

COMM 4352 – Contemporary Rhetoric
CRN: 15686
Fall 2015 (TR 12-1:20, UGLC 210)

General Information

Contact Information

Professor: Dr. Carlos Tarin

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Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:30 am – 11:50 am, and by appointment

Required Text(s)

-Lucaites, J.L., Condit, C.M., & Caudill, S. (Eds.). (1999). *Contemporary rhetorical theory: A reader*. New York: Guilford Press.

-Other course readings, available on Blackboard

Course Overview

Popular usages of the term rhetoric often imply that rhetoric is empty words or language. In this course, we will examine rhetoric from various theoretical perspectives that indicate rhetoric is much more influential in shaping discourse and meaning about our worldviews and perspectives. Rhetoric has been defined as the process of making messages (Rybacki & Rybacki, 1991), the rationale for informative and persuasive discourse (Bryant, 1953), an organized, consistent, coherent way of thinking about something (Ehninger, 1968), as epistemic or a way of knowing (Golden et al., 2000), and as a way to intensify adherence to values and to call to action (Perelman, 1969). We will explore how such different conceptions of rhetoric relate to the study of knowledge and contemporary discourse in different cultural settings.

Course Goals

1. To build foundational knowledge in the area of rhetoric and theory through an examination of (a) contemporary theories of rhetoric, and (b) rhetorical theories in different cultural contexts.
2. To understand the influence and pervasiveness of rhetoric in various communication contexts.
3. To compare and contrast theories and apply and integrate those theories to our everyday lives.
4. To learn about self and others through an examination of how theories apply to our everyday lives.
5. To increase sensitivity toward others and communities.
6. To emphasize lifelong learning and critical self-reflexivity.

Departmental Learning Objectives and Outcomes

- *Objective 1:* To provide high quality instruction to produce students with excellent oral and written communication skills and excellent critical thinking skills
- *Objective 2:* To provide students with current knowledge of the discipline and its theories

- *Objective 6:* To provide students with awareness, knowledge, and application about ethics in multiple communication contexts
 - Learning Outcome:* Competence in oral and written communication skills
 - Learning Outcome:* Competence in understanding and applying rhetorical theories
 - Learning Outcome:* Competence in understanding and applying ethics in multiple communication contexts
 - Learning Outcome:* Competence in understanding the impact of rhetoric

Course Prerequisite

The lectures and assignments in this course will be easier if you have completed COMM 3371, Communication Theory and Analysis. Students who have not taken COMM 3371 or other junior/senior level courses should take those courses before taking COMM 4352. Graduate students should have some background in rhetoric, either through previous communication or rhetoric courses.

Note: This is a reading and writing intensive course. Please carefully consider the expected workload and course due dates when planning your semester/course load.

Classroom Expectations

Students should strive to maintain a respectful and supportive classroom environment. This class will deal with topics and ideas that may be controversial in nature. It is your responsibility to respond and participate to classroom discussions in a thoughtful and productive manner. Any blatant disrespect, sexism, racism, homophobia, classism, etc. will not be tolerated.

Course Assignments and Evaluation

Assignments:

- (1) Weekly Response Questions – Each week we will focus on different topics that are germane to contemporary rhetorical theory and criticism. The texts that are assigned may be difficult, so reading response questions will be used to focus your reading. Additionally, these questions should serve as the basis for in-class discussions that will take place each week. **Reading questions should be uploaded to Blackboard by 11:59PM on Tuesdays. Your response should be no longer than 2 single-spaced pages and should cover ALL readings assigned for the week. For each set, please answer the following questions:**
 - a. What do you think are the most important arguments/points being made by the authors?
 - b. What point(s) do you find most compelling? What point(s) do you disagree with the most?
 - c. What, if any, questions do you have about the assigned readings (cite the text when necessary)? What would you like to discuss further in class?
 - d. Provide at least one example that may be useful in illustrating a concept or concepts discussed in the readings. Examples can be drawn from current events, popular culture, events on campus, etc.

- (2) Critical Response Papers – In order to cultivate a deeper understanding of course concepts, you will be asked to write two papers that critically engage with the assigned readings. Papers should not merely summarize key texts, but should draw connections, highlight shortcomings, and/or apply theoretical concepts to contemporary contexts in order to demonstrate the function and importance of rhetoric in modern society. **Each paper should be 8-10 pages in length (double spaced). Students will be expected to submit a hard copy of their paper in class according to the due dates in the course schedule below.** For more specific instructions and evaluation criteria, see the paper assignment sheet (Blackboard).
- (3) Class Participation/Attendance – Attendance and participation in discussion are critical for your success in this course and necessary to create a robust, stimulating classroom environment. Students are expected to arrive in class having read for the week and ready to participate in a class discussion. Classroom activities may vary from lectures to small group discussion to class debates; your participation and engagement is expected at all times. **Attendance will be taken at the start of each class. Students who fail to participate in discussion and/or leave class early, will lose credit for that day.** Note: Engagement does not necessarily mean you have all the answers; asking questions can be an effective way to participate. If the class seems inattentive, anticipate “cold calls” to encourage discussion.

Grading

Assignments

Points Possible

Weekly Response Questions	44 Points (4 points each, 11 graded sets)
Critical Response Papers	36 Points (18 points each)
<u>Participation/Attendance</u>	<u>20 Points</u>
Course Total:	100 Points

Course Grading Scale

A = 90 – 100%	An “A” grade is designated for assignments that go beyond the requirements of the assignment; exceptional and outstanding work, well written and argued.
B = 80 – 89.5%	A “B” grade is designated for assignments that go beyond some of the requirements of the assignment; better than average work, for the most part, well written and well argued, but with a few errors in writing or reasoning.
C = 70 – 79.5%	A “C” grade is designated for assignments that meet requirements of the assignment, but is average work; average writing, thesis lacks clarity, reasoning is insufficient, or errors in writing.

D = 60 – 69.5%	A “D” grade is designated for assignments that do not meet all requirements of the assignment; generally less than average work, less than average writing, no thesis, reasoning is faulty, or substantial errors in writing.
F = 0 – 59.5%	An “F” grade fails to meet most of the requirements of the assignment; far below average work, faulty reasoning, massive errors in writing.

Course Policies

Late/Incomplete Work

Students are expected to submit assignments on or before assigned due dates. *For weekly response questions* students will lose 1 point for each 24-hour period that the response is not uploaded on Blackboard. *For critical response papers* – absolutely no late work will be accepted. Students who do not turn in their papers on time will receive a zero and will be unable to make up the assignment.

If you think you might have trouble meeting a deadline, *please contact me in advance*. Incompletes will not be given unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances and the student is able to provide verifiable proof.

Academic Misconduct

The University of Texas El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence and students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submitting work for credit that is attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act that gives or attempts to give unfair advantage.

Academic honesty is required of all students. Students found guilty of academic dishonesty can receive an “F” for the assignment or the course, and other disciplinary action may be taken. I take a strong stance on plagiarism. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to) intentional submission of someone else’s work without credit, in part or as a whole; misuse of citations to conceal a source; use of other course work in this class; and other similar behaviors. Please contact the instructor immediately if you are unclear as to what constitutes plagiarism.

CASS

As per Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, if a student needs an accommodation then the Office of Disabled Student Services located at UTEP needs to be contacted. If you have a condition, which may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the director of the Center for Accommodations and Support Services. You may call 915-747-5148 for general information about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the rights that you have as a UTEP student with a disability.

Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and The Center for Accommodations and Support Services Office (CASS) at The University of Texas at El Paso.

Drop/Withdrawal

Census day for Fall 2015 is September 9, 2015. The last day you can drop this course is Friday, October 30, 2015. Incompletes after this deadline will only be given in the case of extreme, extenuating circumstances.

Course Schedule

CRT = Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader (textbook, available at the UTEP bookstore)

Other readings listed by author last name can be found on Blackboard.

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Due
Week 1 Aug 25 Aug 27	Class Introduction	T: N/A Th: N/A	
Week 2 Sept 1 Sept 3	Historical Overview of Rhetoric	T: CRT – “Introduction” TH: CRT – “Toward a Sophistic Definition,” “The Origins and Early Development of Rhetoric” (Murphy, Blackboard)	T: Response Questions (Ungraded this week.) TH: Class Survey (Ungraded)
Week 3 Sept 8 Sept 10	Rhetoric as Epistemic	T: “Stephen Toulmin” (Foss, Foss, & Trapp, Blackboard), CRT “On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic” TH: CRT – “Knowledge, Consensus, and Rhetorical Theory”	T: Response Questions (Graded)
Week 4 Sept 15 Sept 17	Kenneth Burke	T: “Kenneth Burke” (Foss, Foss, & Trapp, Blackboard) TH: The Rhetoric of Hitler’s Battle (Burke, Blackboard)	T: Response Questions (Graded)
Week 5 Sept 22 Sept 24	Kenneth Burke (Continued)	T: “Phases, pentads, and dramatic critical process” (Conrad, Blackboard) TH: CRT – “Burke’s Representative Process,” “Hunting	T: Response Questions (Graded) TH: Critical Response Paper #1 Drafts (Optional)

		and Heritage on Trial” (Tonn, Endress, & Diamond, Blackboard)	
Week 6 Sept 29 Oct 1	The Rhetorical Situation	T: CRT – “Rhetorical Situation,” “Twitter Bites and Romney” (Johnson, Blackboard) TH: CRT – “Myth of the Rhetorical Situation”	T: Response Questions (Graded)
Week 7 Oct 6 Oct 8	Power and Ideology	T: CRT – “Third Persona,” “Ideograph” TH: “Constitutive Rhetoric” (Charland, Blackboard)	T: Response Questions (Graded)
Week 8 Oct 13 Oct 15	Critical Rhetoric	T: CRT – “Critical Rhetoric,” “Rehabilitating Rhetoric” TH: “A Letter/Essay I’ve Been Longing to Write” (Ono, Blackboard)	TH: Critical Response Paper #1 (Graded)
Week 9 Oct 20 Oct 22	Rhetoric and Social Movements	T: CRT – “Personal, Technical, and Public Sphere,” “Requirements, Problems, and Strategies” TH: “Is Gay the New Black?” (Kearl, Blackboard)	T: Response Questions (Graded)
Week 10 Oct 27 Oct 29	Rhetoric, Difference, and Identity	T: CRT - “Disciplining the Feminine” TH: “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” (Anzaldua, Blackboard), “Rhetorical Agency as Hacienda Caras” (Sowards, Blackboard)	T: Response Questions (Graded)
Week 11 Nov 3 Nov 5	Rhetoric, Difference, and Identity (Continued)	T: CRT – “Postcolonial Interventions,” “The World, The Text, and The Critic” (Said, Blackboard) TH: “Comparative Rhetoric, Postcolonial Studies, and Transnational Feminisms” (Wang, Blackboard)	T: Response Questions (Graded)
Week 12 Nov 10 Nov 12	Visual Rhetoric	T: “Behold the Corpse” (Harold & DeLuca, Blackboard)	T: Response Questions (Graded)

		TH: “Remembering and Forgetting the Final Solution” (Hasian, Blackboard)	
Week 13 Nov 17 Nov 19	Space and Place	T: “Neoliberal Capitalism, Globalization, and Lines of Flight” (Dickinson & Ott, Blackboard), “Buffalo Bill Museum” (Dickinson, Ott, & Aoki, Blackboard) TH: NO CLASS (NCA Conference)	T: Response Questions (Graded); Critical Response Paper #2 Draft (Optional)
Week 14 Nov 24 Nov 26 – Thanksgiving, NO CLASS	Rhetoric of Science & Technology	T: CRT – “Rhetoric and Its Double,” “Science and Public Participation” (Endres, Blackboard) TH: NO CLASS	T: Response Questions (Graded)
Week 15 Dec 1 Dec 3	End of Term Wrap Up/Future Directions	T: TBA TH: TBA	

****Critical Response Paper #2 is due on Tuesday, December 8th****

THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE NECESSARY CHANGES IN THE SCHEDULE/CALENDAR/ASSIGNMENTS DEPENDING ON THE NEEDS OF THE CLASS.