Course Overview
Welcome to English 6324: Pedagogy of Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies! This course is designed as a service learning/community engagement learning experience. The objective of community engaged coursework is to collaborate with local community organizations to respond to their needs and goals by establishing a reciprocal and mutually beneficial learning experience between students and community partners. Community engaged courses provide you with opportunities to build writing, critical thinking, pedagogy, research, language, and teamwork skills, which are critical characteristics that will ensure your success as graduate students and in your current and future profession. Additionally, scholars in rhetoric, composition, and literacy Studies have called an urgent need for graduate programs to develop community engaged projects as this ensures graduate students have a broad range of skillsets for diverse academic and non-academic professions.

We will focus on community writing pedagogy and you will serve as community writing fellows as you collaborate with community organizations to respond to their writing and language needs. Throughout the semester, we will reflect on our language agilities, explore theories and pedagogies on community writing, and apply them in our work with community organizations in the Rio Grande Valley. As a community writing fellow with an organization, you will investigate and learn about the organization’s social issues, vision, and objectives. In particular, you will investigate and analyze the role writing and language play in responding to the needs of the organization. Drawing on your writing and language agilities, you will write collaboratively with the community partners to address pressing social issues. Additionally, you will write collaboratively with your classmates to develop a model for community writing fellows. You will build cross-cultural and cross-linguistic collaborations, engage in reciprocal and meaningful interactions with the community, and reflect on your writing and language negotiation strategies through these collaborations. I look forward to a learning-enriching and collaborative community engaged semester!

My role in class is that of a collaborative writer and facilitator; I want to think of our relationship as one focused on collectively discovering new knowledge, ideas, and possibilities in our discipline. In order to engage in collaborative learning, I expect you to remain committed to course readings, discussions, and projects in and outside of class throughout the semester. Collaborative thinking entails rhetorical listening and engaging in cross-linguistic conversations and negotiation of meaning; therefore, I also expect that each one of you will attentively and respectfully listen to other’s perspectives. The course readings will, at times, be challenging and complex. I have high expectations of your abilities and performance. Feel free to ask questions or express concerns openly as I am more than happy and willing to work with you, especially when I see an equal commitment to learning and thinking on your part.
look forward to a learning-enriching semester! The following consists of specific activities, learning expectations, and policies that will guide our learning, writing, reading, and thinking.

To a successful semester,
Alyssa G. Cavazos

**Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies Graduate Program: Student Learning Outcomes**

- **Writing**: Students will be able to compose graduate level academic and professional writing.
- **Critical Thinking**: Students will be able to think critically, and apply critical thinking to academic, instructional, and professional pursuits.
- **Pedagogy**: Students will be able to apply theory and practice of writing instruction at various levels and for diverse students.
- **Research**: Students will be able to understand a variety of research methods and apply appropriate research methodologies to explore specific research questions.
- **Modality**: Students will be able to produce texts in a variety of modes.
- **Language**: Students will be able to understand and negotiate multiple approaches to language difference in academic, professional, and community contexts.

**Course Expectations**

In order to complete this course successfully, you must meet the expectations of the course and the expectations of your partner community organization. This is a reduced seat course, which means that we will meet in person almost every other week. We are likely to meet in person 8-10 times this semester, and you are expected to meet in person with your community partners according to their scheduled meetings and/or based on needs, which can range between 8-10 times throughout the semester. When we don’t meet in person for class or with your community partner, you will be expected to fulfill discussion board expectations on Blackboard and continue with your writing project duties with the organization.

When we meet as a class, you are expected to have completed the course readings and be prepared to engage in class discussion, reflections, and activities. You should also be prepared to write collaboratively with your classmates and share with us what you’ve learned, what kind of progress you’ve made with your community organization, and what kind of questions, concerns, challenges, and/or successes you are experiencing. The work you are expected to complete for our class and the community partner is ongoing throughout the semester. This means that you will be expected to work online some weeks and/or meet in person during other weeks depending on the organization and the timeline for the projects/activities at the organization. Because we are working with community organizations, your schedule flexibility is essential; for instance, some organizations might have events or activities on the weekends that you will be expected to attend or contribute to in some way. For other organizations, you might be able to complete most of the work online, depending on their needs. The goal of the course is to learn about community writing pedagogies and approaches, and most importantly, engage in collaborative writing experiences with community partners to meet diverse goals and writing and language expectations.

Below you will find a short overview and description of the major course projects and learning expectations this semester. A detailed assignment sheet for each major project will be posted on Blackboard. Please note that these projects are not isolated; they build on each other and the success of one is dependent on the others.
**Rhetorical Responses (and participation) 20% (8RRs @ 2.5% each)**
This section encompasses written rhetorical responses and participation in in-class and online discussions. Throughout the semester, we will read a variety of academic articles, and you will interact with community partners as you learn about the role of writing and language within their respective organizations. You will be expected to write approximately **8 one to one and a half pages singled spaced** rhetorical responses based on assigned texts and/or your experiences with the community organization. In each rhetorical response, you will briefly summarize the main research questions, arguments, and supporting data in the course readings, and you will focus your response on inquiry-based analysis as you make connections to your community organization work. Your analysis can focus on implications of the main arguments in the teaching of writing based on theoretical, personal, and/or pedagogical experiences (see formal assignment on Blackboard). While you can make connections to your professional and personal experiences in each of the RRs, your focus is on engaging in a close rhetorical analysis of each of the reading and making connections among the readings due that week. You will also write reflections and participate in class discussion (in person or via Blackboard) based on the course readings, which is also a part of your grade for each rhetorical response. **When a reading is due, you are expected to annotate the text, write notes, and respond to questions even when an RR is not due.** Rhetorical responses are critical to your success in the course, as they will provide you with the opportunity to analyze ideas, concepts, and issues in the field as well as engage in thoughtful and critical conversations with the readings and your peers’ responses to the readings.

**Community Organization Mini-Ethnographic Study 20%**
This project is a mini-ethnographic study consisting of interviews, observations, analysis of primary texts, and secondary research. This project will occur during the first 5-6 weeks of the semester and will serve as a way for you to get to know your community partner. You will conduct informal personal interviews with representatives from the community organization to learn about their goals, vision, and objectives as well as the role of writing and language play in reaching those objectives. You will also be expected to observe their space and activities during your initial visits with them and will keep a Field Notes journal. Finally, you will collect primary documents created by or for the organization (e.g., brochures, flyers, infographics, websites, videos, etc.). Finally, you will conduct secondary research (e.g., academic articles, news reports, etc.) about the community organization. You will then write a Rhetorical Analysis where you will explore the goals and objectives of the organization, their needs, and the role of writing and language in meeting these needs and achieving objectives. This rhetorical analysis will serve as needs assessment to determine what are the writing and language goals of the organization and how you can respond to them through collaborative writing approaches. See formal assignment on Blackboard.

**Community Organization Writing Project(s) 25%**
Based on your mini-ethnographic study and ongoing conversations with your community organization, you will design a “writing project” in collaboration with the community organization’s staff and/or members that responds to the writing and language expectations and objectives of the organization. The “writing project” may consist of one semester-long document or a series of shorter written documents. The actual “product” will depend and vary based on your organization and their needs and what you collectively decide to co-write. In addition to the writing project(s), you will also submit a rhetorical analysis/reflection of the projects you completed in collaboration with your organization. See formal assignment on Blackboard.
Community Writing Fellows Collaborative Framework 20%
As a class, you will collaborate in the design of a community writing fellows model/framework. The purpose of this project is to define the role and responsibility of community writing fellows based on your respective experiences across diverse community organizations. Additionally, you will also describe the characteristics of effective collaborations between community organizations and community writing fellows. You will also consider the challenges and/or problems inherent in community engaged work to determine how to respond to them as active components of the framework. Ultimately, the framework along with your reflections (below) can ultimately be used to enhance community writing projects in our program as well as future courses, and we may even consider submitting manuscripts for publication (as a class and/or with community partners) similar to the articles we read as a class.

Reflection & Showcase 15%
The final component of the course is a reflection and a showcase. On May 7, 2018, we will sponsor a final showcase with all of the community partners and students in our course. The goal is to showcase the type of writing projects you developed in collaboration with the organization, discuss challenges, and success as well as how we can strengthen future community writing fellows partnerships with organizations in the Rio Grande Valley. You will likely design a public document (e.g., poster, video, handout, etc.) to illustrate your projects and critical reflections. In addition, you will submit a 5-7 double-spaced page written reflection (see details on Blackboard).

Course Readings
The majority of course readings will be available to you via PDF or Website link on Blackboard. Please ensure you have reliable computer and Internet access to ensure you are able to download and read all course readings. The main goal of these readings is to help you become acquainted with major conversations in the field of rhetoric, composition, and literacy studies in order for you to not only make contributions but also inform your theoretical and pedagogical views of the discipline. The readings in this course are challenging. However, I know you will engage with these readings by questioning, challenging, and joining the conversation about our discipline. When I read challenging texts, I usually have a pen or pencil, highlighters, and a dictionary immediately available. The following are a few tips to help you engage with course readings in a meaningful way:

- As you read, write on the margins of the text whether you are reading a hardcopy or an electronic version. Often, in iAnnotate (an app) or other PDF files, you can make notes on the margin.
- Make connections to your own personal experiences as a writer or other readings.
- Ask questions to the authors as if you could engage in conversation with them. Often, these questions are ideal for class discussion.
- Write notes when we “frame the reading” in class. In preparation for course readings, I will provide you with a brief overview of the readings and will pose questions to help guide your reading experience.
- Read the discussion questions and activities on Blackboard for each course reading; these can help you read the text with a specific focus in mind.
- Discuss your thoughts on the readings with your peers, family, friends and, of course, me. Verbalizing your thoughts, questions, or concerns often leads to a better understanding of arguments within a text.

Below you will find a list of course readings. All readings are free and located on Blackboard. Please print these readings in advance or have them as electronic versions with your annotations the day we are scheduled to discuss them in class (see course tentative calendar for readings due dates).
### Course Readings

#### Community Writing and Community Engagement

- “Community-Engaged” Laura Julier, Kathleen Livingston, and Eli Goldblatt (from *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*)
- “Interview with Steve Parks, Syracuse University and former Editor of Reflections: A Journal of Public Rhetoric, Civic Writing, and Service Learning” by Willma Harvey, Cristina Kirklighter, and Jessica Pauszek.
- “Community Engagement in a Graduate Level Community Literacy Course” by Lauren Bowen and et al.
- “On Reflection: The Role of Logs and Journals in Service-Learning Courses” by Chris Anson

#### Literacy and Language Ethnography

- “Service-Learning: Engaging Writers with Their Communities” Isabel Baca
- “Literacy Studies and Linguistic Ethnography” by Karin Tusting
- “En Los Dos Idiomas: Literacy Practices Among Chicago Mexicanos” by Marcia Farr

#### Community Literacy and Writing Across Communities Models

- “Community Literacy: A Rhetorical Model for Personal and Public Inquiry” by Lorraine Higgins, Elenore Long, and Linda Flower
- “Transformative Learning, Affect, and Reciprocal Care in Community Engagement” by Ashley J. Holmes
- “Cultivating Transcultural Citizenship: A Writing across Communities Model” by Juan Guerra
- “Writing Across Communities: Diversity, Deliberation, and Discursive Possibilities of WAC” by Michelle Hall Kells

#### Community Engagement Challenges & Possibilities

- “Partners in Inquiry: A Logic for Community Outreach” by Linda Flower
- “The Public Intellectual, Service Learning, and Activist Research” Ellen Cushman
- “Community Service Writing: Problems, Challenges, Questions” By Nora Bacon
- “Navigating Difficulty in Classroom-Community Outreach Projects” by Lauren Rosenburg

#### Community Writing Engaged Pedagogy

- “Community Service and Critical Teaching” Brice Herzberg
- “Engaged Pedagogy” bell hooks
- “Inception to Implementation: Feminist Community Engagement via Service Learning” by Johanna Phelps-Hille

#### Community Engagement Projects

- “Forging Rhetorical Subjects: Problem-Based Learning in the Writing Classroom” by Paula Rosinski and Tim Peeples
- “The Write for Your Life Project: Learning to Serve by Serving to Learn” by Patricia Lambert Stock and Janet Swenson
- Translanguaging *Las Tareas*: Emergent Bilingual Youth Language Brokering Homework in
Immigrant Families.” Language Arts (2014) by Steven Alvarez
- “Translanguaging Literacies and Community Ethnographies” by Steven Alvarez
- “Rhetoric Made Real: Civic Discourse and Writing Beyond the Curriculum” by Paul Heilker
- “But is That Relevant Here? A Pedagogical Model for Embedding Translation in Technical Communication Courses in the US” Laura Gonzalez
- “Education/Connection/Action: Community Literacies and Shared Knowledges as Creative Productions for Social Justice” by Adela C. Licona and J. Sarah Gonzales
- "Translingual Communities: Teaching and Learning Where You Don’t Know the Language" by Elizabeth Kimball

*Additional readings might be announced. Please check Tentative Schedule on Blackboard regularly.

**Self-Assessment:** Criteria on Assessment

**Course Grades & Performance:** The evaluation of your performance is based on Rhetorical Responses/Participation 20%, Community Organization Mini-Ethnographic Study 20%, Community Organization Writing Project 25%, Collaborative Community Writing Framework 20%, Critical Reflection & Showcase 15%, and each consists of a variety of assignments and thoughtful self-reflections. Additionally, your community organization will submit an evaluation form (see Blackboard) of your participation, performance, and collaborative nature. This evaluation form will be used to determine grades on major projects completed about and for the community organization in particular the “Community Writing Project” assignment. In order to earn the grade you deserve, you must submit all required components as each project in the course informs the other.

**Excel Sheet & Grade Performance:** On Blackboard, you will find an Excel Sheet with the above-mentioned percentages, so you can keep track of your grades; I do not use the Blackboard Grade section. In addition to this “formal” Sheet, below you will find specific criteria for specific grades. Thoughtful and critical reflections on each of the projects are also a part of your grade.

**A note on grades:** Simply fulfilling the course requirements warrants an average grade, as in “C,” not an “A.” Coming to class every day and doing assignments is not something that earns “extra credit” or an automatic A, as it is expected by you enrolling in the course. A higher grade will be based on the distinctive quality, development, and reflective nature of your work as well as your ability to guide a piece of writing through the various stages of revision and your willingness to peer review and explore new readings, genres, and techniques.

**Standards for Learning Expectations and Performance**

(Adapted from Doug Hesse’s Language and Composition I Course Guide and revised by Dra. Alyssa G. Cavazos

**A Outstanding Performance:** The work student produces is outstanding as it demonstrates rhetorical and critical awareness that extends beyond intellectual expectations by offering insightful contributions, self-reflections, and thoughtful revisions. The student is always prepared for class (i.e., completes and annotates readings and brings materials). The student participates frequently and thoughtfully in discussions (orally/electronically), making comments and asking questions that lead to deeper understanding or multiple perspectives. The student makes detailed, insightful, clear, and accurate
contributions to peer response activities (written & oral). The student uses class time wisely and productively—working with partners, writing or revising, consulting with the professor.

**B Advanced Performance** The work student produces is advanced as it demonstrates rhetorical and critical awareness of intellectual expectations; at times, further elaboration/clarification and/or revision is needed and self-reflections are often thoughtful. Student is always prepared for class (i.e., completes and annotates course readings and brings materials). The student participates frequently in class, orally/electronically, making comments/asking questions leading to deeper understanding. If the student participates infrequently, he/she makes valuable contributions. The student makes generous, detailed, and clear contributions to peer response activities; the student makes insightful comments but lacks clarity and detail. The student uses unstructured time productively in most cases, but he/she may benefit from further guidance and practice.

**C Expected Performance** The work student produces is expected as it demonstrates a general rhetorical and critical awareness of intellectual expectations; often times, further elaboration, clarification, explanation, and revision is necessary. Self-reflection is general rather than specific and often requires further details on their learning, thinking, writing, and reading processes. The student is prepared for class (i.e., completes and annotates readings and brings materials). The student seldom takes part in discussion, though attentively follow discussions and react to what others said. The student performs peer response work willingly; often, he/she does not offer commentary that is generous, detailed, and insightful. The student uses unstructured time adequately, although they do not fully demonstrate initiative and fail to ask questions for further guidance.

**D Weak Performance** The work student produces is weak in quality as it fails to demonstrate rhetorical and critical awareness of the intellectual expectations. Regularly, the student fails to explain, elaborate, clarify, revise, and/or complete all activities, assignments, and requirements. Self-reflections are vague, lack specificity and depth, or are missing. The student is sometimes unprepared for class (i.e., does not complete and annotate the readings and does not bring materials). The student is inattentive (not following the discussion or taking part in it), disinterested, and/or disrespectful (reading the paper, texting, chronically absent, offering little if any commentary on peers’ work). The student rarely uses unstructured time in a productive fashion.

**F Unacceptable Performance** The work student produces is unacceptable as it may severely contain “D-Weak Performance” qualities OR is not submitted on time or at all. Lack of preparation, lack of engagement, or disruption in class is severe.

**Course Policies**

**Multilingual/Translingual Statement**

Our ability to speak, read, and write in more than one language and/or dialect is a strength both in our personal and professional lives. As we are a part of a University that aims to become bilingual, bicultural, and bilterate, I encourage you to engage in conversation, conduct research, and write in any language and/or dialect that fit your goals and expectations. As rhetorical users of language, we also want to ensure we are mindful and aware of who is our intended audience and what is our intended purpose as we make language and rhetorical choices. Drawing on multiple languages and/o dialects as we conduct research, engage in conversation, and write not only increases our access to existing knowledge but also increases our ability to make new knowledge. I look forward to learning from you and your use of diverse languages/dialects.

La habilidad de poder hablar, leer y escribir en más de un lenguaje o dialecto es una ventaja en nuestras vidas personales y profesionales. Somos parte de una Universidad que tiene como meta el bilingüismo, biculturalismo, y biletrado, por lo tanto, yo los invito a escribir, leer y desarrollar investigaciones en cualquier lenguaje o dialecto que este alineado a sus metas y expectativas. Como
usuarios retóricos del lenguaje, también tenemos que asegurarnos de ser consientes sobre nuestra audiencia y propósito para que así podamos tomar decisiones sobre cómo usar el lenguaje. Usar diferentes lenguajes o dialectos mientras hacemos investigaciones, conversamos, y escribimos no solo incrementa nuestro acceso a conocimientos diversos, pero también incrementa nuestra habilidad de crear nuevos conocimientos. Así que me entusiasma el poder aprender con ustedes y de sus habilidades con diversos lenguajes.

Classroom Atmosphere
I envision our classroom as a place where all of us can share our ideas, thoughts, and questions without fear of being made fun of or embarrassed. We all have different beliefs and perspectives and we do not need to agree with each other on everything we discuss in class; we do, however, have to respect each other at all times, provide constructive feedback, and believe we can all learn from one another. I envision peaceful and learning enriching discussions for all. Our classroom interaction will be based on respect for all of the writers and readers we encounter this semester. Because our writing classroom will be a community of writers and readers, you are expected to help your peers succeed in all course writing projects and in the process you will also succeed. Below you can find additional policies that will help us construct a positive learning environment.

Attendance & Drop by Instructor Policy
Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Failure to attend classes may result in failing the course. UTRGV’s attendance policy excuses students from attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Students should contact the instructor in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations. I do understand that unexpected issues may develop during the semester. If you are absent more than two times, you should make an appointment with me as soon as possible so we may discuss whether dropping the course is a better option for you or continuing with the course is a possibility in order to enable you to earn the best possible grade. Please do not hesitate to contact me. Keep in mind that chronic absences adversely affect your grade.

I will not drop you from the course if you simply stop coming to class. It is your responsibility to make an appointment with me to discuss your absences, dropping the course, or discuss any personal issues that may prevent your full engagement. I am open to discuss specific issues with you, and I am willing to work with you as much as possible to help you gain as much as possible from the course. Please be aware of the following: According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty earning a grade of DR until the official drop date. Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the class should be aware of the “3-peat rule” and the “6-drop” rule so they can recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop rule refers to Texas law that dictates that undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for the third time.

Punctuality
As per UTRGV policy, you are expected to be on time to each class meeting. Walking in late to class is a distraction to me and your peers and it impedes the learning atmosphere. Most importantly, if you come in late to class, you will miss important course information that I usually cover within the first few minutes of class, and I will not repeat myself to each student who walks in late. I consider lack of punctuality an absence. Also, in your future professional career you will be expected to be on time;
please practice this skill in all your college classes. Finally, please discuss with me any issues I might need to be aware of regarding your punctuality to class.

**Late Work**
Work is due at the beginning or before class, it will be considered late thereafter, and will NOT be accepted late. If you know you will miss a class, you need to **submit the assignment ahead of time.** Rhetorical Responses are due at the **beginning or before class** if they are submitted on Blackboard. I do not accept them late. Also, all major research projects will require you to complete activities and assignments throughout the duration of the semester (including process work); therefore, it is imperative for you to submit each component of each major course project by the due date in order to receive feedback from your peers and teacher. If you do not submit these components on time, your grade on the major projects will be severely affected. Most importantly, **I will NOT read or comment on drafts or other components for major projects if they are submitted late** unless a) the student has an official university absence and contacted me well in advance and b) the instructor has agreed to late submission in advance of the due date. If you know you will miss class, you need to submit the assignment ahead of time or come meet with me well in advance of the due date for us to discuss the issue. **Note:** This course relies heavily on technology, so you will need to have reliable access to the internet, which is always available in several places (including the library) on campus. Problems with technology (i.e., computer crash, printer malfunction, internet connectivity issues, etc.) are not acceptable excuses for late work. Plan ahead to avoid last minute crises related to submittal of your assignments. Also, often, assignments will be due on Blackboard, and you are expected to post the assignment by the time and due date specified. If you are absent and you DID NOT inform me of your absence or made contact with me in the case of an emergency, you will not be allowed to make up in-class activities and assignments. Missing in class activities and assignments can severely affect your performance on other projects, such as the major research project and professional portfolio.

**Phones, Computers, and Electronic Devices**
Because this is an institution of learning, ipods and cell phone use is **not permitted** in the classroom unless for specific educational purposes related to our course. If you need to take a call, please excuse yourself from class. Text messaging during class is not permitted. When you walk in to class, your cell phone should be completely **OFF** (not on silent or vibrate). **Please respect your professor and peers.** Additionally, you are encouraged to bring your laptop to class, especially during peer workshop and research days. Your use of laptops is a privilege in class, and they can prove to be a learning-enriching instrument; however, you want to limit use of your computer to our classroom activities and assignments **only**. If you use your computer to complete homework for other courses, check your e-mail, facebook, or text message (not related to course learning), you will kindly be asked to leave class and will receive an absence for the day; we might also need to discuss if you are fully committed to this course. As soon as you arrive to class, you should login to our Blackboard website.

**Materials in Class**
You are expected to bring course readings and assignments to class. You may choose to print course readings or you may choose to have them as electronic versions on an electronic device (such as, an iPad or Computer; **this excludes cell phones**). Most importantly, **your course readings MUST be annotated** on the margins whether you choose to print them or annotate digitally. Additionally, please print course assignments in advance and bring them to class regularly in order to address questions or concerns.

**Academic Integrity Statement**
As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students. If you have any questions about how to properly cite sources or any concerns about giving credit to other’s ideas, please do not hesitate to ask me. I assume that you are familiar with a variety of citation styles, such as MLA (Modern Language Association) and APA (American Psychological Association), and I assume you know how to provide parenthetical citation for all quoted or paraphrased work and how to create a Works Cited page; however, if you are NOT familiar with documenting sources accurately, please ask me and I am happy to help you.

Sexual harassment, Discrimination, and Violence
In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

Course Resources
Blackboard
We use Blackboard as our course website for various activities throughout the course: discussion threads, sharing resources and links, accessing handouts or assignments for the course, assigned readings, discussion questions, activities, and submitting course assignments. You can access Blackboard via www.my.utrgv.edu.

Please make sure you have regular access to Blackboard or if you do not have access to the Internet at home, please plan ahead in order to complete readings and submit assignments on time. If you experience any technical difficulties with Blackboard, you should contact the COLT² Helpdesk:

   Education Complex-(EDCC) 2.202 (2nd Floor)
   1201 W University Dr.
   Edinburg TX, 78401
   email: colthelp@utrgv.edu
   P: 956.665.2979 F: 956.665.5276

A technical difficulty with Blackboard, unless officially approved by COLT² staff as a campus wide issue, is not considered an excuse for not completing readings or assignments on time.

Peer Assistance
Please find fellow classmates who can provide you with assistance throughout the duration of the semester. These peers can remind you of something I said in class; they can also help you find information in Blackboard. As the instructor, I am here to help you think through readings, respond to
your writing, and assistant in the content of the course. I cannot recount what you missed if you fail to come to class or explain what homework is due as this information is located on the course calendar on Blackboard. However, your peers can provide you with help in this area should you be absent or unable to locate a file on Blackboard. You may also use the Blackboard Discussion Board for questions about finding assignments or due dates; this is a place where you and your peers can help each other with technical and other issues. A word of caution: Your peer will NEVER supplement your presence and participation in class. Your peer is not expected to answer their phones or email and should NEVER be used as an excuse for your failure to complete assignments. I also do not expect your peers to share class notes and/or report in for you.

**E-mail**

University policy states that all communication should occur via UTRGV e-mail addresses. I will not respond to e-mails sent from e-mail addresses other than the e-mail address provided to you by the university. My e-mail address is alyssa.cavazos@utrgv.edu. I usually check my e-mail early mornings and late afternoons during weekdays. You can expect a response from me within 24 hours from the time you send an e-mail, except on weekends and holidays. If you have a question or concern about a homework assignment or reading, DO NOT wait until the night before to ask me a question. You need to e-mail me well in advance if you have any questions or concerns regarding course objectives, readings, or assignments.

**Office Hours**

During the office hours posted on the first page of the syllabus, I will be in my office and available to talk with you about any questions, comments, or concerns you have about the course. Please stop by and see me during these hours—that time is YOURS. If the stated office hours do not work with your schedule, e-mail me or ask me in person to make an appointment. Keep in mind that the stated office hours are dedicated to you; I may be in my office during other times, but I might not be able to help you outside of my office hours given my other responsibilities as a university faculty member, such as research, meetings, and committees. Please plan in advance.

**Course Calendar**

The course calendar is a tentative schedule or a plan for course readings, discussions, assignments, and deadlines. This means that the tentative course schedule may change at any time; it is imperative that you remain current with the most updated course calendar on Blackboard as this is where I will update the schedule of assignments, readings, and deadlines.

**Online Readings & Assignment Submission**

I understand that you may or may not have reliable access to the Internet at home. For this reason, I expect you to plan in advance in order for you to print the required course readings by the time we meet for class. Additionally, please plan ahead when an assignment must be submitted online by a certain time or when you are expected to participate in an online discussion. Lack of access to the Internet is NOT an excuse in your failure to complete and annotate course readings or your failure to submit assignments on Blackboard.

**Student Services**

Students who demonstrate financial need have a variety of options when it comes to paying for college costs, such as scholarships, grants, loans and work-study. Students should visit the Students Services Center (U Central) for additional information. U Central is located in BMAIN 1.100 (Brownsville) or ESSBL 1.145 (Edinburg) or can be reached by email (ucentral@utrgv.edu) or
telephone: (888) 882-4026. In addition to financial aid, U Central can assist students with registration and admissions.

Students seeking academic help in their studies can use university resources in addition to an instructor’s office hours. University Resources include the Learning Center, Writing Center, Advising Center and Career Center. The centers provide services such as tutoring, writing help, critical thinking, study skills, degree planning, and student employment. Locations are:

- **Learning center**: BSTUN 2.10 (Brownsville) or ELCTR 100 (Edinburg)
- **Writing center**: BLIBR 3.206 (Brownsville) or ESTAC 3.119 (Edinburg)
- **Advising center**: BMAIN **1.400 (Brownsville)** or ESWKH 101 (Edinburg)
- **Career center**: BCRTZ 129 (Brownsville) or ESSBL 2.101 (Edinburg)

**Accomodating Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects your academic performance) and would like to receive academic accommodations, please inform your instructor and contact Student Accessibility Services to schedule an appointment to initiate services. It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with Student Accessibility Services before classes start. However, accommodations can be provided at any time. **Brownsville Campus**: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at accessibility@utrgv.edu. **Edinburg Campus**: Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at accessibility@utrgv.edu.

**UTRGV Academic Calendar**

The UTRGV academic calendar and final exam schedule can be found at [https://my.utrgv.edu/home](https://my.utrgv.edu/home) at the bottom of the screen, prior to login. Some important dates for Spring 2018 include:

- **January 16**: First day of classes
- **January 19**: Last day to add a course or register for spring 2018
- **March 12 – 17**: SPRING BREAK – NO classes
- **March 30 – 31**: EASTER HOLIDAY – NO classes
- **April 12**: Last day to drop a course; will count toward the 6-drop rule
- **May 2**: Last day of classes
- **May 3**: Study Day – NO class
- **May 4 – 10**: Spring 2018 Final Exams
- **May 11 - 12**: Commencement Ceremonies

**Mandatory Course Evaluation**: Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account ([http://my.utrgv.edu](http://my.utrgv.edu)); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available:

- **Spring 2018 Module 1**: February 14 – February 20
- **Spring 2018 Module 2**: April 11 – April 17
- **Spring 2018 (full semester)**: April 11 – May 2

**Additional Course Resources**

Additional course resources can be found on Blackboard. Please check Blackboard regularly.
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**Departmental Goals: Student Learning Outcomes**

- SLO 1: Students will demonstrate a graduate-level understanding of literary, rhetoric and composition, or linguistic theory.
- SLO 2: Students will demonstrate the ability to interpret literary texts, understand the predominant debates and issues related to rhetoric and composition theory and practice as well as writing in society, or analyze various patterns of language usage.
- SLO 3: Students will demonstrate the ability to conduct rigorous research that involves the evaluation of scholarly arguments as well as the logical organization of evidence, and which leads to the composition of documented, graduate-level research papers, the presentation of such papers at academic conferences, or the production of significant projects relevant to their programs of study.

**Course Goals for English 6324 (not necessarily in order of importance)**

Upon completion of this course:

1. Students will demonstrate a graduate-level understanding of rhetorical theories, including the history of rhetoric, as these relate to the field of rhetoric and composition.
2. Students will demonstrate a graduate-level understanding of contemporary composition theory, such as core issues, debates, research, history, ethics and technology.
3. Students will demonstrate graduate-level understanding of contemporary composition pedagogy, such as core issues, debates, research, history, ethics, and/or technology.
4. Students will demonstrate a graduate-level understanding of larger disciplinary issues surrounding writing (for example, the myriad theoretical, pedagogical, and research implications of the “social turn” in writing, and the role of theory or theorizing in the field), not just about the teaching of writing.