

IF ARISTOTLE RAN GENERAL MOTORS:

The Rhetoric, Ethics, and Politics of Professional Writing

WRITING FOR THE PROFESSIONS (WRTG-31100)

Class: TR 8:10 AM to 9:50 AM

Zoom Meeting ID: 965 1282 9236

SPRING 2026

Smiddy 115

Passcode: W4P01

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Passcode: Antonio

CLASS TEXTS

Morris, Tom. *If Aristotle Ran General Motors*. (Holt, 1997)

Kennedy, George and T. Montgomery. *Technical and Professional Writing: Solving Problems at Work*. (Prentice, 2002)

Putnam, William H. *Pocket Guide to Legal Writing*. (Thomson Delmar Learning, 2006)

Smith, Catherine. *Writing Public Policy: A Practical Guide to Communicating in the Public Policy Making Process*. 6th ed. (Oxford, 2023)



CIVICS, COMMERCE, AND COMMUNICATION

“That man is more of a political animal than bees or any other gregarious creatures is evident. Nature makes nothing in vain, and man is the only animal who has the gift of speech. And whereas mere voice is but an indication of pleasure or pain, and is therefore found in other animals, the power of speech is intended to set forth the *expedient* and *inexpedient*, and therefore likewise the *just* and the *unjust*.”

—Aristotle, *The Politics*

“The offering of a shilling, which to us appears to have so plain and simple a meaning, is in reality offering an *argument* to persuade one to do so and so as it is for his interest. Men in the marketplace *always* endeavor to persuade others to be of their opinion, even when the matter is of no consequence to them. And in this matter, all of us practice oratory on each other thro the whole of our lives.”

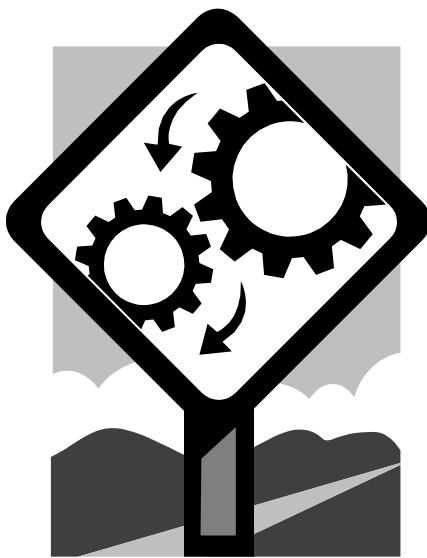
—Adam Smith, *Lectures on Jurisprudence*

“The division of labor, which made possible the Industrial Revolution, has become a more subtle *division of knowledge*, which now characterizes and sustains modern business, political, and academic institutions. We make constant use of formulas, symbols, and rules whose meaning we do not understand and through the use of which we avail ourselves of the assistance of knowledge which individually we do not possess. Since no one possesses total knowledge, different *disciplines* and *professions* of knowledge must learn to *understand* and *dialogue* with each other. The future survival of our civilization, therefore, will depend on *competence*, *integrity*, and *communication*.”

—Friedrich Hayek, *Individualism and Economic Order*

PURPOSE

This advanced workplace writing course teaches *ethics and argumentation* to future professionals. Building on the basic skills taught in Argument (WRTG-20100), Writing for the Workplace (WRTG-21100), and Technical Writing (WRTG-21300), we will produce more complex documents: policy and mission statements, position papers, dossiers, legal research memos, briefs, and long reports. Bridging the public and private sectors, these assignments will teach you how to *define issues, propose changes, judge actions, and promote values* within your chosen field. Besides tackling case studies from within the framework of your own profession, you will debate students from other professions about controversies involving business, government, law, and medicine. Since this class dialogue takes place at the intersection of different professional discourses, our subject of inquiry will be the new *knowledge economy*.



When Peter Drucker first coined the term *knowledge workers*, he paid homage to Nobel economist Friedrich Hayek. According to Hayek, the division of labor, which made possible the Industrial Revolution, has become a subtler *division of knowledge*, which now characterizes and sustains modern business, political, and academic institutions. Echoing Adam Smith, Hayek called our knowledge-based civilization the **GREAT SOCIETY**: a social arrangement based on widespread and decentralized economic interdependence, abstract legal codes, and impersonal information rather than on local and concentrated family ties, concrete tribal customs, and personal dialogue. This shift has profound implications for young professionals entering the workforce.

Hayek's division of knowledge has created a global economy based on billable expertise, compulsory upgrades, and chronic ulcers. Thanks to rampant specialization, *no one*

possesses either total understanding or total autonomy in the marketplace. Instead, competing but interdependent disciplines and professions struggle to understand and communicate with each other. Belonging to different and highly specialized *discourse communities*, lawyers hate dissecting malpractice law for doctors, while doctors resent spoon-feeding test results to lawyers. This Tower of Babel might be funny, if the political and ethical consequences were not so grim.

Miscommunication and aggression have shredded both professional ethics and the social contract. But we cannot easily solve this problem because we are caught in a dilemma. Without the specialization of disciplines and professions, mass society and the global economy would collapse, and billions would perish. This new paradigm has given us the power to create a new civilization, one based on knowledge as something specialized and knowledge workers as specialists. This is what gives the professions their power and makes specialized jargon necessary and inevitable. But the new knowledge economy also raises basic questions—of values, vision, and beliefs, of all the things that hold society together and give life meaning. Can competing professions in a capitalist economy create the common ground necessary for a functioning democracy? How are *clear thinking* and *good writing* essential to this process?

These issues are hardly academic. Whether one sees the professions as a high point of human achievement, or, in George Bernard Shaw's tart phrase, "a conspiracy against the laity," they play a dominant role in our lives. During a personal crisis, we seek the expertise of accountants, doctors, lawyers, and therapists. We rely on architects and engineers to design and maintain public and private space. We seek information, knowledge, and occasionally wisdom from broadcasters, consultants, and journalists. But whatever their differences, all professions:

- Serve the *interests* of *clients* in particular and the *welfare of society* in general
- Create, defend, and argue from a *unique body of knowledge*, based on *formal theoretical* and *ethical principles*
- Practice a *specialized set of skills, methods, and procedures* competently and consistently
- Render *judgments* with integrity under *conditions* of both *technical* and *ethical uncertainty*
- Learn from *experience*, both individually and collectively, and evolve *new knowledge* from *changing contexts* of practice
- Develop and organize a *community* or *network* responsible for the oversight and monitoring of *quality* in both practice and professional education.



"To assume a professional identify is not only to join an occupation," declared Dr. William M. Sullivan at a 2007 Carnegie Foundation symposium on the professions in America: "It is to take up a *civic role*. The core of professionalism is that by functioning as a lawyer, engineer, doctor, accountant, architect, teacher or nurse, an individual carries on a public undertaking and affirms public values. With this identity comes a certain public status and authority as is granted both by custom and the profession's social contract.

"But professionalism also means *duties to the public*. Chief of these duties is the demand that a professional work in such a way that the outcome of that work contributes to the public value for which the profession stands. The larger public seems to understand this intuitively. There is widespread expectation that professionals should be accountable beyond the measure of profit and loss because the professional ethic rests upon a fiduciary basis."

Unfortunately, widespread incompetence and dishonesty have eroded public trust in the professions. Talk-show hosts demand the lynching of bankers and lawyers. Educators consider "creeping professionalism" the enemy of liberal learning on American campuses. Potent and often cruel market forces, unchecked by forces of equivalent power, make it increasingly difficult to define how professionals should behave to clients and the general public. What has happened to the concept of vocation or calling? Given radical economic and technological change, will the professions survive in their recognizable forms, evolve into radically different entities, or dissolve entirely? Are the methods that have been developed for educating professionals adequate to the current intellectual, practical, and ethical demands of these roles?

METHOD

To answer these questions, we will turn to the Greek philosopher Aristotle. As the West's first economist, political scientist, and ethicist, and one of its earliest public relations consultants, Aristotle was passionately interested in human society and communication. He recognized that *passions*, not abstract principles, motivate human action; that *excellence*, not some insipid notion of goodness, inspires human goals; that *persuasion*, not sheer logic, instigates change. Unlike Plato, who believed the Good, the True, and the Beautiful are one, Aristotle insisted these values are *multiple* and *competitive*. For the sake of social balance and cohesion, they must be *defined* and *justified* through *public debate* and *argument*. As a thinker, he believed in a dynamic world of synergy. As a moralist, he steered a middle course between bean-counting and breast-beating.

Aristotle's philosophy consists of *three parts*, each bearing on this writing course:

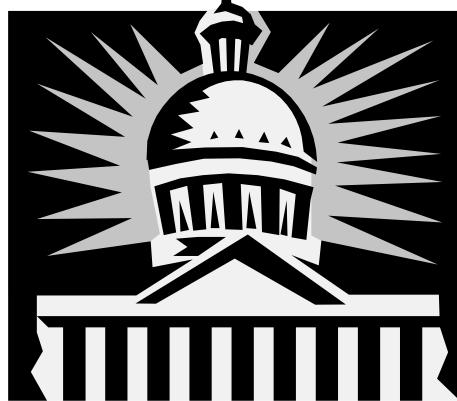


- ◆ **RHETORIC (*the art of persuasion*):** Aristotle was the first writer to define different audiences and appeals, to classify the different occasions of argument, to teach how to find the right topic, and to advise what styles were best suited to what subjects. But for Aristotle, rhetoric means more than converting others to our agenda. It means communication as *character-* and *community-building*. A good modern equivalent would be a corporate mission statement. As D.C. consultants Patricia Jones and Larry Kahaner note, “For Aristotle, positions should be manifestos. Corporate mission statements, therefore, should outline in specific terms what we aspire to be and how we intend to realize our corporate aims. No other document reveals more about a company’s values and ethics than mission statement. It is a map for the high road. *So say it and live it!*”
- ◆ **ETHICS (*the art of conduct*):** Words must lead to action in the real world, but how do we judge our conduct? Aware of shifting contexts and competing goods, Aristotle didn’t believe we could rely on fixed rules and principles. Instead, he maintained, we must cultivate *arête*, commonly translated as “virtue” but actually closer to “excellence,” our personal best. According to Aristotle, *true virtue is passion and instinct tempered and*

mediated by reason. Manuel Velasquez, professor of management and business ethics at the Harvard Business School explains: “What distinguishes humans from other creatures, Aristotle held, is the ability to reason, and so the distinguishing purpose of human beings is to exercise reason in all our activities. Moral virtues, then, are habits that enable us to live according to reason; that is, when we as professionals know and choose the reasonable ground between going too far and not going far enough in our actions, emotions, and desires.”

- ◆ **POLITICS (*the art of organization*):** Gods and beasts can exist in solitude, said Aristotle, but human beings exercise their humanity only through *association*. This perspective provides a necessary antidote to the rabid individualism and frenzied competition that have poisoned

American industry for the past 20 years. To quote Robert Solomon, professor of philosophy and business ethics at the University of Texas at Austin: “The Aristotelian approach to business ethics and communication and the leading question for business in the 21st century begins with the idea that the corporation is first and foremost *a community*.” From Aristotle, young writers in the professions can learn how to break down and analyze organizational systems, weave networks and forge consensus, mediate and moderate tensions and conflicts,



and create and adhere to values benefiting both *shareholders* and *stakeholders*.

Aristotle’s trinity clearly dovetails, just as his three great treatises, *The Art of Rhetoric*, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, and *The Politics*, echo each other. All aspire to *phronesis*, practical wisdom, the capacity to order all parts of ourselves and all components of our actions, personal and professional, in a realistic and effective way. “The person of practical wisdom is like an archer,” Aristotle explained. “In speaking and acting, there are infinite ways to get things wrong; but to act and speak in the right way, at the right time, with the right emphasis, with the right regard to the right persons, and with an exact appreciation for all the relevant circumstances, is to hit the mark exactly, like an arrow thudding into a bull’s-eye.” For Aristotle, then, good action and good communication represent not so much a law obeyed as an action well executed. The best rhetoric, the best ethics, and the best policy, therefore, are the most *on target*.

If these concepts seem too complicated, relax. Ultimately, the Aristotelian approach to professional communication, ethics, and organization comes down to two simple ideas: 1) While professional life has its specific goals and distinctive practices, and different professionals have their particular concerns, loyalties, roles, and responsibilities, *no “professional world” exists apart from the people who work in these professions*—or the greater society in which they are citizens. 2) *The integrity of these professionals determines the integrity of their professions*, and vice versa.

OVERVIEW

To apply Aristotle's principles to professional writing, we will rely on *debate*, *case studies*, and *dossiers*. Every class includes *group discussion* on a political, ethical, or rhetorical issue affecting your profession. These talks will cultivate the *critical thinking* necessary to complete class writing assignments. Although class lectures sometimes focus on the American auto industry, my own area of expertise, you are expected to investigate and report on *research topics* within your particular field, ideally on subjects reflecting your personal and professional interests.

Drawing on class discussion and case studies, this course is divided into four sections. Each section is dedicated to *a particular form of rhetoric* and organized around *a matching Aristotelian concept*.



- 1) **“POSITIONS AND PRINCIPLES”** covers *definitive rhetoric*, the *basic concepts and terms* of ethical persuasion. How do communicators in the professions *identify issues*, *profile audiences*, *analyze specific rhetorical situations*, and *define the terms of debate*? As we answer these questions, we will explore Aristotle's nuanced understanding of **TRUTH**.
- 2) **“WHEELS AND DEALS”** turns to *deliberative rhetoric*, the form of persuasion concerned with *future decisions*. How do communicators in the professions *propose change* and *evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different strategies* for their audience? Deliberative arguments can be *internal*, focused on a specific organization, or *external*, involving multiple outside audiences. Either way, a plan of action must seem fitting and elegant, hence our study of Aristotle's concept of **BEAUTY**.
- 3) **“LAWS AND LEDGERS”** investigates *forensic* or *judicial rhetoric*, the form of persuasion concerned with *past actions*. When things go wrong, tragically wrong, how should communicators in the professions *trace causes*, *form credible and compelling narratives*, and *rebut criticism*? As we will see in our discussion of tort law, these tasks are never easy because too often saving face becomes more desirable than doing right, the letter of the law more important than genuine ethics. To avoid these pitfalls without tilting at windmills, we will consider Aristotle's complicated ideas about **GOODNESS**.
- 4) **“MISSIONS AND LOGOS”** addresses *ceremonial* or *demonstrative rhetoric*, the form of persuasion concerned with *present values*. How do communicators in the professions *promote ideas*, *inspire passion and commitment*, and *build community*, both within their organizations and in the outside world? Fittingly, we will conclude the course with Aristotle's beliefs about **UNITY**.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

One 200-level Liberal Arts (LA) course and Academic Writing (WRTG-10600) or Ithaca Seminar in Writing (JCSM-10800). But if you've had Argument (WRTG-20100), Writing for the Workplace (WRTG-21100), or Technical Writing (WRTG-21300), you will be better prepared.

Clear professional goals and strong problem-solving skills are also desirable. Focus and direction will enhance class performance. So will an ability to apply knowledge from your own profession to case studies, and to share that knowledge with those from other professions.

ASSIGNMENTS

Your final grade is based on these oral and written assignments. The latter include circulars, letters, brochures, press releases, display ads, and radio and TV scripts (250 to 750 words each).

ASSIGNMENT, PERCENTAGE, AND PURPOSE	GENRE AND DESCRIPTION
<i>Class Forums (20%)</i> Sharpen the communication and analytical skills necessary for good consulting.	<i>Oratory</i> Roundtables, debates, and oral reports in each of the course's four sections. From the perspective of your own profession, be prepared to dialogue and argue with students from other professions on controversies concerning the auto industry.
<i>Position Dossier (20%)</i> Establishes your professional voice and research goals and teaches the basics of policy making and legislation. Designed to identify your strengths and weaknesses as an individual writer, this assignment requires you to work <i>alone</i> . TOTAL: 2,000 to 4,500 words.	<i>Definitive Rhetoric</i> Define a <i>concept</i> or <i>issue</i> within your field in a group of 3 to 4 documents. Include a <i>problem description</i> , <i>legislative history</i> , or <i>position paper</i> (750 to 1,000 words) and a <i>periodic</i> , <i>progress</i> , or <i>completion report</i> (1,000 to 2,000 words). Some examples from the auto industry: Are SUV's actually trucks? What exactly is whiplash? Is road rage a legitimate legal defense? Are emissions standards fair and scientifically accurate?
<i>Proposal Packet (20%)</i> Cultivates collaboration and exercises problem-solving skills. Since you must examine your profession within a broad context, work with <i>one</i> or <i>two</i> partners from <i>identical</i> or <i>related</i> fields. TOTAL: 2,000 to 4,500 words.	<i>Deliberative Rhetoric</i> Propose a <i>change</i> within your field in a portfolio of 3 to 4 documents. Include a <i>petition</i> , <i>proposal</i> , <i>problem description</i> , or <i>legislative history</i> (750 to 1,000 words) and a <i>proposal report</i> or <i>feasibility study</i> , or <i>completion report</i> (1,000 to 2,000 words). The proposed change can be <i>operational</i> (a new manufacturing process or employee fitness plan), <i>communal</i> (a scholarship or art bequest), or <i>legal</i> (tougher laws or new industry standards). <i>Identify</i> the problem, <i>evaluate</i> the alternatives, <i>present</i> the best solution, and <i>implement</i> it.

<p>Ethics Probe (20%) Introduces legal thinking and writing, teaches investigative reportage, and sharpens crisis management skills. This assignment explores conflict and clashing values. For the best results, work with <i>two to three</i> partners, some of whom must come from <i>competing</i> or <i>opposing</i> fields.</p> <p>TOTAL: 3,000 to 6,500 words.</p>	<p>Forensic Rhetoric Document and report on a <i>civil</i> or <i>criminal case</i> within your field in a file of 4 to 5 documents. Include a <i>trip</i> or <i>science report</i> (1,000 to 2,000 words); a <i>briefing memo</i>, <i>public testimony</i>, or a <i>public comment document</i> (750 to 1,000 words); and a <i>legal opinion letter</i>, <i>legal research memo</i>, or <i>court brief</i> (1,000 to 2,000 words). From defective products, to financial fraud, to environmental and labor violations, there is no dearth of material. Play <i>investigator</i>, <i>lawyer</i>, and <i>publicist</i>. <i>Describe</i> and <i>document</i> the incident, <i>trace</i> and <i>analyze</i> its cause, <i>defend</i> or <i>attack</i> the industry, and <i>determine</i> reparations. Above all, create a <i>compelling narrative</i>.</p>
<p>Group Mission Project (20%) Builds consensus and creates shared institutional values. Summarizing the course's major themes, this large-group assignment requires you to work with <i>four</i> or <i>five</i> partners from <i>multiple fields</i>.</p> <p>TOTAL: 3,500 to 6,500 words.</p>	<p>Ceremonial Rhetoric Working with a multi-professional task force, promote a new <i>vision</i> or <i>mission</i> for an organization in the public or private sector. This joint collection of 5 to 6 documents should include: 1) <i>SWOT analysis</i> (750 to 1,000 words); 2) a <i>mission statement</i> (750 to 1,000 words); 3) a <i>policy statement</i>, a <i>procedure</i>, or a <i>manual excerpt</i> (1,000 to 2,000 words); 4) <i>public comment document</i> (750 to 1,000 words).</p> <p>Your project can be as simple as revising a division's current operational goals or a company's existing mission statement, or as complicated as creating an environmental initiative, rethinking overseas labor practices, or pushing fuel-efficient or alternative-energy vehicles. Heed Aristotle's warning: <i>Don't be abstract or naive</i>. Real values are meant for living in the real world.</p>

These portfolio assignments are focused enough to allow you to participate in our on-going debate on the knowledge economy, but open enough to allow you to write for and about your particular field. You are welcome, therefore, to produce *discipline-specific documents* not covered in class. Occupational therapists may submit SOAP notes, environmentalists EPIs and lab reports, MBAs business plans, legislators and lobbyists motions and bills. All portfolios should include a *title page* and a two-part *cover memo* (750 to 1,000 words). The first part discusses case purpose, audience analysis, rhetorical strategy, primary and secondary research, document design, and editorial choices. The second evaluates individual or group performance and comments on the writing process itself (brainstorming, outlining, drafting, and revision).

IN SEARCH OF EXCELLENCE

Like your supervisors and fellow employees, visible and invisible constituents, and private and public regulatory agencies, I expect only the best from you. Dealing with human lives and values, communication within the professions can neither afford nor tolerate fuzzy thinking, sloppy writing, or slipshod ethics. Hence these grading criteria:

- ◆ **D** work is *substandard*. Poor effort, empty thinking, weak writing. The assignment is underwritten, incomplete, or riddled with careless mechanical errors.
- ◆ **C** work is *competent*. Minimum effort, standard thinking, conventional writing. While the assignment is complete and glitch-less, it lacks originality, invention, and creativity.
- ◆ **B** work is *good*. Genuine effort, sound thinking, solid writing. The assignment takes risks, holds promises, but still needs improvement.
- ◆ **A** work is *excellent*. Enthusiastic effort, original thinking, distinguished writing. The assignment demonstrates expertise and style and balances creative and analytical thinking.



PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

- 1) **ATTEND CLASS:** Poor attendance definitely will affect your final grade. Keep up with all readings and participate in all class activities and workshops. Should you miss class, contact a classmate for any missing assignments or lecture notes. Also, turn in work *on time* even if you cannot do so in person. Two absences are allowed without penalty, but each subsequent absence lowers your final average by half a letter grade. *According to Department of Writing policy, six absences will result in dismissal from this course.*

Please note the holidays listed in the Undergraduate Catalog's academic calendar. In accordance with New York State law, students who miss class due to their religious beliefs shall be excused from class or examinations on that day. Such students must notify course instructors at least one week before any anticipated absence so that proper arrangements may be made to make up any missed work or examination without penalty.

- 2) **EMBRACE PRACTICE:** Professional writing is *recursive*, a *process* more than a product, moving from brainstorming and outlining to drafting and revision and then cycling back. For each written assignment, peers will comment on your draft in class on days marked as “workshop.” Instructor feedback will be given prior to due date as well as on submitted drafts. This practice will sharpen your thinking and improve your writing. Indeed, you will learn that writing itself is a way of thinking.
- 3) **MEET DEADLINES:** They are the bottom line in professional communication. ***Late papers will not be accepted.*** Revisions are due ***one week*** after receiving an evaluated first draft. No revisions for final dossier.
- 4) **BE HONEST:** This isn’t a course in industrial espionage. A plagiarized paper will receive an F, and you will be asked to withdraw from the course.
- 5) **SEEK HELP WHEN NECESSARY:** First, visit The Writing Center, Smiddy 107—a free resource facility where, at scheduled times throughout the week, you may consult with trained student and faculty tutors about your writing.

Second, in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodations will be provided to students with documented disabilities on a case-by-case basis. Students must register with the Office of Academic Support Services (110 Towers Concourse) and provide appropriate documentation before any academic adjustment will be provided.

For more information on policies and resources, read the Appendix (pages 19 to 22).

WRITING INTENSIVE REQUIREMENT, ICC, AND THE E-PORTFOLIO

THE COMMITTEE FOR COLLEGE-WIDE REQUIREMENTS (CCR) has designated this course as “*Writing Intensive*” (W) within the Integrative Core Curriculum (ICC). If you entered Ithaca College in 2013 or later, you are required to take at least one W course and to upload appropriate artifact(s) to your ePortfolio on Taskstream to demonstrate your achievement of the Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) listed below.

Writing Intensive courses build on your ability to use writing both as a process for *making meaning* within a *specific subject area*, as well as for participating in *ongoing conversations* within a *particular academic or professional community*. Upon completion of a Writing Intensive course, you will be able to:

1. Develop and articulate content knowledge and critical thinking in a specific academic discipline or related profession through frequent practice of informal and formal writing.
2. Demonstrate understanding of audience expectations, genres, and conventions appropriate to communicating in a specific academic discipline or related profession.

3. Compose one or more documents totaling at least 3,000 words through multiple stages of writing, including brainstorming, drafting, integrating sources, and revising comprehensively after receiving substantial, formative feedback on drafts.

Writing for the Professions meets these three objectives and can provide you with many appropriate artifacts for Taskstream, the ePortfolio and assessment system for the Integrative Core Curriculum (ICC). This system is easy to use. On the Taskstream homepage, you will view two Directed Response Folios (DRF) programs, an icon for ICC, and one for Academic Writing 10600. The ICC DRF will include a marker for you to upload artifacts for the Writing Intensive Requirement. I would be happy to make recommendations for your ePortfolio.



PROFESSING KNOWLEDGE is never merely academic. “The peculiar character of the problem of a rational economic order,” Friedrich Hayek states in “The Use of Knowledge in Society” (1945), “is determined precisely by the fact that the knowledge of the circumstances of which we must make use never exists in concentrated or integrated form but solely as the dispersed bits of incomplete and frequently contradictory knowledge which all the separate individuals possess. The economic problem of society is thus not merely a problem of how to allocate ‘given’ resources—if ‘given’ is taken to mean given to a single mind which deliberately solves the problem set by these ‘data.’ It is rather a problem of how to secure the best use of resources known to any of the members of society, for ends whose relative importance only these individuals know. Or, to put it briefly, it is a problem of the utilization of knowledge which is not given to anyone in its totality.

Jimmy Wales cites “The Use of Knowledge in Society,” which he read as an undergraduate, as “central” to his thinking about “how to manage Wikipedia.” Information, Hayek realized, is now *decentralized*. Because knowledge is unevenly dispersed among different members of society, decisions are best made by those with *local knowledge* rather than by a central authority. Such expertise, however, must be based on *civic-minded integrity*. Under Aristotle’s tutelage and with some help from your colleagues, you can cultivate the necessary *ethos* to become an ambassador for your profession in a tricky and dangerous world. For Aristotle, this is the acid test of rhetoric. “*Proof of character*,” he maintained, “*is the ultimate and sovereign proof in argument*.”

CALENDAR

FROM ATHENS TO WALL STREET: “IN SEARCH OF ARISTOTLE”

JAN 20: ORIENTATION

Writing for the professions and the agora

Handouts

- ◆ David Brooks, “The Protocol Society.”
- ◆ AAA, “Looming Crisis on Highway Funds, “Driving Costs,” and “Motorists’ Bill of Rights.”
- ◆ Harold Ford and Jim Hall, “Let’s Rebuild America.”
- ◆ *Wall Street Journal*, “On Bridges and Taxes.”



INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP: “CONTEXTUALIZING YOUR PROFESSION”

1. State your profession and career goals.
2. Name the professions that *collaborate*, *compete*, and *conflict* with yours.
3. Identify your profession’s major *regulatory* and *representative* bodies and explain their respective missions, goals, and challenges.
4. Perform a *trend analysis* of your profession, using the PESTLE template:

CATEGORY	QUERY
<i>Political</i>	What political factors or related legislation affect your profession?
<i>Economic</i>	What economic conditions or trends challenge your profession?
<i>Sociological</i>	What social issues and demographic shifts relate to your profession?
<i>Technological</i>	What technological developments challenge your profession?
<i>Legal</i>	What legal controversies, cases, and rulings apply to your profession?
<i>Environmental</i>	What environmental factors or problems have an impact on your profession?

JAN 22: RHETORICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXTS

Civics, rhetoric, and professional ethics

Morris, *If Aristotle Ran General Motors*

- ◆ Preface, “Reinventing Corporate Spirit,” ix-xv.
- ◆ Introduction: “Business Excellence and the Human Quest,” 3-21.

Kennedy and Montgomery, *Technical and Professional Writing*
◆ Chapter One: “Professionalism and Problem Solving,” 1-23.

Smith, *Writing Public Policy*
◆ Chapter One: “Public Policy is Language Use,” 1-19.
◆ Conclusion: “Ethics for Policy Communication,” 209-213.

JAN 27: CHARACTER AND PASSION
Ethos, persona, and appeals

Kennedy and Montgomery, *Technical and Professional Writing*
◆ Chapter Eleven: “Solving Problems in the Professional Job Search,” 389-422.

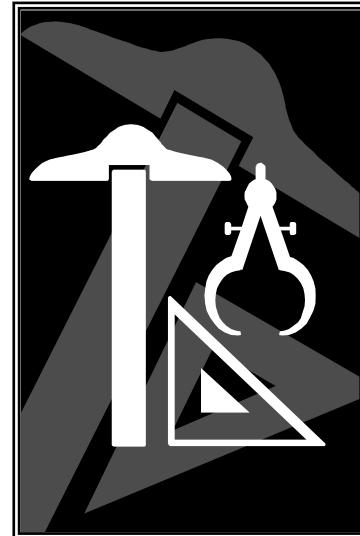
Handout
◆ Carolyn Matalene, “Texts and Public Contexts.”

POSITIONS AND PRINCIPLES: “DEFINING ISSUES”

JAN 29: ISSUES AND CONSTITUENCIES
Audience and invention

Kennedy and Montgomery, *Technical and Professional Writing*
◆ Chapter Three: “Rhetorical Problem Solving,” 52-85.

Smith, *Writing Public Policy*
◆ Chapter Two: “Communicating in Policy Making,” 20-40.
◆ Appendix A: “Writing Clearly,” 214-20.



Handouts
◆ Linda Flowers and John Ackerman, “Reading the Context.”
◆ Case Study 1: “Mountain Trails Horse Center.”
◆ Case Study 2: “Shell: Insights into Energy Security.”

FEB 03: ORGANIZATION AND ARRANGEMENT
Designing arguments and documents for multiple audiences

Kennedy and Montgomery, *Technical and Professional Writing*
◆ Chapter Ten: “Solving Problems through Letters and Memoranda,” 358-88.
◆ Chapter Twelve: “Solving Problems through Document Design,” 423-46.

Smith, *Writing Public Policy*

- ◆ Chapter Three: “Definition: Describe the Problem,” 41-65.
- ◆ Chapter Four: “Evaluation: Analyze and Advise,” 66-85.
- ◆ Appendix B: “Interpreting Data to Support Policy Argument” (*handout*)

Handout

- ◆ Carl Botan, “Lee Iacocca as Internal Issues Manager.”
- ◆ Alfred Pritchard Sloan, “Co-ordination by Committee.”
- ◆ Bolton Point Municipal Water System, “Drinking Water Quality Report.”

FEB 05: DEFINITIVE RHETORIC

Defining issues and markets

Morris, *If Aristotle Ran General Motors*

- ◆ Part One: “Truth,” 25-66.

Kennedy and Montgomery, *Technical and Professional Writing*

- ◆ Chapter Two: “Technical Problem Solving (Definition),” 24-49.

Smith, *Writing Public Policy*

- ◆ Chapter Six: “Position Paper: Know the Arguments,” 106-28.

Handouts

- ◆ Lester Faigley and Jack Selzer, “Definition Arguments and SUVs.”
- ◆ Paul Roberts, “Bad Sports.”
- ◆ Malcolm Gladwell, “Big and Bad.”
- ◆ Danny Hakim, “Block that Grill” and “The Price of Success.”

FEB 10: Kennedy and Montgomery, *Technical and Professional Writing*

- ◆ Chapter Seven: “Solving Problems through Periodic (Progress) and Completion Reports,” 207-73.

Smith, *Writing Public Policy*

- ◆ Chapter Five: “Legislative History: Know the Record,” 86-105.

Handouts

- ◆ Diana Reep, “Writing Periodic and Progress Reports”
- ◆ Tom O’Mara, “Legislative Update”
- ◆ Phil Kolin, “Writing Press Releases, Brochures, and Newsletters.”

FEB 12: WORKSHOP 1.

FEB 17: WORKSHOP 2.

WHEELS AND DEALS: “PROPOSING CHANGE”

FEB 19: POSITION DOSSIER DUE.

DELIBERATIVE RHETORIC

Evaluating policy and proposing change

Morris, *If Aristotle Ran General Motors*

- ◆ Part Two: “Beauty,” 69-111.

Smith, *Writing Public Policy*

- ◆ Chapter Seven: “Petition, Proposal, Letter: Request Action,” 129-48.

Handout

- ◆ Nicholas Lehman, “Conflicts of Interest.”
- ◆ Eric Gable and Richard Handler, “Colonial Williamsburg.”
- ◆ Chrysler, “Making the Mini-Van Safer.”

FEB 24: Kennedy and Montgomery, *Technical and Professional Writing*

- ◆ From Chapter Eight: “Feasibility Studies,” 287-308.
- ◆ Reep, “Writing Feasibility Studies” (*handout*)

Handouts

- ◆ Fareed Zakaria, “Imagine: 500 Miles Per Gallon.”
- ◆ Elizabeth Kolbert, “The Car of Tomorrow.”
- ◆ General Motors, “Who’s Driving the Hydrogen Economy?”

FEB 26: Kennedy and Montgomery, *Technical and Professional Writing*

- ◆ Chapter Six: “Solving Problems through Proposals,” 150-206.
- ◆ Reep, “Writing Proposal Reports” (*handout*)

Handouts

- ◆ Lester Faigley and Jack Selzer, “Proposal Arguments and Title IX.”
- ◆ Donna Tropiano, “Don’t Blame Title IX.”
- ◆ John Cogan and Glenn Hubbard, “Bringing the Market to Health Care.”

MAR 03: WORKSHOP 1.

MAR 05: WORKSHOP 2.



LAWS AND LEDGERS: “JUDGING ACTIONS”

MAR 10: PROPOSAL PACKET DUE.

FORENSIC RHETORIC

Arguing cases through causation, narration, and rebuttal

Morris, *If Aristotle Ran General Motors*

- ◆ Part Three: “Goodness,” 115-72

Handout

- ◆ Notice: “Firestone Class Action Lawsuit.”
- ◆ Harper’s, “No Shoes, No Service” and “Tooth and Consequences”

MAR 12: **THE CALCULUS OF TORT**

Cost-benefit analysis and liability

Putnam, *Pocket Guide to Legal Writing*

- ◆ Chapter Seven: “Preparing to Write,” 149-70.

Handouts

- ◆ Adam Davidson, “Working Stiffs.”
- ◆ Elizabeth Kolbert, “The Calculator.”

MAR 17: SPRING BREAK.

MAR 19: NO CLASS.

MAR 24: FACTS AND FORENSICS

Research, evidence, and causal arguments

Kennedy and Montgomery, *Technical and Professional Writing* (Primary Evidence)

- ◆ From Chapter Eight: “Trip Reports,” 274-87; “Scientific Reports,” 308-23.

Smith, *Writing Public Policy* (Secondary Evidence)

- ◆ Chapter Eight: “Brief, Opinion, and Ordinance: Inform Government,” 149-61.
- ◆ Chapter Nine: “Testimony: Witness in a Public Hearing,” 162-86.
- ◆ Chapter Ten: “Public Comment: Influence Administration,” 187-208.

Putnam, *Pocket Guide to Legal Writing*

- ◆ Chapter Five: “Legal Citation,” 89-134.
- ◆ Chapter Six, “Computer and Internet Research Web Sites,” 135-48.



Handouts

- ◆ Theo Colburn et al, “Hand-Me-Down Poisons.”
- ◆ James Glanz and Eric Lipton, “Report Disputes on the WTC Collapse.”
- ◆ Phil Kolin, “Writing Incident Reports”

MAR 26: COURTROOM DRAMA

Crafting narrative and rebuttal arguments

Putnam, *Pocket Guide to Legal Writing*

- ◆ Chapter Eight: “Legal Correspondence,” 171-88; Appendix A, 251-56.
- ◆ Chapter Nine: “Legal Research Memo,” 189-224; Appendix B, 257-64.
- ◆ Chapter Ten: “Court Briefs,” 225-49; Appendix C, 265-76.

Handouts

- ◆ Philip Cooney, “Revisions to Government Documents.”
- ◆ Sam Kazman, “CAFE is Bad for Your Health.”
- ◆ Matthew Philips, “Can We Really Forgive and Forget?”

MAR 31: WORKSHOP 1.

APR 02: WORKSHOP 2.

APR 07: WHALEN SYMPOSIUM. NO CLASS.

APR 09: WORKSHOP 3.

MISSIONS AND LOGOS: “PROMOTING VALUES”

APR 14: ETHICS PROBE DUE.

CEREMONIAL RHETORIC

Accentuating the positive, eliminating the negative in organizations

Morris, *If Aristotle Ran General Motors*

- ◆ Part Four: “Unity,” 173-211.



Handouts

- ◆ Reibstein and Washington, “Lee’s Last Stand.”
- ◆ The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc., Brochure and Fund-Raising Letter for “The American Immigrant Wall of Honor®.”
- ◆ Iacocca, “Remarks to the Ethnic Heritage Council of the Pacific Northwest.”

APR 16: Kennedy and Montgomery, *Technical and Professional Writing*
◆ Chapter Nine: “Policy Statements, Manuals, and Procedures,” 324-57.

Handouts

- ◆ Chrysler, “Customer Bill of Rights.”
- ◆ Avis, Goodyear, and Honda, “Mission Statements and Commentaries.”
- ◆ Honda, “Earth Day, Every Day.”
- ◆ Quick MBA, “SWOT Analysis.”

APR 21: Kennedy and Montgomery, *Technical and Professional Writing*
◆ Chapter Five: “Collaborative Writing and the Uses of Technology,” 122-49.
◆ Chapter Thirteen: “Solving Problems through Oral Presentations,” 447-78.

WORKSHOP 1.

APR 23: WORKSHOP 2.

APR 28: WORKSHOP 3.

CHANGING LANES: “THE ROAD TO ARÈTE”

APR 30: MISSION PROJECT DUE.
Course Evaluations.



MAY 05: Morris, *If Aristotle Ran General Motors*
◆ Epilogue: “Creating Corporate Excellence,” 212-16.

Smith, *Writing Public Policy*
◆ Conclusion: “Ethics for Policy Communicators,” 199-203.

Handouts

- ◆ Michael J. Sandel, “What Isn’t for Sale?”
- ◆ Anthony Di Renzo, “Top of the World.”
- ◆ Department of Writing, “Professional Writing Courses.”

EXAM WEEK ORAL PRESENTATIONS
May 11, 7:30 AM to 10:00 AM (Smiddy 115 or Zoom)

APPENDIX:

College Diversity Statement, Academic Policies, and Institutional Resources

COLLEGE DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Ithaca College values diversity because it enriches our community and the myriad experiences that characterize a college education. Diversity encompasses multiple dimensions, including but not limited to race, culture, nationality, ethnicity, religion, ideas, beliefs, geographic origin, class, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, disability, and age.

We are dedicated to addressing current and past injustices and promoting excellence and equity. Ithaca College continually strives to build an inclusive and welcoming community of individuals with diverse talents and skills from a multitude of backgrounds who are committed to civility, mutual respect, social justice, and the free and open exchange of ideas. We commit ourselves to change, growth, and action that embrace diversity as an integral part of the educational experience and of the community we create.

To learn more about the college's commitment to diversity, visit:

- <https://www.ithaca.edu/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-statement>

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Academic Conduct

The Ithaca College Policy Manual describes the Standards of Academic Content embedded in the Student Code of Conduct. It is the responsibility of every student and faculty member to be familiar with, and comply with, these expectations for rigor, authenticity, trust, and honesty in academic work. You may find the full policy at:

- <https://www.ithaca.edu/policies/vol7/general/070104/>

We will discuss this policy more thoroughly in our course, but as the Policy Manual states: "Because Ithaca College is an academic community, ignorance of the accepted standards of academic honesty in no way affects the responsibility of students who violate standards of conduct in courses and other academic activities."

Class Attendance

Students at Ithaca College are expected to attend all classes, and they are responsible for work missed during any absence from class. At the beginning of each semester, instructors must provide the students in their courses with written guidelines regarding possible penalties for

failure to attend class. These guidelines may vary from course to course but are subject to the following conditions:

- In accordance with Federal Law, students with a disability documented through Student Accessibility Services (SAS) may require reasonable accommodations to ensure equitable access. A student with an attendance accommodation, who misses a scheduled course time due to a documented disability, must be provided an equivalent opportunity to make up missed time and/or coursework within a reasonable timeframe. An accommodation that affects attendance is not an attendance waiver and no accommodation can fundamentally alter a course requirement. If a faculty member thinks an attendance-related accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration, concerns and potential alternatives should be discussed with SAS.
- In accordance with New York State law, students who miss class due to their religious beliefs shall be excused from class or examinations on that day. The faculty member is responsible for providing the student with an equivalent opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirement that the student may have missed. Any such work is to be completed within a reasonable time frame, as determined by the faculty member.
- Any student who misses class due to a family or individual health emergency or to a required appearance in a court of law shall be excused. If the emergency is prolonged or if the student is incapacitated, the student or a family member/legal guardian should report the absence to the Dean of Students or the Dean of the academic school where the student's program is housed. Students may consider a leave of absence, medical leave of absence, selected course withdrawals, etc., if they miss a significant portion of classwork.

A student may be excused for participation in College-authorized co-curricular and extracurricular activities if, in the instructor's judgment, this does not impair the specific student's or the other students' ability to succeed in the course.

For all absences except those due to religious beliefs, the course instructor has the right to determine if the number of absences has been excessive in view of the nature of the class that was missed and the stated attendance policy.

Students should notify their instructors as soon as possible of any anticipated absences.

Student Accommodations

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodations will be provided to qualified students with documented disabilities. Accommodations are available for remote, hybrid, and in-person study. Students seeking accommodations must register with Student Accessibility Services and provide appropriate documentation before any accommodations can be provided.

Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, so timely contact with Student Accessibility Services is encouraged. Students who wish to meet with an SAS specialist can email sas@ithaca.edu to schedule an online or phone appointment.

Title IX

If you disclose an experience related to sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, dating violence, and/or stalking, sexual harassment or sex-based discrimination, your professor can inform the Title IX Coordinator (lkoenig@ithaca.edu) of all relevant information, including your name. The college will take initial steps to address the incident(s), protect, and, support those directly affected, and enhance the safety of our community.

The Title IX Coordinator will work with you to determine the best way to proceed. Information shared in class assignments, class discussions, and at public events do not constitute an official disclosure, and faculty and staff do not have to report these to the Title IX Coordinator. Faculty and staff should be sure that access to campus and community resources related to sexual misconduct are available to students in the case these subjects do arise. Any other disclosure to faculty and staff needs to be reported to the Title IX Coordinator. For more information: <https://www.ithaca.edu/share>.

Zoom Recordings and Privacy

Instructors will record all online class sessions to help students recover missed lectures and discussions if they are absent. This is permitted under federal laws that protect your educational privacy (FERPA), since the recording is only available to students enrolled in a course, and anything an enrolled student would learn about another student from watching the recording is the same that they would learn about each other if they were both in the class at the same time.

“Breakout” or small group discussions in Zoom, however, are *not* recorded; only all group portions of the class are included. That said, be assured that this is a safe learning environment. If you have any concerns about recording, please speak with me if your instructor.

INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Center for Academic Advising

The Academic Advising Center supports IC students and has transitioned to a virtual model of advising. Students are able to set up both scheduled or drop-in appointments using Zoom and connect with an Academic Advisor. Contact the Advising Center to discuss registration questions, review degree requirements, talk about ICC requirements, discuss adding or changing majors or minors, receive help with study skills and strategies, and get help with any other academic advising related questions. You may also email advisingcenter@ithaca.edu with your advising questions.

To schedule an appointment, go to: <https://www.ithaca.edu/academic-advising-center>.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

The Ithaca College Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) promotes and fosters the academic, personal, and interpersonal development of Ithaca College students by providing short-term individual, group, and relationship counseling, crisis intervention, educational programs to the campus community, and consultation for faculty, staff, parents, and students. Their team of licensed and licensed-eligible professionals value inclusivity, and they are dedicated to creating a diverse, accessible, and welcoming environment that is safe and comfortable for all those they serve and with whom they interact.

CAPS continues to serve all enrolled students at this time via Telehealth. The center has decided not to provide in-person services at this time to ensure the safety of students and staff. Staff in the office will answer questions by phone at (607) 274-3136; please leave a voicemail if you do not reach a live person. You can also reach the office via email at counseling@ithaca.edu.

Should your instructor suspect that you need additional support, they will express their concerns. It is not their intent to know the details of what might be troubling you, but simply to let you know that they are concerned and that help, if needed, is available. Remember: getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do.

Writing Center

The Writing Center aims to help students from all disciplines, backgrounds, and experiences to develop greater independence as writers at two locations: Smiddy 107 (Monday through Thursday, 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM) and the Gannet Center Library, Second Floor Cubicles (Sunday through Thursday, 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM). Our peer tutors will help you to see writing as central to your critical and creative thinking.

Appointments can be made at [Ithaca.mywconline.com](https://ithaca.mywconline.com), which is also linked on the apps.ithaca.edu page. During business hours, please message [ithacacollegewritingcenter](#) on Google Hangouts or email ithacacollegewritingcenter@gmail.com to get real-time assistance. Drop-in service is subject to tutor availability.

AI RULES FOR THIS WRITING COURSE

Ithaca College is exploring and implementing AI applications across campus. Initiatives range from using AI to enhance teaching and learning, improving student services, and providing administrative efficiencies to engaging in critical discussions on the ethical use and equitable access of AI technologies.

IC is working to align its approach to AI with its core values and goals as it prepares students for an AI-driven future. Individual classroom policy, however, varies from instructor to instructor. Here are the AI rules for this writing course.

Permitted Usage

Students may use generative AI tools (ChatGPT, Dall-e, etc.) to:

- Brainstorm and refine ideas
- Fine-tune research questions
- Find information on a topic
- Draft an outline to organize thoughts
- Cite sources and create a reference page
- Check grammar and style

WARNING: Material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. Habitual use may also stifle independent thinking and creativity.

Prohibited Usage

Students may *not* use generative AI tools to:

- Produce any draft of a writing assignment
- Write or revise entire sentences or paragraphs
- Summarize or paraphrase sources
- Contribute to online discussion boards or Zoom chats
- Complete group work, unless all members mutually agree to use the tool

If you include material generated by an AI program, cite it like any other reference material. Failure to do so will be considered *plagiarism* as defined in Section 7.1.14.1 in the [Standards of Academic Conduct](#) found in the Ithaca College Policy Manual. *Ultimately, you are responsible for all material submitted in this course.* Your written work cannot violate intellectual property laws or contain misinformation or unethical content. In addition, *any* use of AI tools must be acknowledged and properly documented to meet this classroom's standards of academic honesty. When in doubt about permitted usage, please ask for clarification.