

RHETORICAL CRITICISM

Communication 431

Spring 2012

Anjali Vats
avats@uw.edu
Tuesdays & Thursdays 8:30am-10:20am
Smith 305

Office Hours
Thursday 10:30am-12:30pm or By Appointment
Communication 340-S



COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this class, you will learn a variety of approaches and concepts used in rhetorical criticism. Your role as a rhetorical critic will be to select, analyze, interpret, and judge selected objects of study, or rhetorical artifacts. In other words, you will learn to choose a rhetorical artifact on which to comment, identify significant features of that rhetorical artifact, explain how the rhetorical artifact's significant features work together to convey a message or several messages to the audience, and argue for your understanding and assessment of the rhetorical artifact.

Over the course of the quarter, you will learn a variety of approaches and concepts to use in your study of rhetorical criticism, including close textual analysis, critical rhetoric, ideology, metaphor, feminism, and narrative, among others. In the spirit of the methods component of this class, you will practice engaging in and critiquing rhetorical criticism in using several approaches and concepts, ultimately choosing one or more preferred ones for your final paper.

By the end of the quarter, you should be able to:

- List, describe, and critique different approaches and critical lenses for rhetorical criticism;
- Explain the process of rhetorical criticism, including selecting, analyzing, interpreting, and judging appropriate rhetorical artifacts, for a variety of approaches and critical lenses;
- Select an object of study for rhetorical criticism;
- Engage in rhetorical criticism of rhetorical artifacts using the array of approaches and critical lenses presented over the course of the quarter;
- Produce a scholarly and polished piece of rhetorical criticism; and
- Evaluate a classmate's scholarly and polished piece of rhetorical criticism.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Jim A. Kuypers, *Rhetorical Criticism: Perspective in Action* (New York: Lexington Books, 2009).

James Jasinski, *Sourcebook on Rhetoric* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2001).

COURSE WEBSITE

<https://catalyst.uw.edu/workspace/avats/29063/>

ASSIGNMENTS

Below are brief descriptions of the assignments in this course. We will discuss each assignment in greater depth closer to its due date.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| • Text Justification | 75 points |
| • Quizzes | 100 points/25 points each |
| • Creative Project | 150 points |
| • Concept Paper | 75 points |
| • Long Paper | 150 points |
| • Reader Response Paper | 75 points |
| • In-Class Presentation | 100 points |
| • Long Paper Revision | 175 points |
| • Presentation & Discussion Participation | 100 points |

TEXT JUSTIFICATION: On *April 12th*, you will turn in a *two page paper* identifying, describing, and demonstrating the significance of the rhetorical artifact you would like to write about in your final paper. You must turn in a copy of your rhetorical artifact with your paper (URLs are sufficient), cite at least three sources, and attach a works cited page (in APA or Chicago format).

QUIZZES: You will take five in-class quizzes this quarter. The quizzes will cover the preceding two or three lectures and readings and will not be cumulative. Quizzes will be given on *April 10th*, *April 17th*, *April 24th*, *May 1st*, and *May 8th*. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped. As a result, there are no makeups for missed quizzes for any reason.

CREATIVE PROJECT: For this assignment, which is due on *April 26th*, you will select a piece of contemporary popular culture (different from the one you are writing about in your long paper) as your rhetorical artifact and an approach to rhetorical criticism we have studied in class as a means of studying that rhetorical artifact. You will create a poster, multimedia presentation, film, website, or some other non-traditional project which defines, describes, and illustrates the approach that you have chosen using your object of study. You will also explain the insights your chosen approach offers us into your rhetorical artifact. This is a creative project—have fun with it!

CONCEPT PAPER: This *two page* assignment, which is due on *May 3rd*, requires you to select and defend the perspective that you will use to read your rhetorical artifact in your long paper. Specifically, you will identify your chosen perspective, discuss the state of current scholarship about that perspective, and demonstrate the usefulness of that perspective in illuminating your rhetorical artifact. You must cite at least five sources from rhetorical scholars other than the course texts or in-class lectures, and attach a works cited page (in APA or Chicago format).

LONG PAPER: You will turn in a complete and polished draft of your final paper on *May 17th*. In your *eight to ten page paper*, you will write a scholarly analysis of your chosen rhetorical artifact using one of the approaches to rhetorical criticism we have discussed in class. Your paper will describe your rhetorical artifact and its significance, explain the method that you will be employing to “read” that rhetorical artifact, analyze and interpret the rhetorical artifact, and finally offer a critical judgment and discussion of the implications of your analysis. You must turn in a copy of your rhetorical artifact with your paper (URLs are sufficient), cite ten or more sources, at least five of which are from rhetorical scholars other than the course texts or in-class lectures, and attach a works cited page (in APA or Chicago format).

READER RESPONSE PAPER: On May 17th, you will bring a hard copy of your Long Paper to class and exchange papers with a classmate. You will have one week to read and write a *two page paper* providing input on your partner’s paper. Your reader response paper, due on *May 24th*, must summarize the argument of the paper you are reviewing, identify the method of rhetorical criticism being used, state and explain at least three strengths of the paper, offer and explain at least one area for improvement. Your partner will receive a copy of your Reader Response Paper so please be professional in your comments and make sure to provide constructive and balanced input.

IN-CLASS PRESENTATION: Each of you will make a *seven to ten minute presentation* of your paper topic in class followed by a short Q & A period. You may present your research findings in any format but you must use some type of visual aid. The purpose of these presentations is to give you the opportunity to share the work you have been doing all quarter with your fellow students.

PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION PARTICIPATION: You are expected to attend and participate in the class discussions and presentations occurring on the last few days of class. Your questions and feedback are an important part of the writing and learning process for your classmates.

REVISED LONG PAPER: Your final paper will be a revised version of the Long Paper you turned in earlier in the quarter. A substantial portion of your grade will be based on demonstrable improvement between the first and final versions of your paper. This paper should follow the assignment requirements for the Long Paper described above.

EXTRA CREDIT: I will let you know if there will be any extra credit opportunities this quarter. Most likely there will be one or two, relating to the content of the course.

WRITING CREDIT

This course meets the requirements for writing credit at the University of Washington. I encourage you to take full advantage of the opportunity to write and receive feedback on your work.

CLASS POLICIES

Class policies are explicitly listed here for your benefit as well as mine. Please review them thoroughly as I will strictly abide by them. Also, please note that this syllabus is subject to change at my discretion. Changes will be announced in class and noted on the course website when possible.

RESPECT

Students are expected to show one another the utmost respect. This means that class discussions of should not involve personal attacks, harassing language, or any other statements in violation of the University of Washington Student Conduct Code. It also means being aware of and avoiding potentially offensive comments and language. If you are not sure whether a topic, comment, or turn of phrase may be offensive, please feel free to come to speak with me before or after class or during office hours. Similarly, if you feel as though the classroom environment is unsafe for you, please come speak with me immediately so we can address your concerns immediately.

Respect also entails full and active participation, cognizance of those around you, and professional behavior. Your professor and your classmates are your colleagues. That means arriving late to class and leaving early, sleeping, chatting, texting, emailing, and other disruptive behaviors are not acceptable. If you cannot stay for the entire class due to extenuating circumstances, please let me know the reason in advance. Absent extenuating circumstances, you are expected to be on time and present, both physically and mentally, for the entire class period.

READINGS

All readings are due at the beginning of class on the date listed on the schedule. Class should be for clarifying the concepts in the readings not hearing them for the first time.

ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments must be *double spaced* in *12 point Times New Roman* font with *1 inch margins* and within the page limits listed above. Please note that the default double spacing option on the newest versions of Microsoft Word will space more than double between paragraphs and thus will not meet the formatting requirements in this class. There are no exceptions to these formatting requirements and you will lose 5 points for each violation.

Assignments, with the exception of the Creative Project, are due to Catalyst Dropbox on the dates and times indicated on this syllabus. Students will lose 10 points per day an assignment is late and no assignment will be accepted more than 5 days after the due date. In the event of illness,

emergency, or other extenuating circumstance, please contact me as soon as possible, providing written verification of the excused absence. Makeup assignments must be completed no later than 5 days after the original assignment due date.

DISCUSSION BOARD

This class has a discussion board through Catalyst. I encourage you to post your questions about the class there and attempt to flesh them out with your classmates. If you have a question, chances are that your classmates do as well. The discussion board is intended to facilitate your learning of difficult course concepts as well as foster class cooperation.

EMAIL

You may contact me by email and I will respond within 24 hours, excluding weekends and holidays. I will not respond to emails regarding assignments that are due within 24 hours or less so please start your assignments well in advance of their due dates.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

We will cover a significant amount of material each day, most of which is very difficult to assimilate through the readings alone. Thus, while very few points are allotted to participation, you are highly unlikely to do well if you do not attend regularly and actively engage with the course material. Also, please remember that it is your responsibility to speak with a classmate and not me to get notes.

CELL PHONES & LAPTOPS

Cell phones are absolutely prohibited in class for any purpose. That includes making phone calls, texting, taking notes, fact-checking, or looking up the time. Individuals who use their cell phones in class will be asked to put their phones away or immediately leave the class.

Laptop use in class is permissible for notetaking only. Disruptive activities including but not limited to watching Netflix, checking your favorite social media websites, trolling for hilarious and amazing YouTube videos, playing video games, and checking email are not permitted. I will not hesitate to ban laptops if they prove to be disruptive to the class environment.

SPECIAL NEEDS

To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services at 448 Schmitz, 543-8924 (V), 543-8925 (TTY), or uwdss@uw.edu. Please present me with your letter from DSS so we can discuss any accommodations you may need.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

I am happy to discuss grade concerns and grievances with students. If you wish to challenge a grade, you must: (1) wait 24 hours after receiving your score, (2) email me a one page summary of your concerns, making reference to the assignment requirements, and (3) make an appointment to meet with me, during office hours or another mutually agreeable time. Grade concerns and

grievances will be considered for *one week* after papers are returned, after which time grades will be final and grade challenges will no longer be accepted.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of Washington's definitions of academic and personal misconduct are outlined in the Student Conduct Code. It your responsibility to read and understand the University of Washington's expectations regarding your conduct.

Plagiarism includes any representation, intentional or unintentional, of another person's words or ideas in a manner that makes it seem as if they were your own, either in written or oral form. Plagiarism and cheating are significant violations of the Student Conduct code and it will be treated as such in this class. Copying another person's paper, speech, presentation, etc. without appropriate citation and attribution will therefore be considered plagiarism.

GRADING

Your final course grade will be determined by the total number of points earned with respect to the following total point grading scale:

950+	4.0	860	3.1	770	2.2	690	1.4
940	3.9	850	3.0	760	2.1	680	1.3
930	3.8	840	2.9	750	2.0	670	1.2
920	3.7	830	2.8	740	1.9	660	1.1
910	3.6	820	2.7	730	1.8	650	1.0
900	3.5	810	2.6	720	1.7	640	0.9
890	3.4	800	2.5	710	1.6	630	0.8
880	3.3	790	2.4	700	1.5	620	0.7
870	3.2	780	2.3				

The lowest passing score for this course is a 0.7, with 620 total points earned for the quarter. Earning less than 620 points for the quarter will, without exception, result in a 0.0.

SCHEDULE AND READINGS

March 27 **Syllabus & Introduction**

March 29 **What is Rhetoric?**

- Kuypers, Chapter 1
- Jasinski, "Preface"
- Jasinski, "Introduction"

April 3 **"Traditional" Rhetoric**

- Kuypers, Chapter 5
- Jasinski, "Canons of Rhetoric"

- Jasinski, “Invention”

April 5

Rhetorical Criticism as Art & The Rhetorical Artifact

- Kuypers, Chapter 2
 - Jasinski, “Criticism in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies”
 - Jasinski, “Text”
-

April 10

The Rhetorical Situation & Quiz #1

- Kuypers, Chapter 4
- Jasinski, “Situation, Rhetorical”

April 12

Close Textual Analysis

- Kuypers, Chapter 6
- Jasinski, “Close Reading”
- Jasinski, “Arrangement”

TEXT JUSTIFICATION DUE TO DROPBOX @ 8:30am

April 17

Critical Rhetoric & Quiz #2

- Kuypers, Chapter 17
- Jasinski, “Critical Rhetoric”

April 19

Ideology Critique

- Kuypers, Chapter 16
 - Jasinski, “Ideograph”
 - Jasinski, “Ideology”
-

April 24

Concept Based Criticism & Quiz #3

- Kuypers, Chapter 18
- Jaskinski, “Tradition”

April 26

Metaphor Analysis

- Kuypers, Chapter 8
- Jasinski, “Style”

CREATIVE PROJECT DUE IN CLASS @ 8:30am

May 1

Feminist Criticism & Quiz #4

- Kuypers, Chapter 15
- Jasinski, “Feminine Style”

May 3

Narrative Criticism

- Kuypers, Chapter 9
- Jasinski, "Narrative"

CONCEPT PAPER DUE TO DROPBOX @ 8:30am

May 8

Constructing Argument in Rhetorical Criticism & Quiz #5

May 10

Thesis & Outline Workshop

May 15

Open Office Hours

May 17

Creative Project Discussion

LONG PAPERS DUE TO DROPBOX @ 8:30am

May 22

Long Paper Presentations

May 24

Long Paper Presentations

READER REPORTS DUE TO DROPBOX @ 8:30am

May 29

Long Paper Presentations

May 31

Long Paper Presentations

LONG PAPER REVISION DUE TO DROPBOX ON JUNE 4TH @ 10:30am