

English 4115
Introduction to Rhetorical Criticism
Fall 2004
Monday/Wednesday, 1:00-2:20 p.m.
LPM 305

Professor: Dr. Tony Slagle
Office: 8 Pedreira
Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 10:00-1:00, 4:00-5:00 and by appointment
Tel: 764-0000 x3811
Email: tslagle@earthlink.net

Course Description

Introduction to the methods, theories, and practice of rhetorical criticism.

Course Prerequisites

At least one course in Speech Communication in Humanities English or permission of instructor.
High fluency in English required.

Purpose and Approach

This course introduces, and invites you to practice, various theories and methods of rhetorical criticism. We will focus on discourse and genres, including but not limited to advertising, journalism, professional articles, reports, essays, and electronic and on-line texts. The main goals of rhetorical criticism are to describe and analyze the structures of persuasive discourse, and to evaluate the possible effects of these structures on audiences. For a rhetorical critic, almost any discourse is an appropriate subject for analysis--not necessarily because the text is "well written" or "literary," but because it reveals and reflects cultural values, social trends, and social relationships. Throughout the course, you will be encouraged to think of rhetorical criticism as a way to highlight cultural assumptions embodied in the style, word choices, argumentative structures, and even physical layout and visual elements of documents.

At the beginning of the term, we will review highlights of the classical rhetorical tradition, and explore ways in which that tradition underlies certain contemporary methods of rhetorical criticism. For the rest of the term, we'll examine, discuss, and practice a range of contemporary critical methods. You will also have the opportunity to analyze other textual, visual, or online rhetorical artifacts.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course the student will:

1. gain an understanding and appreciation of the importance and relevance of rhetorical theory and criticism to humanistic study.
2. understand and be able to apply historical and contemporary approaches to rhetorical theory and criticism.
3. understand how historical context, cultural values, and sites of difference (i.e., race, class, gender, and sexual identity) influence perceptions and interpretations.
4. develop an understanding of the role of rhetorical analysis in interpreting and evaluating expression of human experience.
5. be able to discern how rhetoric is an essential element of the human experience.
6. distinguish the role of rhetoric as a significant force in democratic societies.
7. develop/enhance critical thinking skills by considering a range of perspectives on significant cultural/social issues.
8. develop writing skills by writing about contemporary rhetorical artifacts, both discursive and non-discursive.
9. develop research skills.

Textbook:

Foss, S. K. (2004). *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice* (3rd ed.). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Course Requirements

You are expected to turn in your assignments on the date that they are due. Late assignments will be graded at the discretion of the professor, and will only be accepted with a legitimate excuse.

Evaluación diferenciada a estudiantes con necesidades especiales.

Short Essay #1	10%
Short Essay #2	10%
Term Paper	20%

Exam #1	10%
Exam #2	10%
Exam #3	10%
Exam #4	10%
Class Participation	20%

Los estudiantes que reciben servicios de Rehabilitación Vocacional deben comunicarse co el profesor al inicio del semestre para planificar el acomodo razonable y equip asistivo necesario conforme a las recomendaciones de la Oficina de Asuntos Estudiantes. También aquellos estudiantes con necesidades especiales que requieren de algún tip de asistencia o acomodo deben comunicarse co el profesor.

Description of Assignments

Short Essays: For the short essays, you will select one of the methods that we study in class and write a brief (3-4 pages) rhetorical analysis of a rhetorical artifact that you choose. These papers will be accepted throughout the semester. However, in order to keep your work from “piling up” at the end of the semester, one of these must be turned in by October 4th and the second by November 8th unless you have made other arrangements with me (because you would like to use one of the methods we haven’t covered in class).

Term Paper: Like the short essay, the term paper will be a rhetorical analysis of an artifact of your own choosing. This paper, however, should be a more in-depth analysis of the artifact. The paper should be 8-10 pages in length.

Exams: The four exams will be essay exams. You will be given a rhetorical artifact to critique using one of the methods that we have discussed in class. You may use your book and notes for the exams.

Class Participation: Class participation is extremely important in this type of course, especially on days that we apply the models of criticism to rhetorical artifacts. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the course material.

A note on readings: The readings from the textbook are listed. Additional readings will be assigned and will either be in the textbook, or they will be placed on reserve in the Richardson Seminar Room in Pedreira.

Date	Topic	Readings
August 11	Introduction to course Discuss Syllabus The Nature of Rhetorical Criticism	Make sure that you read Chapter 1.

Date	Topic	Readings
August 16	Doing Rhetorical Criticism	Chapter 2
August 18	Neo-Aristotelean Criticism	Chapter 3
August 23	Neo-Aristotelean Criticism	
August 25	Cluster Criticism	Chapter 4
August 30	Cluster Criticism	
September 1	Exam #1	
September 6	No Class, Labor Day Holiday	
September 8	Fantasy-Theme Criticism	Chapter 5
September 13	Fantasy-Theme Criticism	
September 15	Generic Criticism	Chapter 7
September 20	Generic Criticism	
September 22	Metaphoric Criticism	Chapter 9 Slagle, et. al
September 27	Metaphoric Criticism	
September 29	Exam #2	
October 4	Narrative Criticism 1st Short Paper due no later than this date.	Chapter 10
October 6	TBA	
October 11	TBA	
October 13	Narrative Criticism	
October 18	Pentadic Criticism	Chapter 11
October 20	Pentadic Criticism	
October 25	Generative Criticism	Chapter 12
October 27	Generative Criticism	
November 1	No Class, Electoral Recess	
November 3	No Class, Electoral Recess	

Date	Topic	Readings
November 8	Exam #3 2nd short paper due no later than this date unless you are using one of the methods not yet discussed.	
November 10	TBA	
November 15	Ideological Criticism	Chapter 8
November 17	Ideological Criticism	
November 22	Feminist Criticism	Chapter 6
November 24	TBA	
November 29	Feminist Criticism	
December 1	Queer Criticism	Slagle
December 6	Queer Criticism	
December 8	Exam #4	

TBA=To be announced

Course Policies

- Attendance is expected at all classes. Courses in communication require a high degree of class participation and interpersonal interaction. For this reason, students are expected to attend all classes. A strong emphasis will be placed on in-class participation and learning. Under university policy, more than four absences will result in a grade reduction.
- In the context of this class, “class participation” means coming prepared for class and contributing appropriately to discussions. Contributions can take the form of asking intelligent and useful questions, as well as answering questions thoughtfully. **“Class participation” does not mean merely showing up for class everyday.** Those who show up, but usually come unprepared and who rarely contribute constructively to class discussions are taking from their classmates without giving in return and they will receive no points for class participation.
- Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. It is not an acceptable defense to claim, “I didn’t know I was plagiarizing,” “I didn’t know what I was doing was plagiarism,” or “I didn’t know that plagiarizing was

prohibited.” In an academic environment, plagiarism is one of the most serious offenses a student can commit. **Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional representation of another person’s ideas as your own.** Plagiarism sometimes confuses students. It is plagiarism to turn in any portion of someone else’s paper, speech, or outline as your own work. It is plagiarism to use any portion of a speech or paper from a “file” of previously used speeches and present it in class as your original work. It is plagiarism to take passages from someone’s work and include it in a speech, paper, or outline without citing the original author. Even if you do not use the exact words that someone else used, **it is plagiarism to use their ideas without giving them credit.** It is a form of academic misconduct to knowingly allow another student to use your work as their own. All material submitted for evaluation must be the original work of the student.

4. Late assignments will only be accepted when you contact me *before* the assignment is due, and I will only accept late assignments when you have a legitimate and supportable excuse. In fairness to students who complete their work on time, if I accept your assignment late, you can expect that it will be graded more harshly than if it had been turned in on the date that it was due (because you will have had more time to complete the assignment). You will be penalized ten points (out of 100) for each day a paper is late. Also, when an assignment is late, I will not “make” time to grade it (it will be graded when I have time to do so). In other words, late assignments may take much longer than usual to return to you.
5. Always keep an extra copy of any assignment that you turn in to me (either a hard copy or on a computer disk). While it is extremely rare that I misplace student assignments, keeping an copy will protect you in the event that it happens.