



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

PAR 108 · Austin, Texas 78712-1164

January 23, 1986

President William H. Cunningham  
Office of the President  
Main 400  
CAMPUS

Dear President Cunningham:

I can understand why you might believe that English 306 "really ought to be taught" in the high schools (**Daily Texan** 22 Jan. 1986), given the tendency of some faculty to characterize it as a grammar, spelling, and punctuation course. The best evidence I can present to argue the contrary--that "Rhetoric and Composition" is a sophisticated, college-level writing class--is the E 306 syllabus itself, which I have taken the liberty of enclosing.

The syllabus represents both the theoretical and the practical dimensions of "Rhetoric and Composition": students are taught not only how to write, but how to understand and assess the structure of ideas they encounter in any discipline. Unit V, for example, explores principles of inductive and deductive reasoning; Unit IX proposes a model for exploratory writing based on Kuhn's **Structure of Scientific Revolutions**. And Unit VI introduces students to the resources of a research complex the likes of which they cannot have encountered in high school--the UT libraries.

Whatever its fate, I hope E 306 will be judged fairly and accurately as the college level course it is. I remain unconvinced that what we gain logistically by placing "Rhetoric and Composition" outside the English department compensates for what we lose intellectually and pedagogically in abandoning a well-honed, well-proven, and (all things considered) remarkably popular course.

Respectfully,

John J. Ruszkiewicz  
Director of Freshman English