

Wabash College
RHE 370: THEORIZING RHETORIC
Spring 2017
MWF, 9-9:50am
Baxter 212

Professor: Jeffrey P. Mehltritt Drury, Ph.D.
Office: Fine Arts S204
Office Phone: (765) 361-6296
Home Phone: (989) 402-5333 (text message or voicemail between 9am and 9pm)
E-mail: druryj@wabash.edu
Office Hours: M, 11am-noon; Tu, 1-3pm; W, 2-3pm; by appt., or chance drop-in between 9am & 4pm. On Tuesdays, I may not be available until 1pm.

Course Overview

This course addresses several significant theoretical questions concerning the nature, function, and value of rhetoric: What constitutes “rhetoric”? What does rhetoric “do”? What is the nature of rhetoric’s “audience”? What does it mean to talk about “context”? And how do culture and difference influence the answers to the above questions? The course content will engage rhetoric scholarship from the mid-twentieth century to the present.

Students should expect this to be a seminar course, meaning that our class sessions will be largely student-driven engagement with the ideas presented in the assigned reading material. By taking this course, students will further develop crucial skills (e.g. productively participating in discussion, critical reading and thinking) as well as cultivate a more nuanced understanding of rhetoric’s nature and value that better enables them to negotiate the production of meaning in the complicated world around them.

Course Objectives

This course reflects the curricular goals of the Rhetoric Department and contributes to your fulfillment of the principles embodied in the Wabash Mission Statement:

1. RHETORIC AS A LIBERAL ART: This course will help you to consider how rhetoric is manifest in your daily life.
2. WRITTEN AND ORAL EXPRESSION: The various assignments will contribute to your oral and written communication skills.
3. RHETORIC AND DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES: This course emphasizes rhetoric as a feature of free society, particularly in the context of U.S. political institutions.
4. CRITICAL THINKING: Through the detailed study of theory, this course will contribute to your abilities in analytical reading and reasoning.
5. INTELLECTUAL INQUIRY: With its research requirements, this course contributes to information literacy.
6. METHODOLOGIES OF RHETORICAL STUDIES: This course encourages students to apply the theories of rhetoric to specific instances.

7. ENGAGING DIFFERENCE HUMANELY: This course requires you to consider views of rhetoric beyond the “traditional” canon of Western society.

Required Materials

Porrovecchio, Mark J., and Michelle Celeste Condit, eds. *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader*. 2nd ed. New York: Guilford Press, 2016. **(CRT)**

You will be required to print additional required readings available on the RHE 370 Canvas site. You should allocate approx. \$30 (600 pages, single-sided) for printing this semester.

Assignments

You will complete the following assignments (you will receive more precise criteria in class):

Participation and Scholarly Conduct (50 pts., 10%): Participation and scholarly conduct are crucial to the course objectives. This will be a seminar style course, in which we discuss the assigned material and work toward considering it in relation to examples you bring to class. My hope and expectation is that everyone (including me) demonstrates intellectual curiosity and an earnest desire to learn from one another. To facilitate this environment, it is your responsibility to attend class and get involved. I will assign daily participation grades between 1 and 10. I will grade participation following the rubric outlined on the “Discussion Expectations” page of Canvas. Please also refer to “Creating an Inclusive Classroom” on the next page for more details. Be advised that more than 5 absences will result in a letter grade deduction from your final grade and more than 10 absences *may result in failure of the course*. If you will miss class for Dean’s excuses, it is your responsibility to talk to me as soon as you know so we can make arrangements.

Muddiest Point/Reading Questions (60 pts., 12%): The readings in this class will likely pose a challenge to you. I don’t expect that you understand the material when you walk into class. I do expect, however, that you engage the material with an open mind and put in your best effort to make sense of it. As part of this process, you should get in the habit of marking “muddy” (unclear) passages and generating questions prompted by the reading material. You will be required to submit at least two muddy points or questions for each class meeting that I will use to guide our class discussion. To make this as useful as possible, I must receive responses through Canvas by **11pm the night before class**. Late submissions will receive a zero but you will get three drops across the semester.

Response Papers (50 pts., 10%): For two of the assigned articles, you will write a 3-4 page response paper to demonstrate continued engagement with the material. You may choose which of these to pursue but you must complete at least one over the material prior to Spring Break. The paper is due one week after we discuss the reading in class.

Theory Paper: You will work on an extended project concerning theory and rhetoric.

Topic Proposal & Preliminary Bibliography (20 pts., 4%): This 1-2 page proposal will explain and justify the topic you have chosen for the project. You will then include a bibliography citing rhetoric research relevant to this topic.

Essay Draft (60 pts., 12%): This will be a draft of the final, 15-20 page paper.

Final Essay (100 pts., 20%): This 15-20 page paper will be a formal essay that explores in depth one or more of the topics we discuss in class.

Presentation (40 pts., 8%): You will deliver a 10-12 minute presentation of your project during the final week of class.

Peer Review (20 pts., 4%): You will provide constructive feedback about one of your classmates' papers to help him improve the essay draft.

Discussion Leading (50 pts., 10%): For one class meeting, you will lead discussion of the assigned reading. To prepare for this, you will submit a lesson plan in advance.

Oral Exam (50 pts., 10%): You will be tested on the class material through an oral exam (similar to what you might expect for oral comps).

Grade Scale

Grade	Points	Percent	Grade	Points	Percent
A	465-500	93%-100%	C+	385-399	77%-79.9%
A-	450-464	90%-92.9%	C	365-384	73%-76.9%
B+	435-449	87%-89.9%	C-	350-364	70%-72.9%
B	415-434	83%-86.9%	D	300-349	60%-69.9%
B-	400-414	80%-82.9%	F	<300	<60%

Policies and Expectations

Creating an Inclusive Classroom: I am committed to your success in the class and to fostering an inclusive space. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help you thrive in this course. Come talk to me if you're having trouble with the readings, wrestling with how to take notes, or want to generally discuss how to maximize your learning. If there are circumstances that affect your performance in this class—be they personal, health, family, or other—please let me know as soon as possible so that we can collaboratively determine how to proceed.

Wabash College is dedicated to full access for all qualified students, as am I. If you have a documented disability (or believe you may have a disability) that might affect your work in this class, please contact Heather Thrush (Center Hall 112A, thrushh@wabash.edu, x6347,), Coordinator of Student Engagement and Retention, and then discuss your situation with one of us as soon as possible.

This course will require you to set forth your own ideas that reflect your biases and are not necessarily agreeable to everyone else. As gentlemen, you should carefully consider the effects your rhetoric may have and refrain from hostile or disrespectful comments seeking to shut down or "win" arguments. Additionally, you should strive to use inclusive language that considers numerous viewpoints and experiences.

Reading Assignments: To succeed in this course, you must keep up with the assigned readings by completing them on time. *Class meetings will be about building on and discussing the readings, not summarizing them.* I highly recommend that you take reading notes to supplement class notes; see me if you want tips for how to do this.

Written Assignment Late Policy: If you do not turn in a written assignment when it is due, you will be penalized 5% per 24-hour period that it is late (for example, if the paper is due at 9am on Friday, turning it in at any point between 9:01am on Friday and 9am on Saturday would result in a 5% deduction), for a maximum penalty of 50%. Submissions of Muddiest Points/Reading Questions beyond the deadline will receive a zero.

Assignment Feedback: In general, I will provide detailed written feedback in response to the papers you write in this class. Many of these comments are meant to prompt your continued reflection on and engagement with the material while also providing thoughts for how to improve on future assignments. I hope that you will find this helpful as you progress through the course and please keep in mind that the quantity of feedback alone (i.e. getting a lot of comments) in no way speaks to the quality of your work.

Emergency Procedures: In case of a fire, we are to proceed from the classroom, go downstairs to the nearest exit, and move to the mall across from the building. You should join me and your classmates once outside. In the event of a severe weather storm, we are to proceed to the basement and shelter in the basement hallway.

Professor Communication: Apart from face-to-face interaction through office hours or meetings, my preferred mode of communication with you is e-mail. Please get in the habit of checking your official Wabash e-mail once a day and I will do the same. If you e-mail me, you should expect an e-mail response within 24 hours (turnaround may be longer on weekends). E-mails after 9pm should expect a response the following day.

The Gentleman's Rule: The Gentleman's Rule should guide your conduct in this course. This means that all work you produce is your own original work, not "borrowed" from someone or somewhere else, recycled from previous courses, or completed with other students (unless explicitly permitted), friends, and parents. It also means that all written and oral work drawing upon other sources must **explicitly** reference them using standard formats (MLA, APA, or Chicago style).

I look forward to working with all of you and am excited to learn alongside you!

Course Schedule

This schedule is tentative. Readings, assignments, and due dates are subject to change. You should complete reading assignments prior to the class date for which they are assigned.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic/Assignment</u>
M, Jan. 16	Course Introduction Read Burke, "Definition of [hu]Man," <i>The Hudson Review</i> 16 (1963-1964): 491, 507, 511-14 [sections I, start of VI, VII]. <u>Unit One: The Meaning of Rhetorical Theory</u>
W, Jan. 18	What is the "Rhetoric" in "Rhetorical Theory"? Read "Definitions of Rhetoric"; Douglas Ehninger et al., "Report of the Committee on the Scope of Rhetoric and the Place of Rhetorical Studies in Higher Education," in <i>The Prospect of Rhetoric</i> , eds. Lloyd F. Bitzer and Edwin Black (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971, 208-14.
F, Jan. 20	What is the "Theory" in "Rhetorical Theory"? Read Barry Brummett, "Rhetorical Theory as Hueristic and Moral," <i>Communication Education</i> 33 (1984): 97-107.
M, Jan. 23	What are the General Frameworks for Rhetorical Theory? Read Dennis Mumby, "Modernism, Postmodernism, and Communication Studies: A Rereading of an Ongoing Debate," <i>Communication Theory</i> 7 (1997): 1-13. <u>Unit Two: Rhetorical Text, Context, and Audience</u>
W, Jan. 25	The Nature of Rhetorical Situations Read Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," <i>CRT</i> , 159-65; Vatz, "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation," <i>CRT</i> , 166-70.
F, Jan. 27	The Nature of Rhetorical Situations (cont.) Read Edbauer, "Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation to Rhetorical Ecologies," <i>CRT</i> , 182-93.
M, Jan. 30	The Nature of Text & Context Read Branham & Pearce, "Between Text and Context: Toward a Rhetoric of Contextual Reconstruction," <i>Quarterly Journal of Speech</i> 71 (1985): 19-36.
W, Feb. 1	The Nature of Text & Context (cont.) Read McGee, "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture," <i>CRT</i> , 50-59.
F, Feb. 3	Review & Application Read TBA

M, Feb. 6	The Nature of Audiences Read Black, "The Second Persona," <i>CRT</i> , 295-302; Michael Calvin McGee, "In Search of 'the People': A Rhetorical Alternative," <i>Quarterly Journal of Speech</i> 61 (1975): 235-49
W, Feb. 8	The Nature of Audiences (cont.) Read Wander, "The Third Persona," <i>CRT</i> , 303-19.
F, Feb. 10	The Nature of Audiences (cont.) Read Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," <i>CRT</i> , 382-95.
M, Feb. 13	The Nature of Audiences (cont.) Read Leah Ceccarelli, "Polysemy: Multiple Meanings in Rhetorical Criticism," <i>Quarterly Journal of Speech</i> 84 (1998): 395-415.
W, Feb. 15	Review & Application Read TBA
F, Feb. 17	Finding Research (Location TBA)

Unit Three: A Taste of What Rhetoric "Does"

M, Feb. 20	The Meaning of Meaning Read C. K. Ogden & I. A. Richards, <i>The Meaning of Meaning</i> (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1923), 1-23.
T, Feb. 21	DUE: Topic Proposal & Preliminary Bibliography by 5pm
W, Feb. 22	Speech Acts Read J. L. Austin, <i>How To Do Things With Words</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), Lectures I-II, pp. 1-24.
F, Feb. 24	Rhetoric & Dramatism/Terministic Screens Read Kenneth Burke, "Terministic Screens," <i>Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method</i> (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1966), 44-62.
M, Feb. 27	Feminist Perspective on Rhetoric Read Foss & Griffin, "A Feminist Perspective on Rhetorical Theory: Toward a Clarification of Boundaries," <i>Western Journal of Communication</i> 56 (1992): 330-49.
W, March 1	Rhetoric & Epistemology Read Scott, "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic," <i>CRT</i> , 99-105.
F, March 3	Rhetoric & Epistemology (cont.) Read Cherwitz & Hikins, "Rhetorical Perspectivism," <i>CRT</i> , 116-29.
March 6-10	No Class – Spring Break

Unit Four: Rhetoric, Difference, & Public Life

- M, March 13 **No Class – Oral Exams**
- W, March 15 **No Class – Oral Exams**
- F, March 17 **No Class – Central States Convention**
- M, March 20 Rhetoric & Public Life
 Read Jürgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article,” *New German Critique* 3 (1974): 49-55; Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” *Social Text* 25/26 (1990): 56-80 [selections].
- W, March 22 Rhetoric & Public Life (cont.)
 Read Kevin M. DeLuca & Jennifer Peeples, “From Public Sphere to Public Screen: Democracy, Activism, and the ‘Violence’ in Seattle,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19 (2002): 125-51.
- F, March 24 Rhetoric & Public Life (cont.)
 Read Robert Asen, “A Discourse Theory of Citizenship,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90 (2004): 189-211.
- M, March 27 Rhetoric & Power in Public Life
 Read McKerrow, “Critical Rhetoric,” *CRT*, 396-412.
- W, March 29 Rhetoric & Power in Public Life
 Read Patricia Roberts-Miller, “Democracy, Demagoguery, and Critical Rhetoric,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8 (2005): 459-76.
- F, March 31 Rhetoric & Power in Public Life
 Read Dana Cloud, “The Materiality of Discourse as Oxymoron: A Challenge to Critical Rhetoric,” *Western Journal of Communication* 58 (1994): 141-63.
- M, April 3 Review & Application
 Read TBA
 DUE: Essay Draft by 9pm
- W, April 5 Rhetoric & Difference
 Read Thomas K. Nakayama and Robert L. Krizek, “Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 81 (1995): 291-309.
- F, April 7 Rhetoric & Difference (cont.)
 Read bell hooks, “Language: Teaching New Worlds/New Words,” *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 167-75.

M, April 10	Rhetoric & Difference (cont.) Read Raka Shome, "Postcolonial Interventions in the Rhetorical Canon," <i>CRT</i> , 558-71.
W, April 12	Review & Application Read TBA DUE: Peer Review by 9pm
F, April 14	Rhetoric & Cyberspace Read Zappen, "Digital Rhetoric," <i>CRT</i> , 90-94; Jordan, "A Virtual Death and a Real Dilemma," <i>CRT</i> , 484-500.
M, April 17	Rhetoric & Postmodernism Read Dennis Mumby, "Modernism, Postmodernism, and Communication Studies: A Rereading of an Ongoing Debate," <i>Communication Theory</i> 7 (1997): 14-28.
W, April 19	Presentations
F, April 21	Presentations
M, April 24	Presentations
W, April 26	<i>No Class – Court of Appeals</i>
F, April 28	Presentations; Course Review
T., May 2	DUE: Final Paper by noon