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# Rhetoric and Writing Studies

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In the College of Arts and Letters

## Faculty

Glen McClish, Ph.D., Professor of Rhetoric and Writing Studies,  
Chair of Department  
Carol O. Sweedler-Brown, Ph.D., Professor of Rhetoric and Writing  
Studies  
Richard B. Boyd, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Writing  
Studies  
Jane E. Hindman, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Writing  
Studies  
Cezar M. Ornatowski, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Rhetoric and  
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Ellen Quandahl, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Writing  
Studies, Lower Division Writing Director  
E. Jane Robinett, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Writing  
Studies  
Linn K. Bekins, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Writing  
Studies, Technical Writing Program Director  
Suzanne Bordelon, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Writing  
Studies  
Christopher Werry, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Writing  
Studies

## Associateships

Graduate teaching associateships in rhetoric and writing studies are available to a limited number of qualified students from departments offering graduate degrees. With the guidance of department faculty, teaching associates teach in the lower division writing program. Application forms and additional information may be secured from the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies.

## 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 and composition is a field of theory, research, and teaching concerned broadly with literacy and written discourse. It emphasizes the centrality of discourse (primarily written discourse) to all processes of learning, knowledge formation, socialization into disciplinary and cultural communities, 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, technical and professional writing, and writing in the disciplines to provide 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 a general program, the curriculum also offers specializations in the teaching of writing and in technical and professional writing.

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 technical and 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.

## Master of Arts Degree in Rhetoric and Writing Studies

### Admission to Graduate Study

Students will be admitted in both the fall and spring semesters. Applications should be submitted by April 15 for the fall and by November 1 for the spring.

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.

Applicants should electronically submit the University application available at [www.csumentor.edu](http://www.csumentor.edu).

In addition, applicants should submit the following materials directly to the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies:

- (1) Two sets of official transcripts from all academic institutions attended (in sealed envelopes);
- (2) GRE scores (official notification) (or TOEFL scores for international students);
- (3) Letter of application;
- (4) A 750-1000 word statement of purpose;
- (5) A writing sample (minimum 10 pages);
- (6) Three letters of recommendation.

These materials should be mailed to:

Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies  
(Attention: Graduate Adviser)  
San Diego State University  
5500 Campanile Drive  
San Diego, CA 92182-4452

### Advancement to Candidacy

All students must satisfy the general requirements for advancement to candidacy, including the foreign language requirement, as stated in Part Two of this bulletin. With the approval of the graduate adviser, each candidate may fulfill the foreign language requirement in one of several ways: 1) by passing a local examination administered by one of the University's foreign language departments, 2) by completing one three-unit upper division foreign language or literature course with a grade of C or better, or 3) by passing an examination to be determined by the graduate adviser if the chosen language is not one taught in a department at San Diego State University.

### Specific Requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Rhetoric and Writing Studies

(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 Two 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.

#### General Program

**Required courses** (15 units):

RWS 600	Writing, Knowledge, and Culture (3)
RWS 601	History of Rhetoric (3)
RWS 602	Modern Rhetoric and Composition Studies (3)
RWS 640	Research Methods in Rhetoric and Writing Studies (3)
RWS 799A	Thesis or Project (3) Cr/NC/RP

**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

**Required courses** (24 units):

RWS 600	Writing, Knowledge, and Culture (3)
RWS 601	History of Rhetoric (3)
RWS 602	Modern Rhetoric and Composition Studies (3)
RWS 609	Seminar in Theory and Practice of Teaching Composition (3)
RWS 640	Research Methods in Rhetoric and Writing Studies (3)
RWS 796A	Teaching Internship (3) Cr/NC
<b>or</b>	
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
RWS 799A	Thesis or Project (3) Cr/NC/RP

**Electives** (9 units)

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

#### Specialization in Technical and Professional Writing

**Required courses** (24 units):

RWS 503W	Technical Writing (3)
RWS 504	Problems in Technical Communication (3)
RWS 600	Writing, Knowledge, and Culture (3)
RWS 601	History of Rhetoric (3)
RWS 602	Modern Rhetoric and Composition Studies (3)
RWS 640	Research Methods in Rhetoric and Writing Studies (3)
RWS 796B	Writing Internship (3)
<b>or</b>	
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
RWS 799A	Thesis or Project (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.

### Advanced Certificate in Technical and Scientific Writing

The purpose of this certificate program is to prepare students for careers in technical and scientific writing, or for other careers where advanced writing and document design skills are desirable. The program is designed both for students working on degrees in technical or non-technical fields and for professionals seeking career advancement or change.

Applicants to the program must have completed a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and must have excellent general writing skills (in specific cases, applicants may be required to take additional coursework to improve writing proficiency) and basic computer literacy.

Students in the program will complete 21 units of coursework approved by the director of the program. 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. All courses completed with a grade of B or better are applicable to the Master of Arts degree in rhetoric and writing studies with a specialization in technical and professional writing. For further information, contact the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies.

**Required courses** (9 units):

RWS 503W	Technical Writing (3)
RWS 504	Problems in Technical Communication (3)
RWS 605	Writing Project Management (3)

**Recommended Electives:** (12 units)

RWS 500W	Advanced Composition (3)
RWS 501	Editing (3)
RWS 502	Tools for Technical Communicators (3)
RWS 506	Writing Internship (3) Cr/NC
RWS 507	Technical Communications in Nonprofit Organizations (3)
RWS 508	Scientific Writing (3)
RWS 511	Literacy, Rhetoric, and Technology (3)
RWS 608	Scientific Writing (3)

Other electives may be selected with the approval of the program director. A maximum of six units of transfer credit may be applied to the program. Students should consult with the program director before selecting any courses so that an individualized program of study can be developed.

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

#### UPPER DIVISION COURSES

##### 500W. Advanced Composition (3) I, II

Prerequisites: Satisfies University Upper Division Writing requirement for students who have completed 60 units, fulfilled the Writing Competency requirement, and completed the General Education requirement in Communication and Critical Thinking. **Proof of completion of prerequisites required:** Test scores or verification of exemption; copy of transcript.

The theory and practice of expository writing, including the contributions of semantics, rhetoric, and logic.

##### 501. Editing (3) I

Prerequisites: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 305W or 500W.

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

**502. Tools for Technical Communicators (3) I, II**

Prerequisite: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 503W.

Fundamental software tools for technical communicators. Electronic document style and format. Preparing text electronically for publication and production. Developing on-line and Internet documentation. Rhetorical issues in electronic writing technologies.

**503W. Technical Writing (3) I, II, S**

Prerequisites: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 200. Satisfies University Upper Division Writing requirement for students who have completed 60 units, fulfilled the Writing Competency requirement, and completed the General Education requirement in Communication and Critical Thinking. **Proof of completion of prerequisites required:** Test scores or verification of exemption; copy of transcript.

Principles and practices of writing required in technical and scientific fields or professions, including technical writing style and rhetorical strategies of designing technical documents.

**504. Problems in Technical Communication (3) II**

Prerequisite: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 503W. Recommended: Graphics or drawing course.

Problems in technical writing, including graphics, printing, and reproduction of technical documents; types of technical communication, including reports, manuals, and proposals; manuscript editing and proofreading; audience analysis and readability; writing and recognition of clear technical prose.

**506. Writing Internship (3) Cr/NC I, II, S**

Prerequisites: Consent of instructor and successful completion of a 500-level writing course with a grade of B or better.

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

**507. Technical Communications in Nonprofit Organizations (3) II**

Prerequisite: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 503W.

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.

**508. Scientific Writing (3)**

Prerequisite: Upper Division Writing requirement for undergraduates. **Proof of completion of prerequisite required:** Test scores or verification of exemption; copy of transcript. Intended for those entering a career in scientific writing.

Developing specific writing skills for scientific research and communication. Learning scientific documentation: research paper, case report, review, abstract, promotional material. Adhering to standards and regulations.

**509. Introduction to the Teaching of Composition (3) I, II**

Prerequisite: Consent of instructor based on writing sample and/or test.

Techniques for teaching and evaluation of written composition. Provides a theoretical base for these techniques.

**511. Literacy, Rhetoric, and Technology (3)**

Role that technologies of communication have played in concepts of language, literacy, and cognition. Histories and theories of literacy (with emphasis on rhetorical tradition), and their relevance to research on electronic text.

**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. Maximum credit of six units of 596 applicable to a master's degree. Maximum combined credit of six units of 596 and 696 applicable to a 30-unit master's degree.

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

Directed individual study. Maximum credit six units.

**GRADUATE COURSES**

**600. Writing, Knowledge, and Culture (3)**

Intersection of language, epistemology, and culture. Role of written language in the formation of community knowledge, identity, norms, and values.

**601. History of Rhetoric (3)**

Selected major works on rhetoric from antiquity through nineteenth century. How these works inform pedagogy and public life. Relationship of historical texts to contemporary rhetorical practices.

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

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

**605. Writing Project Management (3)**

Prerequisites: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 503W and 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.)

**608. Scientific Writing (3)**

Prerequisite: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 503W. Intended for advanced students in the sciences.

Developing specific writing skills for a career in scientific and medical communication. Learning scientific documentation process: creating persuasive technical documents, building complex facts into coherent messages, adhering to standards and regulations, and contributing to the effective marketing of new products with promotional pieces that meet legal and ethical standards.

**609. Seminar in 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.

**610. Seminar in Disciplinary Rhetorics (3)**

Practice in and analysis of professional academic discourse, including major genres of disciplinary writing; strategies of written inquiry, argument, and professional conversation; cultural norms of professional practice.

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

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

Research methods and critical approaches to advanced study of rhetoric and writing, with attention to basic reference works, scholarly journals, and bibliographical techniques. (Formerly numbered Rhetoric and Writing Studies 745.)

**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. Maximum credit six units applicable to a master's degree. Maximum combined credit of six units of 596 and 696 applicable to a 30-unit master's degree.

**740. Feminist Rhetorics (3)**

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

Gender's interface with epistemology, authorship, and teaching. Contemporary issues related to feminist creation and critique of knowledge-construction, discourse, pedagogical, and research methods.

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

Prerequisites: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 600, 601, 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.

### **750. Seminar in Rhetorics of Science and Technology (3)**

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

Rhetorical approaches to scientific and technical work, knowledge, texts, and debates. Includes rhetorical studies of workplace writing in organizational contexts.

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

Prerequisite: 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.

### **796B. Writing Internship (3)**

Prerequisites: Rhetoric and Writing Studies 501, 503W, 504, 600, 601, 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.

### **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.

### **799A. Thesis or Project (3) Cr/NC/RP**

Prerequisites: An officially appointed thesis committee and advancement to candidacy.

Preparation of a project or thesis for the master's degree.

### **799B. Thesis or Project Extension (0) Cr/NC**

Prerequisite: Prior registration in Thesis 799A with an assigned grade symbol of RP.

Registration required in any semester or term following assignment of RP in Course 799A in which the student expects to use the facilities and resources of the university; also student must be registered in the course when the completed thesis is granted final approval.

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