Instructor: Sara DiCaglio  
Course: ENGL 355  
Title: The Rhetoric of Style

Description: How do we persuade, inform, move one another with language? This course takes as its subject the slippery and complex topic of style—sentence structure, tropes, rhythm, metaphor, and other techniques and tools that writers use to create effects with words. In order to look closely at style as an object of study, this course will take as its focus a range of readings about a specific topic: the body and its relation to health. Our fundamental concern will be rhetorical, focusing on style as a part of language’s larger force; however, we will also approach language as writers, readers, and fellow occupants of bodies. We will grow to understand style in the writing of others and in our own writing by learning to identify, analyze, and imitate a wide variety of stylistic choices and effects. Our readings will come from a range of genres, including fiction, non-fiction, prose poetry, and medical writing, and represent both more experimental and more traditional approaches to writing.

Proposed Readings: Our main course text will be Performing Prose by Chris Holcomb and M. Jimmie Killingsworth. Readings may include excerpts of work by authors such as Virginia Woolf, Elaine Scarry, Toni Morrison, Rafael Campo, Helena Maria Viramontes, Eula Biss, Susan Sontag, and Jenny Boully.