



Catalog Description: 3 hours. Specialized, focused study of a particular topic, theme, figure, practice and/or theory within the field of rhetoric and writing studies. Prerequisite(s): [ENGL 3200](#), [ENGL 4200](#).

Course Description

Our 4230 class this semester takes place during a global pandemic, which had made many of us think very carefully about what is important to us and what we do to work for, secure, earn, or achieve these important things. Through our actions and choices, we survive, and hopefully gain a sense of “good living” in community with others.

Rhetoric has always been involved in these calculations about what it means and what it takes to live “the good life” in different times and different places. From the ancient Kemet communities that sought “ma’at” as cosmic balance, to our recent political arenas where “good living” is promised through economics, labor, health, security, etc., the good life has been part of the theory and practice of rhetoric for thousands of years.

In this course, we will spend our time together studying some of the ways that rhetoric is used to think about and advertise “the good life” in contemporary society. Our aim is critical rather than aspirational: what IS good living? How are we persuaded to work, eat, sweat, etc. in pursuit of the good life? We will ask these questions and also read and talk about ways specific rhetoricians and artists have defined good living differently than their communities, sometimes even breaking rules or social norms in the process. As we read and discuss rhetorics of health, survival, resilience, and work this semester, we will also help one another recognize what “the good life” means to each other and to our larger communities.

ENGL
4230.001:

Special Topics in Rhetoric and Writing Studies

Topic: Rhetoric and “The Good Life”—Survival, Resilience, and Health

Professor Matthew Heard | Office: LANG 409J

Office Hours: By Appointment via Zoom

Syllabus Contents

- Basic Information
- Course Description
- Required Materials
- Course Objectives
- Evaluation and Grading
- Assignments Overview
- Instructor Policies and Expectations
- Additional Syllabus Policies
- Schedule of Assignments

Basic Information

Welcome to Rhetoric and Writing Studies at UNT! As members of the UNT community, we have all made a commitment to be part of an institution that respects and values the identities of the students and employees with whom we interact. UNT does not tolerate identity-based discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. UNT’s full Non-Discrimination Policy can be found in the UNT Policies section of the syllabus.

Required Materials

We will use a course reader for the majority of our readings,



including articles and book chapters which will be made available to you in class and on Canvas for educational uses only.

Additionally, I recommend having print copies of the major books we will be using for the course:

[Producing Good Citizens](#). Amy Wan (UC Press). ISBN: 9780822962892.

[Unruly Rhetorics](#). Eds Alexander, Jarratt, and Welch. ISBN 9780822965565.

[Parable of the Sower](#). Octavia Butler. ISBN 9781538732182.

Evaluation and Grading

Assignments

Note: To earn a passing grade, you must complete all of the major assignments for the course. Here are the weighted totals of all grades for the course:

%	Weighted Category
40	Daily Assignments (see below)
25	Midterm Project
35	Good Life Project
100	TOTAL

Grading Policies

This course has a demanding reading and writing load commensurate with an upper-level English class. You will be expected to read all assigned texts carefully and to be prepared to

discuss the texts analytically and critically on the day that they are assigned. Much of your class time will be spent discussing course readings, participating actively in class assignments, and working together collaboratively. If you do not understand or need help, please make arrangements to talk to me right away.

Rubrics and Scoring Systems

- For the purposes of this course,
- "A" WORK will constitute a final score of 90-100% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is impressively sophisticated and illuminating: inventive, balanced, justified, effective, mature, and expertly-situated in time and context
- "B" WORK will constitute a final score of 80-89.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is thorough and systematic: skilled, revealing, developed, perceptive, but not unusually or surprisingly original
- "C" WORK will constitute a final score of 70-79.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is acceptable but limited: coherent, significant, and perhaps even insightful in places, but ultimately insufficient in organization, articulation, perception, and/or effectiveness
- "D" WORK will constitute a final score of 60-69.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is incomplete and severely lacking: incoherent, limited, uncritical, immature, undeveloped, and overall not reflective of the performance expected of UNT undergraduates
- "F" WORK will constitute a final score of 0-59.99% of total points, and will

represent an overall response that is unacceptable.

Assignments Overview

Daily Assignments (Quizzes, Discussion Questions, In-Class Work, Etc.)

Keep in mind that we will likely have short content-based reading quizzes over course readings and previous class content frequently. These quizzes will focus on key terms and ideas, and they should be relatively easy if you have done the reading. Quizzes and other daily work are part of your participation for the class; for this reason, they **cannot be made up** if missed.

Major Assignments

Midterm Project: Rhetorics of Good Living

For our midterm project, you will read up on ways that rhetoricians have responded to questions about "the good life," through topics such as ethics, survival, resilience, activism, literacy, security, success, etc. You will report on your findings to the class in a short presentation, and you will also turn in a written version of this report.

Final Project: The Good Life Project

For the final project, we will work together as a class on defining what "the good life" means for us as a group. We also will explore how rhetorical studies contributes new tools for understanding and pursuing "good living" for each of us in our unique circumstances. The final project will involve researching, writing, and presenting a description of your own self-definition of "good living," which will include a self-analysis as well as an artifact that showcases how you are



the good life

learning to use rhetoric in the production and/or critical analysis of

your community.

Overall Participation in the course

Although I expect everyone to be active in class discussions and other in-class activities, part of participation will also include your participation in assignments, discussion boards, and other in-class activities. Participation will figure in to the overall class grade. Excessive absences, tardiness, in-class interruptions, inattentiveness in class, or other non-participatory actions may take off from your overall grade in the course.

Instructor Policies and Expectations:

Attendance and Absences:

UNT policy 6.039 on student attendance states that no student will be excused for more than 25% of a course for absences. Please arrange any planned absences with me ahead of time in order to avoid penalization. Note that absences for the following reasons are authorized as excusable by the university (policy 06.039): (1) religious holy day, including travel for that purpose; (2) active military service, including

travel for that purpose; (3) participation in an official university function; (4) illness or other extenuating circumstances; (5) pregnancy and parenting under Title IX; and (6) when the University is officially closed by the President.

If you notify me ahead of time for any planned absences or unexpected illnesses, I will work with you to try and accommodate any class discussions and information you missed. Quizzes and other in-class work cannot be made up, but I reserve the right to give additional opportunities to some students.

Communication Expectations:

Please communicate with me formally through my UNT email address, matthew.heard@unt.edu. When you write me, please include the subject of your email in the subject line, and write your email with appropriate salutations (i.e. "Dear Dr. Heard" and grammatical language. I have these requirements so that we can practice rhetorics of professionalism when we communicate. Note that I am not able to discuss any information relating academic records through email. I ask that you also remember the following guidelines in your communications with me:

- Treat all communications professionally. Think about spelling and grammar and double-check your response before hitting send or reply. Consider the purpose of any uses of slang or other icons, graphics, or memes.
- Please use my title in all communications (Dr. Heard or Prof. Heard).

"Follow me then, and I will lead you where you will be happy in life and after death [...] for you will never come to any harm in the practice of virtue, if you are a really good and true man."
— Plato, *Gorgias* (405 BCE)

- Think about your tone, and remember that email cannot convey nonverbal cues that provide clarity and context in face to face conversations.

- Take care to respect the personal identities and privacy of yourself, of me, and of others. Respect identities based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and/or culture. Also think carefully about what you reveal and do not reveal, particularly if this information involves your health and/or classroom performance.

- Please also check the syllabus before you ask me

a question about an assignment or course schedule. It helps me if you can also let me know you checked the syllabus before writing, since I put significant time into creating the schedule and the syllabus.

- In your email subject line, it helps to be descriptive and not vague. Since I receive a lot of emails, I need to identify your question and problem as quickly as possible. For a sample email, read this article, "[How to Email Your Professor](#)."
- For any online posts in our course, please read the directions and all the messages in a thread before replying so you do not repeat something one of your peers may have already said. Additionally, avoid replies such as "I agree" and instead explain why you agree or do not agree. Also, share examples, citations, and other sources that have supported your conclusions.
- Remember that if you disagree with anything in class, please refrain from

making personal attacks or use language that discriminates based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and/or culture.

Instructor Responsibilities and Feedback

My responsibility as your instructor is to challenge you, to help you understand the course material, and to help you grow and learn as a student. I will provide clear instructions for projects and assignments, answer your questions, and identify additional resources as necessary. I will also provide substantive feedback on your written work. You can expect me to have feedback and grades returned to you within two weeks of the submission date for each assignment.

Disruptions:

Excessive disruptions of our class time—including posting inappropriate or inflammatory comments or harassing others online—are unacceptable. Please respect the class environment by using your time effectively and helping your classmates do the same.

Supporting Your Success and Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment:

We are all members of an academic community where it is our shared responsibility to cultivate a climate where all students/individuals are valued and their ideas are treated with respect. Therefore, I expect you to conduct yourself with professionalism, generosity, and hospitality during all in-class and online interactions. I expect you to listen to and respect the viewpoints of others, even if you disagree with them. It's OK to voice disagreement respectfully! When you do, please respect others' ideas, feelings, spaces, and rights. Please do not interrupt, cut off, talk over, over, taunt, or humiliate your classmates.

Remember that you are accountable for all of your actions in this course, including your submitted work, your grades, and your interactions with me and with other students!

Everyone will have multiple opportunities to participate in class. Participation can be many things, including all of the following:

- Participating actively in small group work, class meetings, discussions, and office hours
- Showing attention to others in discussion posts or other online interactions
- Completing all assignments on time
- Taking part in optional conferences/office hours and coming prepared

Here are some of the guidelines UNT recommends for preserving hospitality and civility in our class:

- While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law will not be tolerated.
- Treat me and your classmates with respect in any communication online or face-to-face, even when their opinion differs from your own.
- Ask for and use the correct name and pronouns for me and for your classmates.

“The Earth spins on its axis.
One man struggles, while
another relaxes.”
— Massive Attack (1992 CE)

- Speak from personal experiences. Use “I” statements to share thoughts and feelings. Try not to speak on behalf of groups or other individual’s experiences.
 - Use your critical thinking skills to challenge other people’s ideas, instead of attacking individuals.
 - Avoid using all caps while communicating digitally. This may be interpreted as “YELLING!”
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm in emails or discussion posts as tone can be difficult to interpret digitally.
- Avoid using “text-talk” in communications.
- Proofread and fact-check your sources.
- Keep in mind that online posts can be permanent, so think first before you type.

You also can visit the [Engagement Guidelines](https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips) page at <https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips> for more information.

Using Canvas:

Announcements, grades, and some discussions, assignments, and activities for this course will all be handled within UNT’s CANVAS Learning Management System. You must be able to access CANVAS regularly in order to succeed in this course.

All students have access to CANVAS through their UNT accounts. For more information on using CANVAS, see <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701>. If you have any questions regarding your use of the Canvas learning management system, please contact the student help desk at: Email: helpdesk@unt.edu, Phone: 940-565-2324.

You also need to make plans to have a backup way to access the technology each week: another computer; the local library; or perhaps the UNT campus. Not having access to the course will not excuse you from the workload each week.

Formatting Your Assignments:

All written assignments need to be typed and either brought to class or submitted online to our CANVAS site. For all essays, include your name and the page number on the top right of each page (i.e.: Lastname 1). Please also include a date and the course number (ENGL 4230). Use a text font for all essays (Times Roman or Garamond for example) at 12 points, with all one-inch (1”) margins, and double-spacing. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated by the assignment prompt.

Late or Missed Assignments:

All papers are due by class time on the due date (or by the date specified in Canvas). **Late work may not be counted, or may be penalized severely for each day late.** It is up to you as a student to make arrangements with me. Additionally, I will not grade later major assignments from any students until all previous major assignments have been completed. Note that you cannot pass the course if you have not received a grade for all major assignments. Please meet with me as soon as possible if you miss a deadline for an assignment.

Exceptions for technical outages: UNT is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students

from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor may extend the time windows and provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and contact the UNT Student Help Desk: helpdesk@unt.edu or 940.565.2324 and obtain a ticket number. It was revealed in season 2 of The Mandalorian that the name of the “child” cared for by Din Djarin was Grogu. The instructor and the UNT Student Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

Using the UNT Writing Center:

It is always a good idea to [schedule an appointment with the UNT Writing Center](#) to request extra help with all of your assignments for this class. All writers can benefit from sharing and discussing their work with a trained peer tutor, early and often. A writing tutor can help you get started on a paper or help you decide what to revise on an existing draft.

To schedule an online tutoring session, email WritingCenter@unt.edu. You'll need to provide the following information:

- UNT ID (Example: 12345678)
- Your email address
- Your phone number
- Your classification (undergraduate student)
- Your major
- Time and date you want to schedule your session
- Class for which you're writing the paper
- Name of the assignment

“That’s all anybody can do right now. Live. Hold out. Survive. I don’t know whether good times are coming back again. But I know that won’t matter if we don’t survive these times.”

— Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower* (1993 CE)

- Citation style you're using for this paper (APA, Chicago Manual of Style, MLA)
- Digital copy of the paper
- Whether you would prefer a video-based session or a chat box-based session

Library skills

Please make yourself familiar with the UNT

Library and its resources before you get too far in this course. You can make an appointment with a reference librarian in order to get one-on-one help using this link: <https://library.unt.edu/forms/reference-appointment/>

Public Writing

You should consider that all of your submitted writing for this course, including discussions, reading journals, in-class assignments, and final projects, is public writing. The writing that you submit in this course may be viewed by me and possibly your classmates as well. Please do not submit any information about yourself that you do not want to be public, including information about yourself, your friends, your family, etc.

Mandatory Reporting

It is important to know that your teacher, as a State employee, must report any instances of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence or stalking against a student or employee to the institution’s Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator.

If you disclose an incident in your writing for this class that must be reported, your teacher will contact you to let you know. In this case, your teacher may offer support, listen to you, and encourage you to seek help and counseling as soon as possible. Your teacher also will report the incident you revealed in your writing to the Title IX Coordinator at UNT.

Please note that the Title IX office at UNT keeps your information private and only shares it with those who need to know in order to provide care for you and help keep you safe. If you have any questions or concerns about sexual violence, please contact the UNT Survivor Advocate at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or call the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648. You also can visit the [Counseling and Testing Services site](#) for more information.

Syllabus Change Policy

I have made every attempt to provide this syllabus as an accurate overview of the course. However, unanticipated circumstances may make it necessary for me to modify the syllabus during the semester. These circumstances may arise in response to the progress, needs, and experiences of students. Advance notice will be given for any changes made to the syllabus.

“Because survival is insufficient.”

— Emily St. John Mandel, *Station Eleven* (2014 CE)

Additional UNT Policies and Syllabus Statements

Visit our course Canvas site for Additional Syllabus policies that apply to our course

Additional course policies and syllabus statements will be available [on our course](#)

[Canvas site](#). These policies reflect the most up-to-date recommendations and policies for UNT.