

EWRT 1A Composition and Reading
Winter 2024
Writing on Climate Change

Instructor: Sherwin Mendoza, mendozasherwin@fhda.edu

Class Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30 p.m. – 2:20 p.m.

Class Location: L31

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. in the IIS Division Main Office (in the Multicultural Center)

EWRT 1A Student Learning Outcomes

1. Practice writing as a multi-step process including planning and revising with attention to varying purposes, audiences, and rhetorical strategies.
2. Read and analyze rhetorically and culturally diverse narrative and expository texts from a variety of perspectives.

Writing on Climate Change

When I started college many years ago, I had big dreams. I simply assumed that if I worked hard in school, I would be able to find a good job and buy a house. I had a U.S. passport, so I felt like I could go anywhere. I felt like I would be able to get money, and with that money, I could easily get things like new computers and video game consoles that I couldn't get when I was younger. I grew up in Florida, and I did not like the heat and humidity, but I never imagined that the weather would get more uncomfortable, and I never thought that climate-related disasters would ever overturn my life. In short, I felt like the earth's atmosphere was stable, and that I would have better opportunities than my parents, which would allow me to lead a more comfortable life than they had.

Now though, we are living in a very different world, one that is heating up, and one which will be much more unpredictable than the one I thought I was living in when I started college. Whereas I had the unearned luxury of believing that the climate would be a constant, people who are starting college today are faced with the unavoidable challenge of climate change.

The first reading for this course will be Chapter 4 of Cynthia Kaufman's book *The Sea Is Rising, And So Are We*. The thesis of that chapter presents a choice between grieving for a doomed planet, or fighting for it: "If no one else is doing anything, then I may grieve on my own but may not be pulled to do anything either. But it turns out that huge things are being done, all over the world, and much of it at the massive scale needed to make the transition we are working on" (59). This course will hopefully allow you to see ways you can participate in the huge things that are being done to address climate change. You will hopefully learn and write about how a warming planet can impact your life as well as ways in which you can participate in mitigating climate change and perhaps prevent the worst climate scenarios. Early in the quarter we will consider how things we might take for granted, such as the cultural traditions that have formed us and the infrastructure we rely on to lead our daily lives, are possibly threatened by climate change. Midway through the quarter, we will transition to focus on ways we might address

climate change through two research-based assignments. In the first, you will do research that will allow you to critically evaluate efforts to address climate change within the field that you are hoping to become a part of. In the second, you will recommend to the people of California to accept, reject, or modify a climate-related project that the Governor has proposed to receive funding from the California state budget.

Textbooks

All of the course texts will be free and available online. This course will have three major texts:

1. *Writing for Success*
2. *Report Card for California's Infrastructure*
3. Selected chapters of the proposed 2024-25 California state budget summary.

Additionally, you will read articles and web pages that will help you to learn about the state of the field that you intend to major in as well as an item related to climate change in the proposed 2024-2025 budget for the State of California. As necessary, we will also use resources for improving specific writing skills such as those provided by the De Anza English Department, the Writing and Reading Center at De Anza, and the Purdue OWL.

Short Schedule of Polished Writing Assignments

Week 2: Cultural Adaptation (600-800 words)

Week 4: Infrastructure (600-800 words)

Week 6: Your Field's Response to Climate Change (900-1200 words)

Week 8: Policy Brief/Persuasive Essay (1200-1500 words)

Week 11: Reflective Essay (600-800 words)

Short Schedule of Timed Writing Assignments

Week 1: Timed Essay 1

Week 7: Timed Essay 2

Detailed Class Schedule

Week 1: January 8 - January 14

Timed Essay 1

Week 2: January 15 - January 21

Cultural Adaptation Essay due

Week 3: January 22 - January 28

Infrastructure

Week 4: January 29 - February 4

Infrastructure Essay due

Week 5: February 5 - February 11
Your Field's Response to Climate Change

Week 6: February 12 - February 18
Your Field's Response to Climate Change due

Week 7: February 19 - February 25
Timed Essay 2

Week 8: February 26 - March 3
Policy Brief (Persuasive Essay)

Week 9: March 4 - March 10
Policy Brief (Persuasive Essay) due

Week 10: March 11 - March 17
Revisions

Week 11: March 18 - March 24
Reflective essay

Final Exams: March 25 - March 29

Class Policies

Please be aware of these course policies:

- Attendance at the Tuesday and Thursday face-to-face meetings will be mandatory. Participation for each course meeting, including attendance, will be worth five points. An absence will result in a deduction of two points for participation, and being late for class will result in a deduction of one point. To receive an excused absence, you will need to request it from me over e-mail before the class meeting.
- Late assignments will be automatically penalized by Canvas. If you turn in an assignment on the first day after it is due, then you will receive a late penalty of 10% of the possible points. To receive an extension, you will need to request it from me over e-mail before the assignment is due.
- For short assignments, in addition to the penalty of 10% for the first day late, for every day thereafter you will receive an additional penalty of 10%, up to a maximum penalty of 50%.
- For major assignments (assignments worth 100 or 200 points), the maximum late penalty will be 10%.
- You will need to turn in short writing assignments such as reading quizzes, proposals for topics, and outlines before you turn in major assignments. Those short assignments should allow me to check your progress in the writing process for each of the major assignments.

- I may drop you from the class if you fall more than two weeks behind. If you fall one week behind the assignments, I will e-mail you so that we can make a schedule for you to catch up. If you have no contact with me for two consecutive weeks, I may drop you from the class.
- This course will abide by the college-wide policies of De Anza College with respect to academic conduct (honesty, respect for diversity, etc.). Likewise, this course will comply with conditions set in accommodation letters sent from De Anza's Disability Support Programs and Services (DSPS) division. If you feel like disability accommodations will help you to succeed in this course, visit <https://www.deanza.edu/dsps/> or the DSPS office on campus to learn how to apply for DSPS services.

Timed Essays

45-minute handwritten, in-class timed essays will be assigned in Weeks 1 and 7. If you miss the class for a timed essay, or if your timed essay is not of substantial length, you will have one week to make it up either at my regular office hour or during an appointment. Make sure that you take seriously the preparatory assignments for the in-class essays. In order to pass this class, you will need to write two timed essays of at least two substantial paragraphs apiece in length.

These essays are very important for showing me some of the writing skills you might need to improve and to assess your progress in improving them. They might also be a starting point for discussions about how to properly use writing tools and other forms of assistance.

The Writing and Reading Center

The Writing and Reading Center (WRC) offers Customized Support Activities (CSA) to help students to develop writing and other skills that will help them to succeed in college. Options include tutoring sessions, skills workshops, and writing, reading and grammar resources that you complete on your own time. You will have the opportunity to get up to 20 points of extra credit (five points apiece) by attending workshops or working with tutors at the WRC.

The Writing and Reading Center is part of De Anza's Student Success Center, which provides tutoring in not just writing but also math, science, and other subjects. I hope that this class will allow you to familiarize yourself with the tutoring services that De Anza offers.

Appointments and Rewrites

During Weeks 10 and 11, you will have the opportunity to make 30-minute appointments with me to discuss revisions on your policy brief. If you revise the essay and the grade for the revised essay is higher than the grade for the previous draft, the higher grade will replace the lower grade. If time permits, you will also have the opportunity to revise your "Your Field" assignment.

Grades

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Timed Essays (50 points apiece)	100
Cultural Adaptation (Week 2)	100
Infrastructure (Week 4)	100
“Your Field” (Week 6)	200
Policy Brief (Week 8)	200
Short Assignments/Discussions (5 - 20 points apiece)	About 250
Reflective Essay (Week 11)	50
Total	About 1,000

Grading Scale:

A	90% + two timed essays of substantial length
A-	89% + two timed essays of substantial length
B+	86% + two timed essays of substantial length
B	80% + two timed essays of substantial length
B-	79% + two timed essays of substantial length
C+	76% + two timed essays of substantial length
C	70% + two timed essays of substantial length
D	60% and at least one timed essay missed or not of substantial length
F	Below 60% and at least one timed essay missed or not of substantial length