

# Dr. Jeffrey Rice

*By Collin Massie*



Dr. Jeffrey Rice is the English department's Undergraduate Professional Writing Advisor and currently teaches a technical as well as a business writing class, Rhetoric, Argument Analysis, Writing and Technology, and ENG 100 and 300.

Looking at a couple of these classes, a student might be tempted to shy away from what could be considered to exist on the "drier" end of the English spectrum. Yet, Dr. Rice has been renowned by students and professors alike for his ability to make these subjects not only incredibly enjoyable, but also very eye-opening. Dr. Hovet says, "He conveys topics that could be dry (I once saw him run an entire class on the Executive Summary – scintillating stuff...) in ways that engages students and advances real learning."

David Gifford, an MA student who has taken multiple classes with Dr. Rice, mentions an "air of freedom" that permeates his classroom. As he puts it, "What I learned from this enormous freedom was that everything is rhetorical, that persuasion and influence are essential human concerns, not just hot topics for the English classroom."

Dr. Rice's approach to rhetoric was rooted in his inborn curiosity and, as he puts it, "absent-mindedness." Because of this, he found it very easy to lean toward the philosophical, and so majored in English and philosophy. After taking a course from a well-known scholar of rhetoric, he was blown away by the ability to contextualize what he learned in the classroom to his everyday life.

He has published a book called *Beyond Post Process*, which is an edited collection looking at different ways of writing and writing structures, and he has written many works that combine the ideas of rhetorical theory, contemporary technology, and writing.

Of course, Dr. Rice's contributions to the English department are not just in the classroom. Dr. Jones mentions, "He also provides students with a unique study abroad experience: studying rhetoric in Greece!" Ancient Greek rhetoric is something Dr. Rice is particularly passionate about, because it's where we can trace most of our writing traditions back to. This knowledge, in particular, has been extremely beneficial in his philosophical approach to writing in the modern age.

Travel is perhaps his greatest enjoyment outside of writing and research, but it is by no means the only one. He also enjoys relaxing to a good video game. And it's quite apparent that his gaming tastes are not to be underestimated, evidenced by his recent delving into the world of *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*. Dr. Rice must share the opinion of many in the English world; that losing one's self in a good story is just impossible to beat.

Dr. Rice is also currently very excited about curriculum reform in the English department. "It pays homage to the traditions of English and what English studies have been and where that will go in the future." This excitement reflects his understanding that if current writing styles are rooted in ancient forms, there must be new avenues to explore.

To English students, and essentially just students in general, Dr. Rice says, "Get out of your comfort zone. Adopt a revived sense of curiosity! At this point in your life, you have the chance to be curious just for the sake of being curious. Take advantage of it."