ENG 103: RHETORIC & WRITING

Section 60, T/TH 3:30 - 4:45 pm, RB 119 | Fall 2026| Instructor: Prof. Rachel Evans

SECTION THEME:

Rhetoric of Horror

This section of ENG 103 is themed around the rhetoric of horror - how horror as a genre of art and language functions, how the associated emotions and motivations are articulated, and how those articulations and implications shift across time, culture, and context. Throughout this semester, you will learn about the foundational and diverse principles of rhetoric and use them to both respond to others' writing and to develop your own projects.

In keeping with our course theme, we will use these rhetorical tools to discuss a specific rhetorical motivator - horror. While most of us engage with horror through various media like film, this class will engage with it as a multifaceted topic: an emotion, a genre, a methodology, a framework, and a lens through which to understand art and language.

As we proceed through this class, I urge you to remember that any genre - both in terms of how we categorize art and language, and a specific type of rhetorical usage - is a cultural creation that ultimately reflects the authors and contexts that nurture it. Horror rhetoric intersects with a broad range of rhetorical fields and cultures, and as such, we may discuss some sensitive topics in this class. This can include topics like sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and antisemitism. I will do my best to include specific content warnings where they are appropriate, and I expect our classroom discussions to remain open, generous, and civil.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

ENG 103: Rhetoric and Writing (3)
Introduces students to principles of diverse rhetorics and writing processes, and to research processes and information literacy; provides practice analyzing how the processes and practices of language use vary across cultural and rhetorical situations; focuses on the creation of written and multi-modal texts..

Required Texts:

- *Ballpoint, Vol. 1*
  [Link on Canvas]
- All other readings provided on our course website.

YOUR INSTRUCTOR

How to contact me:

Prof. Rachel Evans (she/her)
Office: Robert Bell 257
Email: revans3@bsu.edu

Office Hours: T/TH 12:30 - 2:00 pm.

Also by appointment, either in person or by Zoom.

Course Objectives and Outcomes

Writing is a Foundational Intellectual Skill (ICC) that transfers to both upper-level courses and the workplace. This course is designed to contribute to students' academic and professional success by introducing them to the principles of rhetoric from diverse cultural perspectives, and to research processes and the composition of written and multimodal texts. Course objectives are designed to align with ICC Student Learning Outcomes:

- Identify and analyze a variety of rhetorical concepts from different cultures and contexts
- Assess strategies for invention, drafting, and revision for individual composing styles by setting goals and tracking growth
- Demonstrate an awareness of the rhetorical history and impact of conventions (grammar, citation, format, and genre) as they vary by culture and discipline
- Engage critically and carefully as readers (and listeners) of others' perspectives and diverse language practices
- Produce texts in multiple modes for different rhetorical purposes and audience
- Incorporate evidence and synthesize information from multiple secondary sources to support a sustained argument

Course Content Outline and Format

The content of ENG 103 is designed to enable students to achieve the course goals; specifically, students in ENG 103 will:

- Discuss, analyze, and respond to a variety of written and multimodal texts, from a variety of cultural and ideological perspectives.
- Discuss and analyze the rhetorical history and impact of conventions (grammar, citation, format, and genre) as they vary by culture and diverse language practices.
- Complete regular informal writing assignments that involve and/or attend to writing processes (invention, drafting, feedback, and revision)
- Complete at least three (3) major projects that engage with different modes of delivery for a variety of rhetorical purposes and audiences.
    - At least one major assignment will incorporate secondary research
    - At least one major assignment will address rhetorical knowledges
    - At least one major assignment will be multimodal

Note: Any one assignment may meet multiple requirements

- Engage in practices of peer review, reflection, and revision
- Complete multiple formal or informal writing assignments that involve self-reflection and self-assessment of writing processes (invention, drafting, revision)

NOTE: In order to fulfill the University's Core Curriculum requirement in Writing Program courses, students must earn a minimum grade of C to pass; a grade of C- is not considered

acceptable. Writing Program courses may be repeated as many times as necessary to meet the requirement but:

- The first and all other grades will show up on the transcript.
- All grades except the first will be used to compute the GPA.
- A grade of W will not replace a previous grade.
- Course credit hours apply only once to graduation requirements.

(Please see Ball Point for a more complete explanation of these policies.)

Evaluation

Students provide anonymous evaluations of the course. Instructors are urged to evaluate and revise individual syllabuses on a regular basis. ENG 103 is subject to curriculum review by the writing committee.

Overview of Assignments

Participation/Small Assignments [25% of final grade]
I want this class to be primarily discussion based, so active participation is strongly encouraged. All reading should be done before class that day. To help facilitate discussion, we will frequently complete small, lower stakes assignments. These writings will be graded largely on participation and completion, but I encourage you to use them as a space to come up with a thought you had about the reading or the content up for discussion, or any questions or issues you ran into while preparing for that class. This category will also include both in and out of class writing, such as additional journals or reading responses.

Major Assignment 1: Autoethnography [15% of final grade]
An autoethnography is a form of discovery and research writing that involves self-reflection. How does your own lived experience inform your understanding of a topic? What biases or perspectives do you have because of your own involvement with an issue? Since we will be exploring various aspects of how horror and other rhetorical motivators factor into our daily rhetoric, this assignment provides you with an avenue into deeper exploration of this topic. This paper should be approximately 3 pages long.

Major Assignment 2: Artifact Analysis [20 % of final grade]
The majority of the semester will work towards the completion of two analytical papers. The first will involve you analyzing a specific artifact of your choice. For the purposes of this paper, an artifact can be anything, physical or cultural or artistic, you feel you could pick apart and analyze in depth. While this includes wide swaths of print and digital media, do not let that limit you! This assignment is meant to help sharpen your observational skills, since noticing that rhetorical moves are being made is the first step in figuring out what those moves are accomplishing. This paper should be approximately 3-4 pages long.

Major Assignment 3: Rhetorical Analysis [20 % of final grade]
The second of your two analyses is concerned with recognition of rhetorical tools and evaluating their effectiveness within multimodal compositions. While I encourage you to take your own emotional responses as a user of your text into account while analyzing, this assignment asks you to demonstrate your ability to identify various rhetorical tools and strategies in a specific text, analyze how the author is using them, and evaluate their effectiveness. Again, you are welcome to use any of

our class readings, but do not feel you have to limit yourself to the realm of literature. This paper should be approximately 3-4 pages long.

Major Assignment 4: Multimodal Remix and Reflection [20 % of final grade]
Your final project for the semester includes a formal reflection on your work and growth in the class, including how your stance on writing and reading in an academic setting has or has not changed, and a multimodal presentation component about your research and writing throughout the course that will ultimately be presented to the class in the last week of the semester.

Evaluation and Grading

Please note that at least one attempt for all major writing projects must be turned in for a student to be eligible to pass this course!

All assignments are graded holistically, with detailed instructions and rubric provided to students when the assignment is given, and will receive instructor feedback. Revisions are allowable on a case by case basis.

Grade Scale:
93 – 100 = A
90 – 92 = A-
88 – 89 = B+
83 – 87 = B
80 – 82 = B-
78 – 79 = C+
73 – 77 = C
70 – 72 = C-
68 – 69 = D+
63 – 67 = D
60 – 62 = D-
0 – 59 = F

Course Policies

Attendance Statement

Attendance and participation in class is vital to your success in this course. Some assignments we do will not be made available on Canvas and will not be able to be completed outside of class time. However, I feel it's fair to maintain a bit of flexibility. If you need to miss class for any reason, large or small, I ask that you make a reasonable effort to inform me before that class period. So long as you let me know ahead of time, your absence will count as excused. **After 6 unexcused absences or any period of extended absence, I will require you to meet with me to discuss how your grade may be impacted and how you can best succeed going forward.** I understand that life doesn't happen on schedule. As we continue through the semester, I will do my best to be communicative and transparent with you whenever possible, and I ask that you return that courtesy.

Late/Missing Work Statement

I have structured the course schedule in a way that is meant to spread out the workload and provoke minimum stress, but I understand that this class is not the only thing you do. At this time, I do not have plans to impose any hard and fast deductions for late work, but missing assignments will receive a 0 until submitted.

An extension of one week will be available for all assignments, but you must make a reasonable effort to be communicative with me regarding any challenges you have or accommodations you need for any of our major projects, both as a courtesy to my time and so we can work together to ensure you remain on track to complete all the necessary work for this course.

Office Hours Statement

My office hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays between 12: 30 and 2: 00 pm. You are welcome to meet with me in my office in Robert Bell 257 or online during those times. If those times do not work for you, I am happy to work with you on alternative arrangements that can meet your needs.

Academic Integrity Statement

Outright using someone else's ideas or words as your own or insinuating them as such on any assignment is plagiarism. It is a violation of the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities as defined in the student handbook and will be treated as such. If you are concerned about inadvertently violating this policy, please see me before completing the assignment in question.

genAI/ChatGPT Statement:
The use of ChatGPT, Claude, or any other genAI platform tool to generate ideas, written content, or to produce any other material is **prohibited** in this course. This policy exists for a number of reasons:

- This class is about improving your writing, reading, and research skills. If you are not doing that work yourself, you are not improving. Continued use of these kinds of tools can seriously atrophy your ability to do work like critical thinking, writing, and reading without them (see this recent study from MIT for more detail).
- AI tools of all kinds involve sticky academic honesty issues, since it raises the question of whether the work is truly yours and because tools like ChatGPT rely on training that utilizes a truly unfathomable amount of uncredited work, per their creators' own admissions.
- By their own admission, using genAI tools does not produce reliably accurate results (remember the lawyers who used them to write briefs, just to have the LLM "hallucinate" cases?).
- ChatGPT and other LLMs have a serious negative environmental impact that is accelerating climate change around the globe and harming quality of life for those who live nearest to tech centers (see sources here, here, here, and here for more information, as well as this recent story covering the harm to Memphis communities caused by Elon Musk's xAI supercomputer facility). The public debate regarding the recent boom of generative AI datacenters is ongoing and evolving, but these issues are very much still present in that debate.
- genAI, at all levels, is plagued with labor issues, including exploitation of workers' health, economic stability, and well-being. OpenAI (the creators of ChatGPT), as one example, exploits workers from the global south, especially workers in prisons and refugee camps, workers in Kenya, the Philippines, Columbia, and elsewhere (see sources here, here, here, here, here, and here for more information).

Put more bluntly, the use of genAI tools has no meaningfully positive impact on your writing in a course that is meant to instill foundational skills. You are only cheating yourself out of the learning experience that this class is meant to offer and contributing to environmental harm and labor exploitation through its use. I truly, genuinely believe that all of you are very capable students, and that becoming reliant on this technology can only hinder your development. Due to their unethical nature, the use of ChatGPT and any other genAI tools is not part of this classroom community.

If you are caught using these tools, you will be required to completely rewrite the relevant assignment. Failure to do so will result in a score of 0 for the assignment.

Personal Technology Statement

We will frequently use collaborative documents and storage like Google Drive, access online course material and do online research and writing in class. Laptops are allowed to be out during any class time for note taking unless otherwise advised, but I do ask that phone use be kept to a minimum. I am fine with you checking something or sending a quick text if you're done with individual and group work for that day or you are waiting for an important message, but please do not be on any device actively ignoring class.

Behavior and Respect Statement

Since you all come from a variety of backgrounds and interests, I do not expect all of us to agree with each other all of the time. Many of the readings we will engage with in this class are designed to appeal to our deeply held ideologies and emotions. Debating on issues you care about is a great way to grow your argumentative muscles, but that shouldn't come at the cost of respecting both your peers and I. For collaborative learning to be effective, you must respect the dignity of your classmates, yourself, your instructor, and our classroom environment. Any overtly hateful or offensive behavior (racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, etc.) will not be tolerated, either in class or in your written assignments. Any student demonstrating unacceptable behavior may expect either a verbal or written warning or may be asked to leave class for that period, depending on the nature of the behavior. Talk with me as soon as possible if any situation arises that will negatively affect your experience of this course.

Accommodation Statement

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services office coordinates services for students with disabilities and documentation of a disability needs to be on file with them as soon as possible so that I can provide any accommodations you require in a timely manner. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act protects your privacy as a student; university personnel and faculty are not permitted to share information about your academic progress with anyone outside the university (e.g., your parents) without your permission. Blogs, websites, and wikis are public. Thus, if you wish to protect your privacy, or simply prefer to remain anonymous, you may take precautions by using a pseudonym that won't be identifiable to people outside of this course. Please note that I will not grade or evaluate any of your work publicly.

Non-discrimination Statement

Ball State University is committed to fostering and promoting a healthy learning community. All students will be treated with respect, tolerance, and equality regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender, age, or economic status. If for any reason a student feels discriminated against in the classroom based on these differences, they should contact

the instructor or the department chair. The Office of University Compliance or the Office of Student Rights and Community Standards may be contacted if the student is not satisfied with the results of the meeting with the instructor or department chair. The Ball State University community believes in the strength of diversity and recognizes the importance of appreciating equality.

The Writing Center

Want extra feedback on your papers? The Writing Center is a community of Ball State students who value writing. Visit the Writing Center, located in RB 291, to collaborate with one of their trained peer tutors on any project for any major. The Writing Center is a comfortable, supportive environment for writers from all communities and backgrounds. They are open seven days a week, and any appointment made during their regular hours can be held online or in person. To make an appointment, go to ballstate.mywconline.com.

The Learning Center

The Learning Center offers free tutoring for many courses on campus, including science and humanities, modern and classical languages, math and business, help with any writing task, and study strategies such as time management, test-taking, note-taking, and effective textbook reading. Call 765-285-1006 or visit NQ 350 to make an appointment with a tutor.

Land Acknowledgment

As we come together as a learning community, I want to acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional homelands of the Myaamiaki (Miami) and Lenape (Delaware) peoples upon whose territory the university stands.