Instructor: Mollie Murphy, Ph.D. (call me Mollie)
Pronouns: she/her/hers
Email: mollie.murphy@usu.edu
Office: Lundberg Hall 203
Office Hours: I am free Mondays and Wednesdays 1-2 pm to meet via Zoom. Email me to set up an appointment. Be in touch if these hours are impossible for you and you would like to meet.

Course Description
Welcome to rhetorical criticism online! In this course, students will learn to critically engage public, persuasive communication (rhetoric), which includes news media, speeches, visual artifacts (e.g., memorials, murals), advertising, protests, campaigns, books by activists, movies, and more. The course will offer an overview of rhetoric as well as various methodologies for engaging in rhetorical criticism. Throughout the semester, students will practice applying these methodologies to various rhetorical artifacts, especially speeches.

Required Text

Additional readings will be uploaded to Canvas under the “files” tab.

Point Distribution
Guided reading responses  50%
Participation questions/proposals  5%
Midterm Paper  20%
Final Paper  25%
Total  100%

Grading Scale and Policies
Grading Scale
92.95-100%  A  72.95-76.94%  C
89.95-92.94%  A-  69.95-72.94%  C-
86.95-89.94%  B+  59.95-69.94%  D
82.95-86.94%  B  59.94% and below  F
79.95-82.94%  B-  
76.95-79.94%  C+

*Grades are rounded to the nearest tenth. That means that an 89.95 is an A- and an 89.94 is a B+. This policy is non-negotiable and there will be no exceptions.*
To uphold a fair standard for all students, I do not change or reconsider a grade unless there has been a mathematical or clerical error. However, I am always happy to meet with you to discuss a particular assignment or your standing in the course.

Grades are considered final 48 hours after posting to Canvas.

**Specific Course Assignments**

**Guided Reading Responses (50%)**
Once or twice a week, you will submit written responses to the readings and/or video speeches. I will post prompts for these short writings to the Canvas “announcements” section at least 72 in advance of the due time. I expect written responses to these prompts to clearly show that you have both completed and thoughtfully engaged the materials. Refer to specific passages from the readings/speeches to show you have read/watched the material (without relying excessively on direct quotes). Responses should be polished in writing and organization; organize your ideas into paragraphs, and write concisely so as to avoid wasting space with wordiness or vague language. Lengths of responses will vary, but they will generally be ~1-2 double-spaced pages. I will specify the length of the response on the prompts. Use Times New Roman, 12-point font and standard 1” margins on all sides. A references section is not necessary for these short papers. *Your lowest score in this category will be dropped.*

**Participation Questions/Proposals (5%)**
Five times during the semester, you will submit “assignments” for participation points only. These include your response to an initial meet and greet prompt, a short explanation of your interests, and three proposals for the midterm and final papers which will serve as check ins so that I can help you craft your best work. I will post prompts for these participation questions/proposal assignments under the Canvas announcements section. I will grade these based on completion – the point of each of these assignments is for me to check in with you so that I can a) get to know you and your unique interests and b) help you with your midterm and final papers. To receive full credit, responses should be *thorough* and *thoughtful*. Each participation question is worth 1% of your final grade.

**Midterm Paper (20%)**
Your midterm paper will involve a neo-Aristotelian analysis of a speech text of your choice (you cannot choose a speech listed on the syllabus). You will aim to understand the speech in context, asking how successfully the speaker used rhetoric to meet the demands of the situation. The midterm paper will be heavily grounded in the materials from weeks 4 and 5 on the rhetorical situation and neo-Aristotelian (traditional) criticism. A detailed prompt will be available on Canvas under “files”. You will submit a proposal to me on October 5th. Midterm papers are October 22nd.

**Final Paper (25%)**
For your final paper, you will analyze a rhetorical artifact of your choice using one of the following methodologies: metaphoric, ideographic, narrative, pentadic, feminist, OR tropological (no mixing methods for this assignment). You cannot use the speech you analyzed for your midterm paper, nor can you analyze a speech listed on the syllabus. Also, you do not necessarily
need to analyze a speech for this paper, though you may. You can also consider examining another artifact of public significance: a movie, a series of advertisements, a song or collection of songs, play, monument, or something else. You will use your chosen methodology (“perspective”) to better understand how your selected artifact functions to shape the audience’s understanding of the issue addressed. I will post a detailed prompt to Canvas under “files”. On November 12th, you will submit a proposal explaining your chosen artifact and the surrounding context. On December 3rd, you will submit another proposal explaining your chosen methodology and justifying why it is a good fit for your artifact.

**Course Policies**

**Online Learning**
Students are responsible for becoming familiar with Canvas, where all of our course materials will be available. If you cannot locate a reading/video, notify me at least 48 hours in advance of any assignment deadlines related to the reading(s). **Being unable to locate the reading is not an excuse for submitting work late.** If for some reason you have issues submitting an assignment, you may email the assignment to me by the deadline. See the section below on late work for more specifics. I will also be corresponding regularly via USU email.

**Plagiarism**
Students must complete their own work and give credit to any outside sourced used to complete an assignment. Lack of knowledge of the academic policy is not a reasonable explanation for any form of academic misconduct. Plagiarism includes—but is not limited to—copying and pasting another person’s work, failing to give credit to information derived from another person’s work, paraphrasing another persons’ work in a way that misrepresents the original claims, having another student complete your work, and completing another student’s work. Questions related to the course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

**Learning Accommodations**
Any student who needs special accommodations for learning or who has particular needs is invited to share these concerns or requests with me as soon as possible. Disabilities must be documented through the Disability Resource Center; it is your responsibility to contact the DRC and fill out the necessary paperwork. Formal requests for accommodations must be completed before the scheduled assignment.

**Technology**
**Email:** You may address me as Mollie, or as Dr. Murphy if you are more comfortable with a formal tone. Write an email similar to how you would write a letter (include salutation: “Hello Dr. Murphy/Dear Mollie” sign your name “Regards, Nadia/Best, Miguel”). I will typically respond to an email within 24 hours. If you email me in the evening, expect that I will reply the following day. There is no set turn-around time on weekends. I would ask that you, too, check and respond to email in a similar time frame. This is especially important for online courses.

**Written Assignment Guidelines and Late Work**
All written assignments must adhere to the most recent edition of APA. Reference pages do not count as part of your paper’s page limit, nor does heading material or title pages. Guided responses do not require a title page or references section (unless you are citing material not on
the syllabus, which you don’t have to). Additionally, all written assignments must:

- Be in Times New Roman, 12 point font
- Have standard margins (1” top, bottom, and sides).
- Have no extra white space between paragraphs

Written works may be submitted late for a significant deduction. Reading responses, responses to participation questions, and papers submitted after a ten-minute grace period will receive a 10% deduction. An additional 10% will be deducted for every 24 hours it is not turned in.

There may be rare circumstances in which the above late work penalty will not apply. If you have an extenuating, documentable circumstance, you must notify me as soon as possible, and you must be able to provide authoritative documentation signed by a person in a position to make a determination as to the validity of the excuse. Appropriate documentation must be received within one week. Computer issues are not an excuse for submitting work late. Therefore, I recommend submitting written work in advance of the deadline in case you encounter any Internet connection problems or others issues.

**Course Schedule**

This is a *general plan* for the course. Deviations may be necessary and will be announced.

**IMPORTANT:**

- Mini lectures will be made available at least 24 hours before any assignment deadlines listed under the same day; they will be available on Canvas under the **Discussions thread**
- I suggest completing readings/watching videos in the order listed on the syllabus
- All prompts for participation responses and reading responses will be posted to Canvas under “Announcements”

**Week 1: Initial introductions and defining rhetoric**

To be completed by August 31
- Read the syllabus carefully!
- Watch mini lecture: Welcome, course expectations (on Canvas “Discussions” tab)

To be completed by Thursday, Sept 3
- Read Kuypers, Chapter 1
- Watch mini lecture: What is rhetoric?
- **DUE:** Submit participation response to Canvas by 11:59 pm

**Week 2: What is rhetoric? How is rhetoric helpful?**

To be completed by Monday, Sept 7
- Labor Day, no assignments!

To be completed by Thursday, Sept 10
- Watch mini lecture: Learning to think rhetorically
- Read Steingraber, “3 Bets”
- **DUE:** Submit reading response to Canvas by 11:59 pm
**Week 3: What is rhetorical criticism?**
To be completed by Monday, Sept 14
- Read Kuypers, Chapter 3
- **DUE:** Submit reading response by 11:59 pm

To be completed by Thursday, Sept 17
- Watch mini lecture: Rhetorical criticism – definition and purpose
- **DUE:** Submit participation response to Canvas by 11:59 pm

**Week 4: The Rhetorical Situation**
To be completed by Monday, Sept 21
- Read Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation”
- Read Kuypers, Chapter 4
- **DUE:** Submit reading response to Canvas by 11:59 pm

To be completed by Thursday, Sept 24
- Watch mini lecture: The rhetorical situation
- Read/watch Zach Wahls’ speech on marriage equality
- **DUE:** Submit reading (video) response to Canvas by 11:59 pm

**Week 5: Neo-Aristotelian Criticism**
To be completed by Monday, Sept 28
- Read midterm paper prompt on Canvas
- Read Kuypers, Chapter 7
- **DUE:** Submit reading response to Canvas by 11:59 pm

To be completed by Thursday, Oct 1
- Watch mini lecture: Neo-Aristotelian criticism and your midterm paper
- Read Nixon speech, “Checkers”
- **DUE:** Submit reading response to Canvas by 11:59 pm

**Week 6: The Midterm Paper, Metaphor**
To be completed by Monday, Oct 5
- **DUE:** Submit paper proposals to Canvas by 11:59 pm (instructions on paper prompt, this is for participation points)

To be completed by Thursday, Oct 8
- Read Kuypers, Chapter 9
- **DUE:** Submit reading response to Canvas by 11:59 pm

**Week 7: Metaphor Criticism, Ideographic Criticism**
To be completed by Monday, Oct 12
- Watch mini lecture: Metaphor criticism
- Read King speech, “Speech at Riverside Church”
- **DUE:** Submit reading response to Canvas by 11:59 pm
To be completed by Thursday, Oct 15
- Read Kuypers, Chapter 14
- **DUE:** Submit reading response to Canvas by 11:59 pm

**Week 8: Ideographic Criticism**
To be completed by Monday, Oct 19
- Watch mini lecture: Ideology and ideographic criticism
- Read Clinton, “Women’s Rights are Human Rights”
- **DUE:** Submit reading response to Canvas by 11:59 pm

To be completed by Thursday, Oct 22
- **DUE:** Submit midterm paper to Canvas by 11:59 pm

**Week 9: Narrative Criticism**
To be completed by Monday, Oct 26
- Read Kuypers, Chapter 10
- **DUE:** Submit reading response to Canvas by 11:59 pm

To be completed by Thursday, Oct 29
- Watch mini lecture: Narrative criticism
- Complete “bluff the listener” activity
- **DUE:** Submit reading (activity) response Canvas by 11:59 pm

**Week 10: Pentadic Criticism**
To be completed by Monday, Nov 2
- Read Kuypers, Chapter 11
- Read final paper prompt
- **No assignment due** (you will draw on Chapter 11 in your next response)

To be completed by Thursday, Nov 5
- Watch mini lecture: Pentadic criticism
- Read Tonn, Endres, and Diamon, “Hunting and Heritage on Trial”
- **DUE:** Submit reading response to Canvas by 11:59 pm

**Week 11: Pentadic, Final Paper**
To be completed by Monday, Nov 9
- Read Kennedy speech, “Chappaquiddick”
- **DUE:** Submit reading response to Canvas by 11:59 pm

To be completed by Thursday, Nov 12
- **DUE:** Submit final paper proposal to Canvas by 11:59 pm (instructions on paper prompt, this is for participation points)
**Week 12: Feminist Criticism**
To be completed by Monday, Nov 16
- Read Kuypers, Chapter 13
- **DUE:** Submit reading response to Canvas by 11:59 pm

To be completed by Thursday, Nov 19
- Watch mini lecture: Feminist criticism
- Read Truth, “Ain’t I a Woman?”
- **DUE:** Submit reading response to Canvas by 11:59 pm

**Week 13: Tropes**
To be completed by Monday, Nov 23
- Read Burke, “The Four Master Tropes”
- **DUE:** Submit reading response to Canvas by 11:59 pm

To be completed by Thursday, Nov 26
- Enjoy the break!

**Week 14: Tropes**
To be completed by Monday, Nov 30
- Watch mini lecture: Explaining tropes, prefacing the article
- Read Murphy, “Maternal Dissent in Mainstream News”
- **DUE:** Submit reading response to Canvas by 11:59 pm

To be completed by Thursday, Dec 3
- **DUE:** Submit your proposed methodology for your final paper to Canvas by 11:59 pm; include any questions you have about the final paper (participation points)

**Week 15: Writing Your Analysis**
To be completed by Monday, Dec 7
- Watch mini lecture: Writing an analysis, Mollie answers questions

To be completed by Thursday, Dec 10
- Work on your final paper. Email me questions/set up a Zoom appointment if desired.

**FINAL PAPER DUE THURSDAY, DEC 17TH BY 11:59 PM**