

Distance Studies

Department of English and Writing Studies

WRITING 2215F/650
ENCODING PERSUASION: RHETORICAL THEORY
Fall Term, 2026

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- One textbook is required for this course: Hauser, Gerald A. *Introduction to Rhetorical Theory*. 2nd ed. Waveland Press, 2002.

This text is available through the Western Dellelce Family Bookstore at a cost of either \$65.60 (print) or \$49.00 (180-day e-book rental): see https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2026A&courses%5B0%5D=650_UW/WRI2215F

- Access to Western Brightspace, a reliable high-speed internet connection, and a computer that meets the technical requirements for writing online timed assessments.
- You are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. If you need assistance with the course OWL site, you can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, you can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Rhetoric (Ρητορικη) includes both the study and the practice of human communication. In this course, we will focus on written communication. We will study the ways in which people communicate in order to consider theories of rhetorical activity, and we will write texts informed by those theories.

Hauser's *Introduction to Rhetorical Theory* will form the basis for our thinking about how language is used to communicate. The first five chapters outline some general concepts of rhetorical activity, while chapters 6 through 14 explore these concepts in more detail. Our reading of Hauser, together with more extended discussion of some recent major theorists such as Chaim Perelman, Lucie

Olbrechts-Tyteca and Stephen Toulmin will constitute an introduction to the ‘New Rhetoric.’ In our work on these materials we will aim to understand how these theories work, to test their validity by trying them out and engaging with them in discussion, and consider the question what their usefulness might be to each of us as agents in the world who seek to bring about practical change through the use of language while respecting the agency of others.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES (see also ‘Further Details on Assignments’ below)

Note that there is a formal final examination in this course. This will be an in-person, two-hour final exam to be written during the official exam period on a date and at a time scheduled by the Office of the Registrar.

Your final grade in the course will be derived from your performance in the required work, weighted as shown below.

➤ <u>Tests (3 x 10%)*</u>	30%
➤ <u>Assignment 1: short essay – set topic**</u>	15%
➤ <u>Assignment 2: major essay**</u>	30%
➤ <u>Final Exam**:</u>	25%

***Note: The Tests are designed to take up to one hour to write. The Tests will appear under the ‘Quizzes’ tab. Each will be available to start for a seven-day period (see ‘Schedule’ below). You must start each Test and complete and submit it within 90 minutes.**

**** See ‘Further Notes on Assignments and Exam’ immediately following the ‘Schedule’ for more information.**

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (Please *note* posting requirements)

Obviously, we do not meet formally as a ‘class’ in a Distance Studies course. Therefore, ‘attendance’ and participation on the Discussion Board are intertwined. While Distance Studies classes are generally asynchronous, they are not correspondence or self-paced. You must attend class (defined as logging onto our Owl site) and participate by introducing yourself, and posting questions and thoughts during the first week, and by posting (by participating in a given week’s set discussion topic) in subsequent weeks where there is a Discussion topic for that week. **At least two separate posts** during each of those weeks (a week is defined *for this purpose* as running from Monday to Sunday) are required. **One must be a reply/response to another student and one must be a ‘new’ post (original contribution) starting a new conversation. Any third and further posts each week may be either.**

Postings on the Discussion Board must have the following characteristics:

- Must contribute something meaningful to the Board;
- Must support your opinion with sufficient reasons or evidence;
- Must display good grammar and organization.

*Postings should not:

- Contain disrespectful, insulting, or offensive language;
- Be excessively long or excessively short;
- Be unrelated to the week's topic;
- Say things that do not contribute anything, e.g. "I agree with you" or "nice comment".

Note that 'attendance' as defined in this section is mandatory in this course. Failure to meet the minimum posting requirements as defined above for any week where there is Discussion may result in your earned final grade in this course being reduced by 3%. That penalty is cumulative to a maximum of five weeks. Failure to meet the minimum posting requirements for five or more weeks where there is Discussion may result in your earned final grade being reduced by 15%.

***See also 'WRITING STUDIES' POLICY ON THE USE OF AI TOOLS' below.**

ASSIGNMENT FORMAT

Assignments 1 and 2 must be typed, double-spaced, and submitted online (see 'Submitting Assignments' below) **as Word files**. All assignments must have your name, course name, section number and instructor's name on the first page.

When using sources in a paper, you will be expected to follow MLA, CMS, or APA standards for documentation.

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments 1 and 2 are due on the dates specified on the syllabus Schedule. In the absence of formal academic consideration, **late papers for Assignment 1** will be penalized at 2.5% per day *unless I have permitted* an informal short extension of the due date. You must contact me *ahead of the due date*, by email, for an extension and provide a reason for the request acceptable to me. I will either agree to an informal short extension or refer you to the university procedures for academic consideration (see **Academic Consideration and Accommodation** policy below). **Assignment 2** is due on the last day of classes. **That date is a university deadline** and will be extended **only** with formal academic consideration (see **Academic Consideration and Accommodation** policy below). Important: you are responsible for keeping an electronic copy of all assignments you submit.

Tests 1, 2, and 3 must be written during the weeks specified on the syllabus Schedule. If you miss a Test you may elect to contact me directly to see if we can agree informally to a short extension of its availability. If not, I will refer you to the university procedures for academic consideration (see **Academic Consideration and Accommodation** policy

below).

Procedure for Assignment Submission

You will find Turnitin-enabled* submission links for each of Assignments 1 and 2 under the 'Assignments' tab. You will upload your final version of each Assignment through its link, as a single Word (.doc or .docx extension) file,* titled to identify you as author.

****Note: Pdf or other 'read only' formats, and compressed/zipped files are not acceptable. Please note also that Turnitin will not accept more than a single file submission. In other words, do not try to submit an assignment twice, or in parts as two or more files.***

PREREQUISITES

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites. The prerequisites for Writing 2215F/G are:

“At least 65% in one of [Writing 2101F/G](#), [Writing 2125F/G](#), [Writing 2111F/G](#), [Writing 2130F/G](#) or [Writing 2131F/G](#); or at least 65% in one of [Writing 1000F/G](#), [Writing 1030F/G](#), or [Writing 1031F/G](#); or at least 65% in each of [MIT 1020E](#) (or both of [MIT 1021F/G](#) and [MIT 1022F/G](#)) and [MIT 1025F/G](#); or permission of the Department (consult the Undergraduate Program Director, Writing).”

SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).

*The two required Assignments (essays) in this course will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND COPYRIGHT

All instructor-written materials for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like One Class or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

WRITING STUDIES' POLICY ON THE USE OF AI TOOLS

In this course, students are permitted to use AI tools **when composing Assignments 1 and 2, and when composing posts for Discussion topics, only for information gathering and preliminary research purposes.** These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. It is essential, however, that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize, develop, and articulate their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploration, but students are expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources and avoiding plagiarism in any form. Note that for all assignments completed outside of class, the instructor can require you to attend an in-person interview to discuss your work before a mark is finalized. Assignments and Discussion posts should always reflect students' own thoughts and constitute independent written work. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and ethical learning environment that promotes critical thinking, supports independent inquiry, and encourages original written contributions.

The use of AI tools when writing Tests 1, 2, and 3 is strictly prohibited.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: our class 'week' runs Monday to Sunday unless otherwise noted* below.

Week One (*9 to 13 Sept)	Hauser Ch. 1 'The Eventfulness of Rhetoric' <i>(Introduction to the course; definitions of 'rhetoric')</i>
Week Two (14 to 20 Sept)	Hauser, Ch. 1 'The Eventfulness of Rhetoric' cont.
Week Three (21 to 27 Sept)	Hauser, Ch. 2 'Rhetorical Thinking'
Week Four	Hauser, Ch. 3 'Rhetorical Opportunities'

(*28 Sept to 4 Oct) Hauser, Ch. 4 'Making Commitments through Rhetoric'

*Note: Wednesday Sept. 30 is a "non-instructional" day

Complete Test #1 (10%): available 9 a.m. Sunday September 27 to 11:59 p.m. Sunday October 4 on 'Quizzes' tab
(Test 1 coverage: lecture notes Units 1, 2, and 3; Hauser Chapters 1 and 2)

Week Five Hauser, Ch. 5 'Public Judgment'

(*Oct 5 to 5 p.m. Friday Oct 9)

5 p.m. Friday to Sunday October 18: Reading Week

Week Six Hauser, Ch. 6 'Finding Ideas' (*inventio*)

(19 Oct to 25 Oct)

Assignment 1 (15%) due Sunday 25 October by 11:59 p.m.

Week Seven Hauser, Ch. 7 'Using Good Reasons to Persuade' (*logos*)

(26 Oct to 1 Nov)

Complete Test #2 (10%): available 9 a.m. Monday October 26 to 11:59 p.m. Sunday November 1 on 'Quizzes' tab
(Coverage: lecture notes Units 4, 5 and 6; Hauser Chapters 3, 4, and 5)

Week Eight Hauser, Ch. 14 'Strategic Forms of Argument Structures'

(2 Nov to 8 Nov)

Week Nine Hauser, Ch. 8 'Persuasiveness of Character' (*ethos*)

(9 to 15 Nov) Hauser, Ch. 9 'The Passions' (*pathos*)

Complete Test #3 (10%): available 9 a.m. Monday November 9 to 11:59 p.m. Sunday November 15 on 'Quizzes' tab
(Coverage: lecture notes Units 6, 7, and 8; Hauser Chapters 6, 7, and 14)

Week Ten Hauser, Ch. 10 'Narrative' (*narratio*)

(16 to 22 Nov)

Week Eleven Hauser, Ch. 11 'Acting with Language'

(23 Nov to 29 Nov)

Week Twelve Hauser, Ch. 12 'Experiencing Meaning in Rhetoric'

(*30 Nov to 9 Dec) Hauser, Ch. 13 'Rhetorical form as Strategy'

!Essay 2 (30%) due no later than Wednesday 9 December @ 11:59 p.m.!

!This is a university deadline. Extensions are not possible without a formal request for academic accommodation.!

The Final Exam (25%) will be written in-person during the official exam period;

date/time/location t.b.a.

FURTHER NOTES ON ASSIGNMENTS AND FINAL EXAM

Assignment 1.

This first essay will be on a set topic/materials; see ‘Essay 1’ on the ‘Assignments’ tab for the prompt for Essay 1. You are asked to apply one or more of the concepts we will have been discussing in the first few weeks of class to a rhetorical analysis of a set of materials. Your essay should follow the usual conventions for formal papers, and your grade on it will constitute 15% of your final grade in the course. The essay should be approximately 3 – 5 pages double spaced.

Assignment 2: Major Research Paper.

Beginning early in the term, you should be looking for and deciding upon a subject/topic that interests you and beginning to collect and assemble materials (e.g. articles; editorials; op/ed pieces; clips; speeches; social media commentary etc.) focused on that topic. Each item you choose must use language and/or imagery to communicate something to an ‘audience’ about your topic. The possible range of topics is, of course, practically limitless, but ideally you ought to choose something that has engendered considerable ‘debate.’ You are of course free (and encouraged) to discuss this with me as you go about deciding upon your topic.

Write a **formal rhetorical analysis of* your materials, in which you attempt to explain the various rhetorical strategies used to present and frame the issue or topic you have researched, using the theories we have been studying throughout the course. This essay is your ‘major’ essay in the course, and should be approximately 10 – 12 pages, double spaced; your grade on this essay constitutes 30% of your final grade in the course.

*Please note (from the outset!): you are not, in Assignment 2, writing ‘your’ contribution to the debate surrounding your topic!! Rather, you are writing a rhetorical analysis of that debate (its ‘voices’, their characteristic rhetorical strategies, etc.).

Final Exam.

The final exam in this course will be written in-person during the December examination period, at a date/time to be set by the Office of the Registrar. The exam will be two hours in duration and be worth 25% of your final grade in the course. Please note that no aids are permitted for this exam. Electronic devices of any kind (including cell phones and smart watches) are not permitted

Academic Consideration and Accommodation

University policy on academic considerations is described here:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

You should familiarize yourself with this policy and note that it requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation.

Please note that any formal academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests through the Student Absence Portal, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

https://www.registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation, which may include a Student Medical Certificate. Recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course.

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519-661-3030 (during class hours) or 519-433-2023 after class hours and on weekends.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays and should give reasonable notice in writing (email), prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar

(<https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>).

Statement on Gender-based Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, here. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Other Student Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services

<https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login&languageCd=ENG&>

provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support and Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>