



## WCS 150: Rhetoric & Composition

# Course Themes (Spring 2023)

**WCS 150 classes** use different themes as a basis for readings, discussions, and writing assignments. The following is a list of current themes and the instructors who offer them.

**LOCAL CULTURES/GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES:** We will explore various ways that living in a globalized world impacts conceptions of personal identity and constructions of culture. Course theme readings will address issues of cultural hybridity, locality, representation, online community, activism, tradition, language, and post-pandemic life. By examining the works of different writers and thinkers, we will discover where we stand as individuals on cultural issues that emerge in our interconnected world. With a topic and a point of view, we will be able to develop arguments, support them with evidence, and present them knowledgeably and convincingly in writing.

- **Instructor:** Kirk Peterson (Tues-Thurs)
- **Instructor:** Halle Neiderman (Mon-Wed-Fri)
- **Instructor:** Samira Esat (Tues - Thurs)
- **Instructor:** Bakhtiar Naghdipour (Tues - Thurs)

**CRITICAL GEOPOLITICS:** In this section you will explore different examples of popular culture through the theoretical lens of Critical Geopolitics. This means examining how popular culture – movies, music, video games, anime – is shaped by, and shapes, ‘common sense’ ideas of geographical ‘space’ and ‘identity’. You will get to choose an example of popular culture you find fascinating and develop a convincing and well supported argument of how it does (or doesn't) reflect societal norms and values.

- **Instructor:** Simon Land (Tues-Thurs)

**TABOO:** In this course we will explore various taboos and controversies surrounding animal rights, language, gender expression, sexuality, drugs, abortion, and sex work. By analyzing arguments and rhetoric surrounding taboos and controversial topics, we can develop a reasoned and mature point of view on even the most inflammatory subjects. At the end of this course, students will be able to analyze and develop arguments, support these arguments with evidence, and present them according to the rules of good rhetoric.

- **Instructor:** James (Jim) Swider (Tues - Thurs)

**FOOD:** In this section we will read articles discussing different topics related to food: the process of making food, food and identity, food industry and public policies, food and technology, etc. These discussions explored various issues, such as the purpose and definition of food, our relationships with food and eating, food choices, the future of food, and the food systems, etc. The theme of the course aims to provoke conversations, challenge your thinking, and develop your writing abilities. With a topic and a point of view, we will be able to develop arguments, support them with evidence, and present them knowledgeably and convincingly in writing.

- **Instructor:** Ti Wu (Mon-Wed-Fri for Spring 2023)

**BOUNDARIES:** We will explore political, national, physical, and psychological boundaries. By examining the works of writers across genres, we will investigate ideas about what limits us and ways those limits have been and might be surpassed. With a focused point of view and an audience in mind, we will be able to develop arguments, support them with evidence, and present them knowledgeably and convincingly in writing.

- **Instructor:** Arlyce Menzies (Mon-Wed-Fri)

**PERFORMANCE:** This course focuses on the organizing principle of performance. We will look at definitions of performance and how and why certain aspects function as a tool of analysis. By examining the works of different writers and thinkers, we will discover where we stand as individuals on topics related to performance. With a topic and a point of view, we will be able to develop arguments, support them with evidence, and present them knowledgeably and—hopefully—convincingly in writing.

- **Instructor:** Patricia Coleman (Mon-Wed-Fri)

**SUSTAINABILITY:** In this course, we focus on different ways of thinking about sustainability. Given the compounded sense of crisis brought on by the COVID pandemic, this topic is more important and urgent than ever, which is why it's a good moment to reflect on "Sustainability Now." We will be reading about and discussing some of the key issues surrounding this concept, and examine it from a moral, economic, technological, and governmental perspective. All assignments in this course encourage you to reflect critically on our current practices and imagine a sustainable future for our communities.

- **Instructor:** Adina Arvatu (Mon-Wed-Fri)

**FOLKLORE & FAIRY TALES:** Cinderella, Snow White, Baba Yaga, Kozy-Korpesh and Bayan-Sulu. What do these stories have in common? What do they *mean*? Is there a deeper reason why we still know these stories or are they simply enjoyable tales? In this class, we will examine our continuing fascination with folklore and fairy tales, looking at the ways we have adapted ourselves and the stories we tell to our modern sensibilities. Modern adaptations may include Disney films like *Frozen*, Studio Ghibli's *Spirited Away*, or short fiction like "In the Desert Like a Bone." Throughout the semester, we will consider how fairy tales speak to, subvert, or confirm the biases and underlying assumptions of the cultures that have shaped us and the lives we lead.

- **Instructor:** Kevin Phillips (Mon-Wed-Fri)

**SOCIAL MEDIA:** What are the effects and implications of media and social media in the realms of business, education, and society in general?

- **Instructor:** Tom Hughes (Mon-Wed-Fri)

**IDENTITY:** The course theme of Identity is explored through study of the learning identity proposed by David and Alice Kolb; the connection between learning and change in the physical structure of the brain proven by James E. Zull; the Cultural Dimensions Theory of Geert Hofstede; the emergence of agency and identity through experience and action as studied by historian Lynn Hunt and the TedTalks literary author, Taiye Selasie; the Emotional Intelligence Theory of Daniel Goleman; the power of emotion in effecting change as studied by Antonio Demasio and Mary Helen Immordino-Yang; possible selves by Markus and Nurius; and the Theory of Multiple Intelligences of Howard Gardner. Through reasoned argument, supported by evidence from these approaches and other sources, with an audience and point of view in mind, reflection by course members throws light on the possibility of creating and self-defining one's own Identity.

- **Instructor:** Jane Hoelker (Mon-Wed-Fri)

