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COMM 455.01: Rhetorical Criticism and Theory

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Communication Studies 455
Rhetorical Criticism and Theory
1:10 – 2:00 Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
LA 302

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Office Hours: 10:10 – 11:00 Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 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 Neo-Aristotelian, cluster, pentadic, metaphoric, narrative, ideographic, feminist, and visual 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. (2009) Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration & Practice, (4th Edition). Long Grove, IL: Waveland.

Lunsford, A. A. (2011). The Everyday Writer, (4th Edition). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

A note about The Everyday Writer: Although I do not assign readings from this book, you will be held accountable for much of the material contained in it, including the sections titled "Usage and Style" and APA or MLA Style.

Articles posted on Moodle.

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. See Lunsford's The Everyday Writer for a thorough discussion of plagiarism and how to avoid it. 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

Grades will be based on evaluation of student performance on the following assignments:

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

A=92% and up; A- = 91-90%; B+ = 88-89%; B = 82-87%; B- = 80 - 81%; C+ = 78 -79 %; C = 72 - 77%; C- = 70 - 71%; D+ = 68 - 69%; D = 62 - 67%; D- = 60 - 61%; F 59% and below.

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 so the quality of the class discussions rests largely on your participation skills. To be good participants, it is essential that you read the assigned material critically and actively.

Project Proposal

On September 24 you will submit your project proposal. This will include a discussion of the artifact you will likely use for analysis in your first two papers. In the proposal you should describe your artifact, justify your choice (e.g., why is this an appropriate artifact for analysis? What do you hope to learn through examining it?) and provide contextual information (e.g., when and where did the artifact appear? Who observed/heard/read it? Who delivered/wrote/created it?).

The quizzes, your overall participation, your project proposal, and the presentation of your research to the class combined will count for a total of 100 points.

Papers

Over the course of the semester you will write and submit two critiques of your chosen artifact. Your first paper will utilize neo-Aristotelian, cluster, pentadic, or narrative analysis; your second paper will utilize metaphoric, ideographic, feminist, or visual analysis. One or both of these critiques will serve as the basis for your final essay.

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 Monday, December 12, to be submitted at the beginning of our final exam session – 8:00 am.

Schedule

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|--------|---|
| M 8-27 | Introduction to the Course |
| W 8-29 | The Nature of Rhetorical Criticism Text , Chapter 1 |
| F 8-31 | Doing Rhetorical Criticism Text , Chapter 2 |
| M 9-3 | Labor Day Holiday – no class |
| W 9-5 | Doing Rhetorical Criticism Reading to be announced and posted on Moodle |
| F 9-7 | Doing Rhetorical Criticism |
| M 9-10 | Doing Rhetorical Criticism |
| W 9-12 | Neo-Aristotelian Criticism Text , Chapter 3 Text , Hill, Conventional Wisdom – Traditional Form – The President’s Message of November 3, 1969 Text , Speech by Richard M. Nixon |
| F 9-14 | Neo-Aristotelian Criticism, continued Moodle , Campbell, Critique: An Exercise in the Rhetoric of Mythical America |
| M 9-17 | Cluster Criticism Text , Chapter 4 Text , Elliott, A Cluster Analysis of Enron’s Code of Ethics |

- W 9-19 Pentadic Criticism
Text, Chapter 11,
Text, Ling, A Pentadic Analysis of Senator Edward Kennedy's Address to the People of Massachusetts July 25, 1969
Moodle, Tonn, Endress, and Diamond, Hunting and Heritage on Trial: A Dramatistic Debate Over Tragedy, Tradition, and Territory
- F 9-21 Pentadic and Cluster Criticism
Moodle, Kennedy, Speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association
- M 9-24 Pentadic and Cluster Criticism, continued
Project Proposals Due!
- W 9-26 Pentadic and Cluster Criticism, continued
- F 9-28 Pentadic and Cluster Criticism, continued
- M 10-1 Narrative Criticism
Text, Chapter 10
Moodle, Lewis, Telling America's Story: Narrative Form and the Reagan Presidency
- W 10-3 Narrative Criticism, continued
Moodle, Nixon, The 'Checkers' Speech
- F 10-5 Narrative Criticism
- M 10-8 Narrative Criticism
- W 10-10 Metaphoric Criticism
Text, Chapter 9
Moodle, Osborn, Archetypal Metaphor in Rhetoric: The Light-Dark Family
- F 10-12 Metaphoric Criticism
Moodle, Cuomo, 1984 Keynote Address to the Democratic National Convention
First Paper Due!
- M 10-15 Metaphoric Criticism
- W 10-17 Ideographic Criticism
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

- F 10-19 Ideographic Criticism
Readings to be announced and posted on **Moodle**.
- M 10-22 Ideographic Criticism
Artifact to be determined.
- W 10-24 Ideographic Criticism
- F 10-26 Ideographic Criticism
- M 10-29 Feminist Criticism
Moodle, Campbell and Keremidchieva, Gender and Public Address
Moodle, Bacon, The Intersections of Race and Gender in Rhetorical Theory and Praxis
- W 10-31 Feminist Criticism
Readings to be announced and posted on **Moodle**.
- F 11-2 Feminist Criticism
- M 11-5 The Critique of Visual Rhetoric
Moodle, Gronbeck, Visual Rhetorical Studies: Traces through Time and Space
Moodle, Olson, Finnegan, and Hope, Visual Rhetoric in Communication: Continuing Questions and Contemporary Issues
- W 11-7 The Critique of Visual Rhetoric
Readings to be announced and posted on **Moodle**.
- F 11-9 The Critique of Visual Rhetoric
- M 11-12 Veterans Day – No Class
- W 11-14 National Communication Association convention – No Class
- F 11-16 National Communication Association convention – No Class
- M 11-19 *Second Paper Due!*
- W 11-21 Thanksgiving Holiday
- F 11-23 Thanksgiving Holiday
- M 11-26 Writing Workshop
- W 11-28 No Class – writing day/open office hours

F 11-30 No Class – writing day/open office hours

M 12-3 Paper Presentations

W 12-5 Paper Presentations

F 12-7 Paper Presentations

Monday, December 10, Paper Presentations (Final period – 1:10-3:10)
Final papers due at the beginning of the class period!

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.

Last day to drop classes without petitioning is October 31, 2012. As stated in the course catalog, documented justification is required for dropping courses by petition. Some examples of documented circumstances that may merit approval are: accident or illness, family emergency, or other circumstances beyond the student's control.

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>>.