

**COMM 302: Rhetoric and Criticism**  
**Spring 2019**

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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**TEXTBOOKS:**

Bizzell, P., & Herzberg, B. (1990). *The rhetorical tradition: Readings from classical times to the present*. Boston, MA: Bedford Books.

Palczewski, C.H., Ice, R., & Fritch, J. (2016). *Rhetoric in civic life* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). State College, PA: Strata Publishing, Inc. ISBN: 978-1-891136-37-5

**COURSE PURPOSE AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Communication Studies addresses critical thinking, communicative concepts and skills, and relational and participatory effectiveness in personal, public, and professional spheres. This is a Communication Studies course and as such, this course will give you the tools needed to dissect your experiences in our rhetorical world. Specifically, this course introduces you to major issues and perspectives in rhetorical criticism, including foundational concepts from the history of rhetorical theory, elements of rhetorical studies, and methods of rhetorical analysis. By surveying traditional and contemporary approaches to studying rhetoric, the readings will encourage you reflect upon the power of language and human symbolic activity and explore how these processes work and why they affect us.

Rhetoric is an art form with its own set of principles and a diverse theoretical landscape. This class will introduce you to rhetorical theory and discuss evolving definitions of rhetoric. Skills obtained in this class will help you question the communicative acts going on around you, and the course content will encourage you to ask questions about the nature and functions of communication. Second, the study of rhetorical criticism begins with the understanding that human beings use language and symbols to shape our world. You will learn how to write a piece of rhetorical criticism that does not “criticize” but instead uses tools available to construct and justify reasonable arguments about how rhetoric works. Therefore, this course will also introduce you to major issues and perspectives in rhetorical criticism. This class provides an advanced introduction to the study of rhetoric – “advanced” because the readings are difficult and “introduction” because the content is probably new. This is a reading and writing intensive course. You will encounter difficult readings and may need to take more time to complete the assigned readings.

This course part of the College Core Curriculum; therefore, humanities students will demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and methods of at least one of the humanities in addition to those encompassed by other knowledge areas required by the General Education program. By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. demonstrate an understanding of the concepts and methods used to analyze arguments rhetorically;
2. analyze rhetorical acts by reading rhetorical criticism, assessing others’ critical analyses, and engaging in class discussion;
3. identify and explain rhetorical theory, the debates within it, and its critical application;
4. construct oral and written communication arguments that include a claim with reasons, logical structure, use evidence effectively, move the audience, and respond to objections and alternative views; and
5. conduct scholarly research and incorporate the research using properly formatted in-text citations.

## NCA'S LEARNING OUTCOMES IN COMMUNICATION:

This course meets the following NCA LOCs:

1. LOC #1: Describe the Communication discipline and its central questions
  - Explain the origins of the Communication discipline
  - Categorize the various career pathways for students of Communication
  - Examine contemporary debates within the field
  - Identify with intellectual specialization(s) in the Communication discipline
  - Summarize the broad nature of the Communication discipline
  - Articulate the importance of communication expertise in career development and civic engagement
  - Distinguish the Communication discipline from related areas of study
2. LOC #2: Employ Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts
  - Explain Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts
  - Apply Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts
  - Synthesize Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts
  - Critique Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts
3. LOC #3: Engage in Communication inquiry
  - Interpret Communication scholarship
  - Apply Communication scholarship
  - Engage in Communication scholarship using the research traditions of the discipline
  - Contribute to scholarly conversations appropriate to the purpose of inquiry
  - Evaluate Communication scholarship
  - Formulate questions appropriate for Communication scholarship
  - Differentiate between various approaches to the study of Communication

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Discussion Questions (30 points each/180 total points):** You will be asked to complete 6 sets of discussion questions. Your answers must be typed and each response should be 150-250 words. You can answer each question using bullets or paragraphs but make sure that you (1) reference the class reading by identifying specific page numbers, (2) paraphrase the author's words, (3) include original examples not discussed in class or the readings, and (4) emphasize (bold/underline) key terms. On each respective due date, you should bring a printed copy your answers to class and submit the Word file to Turnitin. During Week 14, you have a chance to answer make-up questions, and the grade earned on this assignment will replace your lowest discussion question grade.
2. **Participation (30 total points):** This grade is comprised of the following assignments.
  - Online quiz of the syllabus (10 points)
  - Conspiracy theory article & discussion questions (10 points)
  - Toulmin Model worksheet (5 points)
  - Visual rhetorical analysis worksheet (5 points)
3. **Elevator Pitch (140 total points):** This assignment asks you to first locate a job that you're qualified to hold right now. Then, you will craft a 1:30-2:00 minute elevator pitch that aims to persuade a hiring manager to employ you. You will use the Toulmin Model (see "Rhetoric in Civil Life," Ch. 4) to write/organize the pitch. Your target audience is pretend in the sense that it is someone who runs a company, nonprofit, hospital, etc., the pitch should move the audience, be written in present day, and incorporate relevant evidence. Everything you say in the pitch applies to what you have accomplished thus far in your collegiate career (e.g., job and volunteer experiences, leadership positions you, courses you have taken that are relevant to the job you want, etc.).
4. **Historical Context Essay (150 points):** The historical context paper is the first step in working towards your final paper. As part of your final paper, you will choose a visual argument to analyze rhetorically. This assignment asks you to examine elements outside of the rhetorical act – the context and occasion. As a result of writing the 500-750 word essay, you will expand on the rhetorical problem (i.e., the rhetor, audience, ideology,

and competing forces), that helped or hindered the rhetor’s attempts at persuasion. Using at least 4 scholarly sources, you should also identify and articulate how course terms, such as collective memory, public memory, and/or an ideograph, appears within the rhetorical act.

5. **Critical Perspective Essay (200 total points):** Before writing your final paper, you will compose a 750-1250 word essay that examines the rhetorical theory you plan to use to analyze your visual argument. Your critical perspective essay should use at least 4 scholarly sources to (1) synthesize scholarly research from peer-reviewed journals to explain the main characteristics of the theory, (2) clarify how you will use the theory to examine your rhetorical act, and (3) argue for the value of the theory in assessing the rhetorical strength of your rhetorical act.
  
6. **Visual Rhetoric Analysis Essay & Abstract/Final paper (300 total points):** This final assignment asks you to analyze a visual argument rhetorically. In a 1250-2000 word essay, you will analyze a visual argument (i.e., bodies, photographs, monuments, memorials, and museums, image events, web pages, advertisements, and cartoons) using tools and assumptions that we have discussed with regards to both rhetorical theory and rhetorical criticism. The essay will include a synthesis of research done on the rhetorical theory, offer historical contextualization of the act, and develop a critical argument using relevant conceptual resources. The essay should advance a claim supported by at least 8 scholarly sources, follow the Toulmin Model, employ persuasive techniques that move the audience, and thoroughly examine the rhetor’s argument rhetorically. You will also create a unique title and submit a 150-250 word abstract that summarizes the paper.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:**

Week	Topic	Reading Due	Assignment Due
<b>TOPIC 1: SYMBOLIC ACTION &amp; LANGUAGE</b>			
1	Course Introduction		
	Rhetoric as Symbolic Action: “Symbols & Symbolic Action” Chang, “Confederate Monuments”	Chapter 1 (pp. 3-13) Chang–OnCourse	
2	Rhetoric as Symbolic Action: “Rhetoric as Civic Engagement” Schutz, “Painting of Emmett Till”	Chapter 1 (pp. 13-23) Schutz–OnCourse	<b>OnCourse- Syllabus Quiz (due by 11:59 p.m.)</b>
	Rhetoric as Symbolic Action: “Culture, Memory, Power” Phillips, “Public & Collective Memory”	Chapter 1 (pp. 23-31) Phillips–OnCourse	
	Language: “Construction of Social Reality, Semiotics, & Terministic Screens”	Chapter 2 (pp. 41-48)	
3	Language: “Public Vocabulary”	Chapter 2 (pp. 49-63)	Print/bring in 1 ideograph
<b>TOPIC 2: VISUAL RHETORIC &amp; HISTORICAL CONTEXT PAPER</b>			
	Visual Rhetoric	Chapter 3 (entire chapter)	
	Visual Rhetoric Rabiega, “Commercial graffiti” (read pp. 37-41/print off) Ramage, “Tips for Analyzing” <u>Historical Context Assignment</u> Discuss Historical Context Essay Campbell & Burkholder, “Historical Context” Foss, “Selecting an Artifact”	Rabiega–OnCourse Ramage– OnCourse Campbell & Burkholder– OnCourse Foss-OnCourse	Print/bring in example of graffiti listed on Rabiega, p. 38

Week	Topic	Reading Due	Assignment Due
<b>TOPIC 3: PLATO'S VIEW ON RHETORIC</b>			
4	Introduction to the Classical Period Plato, "Introduction"	Plato (pp. 55-58)	
	Plato, "Gorgias" Dialectic, rhetoric, flattery	Plato (pp. 61-83)	
	Plato, "Gorgias" cont'd Callicles, truth vs. Truth, virtue	Plato (pp. 83-115)	<a href="#">DQ 1: Plato's theory</a>
<b>TOPIC 4: FINDING &amp; CITING RESEARCH &amp; ARGUMENT CONSTRUCTION</b>			
5	APA formatting packet (print) Finding and evaluating sources Using summary, paraphrase, quotation in-text citations Synthesizing research	All readings– OnCourse	If available, bring technology with Internet access
	Argument: "Place of Argument & Classical Conceptions" Audience, syllogism, & enthymeme	Chapter 4 (pp. 99-109)	Print/bring in example enthymeme (see p. 108)
	Argument: "The Toulmin Model"	Chapter 4 (pp. 109-116)	Prof's approval of rhetorical act
6	Writing an argumentative essay & audience, burden of proof, spheres of argument/audience	Chapter 4 (pp. 117-123)	<b>In-class participation assignment 1: Toulmin Model worksheet</b>
	Rhetors	Chapter 6 (entire chapter)	
	Workday on historical context paper		
7	Aristotle, "Introduction" Aristotle, "Rhetoric, Book I"	"Introduction" (pp. 144-150) Aristotle (pp. 151-153)	<a href="#">Essay: Historical context</a>
	Discuss Elevator Pitch Assignment Aristotle, "Rhetoric, Book I" cont'd	Aristotle (pp. 153-155)	
	Aristotle, "Rhetoric, Book I" cont'd	Aristotle (pp. 155-160)	<a href="#">DQ 2: Aristotle's theory</a>
<b>TOPIC 5: THE RHETOR &amp; ARISTOTLE'S VIEW OF RHETORIC</b>			
8	Elevator pitch activity		
	Day I: Deliver Elevator Pitches		<a href="#">Oral Presentation: Elevator pitches</a>
	Day II: Deliver Elevator Pitches (if necessary) Audiences	Chapter 7 (pp. 199-213)	
9	No class: Spring Break		
<b>TOPIC 6: BURKE'S VIEW ON RHETORIC – AUDIENCES &amp; PENTAD ANALYSIS</b>			
10	Burke, "Introduction" Burke, "A Grammar of Motives"	"Introduction" (pp. 989-991) & Burke (pp. 992-996)	
	Burke, "A Grammar of Motives"	Burke (pp. 996-1018)	<a href="#">DQ 3: Burke's theory</a>
	Tonn, Endress, & Diamond, "Hunting and Heritage on Trial"	Tonn reading– OnCourse	Print/bring in Tonn article

Week	Topic	Reading Due	Assignment Due
11	Discuss Critical Perspective Assignment Campbell & Burkholder, “Selecting a Critical Perspective”	Campbell & Burkholder– OnCourse	
<b>TOPIC 7: BITZER’S VIEW ON RHETORIC – RHETORICAL SITUATION</b>			
	Rhetorical Situations Bitzer, “Rhetorical Situation”	Chapter 8 (pp. 225-236) Bitzer–OnCourse	
	Rhetorical Situations: “Analysis & Situations as Rhetorical” Reagan, “Shuttle Challenger Address” (print)	Chapter 8 (pp. 236-242)	<b>DQ 4: Bitzer’s theory</b> Print/bring in challenger speech text
<b>TOPIC 8: FISHER’S VIEW ON RHETORIC – NARRATIVE PARADIGM</b>			
12	Narrative Fisher, “Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm”	Ch. 5 (entire chapter) Fisher–OnCourse	
	Fisher Cont’d	Ch. 5 (entire chapter) Fisher–OnCourse	<b>DQ 5: Fisher’s theory</b>
	Popp, “History in Discursive Limbo”	Popp–OnCourse	<b>In-class participation assignment 2: Conspiracy Theory article &amp; DQ</b>
13	In class workday on critical perspective paper		Bring research, technology, and 2 copies of paper (if ready for peer review)
<b>TOPIC 9: WRITING A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS RESEARCH PAPER</b>			
	Kupers, “Rhetorical criticism as art”	Kuypers–OnCourse	<b>Essay: Critical perspective</b>
	Discuss Visual Rhetorical Analysis (final paper) Assignment Types of Rhetorical Criticism Foss, “Pedantic Criticism” (pp. 455-463) Foss, “Ideological Criticism” (pp. 209-221)	Foss readings–OnCourse	
14	Writing an Implications Section Section, “Implications”	Section–OnCourse	
	Out of class workday on description of rhetorical act & visual argument worksheet		<b>Participation assignment 3: Visual Arguments worksheet (upload to dropbox)</b>

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Due</b>	<b>Assignment Due</b>
<b>15</b>	APA manual, "Selecting a title and writing an abstract"	APA–OnCourse	Bring in a journal article relating to your theory or rhetorical act
<b>TOPIC 10: GENDER CRITICISM</b>			
	Campbell, "Feminine Style" Vigil, "Feminine Style"	Campbell–OnCourse Vigil–OnCourse	<b><u>DQ 6: Campbell's theory</u></b>
	Foss & Griffin, "Beyond Persuasion" (Invitational Rhetoric) Carey, "The Parallel Rhetorics of Ella Baker"	Foss & Griffin–OnCourse Carey–OnCourse	<b><u>DQ Make-up: Foss &amp; Griffin's theory</u></b>
<b>16</b>	In class workday on rhetorical analysis paper		
<b>FINAL WEEK OF CLASS &amp; FINALS WEEK</b>			
	Out of class workday on rhetorical analysis paper		
	Visual Rhetorical Analysis & Abstract Peer Review		<b><u>Draft: Visual rhetorical analysis &amp; abstract</u></b> (bring 2 printed copies)
<b>Finals Week</b>	Submit Visual Rhetoric Analysis & Abstract		<b><u>Essay: Visual rhetorical analysis &amp; abstract</u></b> (bring a hard copy of abstract, essay, and reference page to prof's office)