

**Description:** Rhetoric & Composition/Professional & Technical Writing (RC/PTW) covers a vast intellectual territory that draws on more than 3000 years of history and touches on every geographical area of the world. Clearly one reading list isn't going to be able to do justice to the world of possibilities. Therefore, we have limited our list's focus to ideas and concepts that students are likely to encounter in courses offered in the MA program (ENGL 257 or ENGL 259) and/or in the Professional & Technical Writing certificate program. It's unlikely that students will have read all of these texts in those classes, but it is very likely that students will have read some of these texts and should be able to draw on their RC/PTW coursework to read the others without excessive difficulty.

Questions that students encounter on the exam will allow students to focus their attention more toward Rhetoric & Composition or Professional & Technical Writing in keeping with courses they've taken; however, students opting to take this portion of the exam will need to read texts, familiarize themselves with concepts, and be able to refer thoughtfully to texts and concepts from both sections on the exam. The majority of these texts can be accessed through SJSU's library. The exceptions are marked below with an asterisk (\*), and we are working to acquire those for the library.

### Rhetoric & Composition Readings

1. Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle, eds. *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*, Utah State UP, 2015.
2. Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* vol. 1, no. 1, 1968, pp. 1-14.
3. Jim Corder, "Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love," *Rhetoric Review*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1985, pp. 16-32.
4. Sharon Crowley, *Composition in the University: Historical and Polemical Essays*, U of Pittsburgh P, 1998.
5. James A. Herrick, *The History and Theory of Rhetoric: An Introduction*, 4th ed. Pearson/Allyn & Bacon, 2009.
6. bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, Routledge, 1994.
7. Carolyn Miller, "Genre as Social Action," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* vol 70, no. 2, 1984, pp. 151-67.
8. Paul Matsuda, "The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity in US College Composition," *College English* vol. 68, no. 6, 2006, pp. 637-51.
9. William Riley Parker, "Where Do English Departments Come From?" *College English* vol. 28, no. 5, 1967, pp. 339-51.
10. Malea Powell, "Learning (Teaching) to Teach (Learn)," in *Relations, Locations, Positions: Composition Theory for Writing Teachers*, ed. Vandenberg, Hum, and Clary-Lemon, pp. 571-80, NCTE, 2006.
11. \* Mike Rose, *Lives on the Boundary*, Penguin, 1989.
12. Jacqueline Jones Royster, "When the First Voice You Hear Is Not Your Own," *College Composition and Communication* vol. 47, no. 1, 1996, pp. 29-40.
13. \* Gary Tate, Amy Ruppert Taggart, Kurt Schick, H. Brooke Hessler, eds., *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*, 2nd ed. Oxford UP, 2014.
14. Joseph Williams, "The Phenomenology of Error," *College Composition and Communication* vol. 32, no. 2, 1981, pp. 152-68.
15. Vershawn Ashanti Young, "Should Writers Use They Own Language?" *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies* vol. 12, no. 1, 2010, 110-7.

### Professional and Technical Writing Readings

1. Robert J. Connors, "The Rise of Technical Writing Instruction in America," *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1982, pp. 329-352.
2. Jo Allen, "The Case Against Defining Technical Writing," *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 68-77.
3. Heather Graves and Roger Graves, *A Strategic Guide to Technical Communication*, 2nd ed. Broadview P, 2012.
4. Amy Einsohn and Marilyn Schwartz, *The Copyeditor's Handbook: A Guide for Book Publishing and Corporate Communications*, 4th ed, U of California P, 2019.
5. Joseph M. Williams, *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, 12th ed., Pearson, 2016.

6. \* Susan Popham, "Teaching Editing through a Feminist Theoretical Lens," in *Editing in the Modern Classroom*, ed. Suzan Flanagan and Michael J. Albers, pp. 91-108, Routledge, 2019.
7. Meghan Casey, *The Content Strategy Toolkit: Methods, Guides, and Templates for Getting Content Right*, New Riders, 2015.
8. Ann Handley, *Everybody Writes: Your Go-To Guide to Creating Ridiculously Good Content*, Wiley, 2014.
9. Elise Verzosa Hurley, "The Rhetoric of Reach: Preparing Students for Technical Communication in the Age of Social Media," *Technical Communication Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 9, 2014, pp. 55-68.
10. Steve Krug, *Don't Make Me Think, Revisited: A Common Sense Approach to Web and Mobile Usability*, 3rd ed., New Riders, 2013.
11. Michael Salvo, "Ethics of Engagement: User-Centered Design and Rhetorical Methodology," *Technical Communication Quarterly*, vol. 10, no. 31, 2001, pp. 273-90.
12. Kim Golombisky and Rebecca Hagen, *White Space is Not Your Enemy: A Beginner's Guide to Communicating Visually through Graphic, Web, and Multimedia Design*, 2nd ed, Focal P, 2013.
13. William E. Blunder, *The Art and Craft of Feature Writing*, Plume, 1988.
14. Zachary Petit, *The Essential Guide to Freelance Writing: How to Write, Work, and Thrive on Your Own Terms*, Writer's Digest Books, 2015.
15. Alexander Thayer, Mary Evans, Alicia McBride, Matt Queen, and Jan Spyridakis, "Content Analysis as a Best Practice in Technical Communication Research," *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, vol. 37, no. 3, 2007, 267-79.

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Sample questions:

### **Rhet/Comp**

In selecting readings for the MA exam in Rhetoric and Composition, we intentionally chose texts that argue for multiple, in some cases competing, definitions of rhetoric and/or composition. In fact, arguing over what we should be arguing over is a central and fundamental aspect of the field because our central practices and values are wrapped up in perpetually shifting situations—that is, in relation to the realities and responsibilities of writing and speaking in specific contexts, with specific purposes, for specific audiences. In a short essay, refer to four or more readings from the exam list to 1) identify what you see as two or three most important components of a definition of rhetoric and/or composition, and 2) make an argument for why those are the most important components.

### **PTW**

In technical writing and editing, we often say that the technical writer is, first and foremost, an advocate for the reader. In a short essay 1) refer to multiple readings from the exam list and your experience to discuss what it means to be "an advocate for the reader," and 2) discuss the technical writer's specific role in advocating for the reader in two topics in technical writing (such as UX/document design, technical editing, content writing, writing for professional publications, etc.).