



COMPOSITION & RHETORIC I
ENG 1301-003
Sul Ross State University,
Fall 2025

Instructor:

Mo Eldridge
Mo.ee.ridge@gmail.com
Morgan.eldridge@sulross.edu

Class Meets: Rooms MAB 302

MONDAY & WEDNESDAY, 11-12:15
Final exam :: TBD

Office Hours: MAB 100

WEDNESDAY 3-5 OR
BY APPOINTMENT

Course Overview:

Composition can be defined as the art of written expression, created through the organization of ideas and the use of structured language. Rhetoric can be defined as the strategic choices a writer or speaker makes to effectively communicate a message to an audience.

What is a line? How do we see a line? How do we make a line? We will compare and contrast the way a line is represented in visual work and written expression. We will consider the function of a line.

Composition & Rhetoric I is an introductory course centered around the art of writing with the purpose of strengthening the foundation of each student's ability to communicate effectively. With an emphasis on rhetorical awareness and personal value systems, students will learn to produce writing in various modes.

This course begins with a foundation of art and writing. We will explore how organization and structural choices shape meaning. Through the study of the basic elements and principles of varying artistic disciplines, students will develop their ability to communicate function and intention through writing.

We will look at artists represented at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa Texas, a contemporary art museum founded by writer/artist Donald Judd in 1986. The site specific art works occupy repurposed military buildings formerly known as Fort D.A. Russell. These works are experiential and large scale.

As a class we will visit the museum, survey artists housed within the museum, read and analyze writings from the artists, and consider how different modes vary in purpose. The survey of writings will include Art Criticism, Art Theory, Art History, personal letters and proposals. Using art as it exists in the landscape of west texas as a lens, students will reflect on their experiences through essays and journal entries.

In Fall 2025, the Chinati Foundation will present a special exhibition of work by Fred Sandback. Students will have the opportunity to focus specifically on Sandback's artistic voice and his frequent references to the functionality of the line. His writing often explores themes such as pedestrian space and the use of language in describing large-scale works. We will examine the voice of the visual artist in writing and the writer's voice across genres, comparing and contrasting. By breaking down the components of creative expression and various writing modes, students will rebuild their understanding of composition through observation, interpretation, and perspective.

By the end of the semester, students will have developed a strong foundation in the principles of composition and rhetoric. They will also gain firsthand experience with contemporary art housed in the tri-county area, applying their observations and reflections to a personal writing practice

PURPOSE:

- practicing the writing process—invention, drafting, revising, editing—as well as presentation of ideas
- understanding and addressing audience and purpose, and making appropriate communication choices
- employing various modes of expression, such as descriptive, expository, narrative, scientific, and self-expressive communication in written, visual, and oral formats
- participating effectively in collaborative settings with an emphasis on listening, critical and reflective thinking, and responding thoughtfully
- applying critical thinking, problem-solving, and basic technical skills in writing expository or argumentative texts

Course Outcomes

WE WILL IDENTIFY AND ASSESS SOME OF OUR PERSONAL VALUES
WE WILL DISCUSS HABITS OF THE MIND / JUDGEMENTS AND SUSPENDING JUDGEMENTS
WE WILL CONSIDER RHETORICAL CHOICES AND PERSONAL PROCESS
WE WILL INTRODUCE THE ARTISTS AT THE CHINATI FOUNDATION
WE WILL READ WORKS BY ARTISTS
WE WILL OBSERVE VISUAL WORKS OF ART AND WRITE ABOUT WHAT WE SEE
WE WILL EXPLORE QUESTIONS ABOUT LIFE AND CREATIVE PRACTICE
WE WILL WRITE ABOUT EXPERIENCE AND OBSERVATIONS
WE WILL WRITE A PERSONAL ESSAY
WE WILL READ AND UTILIZE CRITICAL THOUGHT
WE WILL ARGUE
WE WILL WRITE A PERSUASIVE ESSAY
WE WILL EXPLORE GRAMMAR, MECHANICS, AND STYLE
WE WILL SURVEY DIFFERENT MOVEMENTS IN ART HISTORY FORMING AROUND 1960
WE WILL SITUATE THE CHINATI FOUNDATION WITHIN THE ART HISTORICAL CANON
WE WILL WRITE A RESEARCH ESSAY BASED ON AN ARTIST OF OUR CHOICE
WE WILL CREATE OUTLINES AND PLAY WITH STRUCTURE IN WRITING
WE WILL CONSIDER TRUTH
WE WILL WORKSHOP AND REVISE WITH ONE ANOTHER
WE WILL UNDERSTAND CITATION
WE WILL PRACTICE PARAPHRASING, SUMMARIZING, AND QUOTING
WE WILL TELL A STORY
WE WILL ASK A QUESTION FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES
WE WILL READ
WE WILL EXAMINE THE FUNCTION AND FORM OF WHAT WE READ
WE WILL FIND A THESIS
WE WILL WRITE AN ANALYTICAL ESSAY
WE WILL REVISE TOGETHER
WE WILL FIND OUR VOICE ALOUD
WE WILL FIND OUR VOICE ON A PAGE
WE WILL MAKE A PROMISE

CORE CURRICULUM OUTCOME & EXAMPLES OF PROFICIENCY

Personal Responsibility: linking choices and actions with ethical decision-making

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Expressing core beliefs and the origins of those beliefs, recognizing new perspectives about those beliefs, demonstrating comfort with complexities & what new perspectives have to offer.
- Recognizing multiple and contradictory disciplinary dilemmas and grasping the cross-relations among issues (as well as the ethical implications of context in relation to those issues in the field of study.)

- Demonstrating a high level of academic integrity (i.e., commitment and demonstration of honesty and ethical behavior in an academic setting).
- Demonstrating initiative in making choices independently (accompanied by reflective insight or analysis about the aims and/or accomplishments of their actions).

Required Course Materials

TEXTS

ALL TEXT MATERIALS WILL BE PROVIDED IN CLASS

TOOLS

NOTEBOOK/JOURNAL, WRITING UTENSIL, FOLDER, USB

TIME

THIS COURSE IS TWICE A WEEK, MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY, 11-12:15.

INSIDE THE CLASSROOM

THERE IS AN EXPECTATION THAT YOU WILL COME TO CLASS WITH YOUR TOOLS AND TEXTS. WE WILL HAVE MOMENTS OF IN CLASS WRITING PROMPTS, READINGS WITH DISCUSSION, AND LECTURES.

OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

THERE IS AN EXPECTATION THAT YOU WILL SPEND AT LEAST AN HOUR IN PREPARATION OUTSIDE OF THE TIME IN CLASS FOR IN-CLASS CONTRIBUTION.

Assessment & Grading Criteria

You will be assessed in each class on your progress and participation in lectures, discussions, assignments, and critiques. Your grade will be based on class participation and the quality of the effort you put into completing all journal entries. Being in class is very important. The knowledge needed to complete assignments will be gained through in-person lectures and demonstrations that will be difficult to repeat or for you to make up. If you miss class, catching up is your responsibility.

It is important to stay on track because we will cover material in class each week that builds on the previous weeks. Do not skip class & do not get behind. If you must miss a class, you **must let the instructor know and schedule a time to make-up work you missed**. Recurring absences will affect your participation grade.

In class partner :: NAME _____ CONTACT # _____

Attendance:

SIX absences result in you being dropped from the course with a grade of “F” as per university policy. Upon the 3th unexcused absence you will be dropped one letter grade. Upon the 4th unexcused absence you will be dropped another letter grade. And upon the 5

th unexcused absence you will be dropped yet another letter grade. Plain and simple... attendance is crucial to your survival in this course.

If you must miss a class for a school-related activity, the absence must be discussed (and arrangements made regarding coursework) prior to the absence. If you must miss a class for an emergency or illness, please contact me by email or phone as soon as possible and provide documentation (such as a doctor's note). Late work will not be accepted, unless you have contacted me about extenuating circumstances before the due date. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Arriving on time is essential. Being late three times will count as an unexcused absence. Students are expected to attend the entire class time unless they have made prior arrangements with me in advance. Students who leave early or get up and leave class for any other reason will be counted as absent for that day.

Evaluation:

ESSAY 1 — 15%

ESSAY 2 — 15%

ESSAY 3 — 15%

JOURNAL — 35%

DISCUSSION // PARTICIPATION — 10%

FINAL —10%

You will be graded on participation // in class discussions, three essays, and writings that will be found in your journal. I expect all students to participate in discussions, and if you rarely or never offer thoughtful comments or questions, you will only get half credit for your participation grade. If you aren't comfortable speaking in front of the class, please come talk to me. Details on each assignment will be presented when assigned.

The majority of your grade for the course is obtained through your journal and the accumulation of points from the three major essays.

Your journal is a notebook. You will bring it to class. You will turn in twice in the semester. I will collect the journal at midterms where you will have completed journal assignments on each lecture topic and readings. Each entry will be in essay format 3-5 paragraphs. Do not let these entries intimidate you, we will be working all semester to build the confidence to explore varying forms of communication. Consider the journal entries to be a practice in process. The three major essays will be more polished forms of writing. We will workshop the essays in small groups in class and practice presenting our writing through these forms.

Consider your journal to be the home of all your writing assignments and the steps of process to get to any of the final forms. Your journal will be handwritten. Your journal will be the home for weekly entries on readings and your three major essays.

Essay 1 : descriptive writing about art

Essay 2 : narrative reflections on in person time at Chinati

Essay 3 : art with or about writing with short reflective essay comparing verbal and visual art rhetoric

**** PART OF YOUR PARTICIPATION IS IN CLASS WORKSHOPS TO SUPPORT THE PROGRESS OF THESE THREE MAJOR ESSAYS.**

ASIDE: There will be opportunities to earn extra credit by attending art events.

ADA Statement:

SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartz Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director or Ronnie Harris, LPC, Counselor, at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartz@sulross.edu or ronnie.harris@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the [Student Handbook](#) and the [Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog](#) and for abiding by the [University rules and regulations](#). Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize him/herself with the requirements of such laws.

SRSU DISTANCE EDUCATION STATEMENT

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website.

Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires a secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid the temptation to engage in behaviors that violate academic integrity, such as turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden. Students should also avoid using open AI sources unless permission is expressly given for an assignment or course. Violations of academic integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

IN THIS COURSE GENERATIVE AI IS PERMITTED IN SPECIFIC CONTEXT AND WITH PROPER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

A FURTHER DISCUSSION WILL BE PRESENTED IN CLASS. FOR THIS SEMESTER FALL 2025, STUDENTS WILL BE ALLOWED TO USE CHAT GPT AND OTHER AI GENERATED MATERIALS FOR PLANNING AND BRAINSTORMING. STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO UTILIZE THE EXPERIMENTS OF GENERATING MATERIALS AS LONG AS CITED AND ALSO WITH AN INDIVIDUAL UNDERSTANDING OF CRITICAL THOUGHT ALONGSIDE. AN ESSAY OR JOURNAL ENTRY COMPLETED WITH AI LANGUAGE WILL BE REJECTED AND GIVEN A FAILING GRADE. WE WILL DISCUSS CREATIVE WAYS TO UTILIZE AI AND TO INCORPORATE PERSONAL VOICE AND LANGUAGE ALONGSIDE. THIS WILL BE AN ONGOING AND ACTIVE DISCUSSION THROUGH OUT THE SEMESTER.

"To ensure all students have an equal opportunity to succeed and to preserve the integrity of the course, students are not permitted to submit text that is generated by artificial intelligence (AI) systems such as ChatGPT, Bing Chat, Claude, Google Bard, or any other automated assistance for any classwork or assessments. This includes using AI to generate answers to assignments, exams, or projects, or using AI to complete any other course-related tasks. Using AI in this way undermines your ability to develop critical thinking, writing, or research skills that are essential for this course and your academic success. Students may use AI as part of their research and preparation for assignments, or as a text editor, but text that is submitted must be written by the student. For example, students may use AI to generate ideas, questions, or summaries that they then revise, expand, or cite properly. Students should also be aware of the potential benefits and limitations of using AI as a tool for learning and research. AI systems can provide helpful information or suggestions, but they are not always reliable or accurate. Students should critically evaluate the sources, methods, and outputs of AI systems. Violations of this policy will be treated as academic misconduct. If you have any questions about this policy or if you are unsure whether a particular use of AI is acceptable, please do not hesitate to ask for clarification."

Center for Teaching & Learning. *ChatGPT and Generative AI Tools: Sample Syllabus Policy Statements*. University of Texas at Austin, <https://ctl.utexas.edu/chatgpt-and-generative-ai-tools-sample-syllabus-policy-statements>. Accessed 21 Aug. 2025.

***Acknowledgments: *Statement on Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools in Art & Design Courses* (College of Fine Arts, UT-Austin), *Generative AI Syllabus Statement Considerations* (Texas A&M University), *Using Generative AI in Coursework* (Faculty of Computing and Data Science, Boston University), *Instructional Innovation Resources* (McCombs School of Business, UT-Austin)

WE WILL REVIEW MLA AND APA FORMATS FOR CITATION OF AI GENERATED CONTENT AND IMAGES.
<https://style.mla.org/citing-generative-ai/>

CLASSROOM CLIMATE OF RESPECT

Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

FROM COUNSELING

Sul Ross has partnered with TimelyCare where all SR students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/365 support by visiting [Timelycare/SRSU](https://www.timelycare.com/sulross). The SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office will continue to offer in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall room 112 (Alpine campus), and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students and RGC students.

FROM THE LIBRARY

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend in Alpine offer FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu/. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or by phone (432-837-8123). No matter where you are based, public libraries and many academic and special libraries welcome the general public into their spaces for study. SRSU TexShare Cardholders can access additional services and resources at various libraries across Texas. Learn more about the TexShare program by visiting library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/ or ask a librarian by emailing srsulibrary@sulross.edu. Mike Fernandez, SRSU Librarian, is based in Eagle Pass (Building D-129) to offer specialized library services to students, faculty, and staff. Utilize free services such as InterLibrary Loan (ILL), ScanIt, and Direct Mail to get materials delivered to you at home or via email.

FROM THE TUTORING CENTER

The Lobo Den Tutoring Center offers FREE tutoring support to help you excel in your courses. Whether you need assistance in Writing, Math, Science, or other subjects, we're here to help! Important Information: • Drop-in and Scheduled Appointments: Flexible options to fit your needs. • Hours of Operation: Monday–Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM. • Workshops: Attend our regularly hosted academic workshops on STEM topics and professional development, often in collaboration with specialized faculty. • Location: BWML Room 128. • Contact Us: For more information or to book an appointment, email tutoring@sulross.edu or call (432) 837-8726. Looking for additional support? • Tutor.com offers FREE 24/7 online tutoring in over 200 subjects, including specialized support for ESL and ELL learners with native Spanish-speaking tutors. • Access Tutor.com via Blackboard: Log in to your Blackboard account to get started anytime, anywhere. Take advantage of these valuable resources to boost your confidence and performance in your classes. We look forward to helping you succeed!

Weekly Responsibilities // Structure

WE WILL BEGIN EACH CLASS WITH A GREETING // CHECK -IN
WE WILL DISCUSS SHORT READINGS
THE INSTRUCTOR WILL GIVE AN OVERVIEW /SHORT LECTURE
WE WILL DISCUSS THROUGH QUESTION FORMAT
WE WILL CONDUCT AN IN CLASS WRITING EXERCISE
WE WILL READ ALOUD A WORK OF ART (WRITING)
WE WILL WORKSHOP TOGETHER

** YOU WILL BE ASSIGNED A SHORT READING TO BEGIN AGAIN THE NEXT CLASS.

Tentative Class Schedule

** syllabus and readings are subject to change slightly

ALL READINGS ARE MARKED *** ON THE SYLLABUS IN THE SPACE LEADING TO THE DATE THEY ARE DUE.
ALL ESSAYS/ASSIGNMENTS ARE MARKED WITHIN () WHEN THEY ARE INTRODUCED AND ALSO PRIOR TO DUE DATE

WEEK 1 AUGUST 25 ---- INTRODUCTION & SYLLABUS

AUGUST 27 VALUES ASSESSMENT / INTRO TO ELEMENTS AND FUNCTIONS OF ART

(INTRO ART FROM WHERE YOU ARE FROM)

WEEK 2 SEPTEMBER 1 ELEMENTS / FUNCTIONS / PRINCIPLES / MEDIUMS

SEPTEMBER 3 ART AS WRITING / WRITING AS ART — FINDING OUR VOICE

** 1986 REMARKS ON MY SCULPTURE, FRED SANDBACK

WEEK 3 SEPTEMBER 8 CORE IN CLASS ASSESSMENT // PRESENTATION (ART FROM WHERE YOU ARE FROM)

SEPTEMBER 10 INTRODUCTION TO THE ARTISTS OF CHINATI

** GOING NORTH ; RONI HORN AND GARY INDIANA

(ESSAY 1 : INTRODUCTION .)

WEEK 4 SEPTEMBER 15 INTRODUCTION TO ART HISTORY / THE MODERN MOVEMENTS

SEPTEMBER 17 OBSERVATIONS AND MAKING A CLAIM

** WHAT WE DO NOT SEE IF WE DO NOT SEE, AGNES MARTIN

WEEK 5 SEPTEMBER 22 ROBERT IRWIN DAWN TO DUSK

SEPTEMBER 24 DAWN TO DUSK CONTINUED

**BARNETT NEWMAN AND THE SUBLIME, PAUL CROWTHER

(ESSAY # 1 DESCRIPTIVE: WRITING ABOUT ART DUE)

WEEK 6 SEPTEMBER 29 SMALL GROUP WRITING WORKSHOP / IN- CLASS DISCUSSION

OCTOBER1 MUSEUM OF THE BIG BEND WRITING EXERCISE

** WHY WRITE, CAITLIN MURRAY

** SPECIFIC OBJECTS, DONALD JUDD

(ESSAY 2 INTRODUCTION : NARRATIVE REFLECTIONS AT CHINATI)

WEEK 7 OCTOBER 6 INTRODUCTION TO PERSONAL NARRATIVE

OCTOBER 8 PLAN WEEKEND TRIP — CHINATI VOLUNTEER

[[CHINATI WEEKEND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY 10-12]]

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** WHY DOES FRED SANDBACK'S WORK MAKE ME CRY?, ANDREA FRASER (REFLECTIVE ART ESSAY)

WEEK 8 OCTOBER 13 IN CLASS WRITING WORKSHOP // DISCUSSION

(ESSAY 2 : NARRATIVE REFLECTIONS ON SERVICE AT CHINATI)

[[MIDTERM JOURNALS DUE.]]

OCTOBER 15 INTRODUCTION TO RHETORIC

** THE MORE COMPLETE SITUATION, LYNNE COOKE

WEEK 9 OCTOBER 20 RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

OCTOBER 22 THE LIFE BEHIND THE ART

** EXCERPTS: BLACK MOUNTAIN JOHN CHAMBERLAIN: JOHN CHAMBERLAIN'S WRITINGS AT BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE, 1955

(ESSAY # 3 INTRODUCTION : ART WITH OR ABOUT WRITING WITH SHORT REFLECTIVE ESSAY COMPARING VERBAL AND VISUAL RHETORIC)

WEEK 10 OCTOBER 27 USING AND CITING SOURCES

OCTOBER 29 HOW THE ESSAY SHOULD LOOK // RE-GENRE , REPURPOSING YOUR WRITING FOR MULTI MEDIA

** POINTLESS VANISHING POINTS, KIM BRANDT

WEEK 11 NOVEMBER 3 THE LIFE BEHIND THE ART – GROUP PRESENTATION

NOVEMBER 5 THE LIFE BEHIND THE ART - GROUP PRESENTATION CONTINUED.

** “JOHN WESLEY”, DONALD JUDD

** IT’S HARD TO FIND A GOOD LAMP, DONALD JUDD

WEEK 12 NOVEMBER 10 ON WRITING SOUND,, VISITING ARTIST LECTURE VERONICA ANNE SALINAS

NOVEMBER 12 VERBAL AND VISUAL RHETORIC WORKSHOP

** KANT, CO-PRODUCTION, ACTUALITY AND PEDESTRIAN SPACE: REMARKS ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL WRITINGS OF FRED SANDBACK, JULIETTE KENNEDY

WEEK 13 NOVEMBER 17 ON ARGUMENTS, ON SPEECHES

NOVEMBER 19 ON QUESTIONS, ON CREATIVE WRITING

** ANNE BOYER, LYRICAL ESSAY NO

WEEK 14 NOVEMBER 24 READING AND VOICE

*** JOURNALS DUE

NOVEMBER 26 -----> NO CLASS

WEEK 15 DECEMBER 1 IN CLASS CORE ASSESSMENT

{ DEAD WEEK }

Final exam :: TBD BY SRSU