

COMM 201
Communication as a Liberal Art
Spring, 2008
TTH 9:30-10:50

Instructor: Dr. Dan Durbin

Office Hours: TTh 11:00-11:30, 2:00-2:30, W 5:30-6:30--- and by appointment.

Office: ASC 324D

Phone: 821-6615

email: ddurbin@usc.edu

Course Objectives: This course provides an introduction to rhetorical theory and criticism. The class traces the development of rhetoric from its origins in ancient Greece, through its codification and study in the Roman Era and the Middle Ages, to its use in contemporary times. Students will have the opportunity to study rhetorical theorists from each era and to begin practicing rhetorical inquiry.

Required Texts: Herrick, James A. The History and Theory of Rhetoric. Boston: Allyn and Bacon 2001.

COMM 201 Course Notebook.

Recommended Text: Bizzell, Patricia and Herzberg, Bruce. The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present. Boston: Bedford Books, 1990.

Course Notebook: You will be taking your main class notes in the course notebook. This notebook will be the most important text you buy this semester. It covers the spectrum of thought on communication as a liberal art and will be invaluable in preparing for exams. The current edition has been modified from previous editions to roughly eighteen percent of material. It should surprise no one that I have generated a fair number of exam questions from that eighteen percent. So, you need to buy your own copy. For the price, it is one of the best book investments you will make. The material will be readily adapted to work you must do in future courses. So, buy it and keep it.

Examinations: There will be two midterms and a final examination in this class. The midterms will comprehensively cover different eras of rhetorical theory. The final exam will be cumulative. The midterm exams will each be worth 15% of your final grade and the final will be worth 25%.

Writing Assignments: There will be two writing assignments in this class. The papers will give you practice researching material and following the MLA writing style. In each paper, you will examine and employ rhetorical theories of different eras in the history of rhetoric.

All writing assignments must be prepared in strict adherence to the guidelines for academic writing laid down in the MLA handbook. This means that you must pay careful attention to footnoting, punctuation, proper citation form, and attribution of sources. Each failure to conform to MLA guidelines will result in a lowering of your grade on each assignment.

Grade Breakdown: The grading percentage for each assignment is as follows:

Midterm one-----	15
Midterm two-----	15
Final-----	25
Participation-----	10
Paper one-----	15
Paper two-----	<u>20</u>
Total-----	100

Class Attendance: You are allowed four unexcused absences in this class after which each absence will cost you 5% of your final grade. Note, however, that this course is heavily weighted toward lecture and, as noted, the exams comprehensively cover lecture material. Thus, excessive absences will have a disastrous impact on your ability to answer exam questions. I strongly advise you not to miss class. Being tardy and leaving class early will count as an unexcused absence.

Late Work: The time constraints in this course will not allow for late work. Make certain that you can be here for all exams. Under no circumstances will any exams be given at any time other than during scheduled exam periods. Do not ask to take exams early or late. You will be refused. Further, there will be no extra credit and no extra work assigned in this class for missed exams.

But, now the good news...if you have an official excuse for your absence for one mid-term exam period, there will be one make-up exam at the end of the semester. This exam may replace one missed exam (remember, your absence during the missed exam must be excused). This make-up is only available for emergency situations and I would not advise trying to take advantage of it. It is a much more difficult exam than the scheduled exams. The make-up exam will take place during the last class period. The make-up will not be offered at any other time. Failure to appear for the make-up for any reason will result in an automatic zero for the exam.

You can hand in your papers late. However, late papers will be docked one letter grade for each class period they are late. Anytime after the start of the class period in which they are due will be considered late.

Paper Assignments: In each paper, you are to explain and apply the rhetorical ideas of an important figure from the era we have examined. You will need at least three sources for each paper including at least one primary source. Your class book and notes do not count as a source. Papers will be roughly 5-8 pages in length. So, your explanation should be brief and clear. Papers will be graded on fulfilling the assignment, quality of writing, clarity, and explanatory power. Errors in spelling and grammar will result in a reduction of your grade. Note: I will not accept emailed papers. So, don't send them.

Disabilities Services: Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Academic Integrity: The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's Academic Integrity code as detailed in the Scampus guide. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violations or pattern of violations of the Academic Integrity Code will result in the student's expulsion from the Communication major or minor.

Note: I do not assign incompletes.

Note Two: You will hand in your papers to your TAs. They will set specific times for you to hand the papers in. Don't hand them in to me. I'd lose my head if it wasn't attached.

Tentative Daily Schedule and Reading Assignments

1/15 Course Introduction.

1/17 Perspectives on the study of rhetoric; Herrick Ch. 1.

1/22-1/24 Early Greek Rhetoric; Herrick Ch. 2.

1/29-1/31 Plato; Herrick Ch. 3

2/5-2/12 Aristotle; Herrick Ch. 4

2/14-2/19 Roman Rhetoric; Herrick Ch. 5; Conclusions on classical rhetoric, review for first midterm

2/21 **Midterm #1**

2/26 Medieval Rhetoric; Herrick Ch. 6

2/28 Renaissance Rhetoric; Herrick Ch. 7, Sturken and Cartwright Chs. 1, 4

3/4-3/6 **Writing Assignment #1 Due February 27**; Enlightenment Rhetoric; Herrick Ch. 8

3/11 The Contemporary Turn; review for second midterm; Sturken and Cartwright Chs. 2-3

3/13 **Midterm #2**

3/18-3/20 Spring Break---spread a little rhetorical love around the world

3/25-3/27 New Dimensions in Rhetoric; Rhetoric and Argumentation; Herrick Ch. 9, Sturken and Cartwright Ch. 5

4/1-4/3 Burke, Weaver and Symbol Use; Herrick Ch. 10-11

4/8-4/15 Rhetoric and Social Criticism; Sturken and Cartwright Ch. 6

4/17-4/24 Rhetoric and Popular Culture; Sturken and Cartwright Chs. 7-8; **Writing Assignment #2 Due April 17**

4/29 Rhetoric, Movements, and Culture; Sturken and Cartwright Ch. 9

5/2 Conclusions, wrap up, and review for final exam

Final Exam: 5/13 8-10.

COMM 201
Spring 2008
Writing Assignment #1

We have discussed the use of ethos, pathos, and logos as artistic appeals in rhetoric and how situational factors (courts, ceremonies, legislatures) impact communication. Your first writing assignment offers you the opportunity to perform a classic rhetorical criticism on a speech. You are to find a speech in the journal Vital Speeches of the Day. I will not accept speeches from any other source. You must go to the library or online, look up Vital Speeches, and find a speech that interests you. You are to print or photocopy the speech you choose and take it to one of the TAa for approval.

The speech you choose cannot be an overly familiar one (Kennedy's inaugural address, King's "I Have a Dream" speech, etc. If you aren't sure about your speech, ask your lab instructor.). Your lab instructor will assign a due date for seeing the speech to make sure you have found one early enough to complete your assignment.

You are to photocopy the speech you choose and attach it to the paper you write. Your paper will analyze the speech in its setting. Is the speech epideictic, forensic, deliberative? What can you show from the speech's situation and from its message that indicates what type of oratory it is?

You will also analyze the speech's content, identifying the speaker's use of appeals to ethos (credibility, values), pathos (emotion), and logos (reasoning). Each time you find the speaker appeal to credibility, emotion, or reason, you are to quote that section of the speech, explain how it represents an appeal to logic, emotion, or credibility, and make a judgment concerning how effective that appeal was. You are also to show three pieces of evidence the author uses and identify what type of evidence they are. They may be maxims (famous sayings), examples (illustrations, stories, specific instances), testimony (expert or immediate), and so on. You are to back up your claims about the types of evidence being used by examining the evidence itself (show us why this particular piece of evidence is a piece of testimony or an example). You should conclude your paper by reviewing your assessment of each appeal and each piece of evidence and offering a final assessment of the speech as a whole. You should make the case that it was either effective or ineffective as argument based on your assessment of its use of evidence and ethos, pathos, and/or logos.

Remember, depending on the audience, it is not necessary to use each type of appeal to make a case. And, in some cases, certain appeals might be less useful. For instance, if you examine a speech in which a scientist argues for a specific scientific theorem before an audience of scientists and the speaker solely uses emotional appeals, you have to question how effective s/he might have been.

If this assignment seems a bit mechanical, it is. It is also, in most respects, pretty simple. I want you to experience the major form of rhetorical analysis that took place in

our field through most of the last century before sending you off to have some real fun with a more contemporary analysis. In your second paper, you will use a contemporary critical approach to exam a text of your own choosing (a favorite tv show, music album, book, etc.). Be certain you pick something you really like for your second analysis. It will make it a lot more fun and help you see the contrast between the rather mechanical historical approach to speech analysis and the contemporary interest in all forms of directed communication.

You are to follow MLA guidelines throughout this paper. Each failure to employ MLA guidelines will cost you a point off your paper grade. You should have a minimum of 3 cited sources and a minimum of 5-7 pages of text in your completed paper. At least two of your cited sources should be about the situation the rhetoric was designed to meet (hint-one can be the citation from Vital Speeches of the Day, a second should be a citation directly from Aristotle on artistic and inartistic appeals). Papers will also be graded on quality of writing, quality of analysis, and demonstrated understanding of concepts. Papers will lose one point for each error in spelling or grammar.

COMM 201
Spring 2008
Writing Assignment #2

For your first paper, you used some classical concepts to examine a piece of rhetoric. In your final paper, you are to take a more contemporary approach to a rhetorical text of your own choosing. You are to choose a rhetorical text (a speech, a film, a tv show, a song, a cd, a video game, a tv commercial, any text that is used to motivate audiences to some sort of action). You are to analyze this text using Burke's concept of the guilt-redemption cycle.

As we have discussed in class, contemporary theorists see rhetoric as the means by which we purvey values and motivate audiences and individuals to action. If this is so, any text that enters the public sphere promotes some set of values and presses listeners to some sort of action. Burke saw the guilt-redemption cycle as a perpetual rhetorical form, one that appears over and over again as the rhetorical scheme of effective public discourse.

You are to choose an effective rhetorical text (something that had a noticeable impact on some audience) and explain its effectiveness through the guilt-redemption cycle. This means you are to analyze the text finding the order the author sees as polluted, the pollution the author identifies in the order, the guilty party the author would have us symbolically kill, and the means of expiation (the symbolic killing) the author proposes. You should then identify the transcendent order the author envisions as arising out of this sacrifice.

This assignment is meant to be both challenging and engaging. Burke's ideas are typically complex and often difficult. However, the guilt-redemption cycle, as we have

discussed it, should not pose a great challenge in application. As always, you can make this assignment easy for yourself by choosing as your rhetorical text something you truly enjoy (a favorite movie, a favorite record album).

If you choose a subject you are deeply interested in, this analysis should be illuminating and a whale of a lot of fun. If you pick something you have no interest in, this analysis may cause you greater pain than being forced to watch Adam Sandler films 24 hours a day for life. So, choose a topic near to your heart and read/listen to/watch it closely . . . several times.

You are to follow MLA guidelines throughout this paper. Each failure to employ MLA guidelines will cost you a point off your paper grade. You should have a minimum of 3 cited sources and a minimum of 6-8 pages of text on your completed paper. At least two of your cited sources should be about your subject, indicating its popularity, social impact, or rhetorical effectiveness. Papers will also be graded on quality of writing, quality of analysis, and demonstrated understanding of concepts. Papers will lose one point for each error in spelling or grammar. Good luck and, if you have any questions, please contact me or your lab instructor.