

RHETORIC 102 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 102 focus on writing research papers and refining their abilities as essayists.

TEXTBOOKS

Required:

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

A style manual determined by your instructor.

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

You will continue to improve your writing by composing essays and researching specific topics for **analytical and argumentative papers**. Your assignments will incorporate note taking, drafting, and revising as part of the writing process. You will write at least 7500 words or approximately 25 pages during the semester, including at least five essays written out of class, two of which are research papers longer than 1500 words (or five typed pages). In addition, you will write in-class essays that respond to questions about readings and discussions.

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

The editing exam for Rhetoric 102 requires students to revise some portion of the final essay exam not simply to eliminate errors in grammar, spelling, and mechanics, but more importantly to improve the effectiveness of the prose by making thoughtful stylistic choices. During the semester you will take at least two comprehensive, fifty-minute editing tests similar to the final exam. 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.

If at the end of the semester your course work suggests that you have not met the course goals, your work may be reviewed by the Rhetoric staff to determine whether you should repeat the course.

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 Works Cited list that gives information about the sources I used.

(Signature)

RHETORIC REQUIREMENTS BEYOND 101-102

When you have accumulated enough credit hours or 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 102:

Part 2: Academic Reading and Writing

- 5 Reading arguments** (p. 54)
 - 5a Read with an open mind and a critical eye
 - 5b Evaluate ethical, logical, and emotional appeals
 - 5c Evaluate the evidence behind and argument
 - 5d Evaluate how fairly a writer handles opposing views

- 6 Writing arguments** (p. 60)
 - 6a View your audience as a panel of jurors
 - 6b In your introduction, establish credibility and state your position
 - 6c Back up your thesis with persuasive lines of argument
 - 6d Support your thesis with specific evidence
 - 6e Build common ground
 - 6g Sample student writing: Argument

Part 9: Researched Writing

- 44 Thinking like a researcher; gathering sources** (p. 256)
 - 44a Manage the project
 - 44b Pose questions worth exploring
 - 44c Map out a search strategy
 - 44d Search efficiently; master a few shortcuts to finding good sources

- 45 Managing information; taking notes responsibly** (p. 266)
 - 45a Maintain a working bibliography
 - 45b Keep track of source materials
 - 45c As you take notes, avoid unintentional plagiarism

- 46 Evaluating sources** (p. 27)
 - 46a Evaluate the reliability and usefulness of a source
 - 46b Consider how sources might contribute to your research project
 - 46c Read with an open mind and a critical eye
 - 46d Assess web sources with special care
 - 46e Construct an annotated bibliography

- 47 Writing a research paper** (p. 280)
 - 47a Form a working thesis statement

47b Organize your ideas

48 Citing sources; avoiding plagiarism (p. 282)

48a Understand what plagiarism is

48b Understand the MLA and APA systems of documentation

48c Use quotation marks around borrowed language

48d Put summaries and paraphrases in your own words

49 Integrating sources (p. 288)

49a Summarize and paraphrase effectively

49b Use quotations selectively

49c Use signal phrases to integrate sources

49d Synthesize sources

50 Documenting sources in MLA style (p. 304)

50a MLA in-text citations

50b MLA list of works cited

50c MLA information notes (optional)

51 MLA format; sample research paper (p. 351)

51a MLA format

51b Sample MLA research paper

Part 3: Clear Sentences

9 Balance parallel ideas (p. 84)

9a Balance parallel ideas in a series

9b Balance parallel ideas presented as pairs

10 Add needed words (p. 87)

10a Add words needed to complete compound structures

10b Add the word *that* where needed for clarity

10c Add words needed to make comparisons logical and complete

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

15 Provide some variety (p. 104)

15a Vary your sentence openings

15b Use a variety of sentence structures

15c Try inverting sentences occasionally

Part 4: Word Choice

16 Tighten wordy sentences (p. 108)

16a Eliminate redundancies

16b Cut empty or inflated phrases

16c Simplify the structure

16d Reduce clauses to phrases, phrases to single words

- 17 **Choose appropriate language** (p. 110)
 - 17a Choose an appropriate level of formality
 - 17e Avoid sexist language

- 18 **Find the exact words** (p. 116)
 - 18a Select words with appropriate connotations
 - 18b Prefer specific, concrete nouns
 - 18c Use standard idioms
 - 18d Do not rely heavily on clichés
 - 18e Use figures of speech with care

- 19 **Use the right words (Glossary of usage)** (pp. 119–126)

Part 7: Mechanics

- 39 **Capitalization** (p. 223)
 - 39a Capitalize proper nouns and words derived from them; do not capitalize common nouns
 - 39b Capitalize titles of persons when used as part of a proper name but usually not when used alone
 - 39c Follow conventions for capitalizing titles
 - 39d Capitalize the first word of a sentence or quoted sentence
 - 39e Know your options when the first word after a colon begins an independent clause

In addition to covering material on effective sentences and wording in *The Bedford Handbook*, your instructor will also cover aspects of style using the style manual and other materials. Issues to be covered include achieving clarity, concision, coherence, and appropriate emphasis in your writing. The instructor may assign additional material according to the needs and progress of the class.

Note: Instructors expect that students enrolled in Rhetoric 102 will continue to put into practice what they have learned in Rhetoric 101, both in their essays and on editing tests. The five major errors and other handbook material covered in Rhetoric 101 remain an important component of Rhetoric 102.

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.)