

RHETORIC 101 GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

As a student at Hampden-Sydney, you will learn quickly that the College is committed to teaching writing, and you will find that you need to produce essays in a variety of disciplines. The Rhetoric Program provides a two- or three-semester sequence of courses to prepare you for the written assignments you will be given in the years to come. You will find that learning to write well leads to clear thinking; thus, your work in rhetoric classes is essential for the work you will do from now until graduation, and beyond. In fact, upperclassmen and graduates of Hampden-Sydney maintain that the Rhetoric Program is one of the most valuable features of the College's academic program.

Students in Rhetoric 101 focus on developing persuasive arguments and communicating these ideas clearly and forcefully.

TEXTBOOKS

Required:

Hacker, Diana and Nancy Sommers. *The Bedford Handbook*, 11th edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2020.

Recommended:

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th edition. William Morris, ed. New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1993. (You may substitute a dictionary of comparable quality.)

Your instructor will indicate additional texts, if any.

COURSE CONTENT

Rhetoric 101 will help you develop meaningful ideas, evaluate your arguments, support them logically with convincing evidence, and organize your material effectively. Because all good ideas must be expressed well to be effective, Rhetoric 101 will also teach you how to construct powerful, grammatical sentences. By the end of the term, you should understand how to convey your thoughts to a reader clearly and forcefully.

You will compose a series of drafts, revising both independently and in consultation with your instructor and peers. By the end of the course, you will have written final drafts of no fewer than four writing assignments, totaling at least 5000 words or approximately 20 pages. To ensure you will be able to communicate effectively for a variety of different audiences, contexts, and purposes, those four assignments will require writing to be done in four different genres: narrative, public writing with a source, analysis, and evaluation. Students will also have the opportunity to approach one of these genres in a medium (e.g., podcast, video, speech, website, or infographic) other than a typical typed essay. You will work with your instructor and the Writing Studio on making meaningful, substantive revisions to your essays as well as editing them to eliminate errors in spelling, grammar, and mechanics.

FINAL ESSAY EXAMINATION

The final essay examination for all students in Rhetoric classes will be given on the final Tuesday of classes from 7:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. You will write an essay of at least three pages and may use your dictionary and handbook. The essay topic will be based on a passage selected by the Rhetoric Program staff. The essay exam constitutes 7.5% of your final course grade.

COMPREHENSIVE EDITING EXAM

During the semester you will take at least two comprehensive, fifty-minute editing tests or the equivalent. There may also be additional tests and quizzes as indicated by the instructor.

A final comprehensive editing exam will be administered to all students in Rhetoric classes. The editing exam constitutes 7.5% of your final course grade.

ADVANCING TO RHETORIC 102

Satisfactory performance on course work and the final exams, coupled with regular attendance, will ensure that you are prepared for the challenges of Rhetoric 102. **If at the end of the semester unsatisfactory performance on papers and exams suggests that you may be unprepared for the challenges of Rhetoric 102, your semester's work may be reviewed by the Rhetoric staff to determine whether you should pass 101 and advance to 102 or repeat 101.**

RHETORIC STUDIO

The Rhetoric Studio, located in the Pannill Center below the Commons, is an excellent resource for all HSC community members. The Studio provides one-on-one assistance with a faculty or student consultant on any writing, speaking, or digital project. Whether you need help, writing a thesis, editing an essay, finding and citing sources, recording a podcast, brainstorming ideas, practicing a presentation, or creating a website, the Studio can help. The Rhetoric Studio is open Sundays through Thursdays, typically from noon to midnight.

Drop-ins are always welcome or you can schedule an appointment by going to: hsc.mywconline.com. You can also click on the button on the HSC "Current Student" page, get help at rhetoricstudio.hsc.edu, or simply open your phone's camera app and point it at the QR code below!



PLAGIARISM and THE HONOR CODE

1. Definition

The official College statement on plagiarism is found in *The Key*. One possible consequence of plagiarism is expulsion from the college. The following comments, drawn from the *MLA Handbook* 8th ed. (2016), supplement that basic statement:

Plagiarism is presenting another person's ideas, information, expressions, or entire work as one's own. [...]

Plagiarism can take a number of forms, including buying papers from a service on the Internet, reusing work done by another student, and copying text from published sources without giving credit to those who produced the sources. All forms of plagiarism have in common the misrepresentation of work not done by the writer as the writer's own. [...]

Even borrowing just a few words from an author without clearly indicating that you did so constitutes plagiarism. Moreover, you can plagiarize unintentionally; in hastily taken notes, it is easy to mistake a phrase copied from a source as your original thought and then to use it without crediting the source. [...]

It's important to note that you need not copy an author's words to be guilty of plagiarism; if you paraphrase someone's ideas or arguments without giving credit for their origin, you have committed plagiarism. (7-9)

2. Avoiding plagiarism

What makes plagiarism inexcusable is that it is dishonest. You can avoid plagiarizing if you are careful always to note the source of your information for print and on-line materials when you conduct your research, and if you practice simple honesty. As you learn to use primary and secondary sources in composing your essays, follow three simple rules:

- 1) Get specific instructions about citation from the professor, follow them exactly, and ask whenever you are uncertain.
- 2) When in doubt, always acknowledge the source.
- 3) Follow the guidelines in the *MLA Handbook* or other appropriate style sheet or manual (see also pp. 304–361 of *The Bedford Handbook*).

Remember that any on-line materials you use to gather information for a paper are also governed by rules about plagiarism, so you need to learn to cite electronic sources as well as printed and other sources.

3. Documentation Form and Essay Format

The Rhetoric Program instructs you in the use of the MLA style of documentation (updated in 2016), a style that requires that writers cite their sources in parenthetical acknowledgments in their texts. See *The Bedford Handbook*, pp. 304–350. Pages 316–350 in *The Bedford Handbook* provide guidelines for constructing entries in a “Works Cited” list, and pages 355–361 offer a sample research paper using MLA citation. Since other styles of documentation exist, professors in various disciplines may require you to use some other documentation style—APA or Turabian, for example. You should ask professors about requirements for documentation form.

Every essay should have an appropriate title, and essays that use information from any source should include a “Works Cited” list. On pages 351–361 of *The Bedford Handbook*, you will find an explanation of the MLA manuscript format that your professor may require that you use as a model for your essays.

4. Other Honor Code Matters

First, professors assume that any paper submitted by a student for any class was prepared by that student for that specific class. You may not turn in a single paper for two or more different classes/courses unless each professor involved has authorized you to do so in advance. It is considered a violation of the College’s Honor Code to double-submit a paper without permission from both instructors. Furthermore, you may not hand in any paper previously submitted at this or any other school without obtaining the permission of the current professor in advance.

Second, you should include the following pledge at the end of each paper you write for your Rhetoric class (note that this pledge differs slightly from the regular College pledge):

On my honor I pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment, nor am I aware of any violation of the Honor Code that I shall not immediately report. I have given full credit, in the text or in endnotes or footnotes, for any ideas or wording drawn from someone else, and I have appended a Bibliography or Works Cited list that gives information about the sources I used.

(Signature)

RHETORIC REQUIREMENTS BEYOND 101-102

When you have completed three semesters at the College, you will be asked to take the Rhetoric Proficiency Exam, a timed essay examination. It is in your best interest to take this exam as soon as you are eligible, usually in the second semester of the sophomore year. All students are required to pass this exam in order to graduate. A panel of graders drawn from the faculty at large will judge the exams, grading them on the six-point scale (see Appendix B).

Students will write the Rhetoric Proficiency exam by hand, unless they have a letter from the Dean of the College indicating that they may use a computer because of special circumstances.

If you have not passed the timed Rhetoric Proficiency Examination after three attempts or have completed the equivalent of six semesters of enrollment without passing the examination, you will be enrolled during your next semester in a three-hour, non-credit course, Rhetoric 200: Proficiency Tutorial. In Rhetoric 200, students are asked to write three essays (6-8 pages each) with the guidance of an instructor in the Rhetoric Program. A panel of readers drawn from the faculty at large evaluates the finished essays. If the essays are judged satisfactory, the student has fulfilled the College's requirement of proficiency in writing, provided that he has also passed Rhetoric 101 and 102. If the essays are judged unsatisfactory, the student will be enrolled in Rhetoric 200 again.

This requirement applies equally to all students, including transfer students.

Appendix A

Materials in *The Bedford Handbook* covered in all sections of Rhetoric 101:

Part 1: A Process for Writing

- 1 Exploring, planning, and drafting (p. 2)**
 - 1a Assess your writing situation
 - 1b Explore your subject
 - 1c Draft and Revise a working thesis statement
 - 1d Draft a plan
 - 1e Draft an introduction
 - 1f Draft the body
 - 1g Draft a conclusion

- 2 Building effective paragraphs (p. 14)**
 - 2a Focus on main point
 - 2b Make paragraphs coherent
 - 2c Choose a suitable strategy for developing paragraphs

- 3 Revising, editing, and proofreading (p. 27)**
 - 3a Use peer review: Revise with comments
 - 3b Use peer review: Give constructive comments
 - 3c Approach global revision in cycles
 - 3d Revise and edit sentences
 - 3e Format and proofread the final version of your writing

Part 3: Clear Sentences

- 11 Untangle mixed constructions (p. 89)**
 - 11a Untangle the grammatical structure
 - 11b Straighten out the logical connections
 - 11c Avoid *is when, is where, and reason...is because* constructions
- 12 Repair misplaced and dangling modifiers (p. 92)**
 - 12a Put limiting modifiers in front of the words they modify
 - 12b Place phrases and clauses so that readers can see at a glance what they modify
 - 12c Avoid split infinitives when they are awkward
 - 12d Repair dangling modifiers
- 13 Eliminate distracting shifts (p. 96)**
 - 13a Make the point of view consistent in person and number
 - 13b Maintain consistent verb tenses
- 14 Emphasize key ideas (p. 98)**
 - 14a Coordinate equal ideas; subordinate minor ideas
 - 14b Combine choppy sentences
 - 14c Avoid ineffective or excessive coordination
 - 14d Do not subordinate major ideas

Part 5: Grammatical Sentences

- 20 Repair sentence fragments (p. 128)**
 - 20a Attach fragmented subordinate clauses or turn them into sentences
 - 20b Attach fragmented phrases or turn them into sentences
 - 20c Attach other fragmented word groups or turn them into sentences
- 21 Revise run-on sentences (p. 132)**
 - 21a Consider separating the clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction
 - 21b Consider separating the clauses with a semicolon, a colon, or a dash
 - 21c Consider making the clauses into separate sentences
 - 21d Consider restructuring the sentence, perhaps by subordinating one of the clauses
- 22 Make subjects and verbs agree (p. 135)**

- 22a Learn to recognize standard subject-verb combinations
- 22b Make the verb agree with its subject, not with a word that comes between
- 22c Treat most subjects joined with *and* as plural
- 22d With subjects joined with *or* or *nor*, make the verb agree with the part of the subject nearer to the verb
- 22e Treat most indefinite nouns as singular unless the meaning is clearly plural
- 22f Treat collective nouns as singular unless meaning is clearly plural
- 22g Make the verb agree with its subject even when the subject follows the verb
- 22h Make the verb agree with its subject, not with a subject complement
- 22i With *who*, *which*, and *that*, use verbs that agree with their antecedents
- 22j Treat titles of works, company names, and words mentioned as words as singular

23 Make pronouns and antecedents agree (p. 141)

- 23a Take care with indefinite pronouns (anybody, everyone) and generic nouns

Addendum: Singular “They” Policy

- Always use a person’s self-identified pronoun if known, including when a person uses “they” (or in other cases “them” or “their”) as their pronoun.
- Use “they” as a generic third-person singular pronoun.
 - Do not use any form of “he,” “she,” “he or she,” or “she or he” to function as a generic third-person singular pronoun.*
 - Do not use a combination form such as “(s)he” or “s/he” to function as a generic third-person singular pronoun.
- Use “they” to refer to a person whose gender is unknown, or reword the sentence to avoid using a pronoun.

* Exceptions may occur in cases where the antecedent is specifically gendered and in cases where the person being referred to is a member of a group of people whose genders are all known. Where the antecedent is not specifically gendered, “they” is always acceptable.

- 23b Treat collective nouns as singular unless the meaning is clearly plural
- 23c Take care with compound antecedents

24 Make pronoun references clear (p. 145)

- 24a Avoid ambiguous pronoun reference
- 24b Generically, avoid making broad references with *this*, *that*, *which*, and *it*
- 24c Do not use a pronoun to refer to an implied antecedent
- 24d Avoid the indefinite use of they and it
- 24e To refer to persons, use *who*, *whom*, or *whose*, not *which* or *that*

- 25 Choose between pronouns such as *I* and *me*** (p. 148)
- 25a Use the subjective case (*I, you, he, she, it, we, they*) for subjects and subject complements
 - 25b Use the objective case (*me, you, him, her, it, us, them*) for all objects
 - 25c Put an appositive and the words to which it refers in the same case
 - 25d Following *than* or *as*, choose the pronoun that expresses your intended meaning
 - 25e For *we* or *us* before a noun, choose the pronoun that would be appropriate if the noun were omitted
 - 25f Use the objective case for subjects and objects of infinitives
 - 25g Use the possessive case to modify a gerund
- 26 Distinguish between *who* and *whom*** (p. 153)
- 26a Use *who* and *whom* correctly in subordinate clauses
 - 26b Use *who* and *whom* correctly in questions
- 27 Choose adjectives and adverbs with care** (p. 154)
- 27a Use adjectives to modify nouns
 - 27b Use adverbs to modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs
 - 27c Distinguish between good and well, bad and badly
 - 27d Use comparatives and superlatives with care
- 28 Choose appropriate verb forms, tenses, and moods in Standard English** (p. 159)
- 28a Choose Standard English forms of irregular verbs
 - 28b Distinguish among the forms of *lie* and *lay*
 - 28c Use *-s* (or *-es*) endings on present-tense verbs that have third-person singular subjects
 - 28d Do not omit *-ed* endings on verbs
 - 28e Do not omit needed verbs
 - 28f Choose the appropriate verb tense
 - 28g Use the subjunctive mood in the few contexts that require it

Part 6: Punctuation

- 30 The comma** (p. 180)
- 30a Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction joining independent clauses
 - 30b use a comma after an introductory clause or phrase
 - 30c Use a comma between all items in a series
 - 30d Use a comma between coordinate adjectives not joined with *and*
 - 30e Use commas to set off nonrestrictive (nonessential) elements, but not restrictive (essential) elements

- 30f Use commas to set off transitional and parenthetical expressions, absolute phrases, and word groups expressing contrast
- 30g Use commas to set off nouns of direct address, the words *yes* and *no*, interrogative tags, and mild interjections
- 30h Use commas with expressions such as *he said* to set off direct quotations
- 30i Use commas with dates, addresses, titles, and numbers

31 Unnecessary commas (p. 191)

- 31a Do not use a comma with a coordinating conjunction that joins only two words, phrases, or subordinate clauses
- 31b Do not use a comma to separate a verb from its subject or object
- 31c Do not use a comma before the first or after the last item in a series
- 31d Do not use a comma between cumulative adjectives, between an adjective and a noun, or between an adverb and an adjective
- 31e Do not use a comma to set off a concluding adverb clause that is essential for meaning
- 31f Do not use a comma after phrase that begins an inverted sentence
- 31g Avoid other common misuses of the comma

32 The semicolon and the colon (p. 195)

- 32a Use a semicolon between closely related independent clauses not joined with a coordinating conjunction
- 32b Use a semicolon between independent clauses linked with a transitional expression
- 32c Use a semicolon between items in a series containing internal punctuation
- 32d Avoid common misuses of the semicolon
- 32e Use a colon after an independent clause to direct attention to a list, an appositive, a quotation, or a summary or explanation
- 32f Follow conventions for colon use
- 32g Avoid common misuses of the colon

33 The apostrophe (p. 200)

- 33a Use an apostrophe to indicate that a noun is possessive
- 33b Use an apostrophe and *-s* to indicate that an indefinite pronoun is possessive
- 33c Use an apostrophe to mark omissions in contractions and numbers
- 33d Do not use an apostrophe in certain situations
- 33e Avoid common misuses of the apostrophe

34 Quotation marks (p. 204)

- 34a Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotations
- 34b Use single quotation marks to enclose quotation within a quotation
- 34c Use quotation marks around the titles of short works
- 34d Follow conventions for the use of punctuation with quotation marks
- 34e Avoid common misuses of quotation marks

35 End punctuation (p. 209)

- 35a The period
- 35b The question mark
- 35c The exclamation point

Part 8: Grammar Basics

40 Parts of speech (p. 228)

- 40a Nouns
- 40b Pronouns
- 40c Verbs
- 40d Adjectives
- 40e Adverbs
- 40f Prepositions
- 40g Conjunctions
- 40h Interjections

41 Sentence patterns (p. 237)

- 41a Subjects
- 41b Verbs, objects, and complements

42 Subordinate word groups (p. 243)

- 42a Prepositional phrases
- 42b Verbal phrases
- 42c Appositive phrases
- 42d Absolute phrases
- 42e Subordinate clauses

43 Sentence types (p. 251)

- 43a Sentence structures
- 43b Sentence purposes

Additional material may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor and according to the needs and progress of the class.

Appendix B

Six-Point Scale for Scoring Rhetoric Essay Exams

Top-half score (4, 5, or 6):

Despite difference among them, papers that receive a top-half score all demonstrate proficiency in the use of written language to express an idea: The writer conceives a thesis that develops a thought beyond the terms set out in the question; he focuses on a single idea; he argues a case logically; he develops, not simply repeats, an argument; he provides specific evidence; he writes in language free of serious or frequent or distracting errors. In other words, papers receiving top-half scores present a focused thesis, a solid logical argument, specific evidence, and a sense of control over the essential idiomatic and traditional patterns of English grammar and style. Such essays give an impression of independent, mature thinking and *readability*.

Bottom-half score (1, 2, or 3):

Papers that receive a bottom-half score leave the reader with a sense that the essay needs further revision; they give an overall impression of deficiency of thought and/or expression, an impression produced by the writer's having difficulty with one or more important aspects of written expression. Some feature or combination of features in the essay — ranging from egregious errors of historical fact or inaccurate representation of ideas in the essay topic, to a poorly conceived or poorly expressed thesis, to an illogical organization of evidence, to an error-filled writing style — seriously impedes the reader's ability to follow the argument.

6: An essay in this category expresses an idea clearly, forcefully, and perhaps elegantly. The writer demonstrates lucid, orderly thinking and shows some degree of originality in his handling of the topic. The key difference between the 6 essay and the 5 essay may, in fact, rest in the *greater originality of the thesis* in the 6 essay. The writer uses sufficient, appropriate, varied evidence to support his idea. Sophisticated word choice and sentence structures are further evidence of mature thinking: *The writer of such an essay demonstrates a control of language that extends well beyond simple correctness.* An essay that receives this score will be *virtually free* from errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure.

5: An essay in this category demonstrates a clear understanding of the topic it addresses and an assurance in the writer's use of language. It may be less thoughtful or less well reasoned (perhaps more one-sided in its argument) than a 6 essay, but it will not be mere statement and restatement of generalized ideas. Though it may exhibit minor weaknesses in paragraphing, it will show that the writer can select appropriate and varied supporting evidence which he can organize in unified, coherent units. The writer's examples are well chosen, and he has done a good job of integrating those examples into his text. Overall, it is an essay with notable strength in at least one area; it does not exhibit any serious weakness in any area, and in this regard it is a better essay than the 4 essay. The 5 essay, again, as opposed to the 4 essay, will be *largely* free from serious errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure. Its language will be characterized by clarity if not beauty.

4: Though not as comprehensive in its treatment of an idea as a 5 or 6 essay, an essay in this category will present a largely well-reasoned and readable argument. Overall, it gives the sense that the writer is *in control* of the structure of the essay and of his language. The writer establishes a thesis and sticks with it, provides well-developed, detailed examples (perhaps a well-integrated personal example) in coherent paragraphs and organizes those paragraphs so that the reader has a sense of *the progression of the*

argument, and uses forceful phrasing to convey the ideas. A point or two may be inadequately developed (the essay may be more uneven in its success than a 5 essay) or it may rely on formulaic structure. But the 4 essay will provide specific evidence to support key points. It may contain errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure, but still it gives the impression of fluency, an impression that the writer of the 3 essay does not convey. The paper's overall style does not distract the reader from the content, but instead facilitates the expression of the idea or even makes it interesting.

3: An essay in this category exhibits *serious difficulty* in the expression of an idea and leaves the reader with the sense that the essay has been inadequately revised. It shows a lack of clear, mature, or original thinking. The argument may lack tight logic and organization, its organization being circular or shifting. The writer may provide little argument or evidence within a formulaic structure with paragraphs lacking adequate development, producing an impression of shallow or superficial thinking. *Problems with development are perhaps the most characteristic flaw of the 3 essay.* The writer may make assertions without defending his ideas with reasons and evidence, he may neglect to define key terms, or he may rely heavily on quotations from the exam topic instead of providing evidence of his own. On the other hand, the writer may provide evidence without tying it to a thesis, or he may write a narrative that lacks a clear point. *Repetition is a typical problem in the 3 essay;* repetition and a reliance on vague generalities may combine to produce a plodding style. An overall infelicity of expression may characterize the essay. Numerous serious errors in mechanics and word choice may also seriously interfere with readability. In general, a 3 essay seems less vivid, less coherent, less developed and specific, less confident than a 4 essay. Still, the 3 essay differs from the 2 essay in that the writer of the 3 essay succeeds in some of the writing tasks or comes close in all of them.

2: A paper in this category is *seriously deficient*. It exhibits the same sorts of difficulty as a 3 paper, but it exhibits more of them, and consequently this writer seems much further from writing a competent essay than the writer of a 3 essay. The argument may be simplistic and may be couched in inaccurate, vague language; the argument may be unsupported and its organization may be rambling. Problems with paragraph development and in logical development of the argument may be the most characteristic features of the 2 essay. The writing in this essay may also exhibit numerous mechanical errors that seriously impede readers' ability to follow the argument. Still, the 2 essay differs from the 1 essay in that the 2 essay exhibits a minimum of thesis and structure; in some cases it doesn't say much, and what it does say is said badly.

1: This category is reserved for the essay in which a combination of errors, conceptual confusion, and disorganization creates the impression of *ineptitude* and *incoherence* far beyond that typical of the 2 essay. The writer may attempt to deal with the demands of the topic, his essay may have some form and an indefinite idea, but overall his effort is far from bearing fruit in good writing.

(Basic template and some language drawn from Edward M. White, *Teaching and Assessing Writing* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985).
Revised repeatedly and supplemented by faculty at Hampden-Sydney College, 1985-present.)