

COMM 5340: Rhetorical Methods

T 3:00 – 5:50 p.m., GAB 301

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Office Hours:	Wednesdays, 1:30-3:00 p.m.; Thursdays 2:00-3:30 p.m.; and by appointment
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Each of us encounters and scrutinizes countless cultural objects every day. We interpret, deconstruct, and create meanings for everything from clothing to sporting events to religious rituals. *Rhetoric is understood, in this course, as an act of cultural critique.* In this course, we will critically engage a number of social phenomena to explore the ways we formulate attitudes, beliefs, and values in relationships to a variety of cultural objects or “texts.” This class will offer explicit focus to a variety of critical perspectives that can be adapted and deployed to examine cultural objects. Along the way we will explore films, television programs, political speeches, songs, and sacred cultural documents to offer clarity to the concepts we engage. Of central importance to this class will be the ancient, but always relevant, concept of invention. Perhaps the greatest challenge in developing critical perspectives is recognizing that such attitudes largely come from our own personal experiences, but also being cognizant that they do not simply materialize out of thin air. Critical work is art. All that one needs is right there, lurking inside one’s mind. However, translating those thoughts to the canvas of public display can be enormously challenging (though, often deeply satisfying).

That said, this class serves three interrelated functions. First, it is an introduction, of sorts, to the *history of the field* of rhetorical criticism/critical rhetoric. As such, we will read particularly disciplinary writings to orient ourselves toward some of the major shifts and innovations in the field. Second, it is an introduction to a *critical lexicon* that will equip you to engage various texts. Third, it is an introduction to *critical attitudes* that will orient your perspective. Rather than teach “methods” in any kind of static sense, this course is designed to help you to come to terms with various ways of approaching texts and find your own critical voice in the process.

Required Readings (ISBN #s in parentheses):

- Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study In Method* (ISBN-13: 978-0299075545)
- James Jasinski, *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies* (ISBN-13: 978-0761905042)—referenced on the syllabus as **[JJ]**
- Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th Edition (ISBN-13: 978-0226823379)
- Electronic reader available on Blackboard (all of the articles are included in this)

Course Objectives

- ❖ Understand the history of rhetorical criticism in communication studies in the U.S.
- ❖ Understand the rhetoricity of U.S. public culture.
- ❖ Understand the connections between communication and culture.
- ❖ Improve students' ability to critically engage public culture.
- ❖ Develop critical abilities necessary to describe, explain, analyze, and evaluate symbolic action in the public sphere.
- ❖ Bolster critical thinking and analytical skills. Students should be able to identify an issue, critically evaluate a situation, formulate a position, and answer research questions in a precise and nuanced manner.
- ❖ Appreciate, evaluate, and question the complex ways in which cultural objects make and re-make our (social) world.

Course Requirements

1. Engaged Participation (10% of final grade)

This class will become what we make of it—collectively. A graduate class is meant to call forth critical thinking from each one of us so that we may engage in dialogue with each other and the chosen texts. Although we all enter the room with various backgrounds, everyone is expected to raise questions of interest or uncertainty on a weekly basis in the hopes that this engagement will help to stretch our perspectives as activists, teachers, researchers, writers, and human beings. We, inevitably, will disagree. Disagreement is not a problem from a rhetorical perspective. Rather, it suggests the opportunity for further dialogue and engagement so that we may learn from each other. Instead of aiming to resolve the “right” or “winning” answers, we will attempt to grapple with which ones are “better” and “worse.” Thus, your comments should be constructive and aim for specificity (noting a specific passage, a particular comment made in class, an example of a current event, etc.). By contextualizing even our questions, we hopefully will be able to learn from each other—which, I believe, is the primary goal of a graduate class. You have to attend to participate. Non-attendance is a non-option in graduate courses.

2. Warm-up Essay (5% of final grade)

You will write a short (3-page) essay at the beginning of the semester. This essay is designed to get you writing like a rhetorician in miniature. The paper will involve specific writing prompt, require that you make an argument, and necessitate that you synthesize scholarly research to help you make that argument. This essay also gives the professor the opportunity to comment on your writing and citation style early to correct problems before they are too big to correct.

3. Final Critical Research Project (85% total)

For the final project, you are expected to write a critical research paper that engages some rhetorical artifact from the perspective of some of the theme(s), discussion(s), and reading(s) of this class. Being “critical,” this paper will require an argument that involves both theoretical and political stakes. As “research,” this paper will require some outside investigation on the specifics of your paper topic. As with all assignments, feel welcome to talk with me as you develop your ideas and begin working on the assignment. This paper should be presentable at a major conference. If this can be turned towards your thesis work, all the better. The project will be

divided into several parts, which are detailed below. More information will be distributed in class.

- ❖ **Paper #1: The Critical Object.** This is a short (3-page) essay in which you will describe the text & context you seek to engage in your final paper. The paper should setup the rhetorical context for your cultural artifact/text, demonstrate how it fits in that context, and raise preliminary critical questions you intend to engage. This is **5%** of your final grade.
- ❖ **Paper #2: The Prospectus.** This is a short (3-page) essay in which you will propose your final project. You should have a preliminary thesis, identify a body of theoretical literature to inform your analysis, and demonstrate your ability to put the two together in a critical way. This is **10%** of your final grade.
- ❖ **Paper #3: Critical Literature Review.** This is **not** a string of abstracts or annotations. A critical literature review should craft a compelling argument using existing scholarly sources and demonstrate a deficiency or rupture in that literature that serves as a jumping-off-point for your project. It should be approximately 7 pages long. This is **20%** of your final grade.
- ❖ **The Final Paper.** Using material from your previous papers (adjusted per the professor's comments), you will write a 20-25 page essay that advances a strong critical argument. The paper should include an introduction (2-3 pages), critical literature review (6-8 pages), three main points of analysis (10-12 pages), and a thorough conclusion (3-4 pages). These page ranges are estimates; but they are a good set of general guidelines. This is **45%** of your final grade.
- ❖ **Final Paper Presentation.** These should be conference-style presentations that are 8-10 minutes long. We will also have Q&A after each group (or panel) of papers presented. This is **5%** of your final grade.

NOTE: Unless otherwise noted, all papers should be submitted in class AND via email as an MS Word attachment. All papers should conform to the Chicago Manual of Style and be free of spelling, grammatical, and research errors.

Grading: I assume that grad students have the ability to read, analyze, synthesize, engage in critical thinking, write expertly using correct style/grammar/etc., and participate intelligently in class discussion. Students are expected to produce flawless written work and intelligent critical engagements.

- A Clearly Outstanding and Exceptional Work
- B Above Average Work
- C Average Work (meets all the criteria for an assignment)
- D Below Average Work
- F Fails to Meet Minimal Expectations

I reserve the right to adjust final grades upward or downward by one increment (e.g., A to A+, or B to B-) on the basis of my subjective evaluation of your general class participation.

Late Work Policy: Assignments are due by dates and times specified in the course schedule and must be submitted as directed. Late work will not be accepted.

Attendance Policy: This is a graduate class. Don't miss days. Each class missed will result in a ½-letter grade deduction from your final grade and impact your participation grade negatively. Exceptions for medical reasons and family emergencies will be made on a case-by-case basis and only when discussed with the professor in advance.

Policy Regarding Communication Devices: It's pretty simple ... turn off your cell phones, pagers, etc. during class. You should be devoting your attention to the class, not to your friends outside of class; so please, don't be texting, IMing, Facebooking, or anything of the sort during class. If your phone goes off in class or you're caught texting/IMing/Facebooking, you'll probably be mocked the first time. If it happens again or, worse yet, you don't stop when asked, you'll be asked to leave the class. If it happens during an exam, your test will be confiscated and you'll receive a grade of zero. If there are extenuating circumstances, you must inform the professor before class (not after you're caught).

Access Policy: "The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 -- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens."

I cooperate fully with the University's Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to provide reasonable accommodation to students who wish to avail themselves of ODA services. Students who wish to self-identify should register with the ODA no later than the second day of class.

Plagiarism & Cheating: All persons shall adhere to the Student Standards of Academic Integrity regarding academic dishonesty, including acts of cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and sabotage.

Policies and procedures regarding adjudication of acts of academic dishonesty are available in the UNT Policy Manual at <http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm>. You can also read more here: <http://www.unt.edu/csrr/development/integrity.html>. If you have ANY question whatsoever about what might constitute academic dishonesty, ask. Ignorance of the rules is not an excuse. Plus, you all should know this stuff from COMM 3010.

Acceptable Student Behavior: Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.unt.edu/csrr.

Incomplete Policy: In keeping with UNT policy, I cannot award incompletes simply because a student does not complete coursework in a timely manner. An incomplete may be awarded only in cases where students meet the following conditions: (a) the student has completed at least three-quarters of the work for the semester, and (b) the grade is warranted by a medical or military excuse. Even in such instances, it is the student's responsibility to request a grade of incomplete, which will not be awarded without explicit agreement by the professor.

Technology Issues: Each student is **required** to obtain the rudimentary skills necessary to maintain a university **e-mail account** and use **Blackboard Vista**. Check your e-mail and Blackboard regularly so you receive class-related messages in a timely fashion.

We all depend upon machines to get our work done. We all know that machines break down. When they do, it does not constitute an "excuse" or an "emergency." It is expected that you will prepare your assignments *far enough in advance* so that *when* (not if) your computer malfunctions you will still have time to rectify the problem and turn in the assignment on time. Also: **ALWAYS KEEP GOOD BACKUPS!!!**

Crisis Contingency: In the event of the university closing for weather-related reasons or illness outbreak, e.g. flu, please visit the course website on Blackboard where you will find instructions.

COMM Library Copier Use Policy: Students conducting research in the Communication Studies Library associated with departmental coursework have access to a printer/photocopier located in the office adjacent to the library. We encourage students to make use of this resource to print research accessed online in the library or to copy essays from any of the department's holdings. Students may not use this resource for other purposes, such as printing courses assignments, class notes, scripts, etc. Students who use the copier for uses other than those outlined above will lose copying privileges.

SETE/Course Evaluations: The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider the SETE to be an important part of your participation in this class. SETE administration for Fall 2010 is from Monday, November 29th to Friday, December 17th.

Disclaimer: This syllabus should not be considered a binding contract on the part of the professor, who reserves the right to change any aspect of the course without prior notice.

Course Reading/Assignment Schedule

It is expected that you will read the text(s) **BEFORE** coming to class for the day they're assigned and that you will *bring the readings with you to class* so we can discuss them fully. We may alter some of the readings as the semester progresses depending on the needs of the class. All **[JJ]** readings are reference materials listed for your benefit. They are not intended to be points of class discussion—just read them as needed depending on your individual levels of experience.

August 31: Introduction(s), Criticism, Research, and the Chicago Style

- **[JJ]** Criticism in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies (definitely read this JJ entry)
- Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Seventh Edition (read Part I and familiarize yourself with the citation style in Part II)
- Charles E. Morris III, "Richard Halliburton's Bearded Tales" (skim for style)
- Robert E. Terrill, "Unity and Duality in Barack Obama's 'A More Perfect Union'" (skim for style)

September 7: Rhetorical Criticism ... Some Early Takes

- **[JJ]** Canons of Rhetoric; Ethos; Pathos; Logos
- Herbert A. Wichelns, "The Literary Criticism of Oratory"
- Ernest J. Wraga, "Public Address: A Study in Social and Intellectual History"
- Wayland Maxfield Parrish, "The Study of Speeches"
- Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation"
- Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method*—Chapters 1-3

Warm-up Paper is Due

September 14: Neo-Classical Criticism (and its Discontents)

- **[JJ]** Invention; Arrangement; Style; Memory; Neo-Aristotelianism
- Marie Hochmuth Nichols, "Lincoln's First Inaugural"
- Forbes Hill, "Conventional Wisdom – Traditional Form—The President's Message of November 3, 1969"
- Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method*—Chapters 4-5

September 21: What Happened Next

- [JJ] Genre; Metaphor; Narrative; Close Reading; Iconicity
- Wingspread Conference Reports on Rhetoric & Rhetorical Criticism
- Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, “Form and Genre in Rhetorical Criticism: An Introduction”
- Robert L. Ivie, “Metaphor and the Rhetorical Invention of Cold War ‘Idealists’”
- William F. Lewis, “Telling America’s Story: Narrative Form and the Reagan Presidency”
- Michael Leff, “Things Made by Words: Reflections on Textual Criticism”
- Raymie E. McKerrow, “Research in Rhetoric: A Glance at our Recent Past, Present, and Potential Future”

Paper #1: Critical Object Paper is Due

September 28: The Ideological Turn

- [JJ] Social Knowledge; Ideology; Ideographs; Hegemony; Interpellation; Identification
- Philip Wander and Steven Jenkins, “Rhetoric, Society, and the Critical Response”
- Michael Calvin McGee, “The Ideograph: A Link between Rhetoric and Ideology”
- Philip Wander, “The Ideological Turn in Modern Criticism”
- Maurice Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the *Peuple Quebecois*”
- Joshua Gunn & Shaun Treat, “Zombie Trouble: A Propaedeutic on Ideological Subjectification and the Unconscious”

October 5: Critical Rhetoric, Productive Critique

- [JJ] Text; Context; Critical Rhetoric; Power; Subject/Subjectivity
- Michael Calvin McGee, “Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture”
- Raymie E. McKerrow, “Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis”
- Martha Cooper, “A Feminist Glance at Critical Rhetoric”
- Kent Ono and John Sloop, “Commitment to *Telos*—A Sustained Critical Rhetoric”
- Robert L. Ivie, Collected Editorials from the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*

October 12: Public Address ... or the Return of the Repressed ☺

- [JJ] Hermeneutics; Public Sphere; Style
- Martin J. Medhurst, “The Contemporary Study of Public Address: Renewal, Recovery, and Reconfiguration”
- Rosa A. Eberly, “Public Making and Public Doing: Rhetoric's Productive and Practical Powers”
- David A. Frank, “The Prophetic Voice and the Face of the Other in Barack Obama’s “A More Perfect Union” Address, March 18, 2008”
- Robert E. Terrill, “Unity and Duality in Barack Obama's ‘A More Perfect Union’”

Paper #2: Final Paper Prospectus (Proposal) is Due

October 19: Social Movement(s)

- Lealand M. Griffin, “On Studying Social Movements”
- Michael Calvin McGee, “‘Social Movement’: Phenomenon or Meaning?”
- David Zarefsky, “A Skeptical View of Movement Studies”
- Robert S. Cathcart, “Defining Social Movements by their Rhetorical Form”
- James R. Andrews, “History and Theory in the Study of the Rhetoric of Social Movements”
- Phaedra C. Pezzullo, “Resisting ‘National Breast Cancer Awareness Month’: The Rhetorics of Counterpublics and Their Cultural Performances”
- Darrel Enck-Wanzer, “Trashing the System: Social Movement, Intersectional Rhetoric, and Collective Agency in the Young Lords Organization’s Garbage Offensive”

October 26: Rhetoric and Materiality

- [JJ] Overdetermined; Representation
- Michael Calvin McGee, “A Materialist’s Conception of Rhetoric”
- Ronald Walter Greene, “Another Materialist Rhetoric”
- Dana L. Cloud, “*The Matrix* and Critical Theory’s Desertion of the Real”
- Ronald Walter Greene, “Rhetorical Capital: Communicative Labor, Money/Speech, and Neo-Liberal Governance”
- Jennifer Daryl Slack, “Duel to the Death?”
- Dana L. Cloud, “On Dialectics and ‘Duelism’: A Reply to Jennifer Daryl Slack”

November 2: Rhetoric and the Critique of Race

- Kirt Wilson, “The Racial Politics of Imitation in the Nineteenth Century”
- David A. Frank and Mark Lawrence McPhail, “Barack Obama’s Address to the 2004 Democratic National Convention: Trauma, Compromise, Consilience, and the (Im)Possibility Of Racial Reconciliation”
- Nadine Ehlers, “Hidden in Plain Sight: Defying Juridical Racialization in *Rhineland v. Rhineland*”
- Lisa A. Flores, Dreama G. Moon & Thomas K. Nakayama, “Dynamic Rhetorics of Race: California’s Racial Privacy Initiative and the Shifting Grounds of Racial Politics”
- David Theo Goldberg, “A Political Theology of Race”

November 9: Rhetoric and the Critique of Whiteness

- Thomas Nakayama and Robert Krizek, “Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric”
- Eric King Watts, “Border Patrolling and ‘Passing’ in Eminem’s *8 Mile*”
- Mickey Hess, “Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer”
- Greg Dickinson & Karrin Vasby Anderson, “Fallen: O.J. Simpson, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and the Re-Centering of White Patriarchy”
- Helene A. Shugart, “Crossing Over: Hybridity and Hegemony in the Popular Media”

November 16: No Class, NCA

**Paper #3: Critical Literature Review is Due
via Email (Word Attachment)
by 5:00 p.m. CST**

November 23: Rhetoric and the Critique of Gender (Or Genders' Critique[s] of Rhetoric)

- Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Rhetoric of Women's Liberation: An Oxymoron"
- Celeste M. Condit, "Opposites in an Oppositional Practice: Rhetorical Criticism and Feminism"
- Suzanne Marie Enck-Wanzer, "All's Fair in Love and Sport: Black Masculinity and Domestic Violence in the News"
- John M. Sloop, "Riding in Cars Between Men"
- Carole Blair, Julie R. Brown, and Leslie A. Baxter, "Disciplining the Feminine"

November 30: Rhetoric and the Critique of Sexuality (Or Is it the Other Way?)

- Frederick C. Corey and Thomas K. Nakayama, "Sextext"
- Jeffrey Bennett, "Love Me Gender: Normative Homosexuality and 'Ex-gay' Performativity in Reparative Therapy Narratives"
- Robert Westerfelhaus and Celeste Lacroix, "Seeing 'Straight' through *Queer Eye*: Exposing the Strategic Rhetoric of Heteronormativity in a Mediated Ritual of Gay Rebellion"
- Isaac West, "PISSAR's Critically Queer and Disabled Politics"
- Karma R. Chávez, "Border (In)Securities: Normative and Differential Belonging in LGBTQ and Immigrant Rights Discourse"

December 7: Visual Rhetoric and Public Memory

- Carole Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci, Jr., "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as Prototype"
- Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, "Performing Civic Identity: Flag Raisings at Iwo Jima and Ground Zero"
- Brian Lain, "Panoramic Memories: Realism, Agency, and the Remembrance of Japanese American Internment"
- Barbara A Biesecker, "Remembering World War II: The Rhetoric and Politics of National Commemoration at the Turn of the 21st Century"
- Kevin Michael Deluca, Christine Harold, and Kenneth Rufo, "Q.U.I.L.T.: A Patchwork of Reflections"

December 14: Final Paper Presentations

Final Paper is Due