

COM 303.01—CONTROVERSY AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

T/Th 2-3:15, Fell Hall 176

Fall 2019

Professor: Dr. Joseph Zompetti
Ofc Hours: MTWF 1:15-1:55 & by appointment
Email: zompetti@ilstu.edu (always use this address and NOT ReggieNet)
[217.552.5894](tel:217.552.5894)

Office: Fell Hall 413
Ofc Phone: 438-7876
UTA: Emily McGuire, eamcgu1@ilstu.edu.

Course Description:

In this course, we will examine the divisive rhetoric of contemporary U.S. politics. More specifically, we will focus our studies on so-called “wingnuts,” who are people “on the far-right wing or far-left wing of the political spectrum. They are the professional partisans and the unhinged activists, the hard-core haters and the paranoid conspiracy theorists” (Avlon, p. 2). Examples of wingnuts are Glenn Beck, Ann Coulter, Rush Limbaugh and Sarah Palin on the right, and Keith Olbermann, Michael Moore, Maxine Waters, and Al Franken on the left (more examples can be found on ReggieNet). We will examine their comments, images, speeches, and so on to identify common rhetorical tropes used to manipulate political messages. We will also discuss the impact wingnuts have on public discourse in contemporary America. The course will entail readings, discussions, and video clips concerning wingnuts. We will also explore various rhetorical theories to help us in our understanding of the wingnut phenomenon. The course centers on class discussion, presentations, and critical papers.

Course Objectives:

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. know what a wingnut is and how they function in contemporary U.S. culture.
2. understand different theoretical perspectives to analyze wingnut rhetoric.
3. develop skills in using theory to analyze the texts of wingnuts.
4. articulate ideas in both oral and written contexts concerning the rhetoric of wingnuts.
5. discuss issues pertaining to wingnuts in civilized discourse.
6. construct arguments about the significance of wingnut rhetoric.

REQUIRED:

Avlon, John (2014). *Wingnuts: Extremism in the Age of Obama*. New York: Beast Books. ISBN: 978-0991247608

Zompetti, Joseph P. (2018). *Divisive Discourse: The Extreme Rhetoric of Contemporary American Politics* (2nd ed.). Cognella. ISBN: 978-1-63487-884-5. Available: <https://titles.cognella.com/divisive-discourse-9781634878838>. [NOTE: It is **VITAL** you purchase the new, 2nd edition!]

**Google News – more on this below

Other Texts:

Abramowitz, Alan & Kyle L. Saunders (2005). Why can't We All just get Along?: The Reality of a Polarized America. *The Forum*, no. 1076, 1-22.

Agre, Philip E. (2002). Real-time Politics: The Internet and the Political Process. *The Information Society*, 18, 311-331.

Ahler, Douglas J. (2014). Self-fulfilling Misperceptions of Public Polarization. *The Journal of Politics*, 76(3), 607-620.

Baldassarri, Delia & Peter Bearman (2007). Dynamics of Political Polarization. *American Sociological Review*, 72, 784-811.

Barberá, Pablo (2014, October 18). How Social Media Reduces Mass Political Polarization: Evidence from Germany, Spain, and the U.S. New York University papers. Available, <https://files.nyu.edu/pba220/public/barbera-polarization-social-media.pdf> (accessed 12/12/14).

Boynton, George Robert, James Cook, Kelly Daniels, Melissa Dawkins, Jory Kopish, Maria Makar, William McDavid, Margaret Murphy, John Osmundson, Taylor Steenblock, Anthony Sudarmawan, Philip Wiese, & Alparsian Zora (2014). The Political Domain goes to Twitter: Hashtags, Retweets and URLs. *Open Journal of Political Science*, 4(1), 8-15.

Calfas, Jennifer (2018, June 25). ‘They’re Not Welcome Anymore, Anywhere.’ Maxine Waters Tells Supporters to Confront Trump Officials. *Time*. Available online: <http://time.com/5320865/maxine-waters-confront-trump-staffers-family-separation-policy/>

Christensen, Henrik Serup (2012). Simply Slacktivism? *eJournal of eDemocracy & Open Government*, 4(1), 1-23. Available, <http://www.jedem.org/index> (use their search function to obtain this article, and download the PDF for free)

Citigroup (2005, October 16). *Equity Strategy*.

Conway, N., Grabe, E. M., Grieves, K. (2007). Villains, victims, and the virtuous in Bill O’Reilly’s “No Spin Zone”: Revisiting world war propaganda techniques. *Journalism Studies*, 8(2), 197-223.

Engels, Jeremy (2012). The Rhetoric of Violence: Sarah Palin’s Response to the Tucson Shooting. *Symploke: A Journal for the Intermingling of Literary, Cultural and Theoretical Scholarship*, 20(1-2), 121-138. Available on Project Muse.

Farrell, Henry (2012). The Consequences of the Internet for Politics. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 15, 35-52.

Finlayson, Alan (2012). Rhetoric and the Political Theory of Ideologies. *Political Studies*, 60(4), 751-767.

Goldsborough, Reid (2011, January 10). 'Slacktivism' is Becoming the New Activism. *Community College Week*, p. 13.

**Google News – more on this below

Gutmann, Amy (2007, Fall). The Lure & Dangers of Extremist Rhetoric. *Daedalus*. 70-78.

Hart, Roderick P., Sharon E. Jarvis, William P. Jennings & Deborah Smith-Howell (2005). *Political Keywords: Using Language that Uses Us*. New York: Oxford University Press. [chapter 4, "The Government: A Troubling Ally," pp. 67-86]

Heatherington, Marc J., & Jonathan D. Weiler (2009). *Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [excerpt, on ReggieNet]

Jeffreys-Jones, Rhodri (2010). Changes in the Nomenclature of the American Left. *Journal of American Studies*, 44(1), 83-100.

Khan, Mariam (2018, June 27). California Rep. Maxine Waters Triples Down on Feud with Trump. *ABC News*. Available online: <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/california-rep-maxine-waters-triples-feud-trump/story?id=56201143>

Kincaid, Cliff (2003, September 25). Liberal Media Protect Extremists. *Accuracy in Media*. Available online: <http://www.aim.org/media-monitor/liberal-media-protect-extremists/>

Larson, Magali Sarfatti & Douglas Porpora (2011). The Resistible Rise of Sarah Palin: Continuity and Paradox in the American Right Wing. *Sociological Forum*, 26(4), 754-778.

Mason, Lilliana (2018). Ideologues without Issues: The Polarizing Consequences of Ideological Identities. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 82, 280-301.

Mattson, Kevin (2003, Spring). The Perils of Michael Moore: Political Criticism in an Age of Entertainment. *Dissent*, 50(2), 75-80.

Milakovich, Michael E. (2010). The Internet and Increased Citizen Participation in Government. *eJournal of eDemocracy & Open Government*, 2(1), 1-9. Available, <http://www.jedem.org/index> (use their search function to obtain this article, and download the PDF for free)

Misiak, Anna (2005, Fall). Not a Stupid White Man: The Democratic Context of Michael Moore's Documentaries. *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 33(3), 160-168.

Noel, Hans (2013). *Political Ideologies and Political Parties in America*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [chapter 7, "Ideological Parties and Polarization," pp. 165-180]

Robinson, Peter (2012, January 4). The GOP's Not-So-Great Communicators; No One Should Judge Politicians on Rhetoric Alone. *Wall Street Journal*. Available via ProQuest.

Schradie, Jen (2014, November 3). Bringing the Organization Back In: Social Media and Social Movements. *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*. Available, <http://berkeleyjournal.org/2014/11/bringing-the-organization-back-in-social-media-and-social-movements/> (accessed 11/5/14).

Sclafani, Jennifer (2009). *Talking Back to Newt Gingrich: Discourse Strategies in the Construction of Language Ideologies*. Dissertation for Degree in Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics, Georgetown University. Available via ProQuest Digital Dissertations.

Sobieraj, Sarah, and Jeffrey M. Berry (2011). From Incivility to Outrage: Political Discourse in Blogs, Talk Radio, and Cable News. *Political Communication*, 28(1), 19-41.

Somin, Ilya (2004, September 22). When Ignorance Isn't Bliss: How Political Ignorance Threatens Democracy. *Policy Analysis*, no. 525, 1-27.

Spence, Louise (2010). Working-Class Hero: Michael Moore's Authorial Voice and Persona. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 43(2), 368-380.

Swigger, Nathaniel (2013). The Online Citizen: Is Social Media Changing Citizens' Beliefs about Democratic Values? *Political Behavior*, 35, 589-603.

Warner, Benjamin R. (2010). Segmenting the Electorate: The Effects of Exposure to Political Extremism Online. *Communication Studies*, 61(4), 430-444.

Warner, Benjamin R., Sarah Turner McGowen, & Joshua Hawthorne (2012). Limbaugh's Social Media Nightmare: Facebook and Twitter as Spaces for Political Action. *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 19(2), 257-275.

Yardi, Sarita & Danah Boyd (2010). Dynamic Debates: An Analysis of Group Polarization over Time on Twitter. *Bulletin of Science Technology Society*, 30(5), 316-327.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

ATTENDANCE:

Every class period is critical if you are to obtain the most of your education. Furthermore, issues that we discuss in class (which will frequently stray from the texts) will be necessary for your on-going assignments. Your participation grade also will undoubtedly be reflected by your attendance. **After your third non-excused absence, your overall grade will be reduced by one full letter grade for each day you miss.** I reserve the right to determine what constitutes a legitimate excuse. However, if you notify me ahead of time and your excuse is reasonable, we will generally be able to work something out.

LATE WORK:

Assignments not turned in on-time will be penalized **one full-letter grade for each day they are late.** Accepting any late work is strictly at the instructor's discretion. If you are experiencing difficulties or have unforeseen circumstances emerge, send me a quick email out of courtesy, and it is possible we can strike an agreement or compromise about your late work.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES:

Out of courtesy for all participating in the learning experience, all cell phones must be turned off before entering the classroom, and they should not be turned on until class is over. This means, of course, that ***there should be no text messaging occurring during class.*** Laptops may be used, but please out of courtesy for others, do not use them for any other means except for taking notes and issues related to class (i.e., no Facebook or email reading). Since I have had students who disregard my request for courtesy in these matters, **I will now give students a ZERO for participation** if I notice that they are not paying attention due to a screen that is in front of them. Even if the student submits their discussion questions/comments, they will receive a zero for that day's participation grade.

SPECIAL NEEDS/CONCERNS:

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit the StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu. Any and all accommodation concerns must be discussed with this office before any arrangements can be made with the instructor.

CLASS DISCUSSION:

This course is designed to improve your ability to communicate and interact with different concepts. Given the inherent communicative nature of symbols and rhetorical forces and their influence on our lives, your participation in class discussions is critical in practicing, developing, and understanding communication skills and messages. Additionally, we all learn more if everyone contributes. I expect all of you, as you should expect from yourselves, to contribute to our educational experience. It is expected that each of the reading assignments will be completed by the time you come to class the day the assignment is due. DO NOT think that your "attendance" is your participation grade. To participate means you add to the overall learning environment with your ideas and critical, albeit respectful, comments. It is up to you to come to class prepared to participate as a citizen — to listen attentively to others, to engage critically and creatively to the perspectives of others, and to contribute meaningfully to discussions of the class topics. In short, come to class having read the material with questions and comments ready for discussion. Students who interrupt discussions by frequently arriving to class late, who constantly interrupt others without meaningfully listening to their comments, or who constantly bring up questions that would more appropriately be answered by a glance at the syllabus or during office hours (e.g., "when is this due?" or "what do we have to read for the next class?") not only reflect poorly on their own class citizenship; they also actively cheapen the educational experience of everyone else. Procedural questions about what is expected of you in the class should be saved for office hours if they are not answered after a re-reading of the syllabus or can be asked via email.

A. **Read before class:** The only way class discussion will be meaningful is if you read the material before class. I will not lead the class in a discussion over material when discussion should be occurring. As active participants in the class, it is up to you to read and participate in discussions. Ultimately, if you do not read and there is little to no class discussion, it will hurt your class performance and devalue your overall education. **DO NOT EXPECT TO READ MATERIAL WHILE IN CLASS!!!**

B. **When reading material for class:** There will be times when some of you believe the readings in the books are too difficult or confusing. As college students, I expect you to rise to the challenge and spend the time necessary to comprehend, reflect, and use the material in the books. You may have to read the material more than once, so budget your time carefully. You should also consult dictionaries for words or concepts that are unfamiliar to you. If you are having trouble with the readings, you may work with someone else in class. If you are not used to this type of material, you should try to understand the central argument of the piece along with other key arguments. You may ask me questions about conceptual material, but I will not respond to claims that the material is too confusing or difficult.

C. **Critical Observations** – for each class period of reading, you need to bring to class 5 critical questions/comments based on the reading. You will hand them in to me at the end of the class period. They must be typed. You will receive up to 5 points for your questions, and up to 5 points for your participation in that particular class. **Additionally, for each observation, you should put the page number of the reading for which your question/comment pertains – in other words, reference the page where your question/comment relates.** You should also place the date for the discussion at the top.

D. **Bring readings to class.** Since we will be discussing a great deal in class, it is helpful if all of us can refer to the readings during the class discussion. Thus, you should bring your books and articles (if possible), for that particular day's reading assignment, to the class.

E. **Google News** – for EACH discussion day, I expect you to read through the relevant news of the day that pertains to our class. This is **essential** for our class discussions (and your knowledge of current events), and I expect you to come to class knowledgeable about the current news items. Failure to stay abreast of current news and failure to incorporate it into your discussions will **severely** hamper your participation grade.

Each reading day involves class discussion. Your participation will be based on the following rubric – a total of 5 possible points per class. This rubric will also be used for your overall course participation grade (in conjunction with your total points earned).

5	4	3	2	1
Full participation as a leader in class, providing well-developed responses, questions, comments, and sharing knowledge with others. Demonstrates “big picture thinking” tying course concepts to class, experiences, & discussion.	Above average participation as mostly a listener with some involvement in class discussions. Some questions and responses provided. Not always able to describe how concepts tie together in terms of the “big picture.”	Does what is expected: comes to class and completes reading assignments. Normally a listener in class discussion. Often does not ask or answer questions. Sometimes is distracted and not motivated to see the “big picture.”	Does not demonstrate a time commitment to the course (is tardy, misses some class, comes to class unprepared). Often does not participate. Not interested in how course concepts relate to the “big picture.”	Acts in a manner that disrupts the learning of self and others. Creates an uncomfortable environment for others (i.e., disrespect, incivility, comments unrelated to the readings, etc.). Often is tardy and/or misses class.

PERMISSION REQUIRED TO RECORD:

Students must obtain written permission from the instructor if they wish either to photograph classroom lectures or discussions or to record them using audio or video devices. This restriction includes visual materials that accompany the lecture/discussion, such as lecture slides, whiteboard notes/equations, etc. Such recordings are to be used solely for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the class. They may not be reproduced, shared in any way (including electronically or posting in any web environment) with those not in the class. Students with disabilities who need to record classroom lectures or discussions must contact Student Access and Accommodation Services to register, request and be approved for an accommodation. Students who violate this policy may be subject to both legal sanctions for violations of copyright law and disciplinary action under the University’s Code of Student Conduct.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. This includes cutting and pasting from the Internet (even if such cutting/pasting have a reference), and generally any material that is not your own unless broken off with quotation marks and cited to the proper author. You **MUST** cite material **EACH** time it is used – **NOT** just at the end of a paragraph. **THIS ALSO INCLUDES POWER POINT PRESENTATIONS!!!** Specifically for this class, intentional borrowing material from others without proper citation or falsification/fabrication of supporting material, will automatically result in a **ZERO** for that assignment and may result in additional action taken by the appropriate university officials.

FINAL NOTE:

The nature of this course requires reading and examining controversial issues. By their nature, controversial issues foster disagreement. Our efforts in this course are to analyze these issues, discuss them, and criticize the strengths and weaknesses of the rhetorical messages and strategies employed in in political rhetoric. As such, respect and tolerance for the interrogation of other people’s views in this course is imperative. At the same time, we should also be mindful of the sensitivities of others. If someone – including me – uses language that you find offensive or inappropriate, please kindly let them and/or the class know so that we can learn from each other and improve our climate of civility.

Senate GOP meeting this morning.



“Before we discuss raising taxes on the poor & middle class, adding \$1 trillion to the deficit, taking health insurance away from 13 million, raising premiums by 10%, defending treason and swearing in a pedophile, let’s begin with a prayer.”

GRADING

Note: **Failure to turn in any of the course requirements may result in failure of the overall course.** I grade your work based on the final product, not your effort. The Grading Scale is an A (4) = 90-100, B (3) = 80-89, C (2) = 70-79, D (1) = 60-69, F (0) = 0-59. Here are the grading criteria I will use to holistically evaluate the quality of everyone's papers:

- *Superior (A)* — Focused, well-written, thoughtful and well-organized argument in response to the assignment. The writer demonstrates the highest degree of intellectual engagement by competently using concepts, terms, and examples; plus the writer may address related issues of interest or further investigation to the assignment. The paper adheres to the expectations for the assignment, and the writer demonstrated maturity (i.e., style and tone) consistent with the expectations for college courses. The paper demonstrates competence in language use and manuscript preparation, and it is free or nearly free of grammatical, spelling, formatting and other errors. Research from external sources goes well beyond the minimum necessary for the assignment.
- *Very Good (B)* — Discussion of concepts and terms related to the assignment is okay but needs more application through explanations, examples, or other devices to demonstrate understanding. Intellectual engagement with the assignment's topic is sufficient and may include additional points of interest related to the course's content. The writing suffers from some problems in grammar, spelling, mechanics, organization, etc., and the style or tone of the writing is ineffective in places.
- *Adequate (C)* — Discussion reflects primarily on one's self, answering only the "what" part of the assignment and not the "why." Analysis is only at a surface level with limited, direct application of the course's concepts. The writing suffers from frequent problems in basic matters of grammar, spelling, mechanics, organization, etc., and the style and tone of the writing is ineffective and/or inappropriate in many places in the text.
- *Poor (D)* — Discussion of concepts lacks depth, having no or nearly no application of the course's content for the assignment. Analysis presents little or no thoughtful reflection. Ideas are oversimplified and limited. The writing suffers from significant, numerous problems in multiple areas, including style and tone.
- *Failure (F)* — The writer's work does not fulfill the assignment on any of the grounds for other letter grades, or the writer did not turn in the assignment. A "failed" paper also is replete with mistakes that violate the "grammar tips" at the end of this syllabus. An "F" paper is not college-level writing.

Also Note the following regarding my grading of grammar and mechanics: I will deduct one point for each grammatical/mechanical mistake for your first wingnut paper, and two points for each mistake for the second wingnut paper. If there is a recurring grammar or mechanical error (e.g., frequent run-on sentences), I will stop deducting points after five errors – in other words, if you commit 16 run-on sentences, I will only deduct points for the first five. One final important note is that even if the content/substance of your paper is done well, the grammar and mechanical mistakes can result in few, even zero, points for the assignment. Since the grammar and mechanical issues are based on points deducted, the overall paper grade can mathematically reflect little value placed on the content if the mechanics outweigh or overwhelm the substantive portion of the paper. In other words, you can feasibly receive (for example) a 10 or a 5 or a zero on a paper due to poor writing even if the rest of the assignment is satisfied.

Participation	200 pts.
Leading class discussion	100 pts.
Personal Position paper	50 pts.
Wingnut Paper #1	250 pts.
Wingnut Paper #2	400 pts.
<u>Total</u>	<u>1000 pts</u>

Grad Students: As part of taking a 300-level course, graduate students are required to complete additional assignments. For this course, graduate students will be expected to write their final papers between 15-20 pages, with 35 references (10 of which should be from peer-reviewed, scholarly sources, and only 5 of which can come from the internet). Additionally, graduate students will be expected to lead one class in discussion. The date/topic will be assigned in consultation with the instructor.

ASSIGNMENTS

I will not accept anything over e-mail. All work should be handed-in. Make sure you proofread all of your work and that they are emailed to yourself, or saved on a flash drive/memory stick. If you forget to proofread or if you misplace your work do not expect me to be sympathetic. Any late work will be automatically reduced one-letter grade for every class period that it is late. If you foresee problems, make sure you discuss them with me BEFORE the assignment is due. The assignments for this class are as follows (more detailed descriptions will come later):

1. Discussion: As I mention above, you need to attend each class prepared, which means you should have read the material for that day. Some days will require more reading than others, but for longer readings you will probably get away with skimming carefully so long as you understand the core, key concepts in the reading. I will expect each of you to have at least 5 critical points for the readings. "Critical points" may be critical questions or critical issues worthy of discussion. What do I mean by "critical"? I mean questions that probe higher levels of thinking – compare/contrast, deep analysis, etc. I **do not** mean questions such as "according to the author, what is the concept of rhetoric"? Instead, a better question would be "The author describes rhetoric as ____; how is this helpful when analyzing _____?" If there are multiple readings assigned for a particular day, you should ensure that your questions/comments reflect somehow **all** of the readings for that day. Additionally, for **each** question, you should put the page number of the reading for which you question/comment pertains – in other words, reference the page where your question/comment relates. And, **you should bring with you to class the actual readings so we can refer to the pages of the readings in our discussions.** **The maximum you can receive for participation is 225 points (i.e., 25 extra points).**

2. **Leading class discussion:** Each of you will lead the class in discussion about that particular day's reading material. You will carefully read through the material due for your discussion day, prepare a 5-7 minute overview of the topic material, and generate a list of critical questions about the material. Your responsibility will be to keep the class discussing the material for that day. Your purpose will be to provide a summary of the theory/material and stimulate discussion for that day. **You will need to submit to me your outline, copies of external resources you're using, and a bibliography.** We will spend two days discussing each of the "case study" chapters of my book, so one of you will present on a Tuesday, and another will present on a Thursday – it is your responsibility to discuss with the other person (responsible for the same chapter) to ensure you do not duplicate your questions and comments (I have highlighted those days in the schedule in lilac). I will post the list of assigned presentation days, after you choose the ones you want, on ReggieNet. **Also, for those of you discussing specific topic areas, I will expect you to provide one YouTube clip to illustrate one of the concepts for that day.** I will be looking for the following when determining your grade:

- a. Do you have insightful questions about the reading material for the class to discuss?
- b. Do you keep the discussion going?
- c. Are you flexible in your questions to ask new ones as they emerge from the discussion?
- d. Are you mindful of the time? (be sure to get through all of the material for that day)
- e. **Are you encouraging everyone to participate?**
- f. Are you respectful of others' comments?
- g. Are you prepared and energetic?
- h. **Did you do outside reading to prepare you for leading class discussion?** (This means that you should consult other sources to help inform you about the material to be discussed that day in class. You should use additional material to help you frame your questions, add to the discussion at key points, and help you with handling the overall discussion.)
- i. Did you succinctly and accurately provide an overview of the theory/material?
- j. **IF IT IS NOT YOUR DAY TO PRESENT** – you are still expected to read the material and participate each day of class. Each of you will begin with 200 points for participation. If you fail to meaningfully and actively participate in a class discussion, you will lose up to 5 points for that day. You will also receive participation points for 5 critical questions for each day of reading, as explained above under "class discussion."

3. **Political Position Paper:** For this paper (due **Tuesday, September 3**), you need to write about your views on politics: do you try to stay aware of current events, do you frequently discuss about political issues, what issues do you find important, what is your role in politics, how do you use media when considering political viewpoints, etc. This is a very open-ended assignment. It serves a couple of different purposes. First, it gives you an opportunity to write something for me early in the semester so you can receive my feedback on your writing. Second, it forces you to think about the role of politics in your life and how you communicate about politics – knowing this can help you in many of our class discussions. There is no page limit for this paper, but I expect it will be at least 2-3 pages in length. You may use the first pronoun "I" in your paper, and you do not need to do any additional research. However, you should consider using and citing material from the first few readings. This is a simple and personal reflection about yourself around the issues I mentioned above. You should read carefully and abide by **my writing tips** at the end of this syllabus. It is worth 50 points.

4. **Wingnut Paper #1:** For this paper (due **Thursday, October 17**), you need to write approximately 10 pages (although quality is more important than quantity) analyzing the rhetoric of a wingnut of your choice. You must first define why the person is a wingnut, describe a brief biography of the person, and then spend the bulk of your paper analyzing the rhetoric of this wingnut (what are their major claims, what types of evidence do they use, what fallacies do they use, what are their goals/purposes, is their rhetoric effective – why or why not – and ultimately what is their significance to contemporary rhetoric?). **This wingnut should be a liberal, and must be someone other than Michael Moore.** You **must** conduct external research for this paper – this may include popular media cites and webpage relating to this particular wingnut, but it should also include at least **ten** scholarly sources (other than the assigned readings from class). You may use (and should) the readings from class, but they won't count toward the required sources for this paper. You need to avoid sketchy and unreliable websites, such as Wikipedia and blogs. The paper should be double-spaced and should reflect what is under "written assignments" (and my writing tips) in this syllabus. The paper is worth 250 points.

5. **Wingnut Paper #2:** For this paper (due **Tuesday, December 10**), you need to write approximately 10 pages (although quality is more important than quantity) analyzing the rhetoric of a wingnut of your choice, but this wingnut **must be a conservative.** You must first define why the person is a wingnut, describe a brief biography of the person, and then spend the bulk of your paper analyzing the rhetoric of this wingnut (what are their major claims, what types of evidence do they use, what fallacies do they use, what are their goals/purposes, is their rhetoric effective – why or why not – and ultimately what is their significance to contemporary rhetoric?). You **must** conduct external research for this paper – this may include popular media cites and webpage relating to this particular wingnut, but it should also include at least **fifteen** scholarly sources (other than the assigned readings from class). You may use (and should) the readings from class, but they won't count toward the required sources for this paper. You need to avoid sketchy and unreliable websites, such as Wikipedia and blogs. The paper should be double-spaced and should reflect what is under "written assignments" (and my writing tips) in this syllabus. The paper is worth 400 points.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

All papers and written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and in paragraph form. The quality of your written work (grammar, punctuation, format, spelling, etc.) will be included in grading evaluations (**I generally deduct roughly one point for every grammatical/mechanical issue, except for major paper #2 when points are doubled**). The content of your work is necessarily implicated and impacted by the mechanics of the paper. Make sure you proofread all of your work and that it is photocopied or saved on a jumpdrive. If you forget to proofread or if you misplace your work, do not expect me to be sympathetic. I will not accept e-mailed copies of your written work. I reserve the right to choose whether or not to accept any late work. Any accepted late work will be automatically reduced one-letter grade for every class period that it is late. If you foresee problems, make sure you discuss them with me BEFORE the assignment is due. Accepting any late work is strictly at the instructor's discretion. In addition, make an argument!!!! Don't simply provide opinion. Support your reasons with sufficient evidence (including quotes, references, examples, etc.) that demonstrate, justify or prove your over-arching argument. All the written work asks you to analyze the rhetorical implications of something. The paper should also demonstrate your working vocabulary of the ideas expressed in the literature indicative of rhetoric and social movements or activist campaigns. **You should research your area thoroughly.** ANY AND ALL ARGUMENTS, IDEAS, WORDS, CONCEPTS, MATERIAL THAT IS NOT YOUR OWN MUST BE APPROPRIATELY FOOTNOTED AND CITED IN A BIBLIOGRAPHY PAGE. *Your research should avoid being conducted from the Internet, unless in special circumstances, where you need to obtain instructor approval.* **Citations:** Any and all work or ideas taken from another person or entity must be appropriately cited. This means that **material MUST be cited EACH time it is used** in your written work (not a simple reference at the end of a paragraph or end of your paper), AND it must have an appropriate full reference in a footnote or works cited page. You should also avoid doing whatever is minimally necessary to meet the assignment. If you set your sights that low, the best you will receive will be a C for your work; after all, a C is average and reflects minimal work. To receive a high B or an A, you should go well beyond what is expected of you – surprise and impress me. **All writings should be in Times New Roman, 12-point font.**



TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**August**

T, 8/20	The syllabus
R, 8/22	Introductions
T, 8/27	The nature & context of American politics [read Hart et al. (2005); Noel (2013)]
R, 8/29	Introduction to rhetoric & ideology; Zompetti lecture [read Heatherington & Weiler (2009); Finlayson (2012); Mason (2018)]

September

T, 9/3	Introduction to wingnuts; Dr. Z lecture [read Avlon, preface & chp. 1; and read Zompetti, intro chapter and chp. 1]; position paper due
R, 9/5	Introduction to wingnuts [read Avlon, chp. 2, 3, and 4]
T, 9/10	Introduction to wingnuts [read Avlon, chp. 6, 8, and 10]
R, 9/12	Wingnut rhetoric [read Gutmann (2007); Sobieraj & Berry (2011)]
T, 9/17	Liberal wingnuts, Michael Moore [<i>Capitalism: A Love Story</i>]
R, 9/19	Liberal wingnuts, Michael Moore [<i>Capitalism: A Love Story</i>]
T, 9/24	Liberal wingnuts, Michael Moore & Maxine Waters [read Citigroup (2005); Spence (2010); Calfas (2018); Khan (2018)]
R, 9/26	Conservative wingnuts: O'Reilly & Gingrich [read Conway et al. (2007); Sclafini (2009)]; NICD conference

October

T, 10/1	Conservative wingnuts: Sarah Palin [read Larson & Porpora (2011); and Engels (2012)]
R, 10/3	Review and discussion on formal academic writing
T, 10/8	2nd Amendment rhetoric [read Zompetti, chp. 2]
R, 10/10	2nd Amendment rhetoric [read Zompetti, chp. 2]
T, 10/15	Religious rhetoric [read Zompetti, chp. 3]
R, 10/17	Religious rhetoric [read Zompetti, chp. 3]; Wingnut paper #1 due ; Detroit Fulbright conference
T, 10/22	Healthcare rhetoric [read Zompetti, chp. 4]
R, 10/24	Healthcare rhetoric [read Zompetti, chp. 4]
T, 10/29	LGBTQ+ rhetoric [read Zompetti, chp. 5]
R, 10/31	LGBTQ+ rhetoric [read Zompetti, chp. 5]

November

T, 11/5	Immigration rhetoric [read Zompetti, chp. 6]
R, 11/7	Immigration rhetoric [read Zompetti, chp. 6]
T, 11/12	Rhetoric of race [read Zompetti, chp. 7]
R, 11/14	Rhetoric of race [read Zompetti, chp. 7]
T, 11/19	Rhetoric of race [read Zompetti, chp. 7]
R, 11/21	Rhetoric of foreign policy [read Zompetti, chp. 8]
T, 11/26	Thanksgiving Break
R, 11/28	Thanksgiving Break

December

T, 12/3	Rhetoric of foreign policy [read Zompetti, chp. 8]
R, 12/5	Conclusion: What is to be done? [read Zompetti, chp. 9]
T, 12/10	Wingnut Paper #2 due between 2-5 pm in my office (NOT the SoC main office, NOT via email, and NOT under my door)

Syllabus contract

I have read the syllabus for Dr. Zompetti's course and agree to the terms for required coursework and acceptable classroom behavior.

Name _____ Date _____ Also, please give me some information about yourself.

ISU e-mail address:

Phone # (I will only use in an emergency):

Major:

Desired career field(s) or job(s):

How do you think this course might apply in your career?

How would you like this course to improve your civic, community or personal life?

Two unique things about yourself:

LEADING CLASS DISCUSSION DATES/TOPICS

September

R, 9/5, intro to WNs _____

T, 9/10 intro to WNs _____

R, 9/12 WN rhetoric _____

T, 9/24, liberal WNs _____

R, 9/26 convs. WNs _____

October

T, 10/1 convs. WNs _____

T, 10/8 2A rhetoric _____

R, 10/10 2A rhetoric _____

T, 10/15 religious rhet. _____

R, 10/17 religious rhet. _____

T, 10/22, HC rhet. _____

R, 10/24, HC rhet. _____

T, 10/29, LGBTQ+ rhet. _____

R, 10/31, LGBTQ+ rhet. _____

November

T, 11/5, IM rhet. _____

R, 11/7, IM rhet. _____

T, 11/12, racial rhet. _____

R, 11/14, racial rhet. _____

T, 11/19, racial rhet. _____

R, 11/21, FP rhet. _____

December

T, 12/3, FP rhet. _____

DR. Z's WRITING TIPS

How to use this guide: **Read this guide carefully.** Read it now, and read it before you turn-in your work. When you receive my feedback on your writing, I may use acronyms for certain principles in this guide – those acronyms are listed by the tips (e.g., tip #3 below has “EWP” at the end, meaning “ending with a preposition”.)

1. Spend more time on your writing. Proofread, proofread, proofread. Follow my tips. Have someone you trust (and who can be brutally honest) proofread your work as well.
2. Use a Thesaurus. Seriously!
3. Avoid ending sentences and clauses with a preposition (e.g., don't say, “those are the people I will be speaking with.” Instead, say “those are the people to whom I will speak.”) [EWP]
4. Use precise language – avoid vague language.
5. Avoid using conversational jargon, trite phrases, and informal writing. Do not write like you speak. You should write in a formal way and with a formal tone. Avoid using language like “going to,” something is “so” difficult, “whatever,” etc. The best way to do this is to read as much as you can, especially non-fiction (i.e., peer-reviewed journals, books on academic disciplines, etc.). [AWLPS – avoid writing like people speak]
6. Cite material EACH TIME you use it. [cite]
7. Cite evidence when you need to support a position or argument. [cite]
8. Vary your sentence structures.
9. Vary your word choice – don't repeat the same words (or variants of words) over and over again. [WC]
10. As you write, always ask “how” and “why.” If your writing doesn't answer these questions, you need more support (and/or evidence). Also, you should be sure to answer the “so what” and “who cares” questions to accentuate the significance and importance of your topic and your writing.
11. Avoid unclear pronouns. Instead of saying “it comes from pork,” be careful with the word “it” and say “bacon comes from pork.” Other pronouns to watch are: they, he/she/it, people, this, that, these, things, etc. Here's a good rule to follow: Imagine you are walking up to someone on the quad. If you just said, “it comes from pork,” they will have no idea what you mean. If, instead, you go up to them and say, “bacon comes from pork,” they will still think you're a whacko for coming up to them and saying that, but at least they will know what you mean! [UP]
12. Avoid saying "today's society" or phrases like it, such as "the world today." This is one of my ultimate pet-peeves. It is filler, clutter, and simply just junk writing. Be more specific and clear in your writing. If you are referencing a particular era, date, or period of history, say so. If you are talking about the present condition of things, chances are you have already described that or the reader will understand it. [YUK]
13. Be aware of there vs. their vs. they're.
14. Don't use contractions! Seriously, contractions detract from formal writing.
15. Also be aware of it's vs. its. "It's" is the **contraction** not the **possessive**. So, if you are referring to the stain on the book, you would say "its stain." You should **never** use "it's" because you should not use contractions in formal writing.
16. Be careful with dates. Often folks confuse 1970s vs. 1970's. More often than not, you will want to just use 1970s. The only time you use an apostrophe is if you want to show possession. E.g., "The 1970's economy was terrible."
17. Avoid run-ons. These are sentences that require commas to separate two full sentences, but have no commas. For example: "I detest papers that are written poorly and I love chocolate." The sentence should have a comma before the "and" to read: ""I detest papers that are written poorly, and I love chocolate." [RO]

18. Avoid sentence fragments (such as this). Sentence fragments are phrases or clauses (often complex) that are not full sentences. Be sure all of your "sentences" have subjects and verbs! [FRAG]

19. Be careful with indented quotations. These are the lengthy quotes you may have in your paper that are distinct from the shorter quotations. Every line of indented quotations should be indented (hence their name) and they do not use quotation marks!!! Lengthy quotes that take 4 or 5 sentences should be indented – 1) the entire quote should be indented, 2) it should be single-spaced, and 3) it doesn't use quotation marks. [BQ]

20. Use proper citations. If you don't know how to cite material, you need to purchase an MLA or APA guide. You can always ask me or someone else for help. For in-text citations, you should have the author's last name and year. If it is a direct quotation, you should also include a page number, unless it is from a webpage. If there is no author (which is rare!!!), then you should cite the first couple of words of the title. NEVER put URL addresses in an in-text citation. For Bibliography/Reference citations, make sure that the citation is complete and accurate – this includes the author's name, the date, the title of the article/chapter, the title of the periodical/book, volume number (if a journal article), and if from a web source, include the full URL. The URL should be from a webservice – if you are using material from a Milner database, DO NOT include the Milner URL – just cite the source as if it were a hard copy. You do not need to include DOI numbers for written work submitted to me.

21. Use adequate citations. **ANY** material that is not your own, that you quote, that you paraphrase, that you allude to, etc., **MUST BE CITED**. Failure to do so is plagiarism and is unacceptable. Proper citation – you should cite a source EACH time you use it, not at the end of a paragraph.

22. Avoid using the second person "you." Another big pet peeve of mine. This is sloppy writing. At times you may use the first person (e.g., "I"), but never use "you" unless you're quoting someone else. [2P]

23. Avoid writing like you talk. Some common examples are "doing this will be huge" or "like, this is important." Writing is fundamentally different than speaking, and you must be able to know the difference. [AWLPS]

24. Use dashes, not hyphens (-- vs. -). For example, if I say that good writing is important – it helps you get a better job, makes you appear more intelligent, etc., that is different than saying that you're a well-liked person (notice in the beginning the use of dashes, and the hyphen is used only for hyphenated language).

25. Be mindful of proper and appropriate paragraph development. This means that a paragraph should stick to one central point, but it should also be developed – meaning more than 2 or 3 sentences in length. Paragraphs should focus on a single concept or argument. So, while a paragraph should be long enough to develop a single, coherent argument, it should also not be too long – it should not include more than a single argument or unit of thought. Generally speaking, a paragraph should not exceed half or ¾ of a page. [¶]

26. Underline or italicize titles of books, periodicals, movies, TV shows, and musical albums. Use quotations for titles of TV show episodes, titles of articles in periodicals, and individual songs.

27. In general, follow the suggestions for composition in any widely-used manual of style. Pay special attention to the form for footnotes and bibliography entries. You may use whatever style you desire, as long as you use it consistently.

28. Papers should be expository or argumentative in nature. Avoid descriptive material unless it is brief and necessary to your overall argument. Narrative material on how you discovered the topic is neither necessary nor appropriate. Stay away from informal tones. Write your paper with the assumption that the readers are academics and/or scholars.

29. A paper is more than a receptacle for quotations from others. Do not produce a string of quotations held together only by transitions. Also, do not deposit quotations in the paper without preparing the reader with appropriate contextual material which elaborates on the quotation in an appropriate and useful manner. Finally, you should unpack and explain the significance of the quotation immediately after the quote. [SQ]

30. Please **double space**. Do not use 1-1/2 space. Leave ample margins at sides, top, and bottom so that comments may be made on the paper without great difficulty. I prefer Times New Roman, 12-point font.

31. Do not place papers in booklet covers or binders. Use staples to keep your paper together. Please do not dog-ear the pages.

32. Do not leave papers until the last minute. Please have consideration for your reader as well as pride of authorship, and allow enough time to prepare the paper so that your ideas may be expressed in clear, succinct, and stylistically appropriate ways. Poor writing due to last minute preparation will greatly damage the grade.

33. UMSL – "use more sophisticated language." Formal writing should use sophisticated language, not words such as "get" or "a lot"

or “got” or “x is so important.” **Use a thesaurus.**

34. Avoid referencing the class. Don't say “as we've discussed in class” or some other form of referencing. It detracts from the formal nature of your writing.
35. Avoid generalizations – Avoid generalizations when it comes to descriptions of people (e.g., “all college students drink”), but also avoid generalizations when it comes to describing issues (e.g., “the media always criticize Bush”)
36. “Media” and “data” – these words are **plural!!!** This means you must be mindful of correct subject/verb agreement. For example, these are incorrect:
The media **has** discussed the election. The data **is** informative.
These are correct:
The media **have** discussed the election. The data **are** informative.
37. * in your paper indicates that a quotation needs a transition to introduce it.
38. URL addresses – First, don't cite the URL address in the paper. Instead, cite the author or the first couple of words of the title. The full URL is stated in your bibliography page (or footnote). Second, change the color of the URL address to black and underline it. In other words, make it match the destination of the rest of your writing. [URL]
39. Webpaged material – although you should avoid using the Internet for your material, some of you will inevitably do so anyway. If you do, and you cut/paste it directly from the Internet, make sure the font matches the font you're using for your paper.
40. Support your claims – if you make an argument, back it up with evidence. If you use statistics or complicated explanations for ideas that the average person probably wouldn't know, back it up. For each claim that needs support, you should find at least TWO sources to support it.
41. If you emphasize a word or phrase in your paper and you feel it should be emphasized even more, do NOT italicize it or underline or put it in apostrophes. Special words should be important simply by reading them. If, however, you are coining a word or drawing attention to a word or phrase used in the literature, place it in quotation marks.
42. Any foreign words used in your writing should be italicized.
43. When citing web-based material, do **NOT** put the URL address in your paper. It should be cited by author or title. The URL address should be in the bibliography page only.
44. Citing material within your paper: Use embedded textual references or footnotes/endnotes – just be consistent with appropriate stylistic conventions. **DO NOT** place the entire title of a book or article in the text of your paper; there is no need for this, it just takes up space, it disrupts the flow of reading, and the full titles should appear in the bibliography/references page. All you need to cite in the text of the paper is the author's (authors') name, date and page number. If there is no page number, simply use “n.p.”
45. Citing material at the end of your paper: You must have an appropriate bibliography/references page. It should be listed alphabetically first, then if you have material from the same author, they should be listed by date in ascending order (i.e., the oldest date occurs first). If you have more than one source from the same author in the same year, indicate this by the use of letters at the end of the date (e.g., Zompetti 2010a, Zompetti 2010b, Zompetti 2010c, etc.).
46. Avoid putting titles of books and articles in your paper. They are unnecessary and take up too much space. They will appear in your Works Cited/Bibliography pages, so they do not need to be in the text of your paper.
47. Punctuation – Avoid doing these:
 - a. “Smith argues that writing is fun,” (Smith, 2010). [no comma before the quotation mark]
 - b. “Smith argues that writing is fun.” (Smith, 2010). [only use one period – should be after the parentheses]
 - c. “Smith argues that writing is fun.” (Smith, 2010) [only use one period – should be after the parentheses]
48. All papers must have a thesis statement, and then the subsequent paragraphs of your paper should support that thesis statement. A thesis statement is a one-sentence, declarative contention of yours about the position you will be advocating.

49. Please note that titles of books, journals, albums, TV shows, and anything that is a “stand-alone” product should be *italicized* or underlined (you may use either, but don’t use both – be consistent and only use italics or underlining). If you are citing a chapter of a book, an article in a journal or magazine, a specific song, or an episode of a TV series, then those should be placed in “quotation marks.”

50. Embedded references in the paper itself – The punctuation of the sentence should occur after the reference, and there should not be any punctuation before it. For example:

Incorrect: writing is fun. (Zompetti, 2009). [there should not be a period before the embedded reference]

Incorrect: writing is fun, (Zompetti, 2009). [there should not be a comma before the embedded reference]

Correct: Is writing fun (Zompetti, 2009)?

Correct: writing is fun (Zompetti, 2009), but it can be challenging.

51. Introductory prepositional phrases should be offset with a comma. For example, “Although the course was challenging, I still learned a great deal” or “In the United States, apple pie is yummy.” Notice the comma after the phrases.

52. Generally, you should avoid “so” in your writing. For example, avoid saying things like “I was so hungry.” Instead, simply say, “I was hungry,” or “I was very hungry.”

53. Items in a series use parallel structure. Example:

A. Incorrect: The student argued that they were busy, people said they were poor, and became ill after eating Avanti’s.

B. Correct: The student argued that they were busy, poor, and ill from eating Avanti’s.

54. Adverbs generally end in -ly and answer the question “how.” Thus:

A. Incorrect: I felt bad.

B. Correct: I felt badly. [I felt how? I felt badly.]

55. WMF – write more formally. This is similar to UMSL, but simply put, it means to write in a more formal way, as opposed to a journalistic or creative writing style.

56. Hyphenation – when two words (typically adjectives) function together to modify or describe a proceeding noun, then the two words should be hyphenated. For example:

A. Hyphenate: A well-read student knows the difference between philosophy and religion.

B. Don’t hyphenate: A yellow, high post designates the height of the bridge. [“yellow” and “high” do not function together to create a single modifier – they are two separate adjectives]

57. Capitalize proper nouns – if a word also functions as the name or official label of an entity or group, it should be capitalized. For example, the words Republican and Democrat should be capitalized. However, the word democrat – a person who believes in democracy – is not capitalized because it refers to a general belief, not a particular political party.

58. Internet -- capitalize the “I” so that the word is spelled “Internet.”

59. All written work should be in Times New Roman, 12 point font.

60. Avoid words the end with “wise,” like “economy wise” or “culture wise” or “business wise.” This type of writing falls under AWLPS.

61. Avoid using the word “being” (as in “being that such and such...”) and “having” (as in “having to do something”). You can avoid these typically very easily. Instead of using “being,” use the word “since.” Instead of “having,” use the verb that follows it (e.g., “having to drive to the store,” could simply be “driving to the store”).

62. Punctuation when there are quotation marks.

A. [incorrect]: “The cat was black”, and I loved it.

B. [correct]: “The cat was black,” and I loved it.

63. Web citations when there is no author:

A. In the text of your paper, you should cite the source by its title if there is no author, such as this (Glenn Beck Biography, 2016, np).

B. Then, in the References Page, you should cite it like this:

Glenn Beck Biography (2016). Available: <http://www.biography.com/people/glenn-beck-522294> (accessed 4/22/16).

64. What constitutes a “scholarly source”?

A. From Dr. Darby Ray at Millsaps College:

In general, a **"scholarly" source is one that is written or edited by a "scholar"** – that is, a person who has earned a graduate degree in the field they are writing about. Having such a degree (usually a Ph.D.; synonym: a doctorate) means the person has had to prove that they have studied the field extensively and have mastered it well enough to be considered an expert in it. This doesn't mean that the person's interpretation of their field is beyond question or debate; rather, it means that they at least know enough about the field to have an INFORMED interpretation (in other words, one that others ought at least to consider).

People who are **professors at a college or university** may safely be considered "scholars" because they have usually earned a graduate degree in their field of knowledge.

People who publish books can usually be considered "scholars" because most publishers only publish books that have been reviewed by two or more experts in a field, which means that at least a couple of experts have agreed that the author of the book is well enough informed about their chosen subject matter to be considered a scholar. Hence, a book may usually be considered a "scholarly" source.

Articles in a journal published by a college or university can be considered "scholarly" because "scholars" have approved those articles.

Articles in a journal published by a scholarly group such as the American Medical Association or the American Bar Association or the Modern Language Association can be considered "scholarly" because, once again, such articles have been reviewed by experts in the field.

If you aren't sure whether or not the group that publishes a journal is "scholarly" or not (for instance, maybe you've never heard of the Modern Language Association and so don't know that it is the association of college and university English professors), you can look at the section in the journal where the list of editors is given. Scholarly journals usually list not only the editors' names but also their academic credentials (what degrees they have earned, or where they are a professor). If a journal offers no such list, then chances are it is NOT a scholarly journal because if it were, it would list the names and credentials of its scholars. You can find this information by looking at a hard copy of the journal or by visiting the journal's webpage and searching for its list of editors.

If you run across a random article on the Internet, you need to ask at least two questions:

- Who wrote the article, and is that writer a "scholar" (see definition of scholar above)? If no credentials of the author are listed, then he or she is probably NOT a scholar. If no author is listed, then the source is definitely NOT a scholarly source.
- Is the article sponsored by a scholarly organization (such as a university or college or scholarly journal)? If so, it can usually be assumed to be a scholarly source.

Magazines like *Time* and *Newsweek* often have good information in them, but because they usually do not document how they got that information (whether it came from reliable, well-informed sources or not), and because the authors of their articles are not usually "scholars" (refer to definition above), they are not usually considered scholarly sources.

(http://www.millsaps.edu/academics/heritage_how_to_identify_scholarly_sources.php)

B. From Michael Engle, Cornell University: **“Scholarly or peer-reviewed journal articles** are written by scholars or professionals who are experts in their fields. In the sciences and social sciences, they often publish research results.

(<http://guides.library.cornell.edu/scholarlyjournals>)

65. **Each** word should have purpose. Think carefully about the words you choose – is there a better word? Can you say what you mean more succinctly? Have you checked a thesaurus to review synonyms?

66. Review multiple drafts. Do not just print off your work as soon as you finish it. Go over it. Then, go over it again. Ask someone else to proofread it as well. Be sure to review my writing tips to double-check easy-to-fix problems (e.g., do a “search” of your document for words such as “you” or “get” or “getting,” etc. Those are easy to find and replace).

67. Use multiple examples from multiple sources!

A. If I try to convince you to vote in the election (assuming you haven't decided yet), are you just going to take my word for it? Or, if I just say, “hey, you have a civic duty,” is that reason alone sufficient to convince most people? Of course not! I should also say things like this election is super important, by not voting you may be jeopardizing something you care about, voting requires that you become educated about the candidates and issues which are important to be engaged in your community, etc. The more reasons I use, the more likely I'll persuade with one or more of them.

B. We all know that some sources are just bad. Recall the examples I placed on ReggieNet that appear to be from ABC News but are actually bogus. Or, what if you were writing a report on climate change and you only found one source to support your claims – and that source happens to be a climate change denier?!? Your entire position would be based on just one source, and that source would be disputed by over 1700 of the world’s leading experts! If you research multiple sources, you avoid this problem.

68. Avoid “filler” words that are vacuous in meaning, such as “true,” “truly,” “literally,” “do,” and “does.” This can also occur with the word “had.” For example:

- A. Avoid: “In order to develop a true understanding of politics, I read the newspaper.”
- B. Correct: “In order to develop an understanding of politics, I read the newspaper.”
- C. Avoid: “I do believe that climate change is happening.”
- D. Correct: “I believe that climate change is happening.”
- E. Avoid: “I had discovered that politics is interesting.”
- F. Correct: “I discovered that politics is interesting.”

69. Avoid the word “amongst.” This is a word commonly seen in British English, and many Americans incorrectly assume it is a formal word. Instead, we should simply say “among,” which is still considered formal in American English.

70. Similarly, we should avoid the word “judgement.” This is the British way of spelling the word. In American English, we simply spell it as “judgment.”

71. Avoid the word “towards.” In American English, we just spell the word as “toward,” without the “s.”

72. Avoid the problem of “apart” vs. “a part.” When discussing division or separation, we use the word “apart,” as in “politics is splitting us apart.” When discussing groups or categories, we use “a part,” such as “we all like to be a part of something bigger, which is why I am a Republican.”

73. Possessives – In today’s texting generation, apparently the use of apostrophes for possessives (showing ownership) no longer occurs. This is a HUGE mistake. In proper writing – and even in normal, everyday, professional/business writing – the use of apostrophes to show possession is still required. Thus, you MUST use apostrophes accurately in your writing for this class:

- A. Avoid: “Trumps rhetoric about the economy is interesting.”
- B. Correct: “Trump’s rhetoric about the economy is interesting.”
- C. Avoid: “We are looking at Democrat’s position on this” (when speaking of multiple Democrats)
- D. Correct: “We are looking at Democrats’ position on this” (when speaking of multiple Democrats)
- E. Avoid: “The Joneses house is beautiful”
- F. Correct: “The Jones’ house is beautiful”

74. If you have questions, ask ME, not someone else who may not know about my grammar tips or who may not be knowledgeable about writing mechanics.

**Note: You may think that grammatical conventions such as these are restrictive, perhaps even colonizing. You might be correct. However, they are also perceived as being important, particularly among scholars and potential employers. Therefore, it is in your best interest to master these NOW!!!