

SPCM 412: Evaluating Contemporary Rhetoric

Spring 2020 / section 1 / 3 credits / face-to-face

Mon/Weds/Fri 10:00 – 10:50 am

Clark C251

Instructor: Hailey Otis

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Office Location: BSB A208

Office Hours: Mon/Weds
11 am – 12:30 pm, or by appt*This syllabus is a living document, subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.*

SPCM 412 Course Information	
Prerequisites	CO 150 or equivalent
Course Description	In this course, students will explore and evaluate contemporary persuasive communication in order to understand and assess a variety of forms of messages and symbols. Students will assume the role of the rhetorical critic, taking an analytical lens to the world around them and developing a sensitivity to the ways in which various rhetoric(s) compel ourselves and a diversity of audiences. This course will move through discussing what rhetoric and rhetorical criticism are and ought to do, different objects of study and the best methods for approaching them, as well as a variety of critical approaches to the practice of rhetorical criticism that are keen to dynamics of power, privilege, identity, and culture. The ultimate goal of this class is for students to produce compelling pieces of rhetorical criticism after reading, discussing, and reflecting on several exemplary models.
Course Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand, assess, and analyze key terms, concepts, and theories rhetorical scholars use to evaluate contemporary rhetoric • To apply key rhetorical terms, concepts, and theories to the contemporary landscape of public discourse • To develop the sensitivity of a rhetorical critic that is keyed into the ways in which various rhetoric(s) compel a diversity of audiences based on a firm understanding of dynamics power, privilege, identity, and culture • To confidently contribute to conversations on rhetoric, rhetorical scholarship, and public discourse • To produce a thoughtful, compelling, extended piece of rhetorical criticism that advances a critical perspective on some object/ artifact/text(s) in the world
Required Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No required textbook • All readings will be posted on Canvas

ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

**Details, expectations, and grading schemes for each assignment will be provided electronically via Canvas and explained in greater depth during class*

Topic Proposal Paper or Meeting (25 pts):

By the end of the third week of the semester, you will either turn in a written topic proposal for your final paper or meet with me to discuss your topic idea. Details for this assignment will be provided early in the semester for both the written and in-person meeting options.

Artifact Paper (75 pts):

One of the first building blocks of your final critical essay will be writing a paper that describes the history, context, and content of your chosen artifact/object/text(s) of study. This paper gives you a chance to deep dive into your artifact, learn everything you can about it, and write up the information you find in a way that works toward your final essay.

Annotated Bibliography (75 pts):

Another early building block toward your final paper is the annotated bibliography. For this assignment, you will conduct extensive research and select 10+ scholarly sources from academic journals and books that are most relevant and germane to your topic. For each source, you will include a full and accurate bibliographic citation as well as a paragraph that both summarizes the source and explains how it will be useful for your project.

Critical Essay (500 pts total):

Your reading, writing, revising, and learning in this class will culminate in writing your own piece of rhetorical criticism. This kind of writing project is most successful when approached with multiple drafts, rounds of revision, and opportunities for feedback. As such, your Critical Essay is broken down into the following pieces, due at various times throughout the semester:

Version 1 (150 pts): This first version is your chance to turn in a full version of your critical essay based on what you've learned in the first half of the semester. This version will build on your artifact paper and annotated bibliography and include an in-depth, thoughtful analysis of your object/artifact/text(s). Though you will have a chance to make multiple revisions based on feedback from myself and your peers for the final version, you want to treat this first version as a complete, finalized, and polished version of your paper in itself.

Version 2 (for peer review) (75 pts): Based on the feedback you receive from me on the first version of your essay, you will revise a second version for peer review. This version will be significantly different than your first version and will be the version that goes through at least two rounds of peer review in the latter half of the semester before the final version is due.

Final Version (250 pts): You will turn in a complete, finalized, and polished version of your paper at the end of the semester based on your feedback from me on version 1 and your peer feedback on version 2. Since this paper will have gone through multiple rounds of feedback and revision and will build on all the previous writing assignments in the course, I expect you to produce a strong, cogent, well-researched, in-depth, thoughtful piece of rhetorical criticism worthy of submission to an undergraduate conference.

Final Presentation (25 pts): During the final exam period for this class, each student will give a 7-10 minute presentation on their paper that overviews their argument, reviews relevant literature, explicates their analysis, and gestures toward their larger implications. Immediately following each presentation will be a few minutes of Q&A from the audience.

Analysis Outline & Meeting (50 pts):

During week 13, you will need to sign-up for a time to meet with me to discuss your plan for your revised analysis for the second version of your critical essay that is due at the beginning of week 15. To prepare for this meeting, you will need to fill out the "Critical Analysis Outline Worksheet" completely with as much detail as possible. For this assignment, you will be graded on both your completed outline and your meeting with me.

Peer Review (100 pts total):

Peer review is a significant part of the process of making your writing better. You will learn more about your writing (strengths, areas for improvement, anxieties, motivations, etc) from letting your peers read your work and reading theirs in return than you could ever learn from writing in isolation. As such, version 2 of your paper will go through at least two rounds of peer review. For the first round, your peer reviewer(s) will take your paper home and have a few days to read it and give feedback in written form. Round 2 will be an in-class peer review session to work out any major issues before the final version is due. Each student will be graded on the quality and depth of their written review of their peers' work (75 pts) as well as their participation in the in-class session of peer review (25 pts).

Exemplar Outline (25 pts):

In the second half of the semester, you will find and read a published piece of rhetorical criticism on a topic or approach that is interesting to you or helpful to your final project in some way (or hopefully both!). Since reading others' work is helpful in bettering your own writing, you will take this exemplar essay and break it down into its component parts in outline form to get a better sense of each piece of the author's argument. You will also write a short reflection on what you learned from this process and how this essay will be useful to you and your own writing.

Rhetorical Approach Multimodal Mini-Project (50 pts):

Once during the semester, you will be in charge of crafting a project that conveys information about a specific rhetorical approach. Because this project is multimodal, you will be tasked with presenting the information in a way that goes beyond the written word. Some possible project formats include: an explanatory video, a blog post with visuals, a graphic or set of graphics with captions, a podcast, a website page, an infographic, a poster, etc. The goals of this project are to increase your understanding of a particular rhetorical approach through creativity and to provide a repository of informative resources for the class. As such, we will house the projects on our class' Canvas page. These projects will be due a week after the particular approach is discussed in class. I will have students sign-up for the approach of their choosing early in the semester, so start looking at dates and approaches that interest/work for you early on.

Participation (100 pts):

Throughout the semester, we will do various in-class activities such as class criticisms, writing workshops, group work, etc. Most in-class participation activities will be worth points that you can easily earn by simply showing up, thoughtfully engaging, and putting your name on a piece of paper. On the flip side, if you miss class regularly, you will miss out on several participation points. Furthermore, if you are not thoughtfully and actively engaging in the activity at hand, I reserve the right not to give you participation points for that activity. At the end of the semester, I will count up the number of participation activities we did and the amount of points you were in-class to earn will be factored into a total of 100 pts.

	<u>Final Grade Scale</u>			
Topic Proposal	25 pts			
Artifact Paper	75 pts			
Annotated Bibliography	75 pts			
Critical Essay	500 pts			
Version 1 (150 pts)				
Version 2 (75 pts)				
Final Version (250 pts)				
Final Presentation (25 pts)				
Analysis Outline/Meeting	50 pts			
Peer Review	100 pts			
Exemplar Outline	25 pts			
Multimodal Mini-Project	50 pts			
Participation	100 pts			
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1000 pts TOTAL				
933 - 1000 = A	900 - 932 = A-	867 - 899 = B+	833 - 866 = B	
800 - 832 = B-	767 - 799 = C+	700 - 766 = C	600 - 699 = D	≤599 = F

COURSE POLICIES**Attendance**

Attendance is essential for your success in this course. Though I will not formally take attendance, many – if not most – class meetings will include some kind of participation assignment/activity that will count toward your participation grade. If you are not in class, you are unable to earn participation points for that day. If you miss a class, you are responsible for all material discussed that day. Plan to get the notes for any missed days from a classmate.

Late Work

Because this class includes a significant amount of writing, drafting, feedback from myself/peers, and revising, turning assignments in on time is imperative. For each day (starting with the 24-hour period immediately following the original due time) an assignment is late, I will deduct 10% from your final grade on that assignment (i.e. if you turn in an assignment two days late and your final grade was a 94%, you will ultimately get a 74% on that assignment). I offer the flexibility of turning in one writing assignment (excludes peer review, participation,

and final presentation) up to two days late with no penalty. For whichever assignment you use this option for, be sure to include the following disclaimer on the top of your document in **red font**: *"I am using my two-day flexibility for this assignment."* You cannot turn a writing assignment in more than two days late and use this option. Do not expect the same level/amount of feedback from me on a paper that is turned in later than its original due date.

Students with Disabilities

This class is committed to being accessible for students regardless of ability or health. If you are a student who will need accommodations in this class due to a disability or chronic health condition, please provide me with an accommodation letter from the Student Disability Center (SDC, formerly RDS) so that I may implement your accommodations as soon as possible. Please meet with me during my office hours to give me the letter and/or to further discuss your needs. If you do not already have these letters, please contact the SDC as soon as possible to initiate the accommodation process. The SDC is located in room 121 of the TILT building. You can contact them at 970-491-6385 or visit www.disabilitycenter.colostate.edu.

Academic Integrity

This course adheres to the Academic Integrity Policy of the Colorado State University General Catalog and the Student Conduct Code (<https://resolutioncenter.colostate.edu/student-conduct/code/>). A key feature of academic integrity is avoiding plagiarism, defined as: "the copying of language, structure, ideas, or thoughts of another, and representing them as one's own without proper acknowledgment. Examples include a submission of purchased research papers as one's own work; paraphrasing and/or quoting material without properly documenting the source," (CSU General Catalog). All written assignments must be your own, and must be original and specific to this course. Work originally written for another course is *not* acceptable. Material taken from other sources must be appropriately cited. If you are found in violation of CSU's Academic Integrity Policy, I will pursue disciplinary action as discussed in the CSU General Catalog and Student Conduct Code.

Turnitin

The Department of Communication Studies employs Turnitin to protect against plagiarism, and it is mandatory that you submit all written work to this service. After clicking on the appropriate assignment, please upload a Word document of your assignment through the Turnitin link. ***Be sure to confirm that you successfully submitted your assignment by re-clicking on the Turnitin link after you've submitted.*** Each written assignment will be assessed for plagiarism through Turnitin and all suspiciously high scores will be met with appropriate action between instructor and student.

Grade appeals

If you wish to appeal a grade, the following process must be adhered to:

- (1) You must wait 24 hours after you get your initial grade back before you contest the grade,
- (2) You must contest the grade in writing (i.e. a word document attached to an email) within one week of getting the initial grade back,
- (3) After you contest the grade in writing and I submit a decision back to you in writing, we will decide together if we need to schedule a meeting in office hours to address any further questions. Please note that I reserve the right to move a grade either up or down after reviewing the grade appeal. Be sure to be as specific as possible in describing why you think you deserve a different grade than the one you received.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Content Warning and Class Climate

Some of the course readings and classrooms discussions this semester may involve mature, difficult, and potentially challenging topics. We should all work together to create a space that is both intellectually rigorous and respectful of diverse perspectives and positionalities. Even when you strongly disagree with someone/something, you are expected to be respectful and mindful of the ways that our identities and experiences position us in the classroom.

I expect everyone to come to class prepared to discuss the readings in a mature and respectful way. If you are struggling with the course materials, here are some tips: read the syllabus so that you are prepared in advance. You can approach your instructor ahead of time if you'd like more information about a topic or reading. If you are struggling to keep up with the work because of the course content, you should speak with me and/or seek help from the counseling center.

Instructor and Student Responsibilities

As the instructor of this course, I promise to:

- (1) Treat all students fairly and with respect
- (2) Be prepared for lecture and available for explanation/assistance outside of class
- (3) Be efficient, consistent, and fair with grading
- (4) Create a safe space for learning, questioning, and failure
- (5) Check my biases and privilege in the pursuit of knowledge
- (6) Be willing to admit when I'm wrong

In return, I expect you to:

- (1) Treat myself and your classmates with respect
- (2) Come to class prepared and engaged
- (3) Be mindful of your language and actions in the classroom
- (4) Check your biases and privilege so as to foster critical thinking
- (5) Ask for help when you need it
- (6) Be willing to fail

COURSE SCHEDULE

**Readings and assignments due by class time unless otherwise specified*

WEEK	DATE	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Introduction to Rhetorical Criticism			
What is Rhetoric?			
Week 1	1/20	NO CLASS	
	1/22		
	1/24		
Week 2	1/27	Blair, Dickinson, & Ott (pp. 2-5) Kuypers & King (Ch. 1)	
	1/29		
What is Rhetorical Criticism?			
	1/31	<i>Routledge Reader "Intro"</i> (pp. 1-11) Kuypers (Ch. 2)	
Week 3	2/3	Nothstine, Blair, & Copeland	
	2/5		
	2/7		
			Topic Proposal due Sat 2/8 @ 11:59 pm
Objects and Methods			
"Traditional" Criticism			
Week 4	2/10	Hill (Ch. 5)	
Close Textual Analysis			
	2/12	Browne (Ch. 6) Prasch	
	2/14		
Equipment for Living			
Week 5	2/17	Burke Khrebtan-Hörhager & Avant-Mier	
	2/19		
	2/21	<i>Work on Artifact Paper in-class</i>	
			Artifact Paper due Sat 2/22 @ 11:59 pm
Week 6	2/24	NO CLASS - WSCA	
Visual Rhetoric			
	2/26	Foss Harold & Deluca	
	2/28		
Week 7	3/2	<i>In-class workshop: Research</i>	
Criticism of Media			
	3/4	Meier & Medjesky Fletcher & Primak	
Criticism of Social Media			
	3/6	Huntington	

			Annotated Bib due Sat 3/7 @ 11:59 pm
Rhetoric of Space/Materiality			
Week 8	3/9	Dickinson	
	3/11	<i>In-class workshop: Writing Thesis Statements & Critical Claims</i>	
	3/13	<i>In-class workshop: Outlining & Organization</i>	
Week 9: Spring Break (3/16-3/20)			
Body Rhetoric			
Week 10	3/23	DeLuca	
Social Movement Rhetoric			
	3/25	Enck-Wanzer Chavez	
	3/27		
			Critical Essay: Version 1 Due Sat 3/28 @ 11:59 pm
Critical Approaches			
Critical Rhetoric, Objectivity, & Politics			
Week 11	3/30	McKerrow Black (Ch. 3)	
Feminist Criticism			
	4/1	Meyer Anderson	
	4/3		
Queer Criticism			
Week 12	4/6	Slagle West	
	4/8		
Racial Rhetorical Criticism			
	4/10	Flores <i>C&CCS Forum: Race & Rhetoric</i> (pick 2)	
			Exemplar Outline due Sat 4/11 @ 11:59 pm
Intersectional Rhetoric & Criticism			
Week 13	4/13	Crenshaw Otis	<i>Make appt to discuss analysis outline this week</i> (Outline due before meeting)
	4/15		
	4/17	<i>In-class workshop: Writing Critical Claims Pt. 2</i>	
Strategic Rhetorics			
Week 14	4/20	Nakayma & Krizec Westerfelhaus & Lacroix	
	4/22		
Vernacular Rhetoric(s)			
	4/24	Ono & Sloop	

		Guo & Lee	
Peer Reviewing & Revising			
Week 15	4/27	<i>Discuss peer reviewing in class</i>	Critical Essay: Version 2 Due to Peer Reviewers by class time
	4/29	<i>Peer review time in-class</i>	Peer reviews due @ 11:59 pm
	5/1	<i>In-class workshop: Revising</i>	
Week 16	5/4	<i>In class workshop: Biggest Struggle</i>	
	5/6	<i>In-class peer review</i>	Bring revised papers to class for final peer review
	5/8		
			Final Version of Critical Essay due Sat 5/9 @ 11:59 pm

Final Exam Period	THURS 5/14 11:50 am - 1:50 pm	Final Paper Presentations
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