

Spring 2-1-2019

# COMX 445.01: Rhetorical Criticism and Theory

Sara E. Hayden

University of Montana - Missoula, [sara.hayden@umontana.edu](mailto:sara.hayden@umontana.edu)

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## Recommended Citation

Hayden, Sara E., "COMX 445.01: Rhetorical Criticism and Theory" (2019). *Syllabi*. 9420.  
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Communication Studies 445  
Rhetorical Criticism and Theory  
Spring 2019  
9:30-10:50 Tuesdays and Thursdays

Professor: Sara Hayden, Ph.D.  
Office: LA 346  
Office Phone: 243-4333  
Email: sara.hayden@mso.umt.edu  
Office Hours: Mondays 2:15-3:15; Tuesdays 3:00-4:00, and by appointment.

Course Description

The study of rhetorical criticism and theory begins with the understanding that as human beings, we use language and other symbols to shape the world in which we live. Rhetorical theory allows us to explore how symbols function and rhetorical criticism is one of the processes through which we assess symbolic acts. In this course, you will learn about contemporary approaches to rhetorical criticism and theory. Methods to be covered include Dramatistic (cluster and pentadic), metaphoric, narrative, ideological, and feminist, criticism. You will be required to participate in class discussions, complete quizzes/participation questions, write two original rhetorical analyses which will culminate in a final, third essay, and present your research to the class. Preliminary criteria for each are outlined below.

Required Reading

Foss, S. K. (2018) Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration & Practice, (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). Long Grove, IL: Waveland.

Material posted on Moodle. **Many of these documents are speeches we will be discussing in class. You must print them out and have them with you on days when they are being discussed.**

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarizing, and deliberately interfering with the work of others. Plagiarizing means representing the work of someone else (such as another student or an author of a book or an article) as your own. If you use the ideas or words of someone else on an exam or in a paper, you must cite the source of the original information. If you have specific questions about how to avoid plagiarism, ask me for help. Following university regulations, cheating and plagiarism will be penalized with a failing grade in this course.

Grades

Quizzes/Participation Questions/Participation	50 points
Project Proposal	50 points
Paper 1:	100 points
Paper 2:	100 points
Final Essay:	100 points
Total:	400 points

## Description of Assignments:

### Quizzes and Participation Questions

Completing the assigned readings will be key to your success in the course. As such, although I will not be giving formal exams, I will often administer quizzes or short participation questions designed to test your understanding of the assigned readings. You should be prepared to complete quizzes/participation questions on a regular basis. Dates of quizzes/questions will not be announced.

### Participation

This course will be run as a seminar, as such, students will be expected to come to class ready to discuss the assigned readings. In good seminars, student questions and insights direct group discussions. This means that the quality of the class rests largely on your participation skills. To be good participants, it is essential that you read the assigned material critically and actively.

### Project Proposal

Over the course of the semester you will write three papers analyzing an artifact or artifacts of your choice. You will submit your project proposal with a copy of your artifact on February 12. The proposal will include a description of your artifact, a justification of your choice of artifact (e.g., why is this an appropriate artifact for analysis? What do you hope to learn through examining it?), and contextual information (e.g., when and where did the artifact appear? Who observed/heard/read it? Who delivered/wrote/created it?). American Rhetoric is a good place to look for artifacts for analysis: <https://www.americanrhetoric.com>

### Papers

Over the course of the semester you will write and submit two critiques of your chosen artifact. Your first paper will utilize dramatistic (cluster or pentadic) or narrative criticism; your second paper will utilize metaphoric, ideographic, or feminist criticism. One or both of these papers will serve as the basis for your final essay. **Please plan to submit papers via email in Word Format.** Papers are due at the beginning of the class period.

### Final Essay

Your final essay will constitute a complete piece of rhetorical criticism, including an introduction, theoretical/methodological overview, contextual section, rhetorical analysis, and conclusions. Each student will present her or his research to the class during the final week of classes or during our scheduled finals period. The final essay is due Tuesday, April 30 at 8:00 am.

## Schedule

Th 1-10	Introduction to the Course
T 1-15	The Nature of Rhetorical Criticism <b>Text</b> , Chapters 1 and 2

- Th, 1-17      Doing Rhetorical Criticism  
**Moodle**, Donald Trump’s Presidential Campaign Announcement  
**Moodle**, Mercieca, “The Rhetorical Brilliance of Trump the Demagogue”
- T 1-22      Doing Rhetorical Criticism
- Th 1-24      Doing Rhetorical Criticism
- T 1-29      Dramatistic Criticism  
**Text**, Chapters 4 and 11
- Th 1-31      Dramatistic Criticism  
**Text**, Littlefield and Quenette, “Crisis Leadership and Hurricane Katrina: The Portrayal of Authority in the Media in Natural Disasters”  
**Moodle**, Ling, “A Pentadic Analysis of Senator Edward Kennedy’s Address to the People of Massachusetts July 25, 1969”
- T 2-5      Dramatistic Criticism  
**Moodle**, Susan Collins’ Senate Floor Speech in Support of Brett Kavanaugh
- Th 2-7      Dramatistic Criticism
- T 2-12      **Writing Workshop**  
*Project Proposals Due!*  
**Please bring two copies of your chosen artifact to class.**
- Th 2-14      Narrative Criticism  
**Text**, Chapter 10  
**Moodle**, Lewis, “Telling America’s Story: Narrative Form and the Reagan Presidency”
- T 2-19      Narrative Criticism  
**Moodle**, Barack Obama’s A More Perfect Union speech
- Th 2-21      Narrative Criticism
- T 2-26      **Writing Workshop**  
**Please bring your paper-in-progress and a copy of your chosen artifact.**
- Th 2-28      Metaphoric Criticism  
**Text**, Chapter 9  
**Moodle**, Hardy-Short and Short, “Fire, Death, and Rebirth: A Metaphoric Analysis of the 1988 Yellowstone Fire Debate”

- T 3-5 Metaphoric Criticism  
**Moodle**, Mario Cuomo’s 1984 Keynote Address to the Democratic National Convention
- Th 3-7 Metaphoric Criticism
- T 3-12 Ideological Criticism  
**Text**, Chapter 8  
**Text**, Dickinson, Ott, and Aoki, “Memory and Myth at the Buffalo Bill Museum”  
**Moodle**, McGee, “The Ideograph: A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology”  
**Moodle**, Lucaites and Condit, “Reconstructing <Equality>: Culturetypal and Counter-Culture Rhetorics in the Martyred Black Vision”
- Th 3-14 Ideological Criticism  
**Moodle**, Shirley Chisholm’s For the Equal Rights Amendment speech
- T 3-19 Ideological Criticism
- Th 3-21 Ideological Criticism
- T 3-26 Spring Break
- Th 3-28 Spring Break
- T 4-2 Feminist Criticism  
**Text**, Chapter 6
- Th 4-4 Feminist Criticism  
**Moodle**, Sarah Palin’s 2008 Speech to the Republican National Convention
- T 4-9 Feminist Criticism
- Th 4-11 **Writing Workshop**  
**Please bring your paper-in-progress and a copy of your chosen artifact(s) to class.**
- T 4-16 No Class – Writing Day/Open Office Hours  
***Paper Two Due***
- Th 4-18 No Class – Writing Day/Open Office Hours
- T 4-23 Paper Presentations
- Th 4-25 Paper Presentations
- T 4-30 Final papers due by 8:00 am

Please Note:

Incompletes will be given only in emergencies and only with my prior consent. If you foresee having difficulty finishing the course, come speak with me immediately.

The 45<sup>th</sup> instructional day is the last day to drop classes or change your grading option. After that date, you may drop this class only if you meet the criteria set out by the University – see your university catalog or come speak with me. Incompletes will be given only in emergencies and only with my prior consent. If you foresee having difficulty finishing the course, come speak with me immediately.

Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). “Reasonable” means the University permits no fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications. For more information, please consult <<http://www.umt.edu/disability>>.