Course Description:

This course is designed to help you develop your ability to engage in scholarly research in the humanities. More specifically, you will be given the resources to build an article-length rhetorical criticism paper that is good enough to be accepted for presentation at a conference and eventually achieve publication in a journal.

This course is not designed to examine the history of rhetorical criticism in the discipline or to survey rhetorical methods, nor will it teach you to apply a single “cookie-cutter” method to an artifact. Instead, this course takes a practical and pluralistic approach to critical activity in rhetorical inquiry. You will read representative articles that discuss or apply different rhetorical concepts to the study of texts; you will cull from those articles certain productive approaches to analyzing, interpreting, and judging texts; then you will utilize those approaches in your own reading of a text. Texts are always embedded in contexts, and so you will give attention to the production influences on your text, the internal dynamics of the text itself, and the reception that text received.

To build a final paper throughout the quarter, it is important that you quickly identify an artifact for rhetorical study. Typical artifacts include, but are not limited to: texts that are non-fiction (e.g., an oration, an essay, a book, a documentary, a museum exhibit), socially important (public, influential, and/or representative), bounded into a whole (i.e., you can argue the text or series of texts you have chosen has an identifiable structure), and only apparently transparent (i.e., there is something about the text that, upon close inspection, is puzzling and requires another look).

This course does not have a particularly heavy reading load, but you will be doing a lot of writing. Practice makes perfect and this is a course designed to improve practice.

Required Texts:

James Jasinski, *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies* (Sage, 2001). Although I have not assigned specific readings from this book, I expect you to consult it when searching for a rhetorical concept to introduce to the class, and throughout the quarter to learn more about the terminology you encounter in your assigned readings.

The rest of the class readings are available at [https://catalysttools.washington.edu/sharespaces/space/cecc/7256](https://catalysttools.washington.edu/sharespaces/space/cecc/7256).

Final Grade Determination:

- Text choice and justification paper (4-5 pgs.) ................................................................. 5%
- Four short criticism papers (2 pgs.), worth 5% each ......................................................... 20%
- 12-15 minute presentation on concept of your choice, with handout and bibliography .......... 10%
- Reader’s report of a classmate’s complete draft (2-5 pgs.) .................................................. 5%
- Final paper (17-25 pgs.) ....................................................................................................... 60%

All papers will be turned in and returned to you online at [https://catalysttools.washington.edu/collectit/dropbox/cecc/6756](https://catalysttools.washington.edu/collectit/dropbox/cecc/6756).
If class has to be cancelled unexpectedly, we can hold class virtually through the class discussion list at:
https://catalysttools.washington.edu/gopost/board/cecc/13213/

Assignments:

*Text choice and justification paper (4-5 pgs., due Oct. 13 at 1:30 p.m.)*: In this paper, you will persuade me that you have chosen a text that is an appropriate object for rhetorical criticism over the course of a 10-week quarter. In doing so, you should identify the text, provide some preliminary information about its context, and review the existent scholarly literature relevant to your project, as well as make a persuasive argument that this text deserves your close attention and will likely result in a publishable paper. If feasible, you also should provide me with a reproduction of the artifact.

*Short criticism papers (2 pgs. each, due Oct. 20, Oct. 27, Nov. 3 and Nov. 24 at 1:30 p.m.)*: You will model the criticism we read and discuss in class, drawing from the concepts discussed there as you critique your chosen text. Each short paper will report the most significant finding you discovered from applying the concept to your text. You will turn in four of these papers: one on production influences, one on metaphor, one on reception, and one on a rhetorical concept introduced in class by one of your classmates.

*Concept choice presentations (12-15 minute speech, with handout that includes a bibliography, due Nov. 5, 10, 17 or 19 at 1:30 p.m.)*: I have chosen three rhetorical concepts that we will study together in the class (performative traditions, polysemy, and metaphor). You will each choose one other rhetorical concept that we will study together, and one representative piece of published rhetorical scholarship that explores and/or applies that concept. I am happy to help you locate a suitable representative piece of published scholarship on your chosen concept; just let me know if you’d like this assistance. Before class on Oct. 29, I will need to have approved both the concept and representative critical essay you have selected so that pdfs of these readings can be made available to everyone in the class. On the day your reading has been assigned to your classmates, you will present a short speech on your chosen concept as it is used in the representative essay (which the entire class will have read by that day) and in other essays that you’ve found in your research on that concept. In this speech, you will also illustrate the concept by applying it to the rhetorical criticism of your text. You will provide a handout that includes a definition of the concept, a summary of what you’ve discovered about the concept in your research on its use in rhetorical criticism, and a summary of what you discovered from applying the concept to your text. This handout should include a bibliography that lists all useful materials you have read about the concept. Some prospective concepts include (but are not limited to): genre, ethos, irony, iconicity, pentadic ratios, dissociation, imitation, kairos, myth, narrative, ideographs, close reading, argument schemes, topoi, intertextuality, presence, condensation symbols, and stases.

*Draft of Final Paper (17-25 pgs., due Dec. 8 at 1:30 p.m.) and Reader’s report (2-5 pgs., due Dec. 10 at 1:30 p.m.)*: You are expected to turn in a draft of your final paper by Dec. 8, and act as a reviewer for the draft turned in by one of your classmates, filling out the standard reader’s report section titled “comments to author” and returning a copy of that reader’s report to me and to your classmate by Dec. 10.

*Final paper (17-25 pgs., due Dec. 16 by 10:30 a.m.)*: Your final paper will utilize one or more of the concepts studied in class in the criticism of your chosen text. It will be evaluated as a paper submitted for conference presentation and/or publication, thus it should conform to the publication standards of the field, making an argument that contributes something significant to the scholarly literature.
COMMUNICATION 515: RHETORICAL CRITICISM
AUTUMN 2009
SCHEDULE

Thurs. Oct. 1  Orientation to the class

Tues. Oct. 6  On the Relationship between Method and Theory in Humanistic Research

Thurs. Oct. 8  Publication-Worthy Research in Rhetorical Criticism

Reading Text in Context

Tues. Oct. 13  TEXT CHOICE AND JUSTIFICATION PAPER DUE

Thurs. Oct. 15  Production Influence: Performative Traditions

Tues. Oct. 20  SHORT PAPER DUE
Thurs. Oct. 22  Metaphor


Tues. Oct. 27  SHORT PAPER DUE

Thurs. Oct. 29  Reception: Polysemy


Tues. Nov. 3  SHORT PAPER DUE

Thurs. Nov. 5  Your Choice of Rhetorical Concept; HANDOUTS DUE FROM PRESENTERS

Presence [Liz Hunter presenting]


Bureaucratization [Anjali Vats presenting]


Tues. Nov. 10  Your Choice of Rhetorical Concept; HANDOUTS DUE FROM PRESENTERS

Ideograph [Nate Johnson presenting]


Identification [Alison Rank presenting]


Thurs. Nov. 12  NO CLASS – NCA CONVENTION
Tues. Nov. 17

**Your Choice of Rhetorical Concept**

*HANDOUTS DUE FROM PRESENTERS*

**Epideictic** [Pamela Pietrucci presenting]


**Heteroglossia** [Jennifer LeMesurier presenting]


**Genre** [Heather Hill presenting]


Thurs. Nov. 19

**Your Choice of Rhetorical Concept**

*HANDOUTS DUE FROM PRESENTERS*

**Ego-function** [Kai Kohlsdorf presenting]


**Interpellation** [Katie Knobloch presenting]


Tues. Nov. 24

**SHORT PAPER DUE**

Thurs. Nov. 26

**NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

Tues. Dec. 1

**Publication-Worthy Research in Rhetorical Criticism Revisited**

Re-examine all the readings in class to this point to determine what constitutes publishable scholarship in the area of rhetorical criticism.

Thurs. Dec. 3

**Paper Presentations**

Tues. Dec. 8

**Paper Presentations; DRAFTS OF FINAL PAPER DUE**

Thurs. Dec. 10

**READER’S REPORT DUE**

Wed. Dec. 16

**FINAL PAPERS DUE BY 10:30 A.M.**