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# Rhetoric and Writing Studies

In the College of Arts and Letters

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## Faculty

Suzanne M. Bordelon, Ph.D., Professor of Rhetoric and Writing Studies, Chair of Department  
Glen A. McClish, Ph.D., Professor of Rhetoric and Writing Studies (Graduate Adviser)  
Cezar M. Ornatowski, Ph.D., Professor of Rhetoric and Writing Studies  
Linn K. Bekins, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Writing Studies, Professional Writing Program Director  
Richard B. Boyd, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Writing Studies  
Paul A. Minifee, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Writing Studies  
Kathryn Valentine, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Writing Studies  
Christopher Werry, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Writing Studies, Lower Division Writing Director

## Associateships

Graduate teaching associateships (GTA) in rhetoric and writing studies are available to a limited number of qualified graduate students. Teaching associates must have completed Rhetoric and Writing Studies 609, attend Rhetoric and Writing Studies 796A during the first semester of their associateship, and have the consent of the RWS GTA program director. Additional information is available on the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies website (<http://rhetoric.sdsu.edu/employment/index.htm>).

## General Information

The Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies, in the College of Arts and Letters, offers graduate study leading to the Master of Arts degree in rhetoric and writing studies. Rhetoric is a field of research, teaching, and theory concerned broadly with literacy and spoken, visual, and written discourse. It emphasizes the centrality of discourse (especially written discourse) to all disciplinary and cultural communities, knowledge formation, learning, and professional work. The program builds on the diverse interests of faculty in the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies to bring together rhetorical theory, history of rhetoric, composition studies, literacy, writing pedagogy, discourse theory, professional writing, and writing in the disciplines. Coursework provides a coherent platform for inquiry into the diverse ways in which literacy and writing are used in academic, professional, and cultural contexts.

The Master of Arts degree in rhetoric and writing studies is a 30-unit program that provides preparation for students wanting to pursue doctoral-level study in the area of rhetoric and writing studies or in related disciplines or for students who plan to terminate their studies at the M.A. level. In addition to the general program, the curriculum offers specializations in the teaching of writing and in professional writing.

The general program is a customizable path that prepares students for advanced study or a range of careers in writing-related fields. The specialization in the teaching of writing prepares students to teach writing in colleges and furthers the professional development of secondary school teachers. The specialization in professional writing prepares students for careers as professional writers in business, industry, public agencies, and government within the broader disciplinary context of rhetoric and writing studies, as well as to teach technical and professional writing at colleges or in specific training settings.

The program includes a teaching internship for students in the teaching of writing specialization and a technical writing internship for students in the technical and professional writing specialization and, where appropriate, special study based on work experience.

## Admission to Graduate Study

Students will be admitted only in the fall semester. See Rhetoric and Writing Studies website for deadlines: [http://rhetoric.sdsu.edu/graduate/how\\_to\\_apply.htm](http://rhetoric.sdsu.edu/graduate/how_to_apply.htm).

To be admitted into the program, students must satisfy the general requirements for admission to graduate study at the university with classified graduate standing, as described in Part Two of this bulletin. In addition applicants must have a GPA of at least 3.0 in the last 60 semester units (90 quarter units) attempted in their bachelor's degree studies.

Students applying for admission should electronically submit the university application available at <http://www.calstate.edu/apply> along with the \$55 application fee.

All applicants must submit admissions materials separately to SDSU Graduate Admissions and to the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies.

### Graduate Admissions

The following materials should be submitted as a complete package directly to:

Graduate Admissions  
Enrollment Services  
San Diego State University  
San Diego, CA 92182-7416

- (1) Official transcripts (in sealed envelopes) from all postsecondary institutions attended;

NOTE:

- Students who attended SDSU need only submit transcripts for work completed since last attendance.
- Students with international coursework must submit both the official transcript and proof of degree. If documents are in a language other than English, they must be accompanied by a certified English translation.

- (2) GRE scores (<http://www.ets.org> SDSU institution code 4682);
- (3) English language score, if medium of instruction was in a language other than English (<http://www.ets.org> SDSU institution code 4682).

### Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies

The following admissions materials must be submitted electronically via DecisionDesk, <http://gra.sdsu.edu/decisiondesk/>:

- (1) Letter of application;
- (2) Curriculum vitae or resume;
- (3) A 750-1000 word statement of purpose;
- (4) Writing sample (minimum 10 pages total, in one or separate documents);
- (5) Three letters of recommendation.

## Advancement to Candidacy

All students must satisfy the general requirements for advancement to candidacy, as stated in Part Four of this bulletin.

## Specific Requirements for the Master of Arts Degree

(Major Code: 15013)

In addition to meeting the requirements for classified graduate standing and the basic requirements for the master's degree as described in Part Four of this bulletin, a student must complete a program of study approved by the department's graduate adviser. The program must consist of at least 30 units, with at least 18 units of 600- and 700-level courses. All students must complete 15 units of core courses and 15 units specific to the general program or a specialization.

### Core Courses

*Required courses* (15 units):

- RWS 600 Reading and Writing Rhetorically (3)  
 RWS 601A History of Rhetoric I (3)  
 RWS 602 Modern Rhetoric and Composition Studies (3)  
 RWS 640 Research Methods in Rhetoric and Writing Studies (3)  
 RWS 790 M. A. Examination Preparation (3) Cr/NC  
 or  
 RWS 799A Thesis or Project (3) Cr/NC/RP

### General Program (SIMS Code: 112201)

*Electives* (15 units)

Fifteen units of thematically focused electives selected with the approval of the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies graduate adviser.

### Specialization in the Teaching of Writing (SIMS Code: 112202)

*Required courses* (9 units):

- RWS 512 Writing Center Practice, Research, and Theory (3)  
 RWS 609 Theory and Practice of Teaching Composition (3)  
 RWS 796A Teaching Internship (3) Cr/NC  
 or  
 RWS 798 Special Study (based on work experience, where appropriate and with the approval of the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies graduate adviser) (3) Cr/NC/RP

*Electives* (6 units)

Six units of thematically focused electives selected with the approval of the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies graduate adviser.

### Specialization in Professional Writing (SIMS Code: 112203)

*Required courses* (9 units):

- RWS 504 Advanced Professional Writing (3)  
 RWS 607 Writing Project Management (3)  
 RWS 796B Writing Internship (3)  
 or  
 RWS 798 Special Study (3) Cr/NC/RP (Based on work experience, where appropriate and with the approval of the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies graduate adviser.)

*Electives* (6 units)

Six units of thematically focused electives selected with the approval of the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies graduate adviser.

## Advanced Certificate in the Teaching of Writing

(SIMS Code: 112299)

Offered by the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies, the Advanced Certificate in the Teaching of Writing provides opportunities for teachers, scholars, and other professionals to expand their knowledge of rhetoric, expository texts, and composition instruction.

Applicants to the program must have completed a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.

Students in the program must complete 12 units of coursework with a minimum of six units at the 600-level or above. A minimum grade point average of 3.0 or better must be maintained in certificate coursework, with no less than a C grade in any course.

*Required courses* (6 units):

- RWS 600 Reading and Writing Rhetorically (3)  
 RWS 509 Teaching Composition in Secondary Schools (3)  
 or  
 RWS 609 Theory and Practice of Teaching Composition (3)  
*Electives* (6 units)  
 Three units selected from:  
 LING 550 Theory and Practice of English as a Second Language (3)  
 LING 652 Second Language Acquisition (3)  
 LING 653 ESL Reading and Writing (3)  
 Three units selected from:  
 RWS 512 Writing Center Practice, Research, and Theory (3)  
 RWS 601A History of Rhetoric I (3)  
 RWS 602 Modern Rhetoric and Composition Studies (3)  
 RWS 640 Research Methods in Rhetoric and Writing Studies (3)

The certificate adviser in the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies is responsible for evaluating applications and advising students.

Up to 12 units of coursework taken as part of the certificate program, with the approval of the graduate adviser, may be applied to the Master of Arts degree in rhetoric and writing studies with a specialization in the teaching of writing.

## Courses Acceptable for Master's Degree Program in Rhetoric and Writing Studies (RWS)

Refer to *Courses and Curricula and Regulations of the Division of Graduate Affairs* sections of this bulletin for explanation of the course numbering system, unit or credit hour, prerequisites, and related information.

### UPPER DIVISION COURSES

#### RWS 500W. Advanced Writing Strategies (3)

Prerequisites: Satisfies Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement for students who have completed 60 units; completed Writing Placement Assessment with a score of 8 or higher (or earned a grade of C (2.0) or better in Rhetoric and Writing Studies 280, 281 [or Linguistics 281] if score on WPA was 6 or lower); and completed General Education requirements in Composition and Critical Thinking.

**Proof of completion of prerequisites required:** Test scores or verification of exemption; copy of transcript.

Advanced writing course focusing on how meaning is negotiated and claims are argued in academic and public discourse.

#### RWS 501. Editing (3)

Prerequisite: Graduate standing or Rhetoric and Writing Studies 200 [or English 200] or 250.

Fundamentals of professional editing. Functions of an editor. Document development, style, and style guides. Editing tools and technologies. Preparing text for publication and production.

#### RWS 503W. Professional Writing (3)

Prerequisites: Satisfies Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement for students who have completed 60 units; completed Writing Placement Assessment with a score of 8 or higher (or earned a grade of C (2.0) or better in Rhetoric and Writing Studies 280, 281 [or Linguistics 281] if score on WPA was 6 or lower); and completed General Education requirements in Composition and Critical Thinking.

**Proof of completion of prerequisites required:** Test scores or verification of exemption; copy of transcript.

Principles and practices of professional writing, including clear and concise style and rhetorical strategies of designing effective workplace documents. Practice composing memos, reports, proposals.

**RWS 504. Advanced Professional Writing (3)**

Prerequisite: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 500W, 503W, or graduate standing.

Advanced principles in professional writing, including user and task analysis for interface design; document design and typography; collaboration and interpersonal communication; ethical and cultural issues; usability testing; and small group management.

**RWS 506. Writing Internship (3) Cr/NC**

Prerequisites: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 500W or 503W. Admission to a minor, major, certificate, or graduate program in rhetoric and writing studies.

Intensive experience in writing and editing documents while student is under the joint supervision of an academic instructor and a professional coordinator.

**RWS 507. Professional Communication in Nonprofit Organizations (3)**

Prerequisites: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 200 [or English 200] and 250. Upper division or graduate standing.

Developing specific technical communication skills for nonprofit organizations. Learning nonprofit documentation: proposals, mission statements, advertising, member surveys, capital campaigns. Promoting volunteerism. Interacting with nonprofit boards. Adhering to requisite state and federal regulations.

**RWS 508W. Scientific Writing (3)**

Prerequisites: Satisfies Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement for students who have completed 60 units; completed Writing Placement Assessment with a score of 8 or higher (or earned a grade of C (2.0) or better in Rhetoric and Writing Studies 280, 281 [or Linguistics 281] if score on WPA was 6 or lower); and completed General Education requirements in Composition and Critical Thinking. Admission to a minor, major, certificate, or graduate program in rhetoric and writing studies. **Proof of completion of prerequisites required:** Test scores or verification of exemption; copy of transcript.

Scientific writing in academic and empirical research settings to include clear and concise writing style, rhetorical strategies, and writing of research reports, proposals, conference presentations, and articles.

**RWS 509. Teaching Composition in Secondary Schools (3)**

Prerequisite: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 200 [or English 200] or graduate standing.

Theory and practice of teaching and assessing composition in secondary schools and comparable contexts.

**RWS 510. Rhetoric and Culture (3)**

Interplay of rhetoric, writing, and culture, including race/ethnicity, gender, class, and other cultural considerations. Role of texts in shaping and shifting community knowledge, identity, norms, and values.

**RWS 512. Writing Center Practice, Research, and Theory (3)**

Prerequisite: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 200 [or English 200] with a grade of C (2.0) or better or satisfaction of Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement.

Practice, research, and theory of coaching writing in various settings. Individual and small group writing projects and research. Maximum credit six units.

**RWS 596. Special Topics in Rhetoric and Writing Studies (1-3)**

Prerequisite: Consent of instructor.

Selected topics in rhetoric and writing studies. May be repeated with new content and consent of instructor. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. Limit of nine units of any combination of 296, 496, 596 courses applicable to a bachelor's degree. Credit for 596 and 696 applicable to a master's degree with approval of the graduate adviser.

**RWS 599. Special Study (1-3) Cr/NC**

Directed individual study. Maximum credit six units.

**GRADUATE COURSES**

**RWS 600. Reading and Writing Rhetorically (3)**

Theoretical frameworks, including rhetorical theory and discourse analysis, for analyzing and interpreting academic, professional, and everyday texts. Critical reading and writing of texts and rhetorical dimensions of knowledge production.

**RWS 601A. History of Rhetoric I (3)**

Prerequisite: Good standing in an approved graduate program.

Major works of rhetoric from Greek Sophists through Imperial Rome. Themes and core concepts that shape the discipline of rhetoric. How the works informed pedagogy and public life. Relationship of historical texts to contemporary rhetorical practices.

**RWS 602. Modern Rhetoric and Composition Studies (3)**

Twentieth century rhetoric and composition theory, and their relationship to study and teaching of written discourse.

**RWS 607. Writing Project Management (3)**

Prerequisite: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 504.

Managing technical documentation projects. Collaborative writing. Managing writing teams. Conducting task analysis, estimating cost and schedule, preparing document plans, gathering information, testing documents, and managing project documentation. (Formerly numbered Rhetoric and Writing Studies 505.)

**RWS 609. Theory and Practice of Teaching Composition (3)**

Research and theory in field of teaching composition. Links research to classroom practice. Prepares students to teach composition at SDSU and other post-secondary settings.

Prerequisite for teaching associateships in Rhetoric and Writing Studies.

**RWS 640. Research Methods in Rhetoric and Writing Studies (3)**

Prerequisites: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 600, 601A, 602.

Research methods and critical approaches to advanced study of rhetoric and writing, with attention to basic reference works, scholarly journals, and bibliographical techniques.

**RWS 696. Topics in Rhetoric and Writing Studies (3)**

Intensive study in specific areas of rhetoric and writing studies. May be repeated with new content and consent of instructor. See *Class Schedule* for specific content. Credit for 596 and 696 applicable to a master's degree with approval of the graduate adviser.

**RWS 730. Gender and Rhetoric (3)**

Prerequisites: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 600 and 601A.

Explores intersection of gender, rhetoric, and power. Topics include rhetoric and the body, gendered differences in rhetorical styles, roles gender plays in professional relationships, culture, and the media. Interrogation of gender as an analytical category.

**RWS 744. Seminar in Issues in Rhetorical Theory and Practice (3)**

Prerequisites: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 600, 601A, 602.

Problems in teaching of rhetoric and writing, both practical and theoretical. Advanced study of topics such as teaching practices, genres, stylistics, or a major figure. May be repeated with new content. Maximum credit six units.

**RWS 790. M.A. Examination Preparation (3) Cr/NC**

Prerequisites: Twenty-four units of graduate coursework that counts toward the M.A. degree in rhetoric and writing studies. Student must be in final semester of study for master's degree.

Survey of selected essays, articles, and texts in rhetoric, composition studies, and professional and technical writing included in the M.A. examination. Emphasis on rhetorical analysis of texts and contexts (historical, social, professional, and technical). Strongly recommended for students taking the M.A. examination.

**RWS 796A. Teaching Internship (3) Cr/NC**

Prerequisites: Completion of Rhetoric and Writing Studies 609 and consent of graduate adviser.

Teaching experience while student is under joint supervision of college-level teacher and academic instructor. Maximum credit three units.

**RWS 796B. Writing Internship (3) Cr/NC**

Prerequisites: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 501, 504, 600, 601A, 602, and consent of graduate director.

Intensive experience in writing and editing documents while student is under joint supervision of an academic instructor and a professional coordinator. Maximum credit three units applicable to a master's degree.

**RWS 798. Special Study (1-3) Cr/NC/RP**

Prerequisite: Consent of staff; to be arranged with department chair and instructor.

Individual study. Maximum credit six units applicable to a master's degree.