Welcome to rhetorical criticism! In this course, you will learn to engage in expert readings of public, persuasive communication (rhetoric) that structures our lived realities. We will examine the persuasive potency of rhetorical artifacts including (but not limited to), speeches, news media, movies, social movements (protests, writings, etc.), art, and more.

While the course will offer an overview of rhetoric and rhetorical studies, primary emphasis will be given to understanding various methodological and conceptual approaches to engaging in rhetorical criticism. This will necessitate intensive reading, writing, and thoughtful discussion.

**Required Text**

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

**Points Distribution**

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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Papers</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criticism project</td>
<td>60% (5% prep paper; 20% polished draft; 35% final paper)</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**Grading Scale**

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92%</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83-86%</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
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Specific Course Assignments

Weekly Papers (40%)

By no later than 8 am on Wednesdays, you will upload a 2-3 (double-spaced) paper reviewing and engaging with all of the week’s readings. These weekly writings should include each of the following:

- An explanation/overview of the week’s methodological approach/focus/concept (e.g., tropes, narrative, voice)
- Details on each assigned article/reading, including the author’s main arguments (this does not include the Kuypers text, which should be engaged in your writing but not heavily unpacked)
- Your own questions/difficulties and/or ideas on how one might utilize the weekly method/concept in an analysis. For example, you could pose a provocative discussion question (or several). Or, you could discuss what points/ideas you had difficulty understanding. Or you might share a speech or other artifact that could be usefully analyzed using the given approach.

You can organize these papers a number of ways. For example, you might explain the methodological approach, summarize and discuss the various essays one by one, and end with your own thoughts/questions on the material. Or, you could also discuss the general method/approach of the week and move to identify themes across the readings before sharing a speech that would be usefully explored using the given concept. Other options exist.

For these weekly papers, I am most interested your understandings of what the authors are arguing. Avoid praising or criticizing the readings and try to think on the authors’ terms. We want to make sure we understand the readings before we critique them.

Criticism Project (60%)

Your seminar course paper will be an original criticism of a rhetorical artifact of your choosing. The end goal of the paper is to turn it into a conference presentation at a regional or local conference, but you may also consider submitting to a national conference or submitting the essay for scholarly publication. Each paper should be polished, TNR font, 1” margins, double-spaced, and adhere to the guidelines of the latest edition of APA, MLA, or Chicago Style (choose your style and stick to it). You will complete your seminar paper in the steps below.

By no later than October 16th: Set up an appointment to meet with me on Zoom to discuss your paper. Come to this meeting prepared to discuss and justify your chosen artifact and its interesting rhetorical features. You should also have compiled some information on the context surrounding the artifact.

Preparation Paper: This is a ~4-5 page paper that describes, in detail and in an organized fashion, the artifact you plan to analyze, its surrounding context, and a potential methodology or body/bodies of literature you could use to engage the artifact. Include all relevant details, which might but will not necessarily include the following: information on the rhetor(s), content of the artifact/most interesting rhetorical features you hope to engage, the range/boundaries you have placed on your artifact (e.g., one chapter of a book, media coverage from certain outlets and
within a limited date range), the year of publication/delivery, the archive (if multiple versions of
the artifact exist, you want the document(s) you analyze to be authenticated/as primary as
possible), the audience(s) you are considered (e.g., immediate, favorable, regional, etc.), the
venue/event in which the speech/text was delivered, the circulation (if known), and any other
relevant information. Next, include relevant information on context. What was going on at the
time the rhetorical artifact was published/delivered? What social/political/ideological currents
shaped the context in which the rhetoric circulated? Utilize primary and secondary sources to
summarize the constraints, opportunities, and/or precipitating events that gave/give shape to your
artifact(s). Finally, you should conclude by proposing a methodology and/or bodies of literature
to be used when it comes times to analyze the artifact. This might be a methodological approach
(e.g., dramatism/the pentad), or it might combine a methodology with a secondary body of
literature (e.g., narrative and public memory of WWII, metaphor and maternal appeals, close
textual analysis and trope). Due October 21st

First Draft: This is an ~18-25 page draft of your final course paper complete with an
introduction, contextual information, a literature review (that discusses your methodology as
well as other relevant bodies of literature), organized analysis (divided into sub sections that
speak to one another), and conclusion. The paper is considered a “draft” because I will offer
detailed feedback that you will address in your revised final paper. I expect the draft to be your
best effort at a complete, polished final paper; it should be anything but “rough.” A minimum of
20 sources is required. Due November 18th

Final Draft: The final paper should reflect thoughtful changes based on the feedback from the
professor. I expect a final draft that is conference submission ready. Due December 16th

Course Policies

Participation
Students are expected to attend all class meetings from start to finish and to come having
carefully completed all of the assigned readings. During class, all seminarians are expected to
speak thoughtfully and productively; come to class with questions and thoughts to contribute to
our discussions. You are also expected to listen and respond to others respectfully, thoughtfully,
and without snark. Do not interrupt your peers or the instructor, and do not explain things to your
peers (your equals) unless a question is asked to you directly. We are all discussants contributing
to the conversation; a learning environment necessitates that we let go of hierarchy and support
rather than compete with one another.

*Class is not the time to check email, your phones, or surf the Internet. Please be fully engaged
whether we meet on Zoom or in person.

Late Work and Extensions
Late work (without an agreement with me made with me ahead of time) will not be accepted.
Emergencies and truly extenuating circumstances not included.

Extensions and incompletes will be given on rare occasions in consultation between professor
and student before the assignment is due.
Plagiarism
Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. Students must complete their own work and given credit (written and oral) 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, using a paper written in this class in another class or vice versa, failing to give credit to information derived from another person’s work, paraphrasing another persons’ work in a way that misrepresents the original, having another student complete your work, and completing another student’s work. The penalties for plagiarism are severe. They include warning or reprimand, grade adjustment, probation, suspension, expulsion, withholding of transcripts, denial or revocation of degrees, and referral to psychological counseling. Please refer to The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University, Article VI., https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/. Questions related to the course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the professor.

Sexual Harassment and Discrimination
The Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Commission defines sexual harassment as any “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.” If you feel you are a victim of sexual harassment, you may talk to or file a complaint with the Office of Equity, located in Old Main, Room 161, email (titleix@usu.edu) or call the office at 797-1266.

Learning Accommodations
USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as early in the semester as possible ((University Inn # 101, 435-797-2444, drc@usu.edu). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.

Course Schedule (subject to change – any deviations will be announced)

Week 1, September 2
What is rhetoric? What is rhetorical criticism?
Kuypers, Chapters 1-3
Enos, Kohrs Campbell, King, Condit, Jensen, Foss, Medhurst, and Zarefsky, “Symposium: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Rhetorical Criticism”
No weekly paper due this date

Week 2, September 9
Foundations of Rhetorical Criticism
Kuypers, Chapter 4 and 7
Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation”
Vatz, “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation”
Campbell, “The Forum”
Week 3, September 16
Public Address and Close Textual Analysis
Kuypers, Chapter 8
Wrage, “Public Address: A Study in Social and Intellectual History”
Fulkerson, “The Public Letter as Rhetorical Form: Structure, Logic, and Style in King’s ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’”

Week 4, September 23
Dramatism: The Pentad
Kuypers, Chapter 11
Burke, “Terministic Screens”
Tonn, Endres, and Diamon, “Hunting and Heritage on Trial: A Dramatistic Debate Over Tragedy, Tradition, and Territory”
Smith and Hollihan “‘Out of Chaos Breathes Creation’: Human Agency, Mental Illness, and Conservative Arguments Locating Responsibility for the Tuscon Massacre”
*Start thinking about your text for analysis; schedule a meeting with me before October 21*

Week 5, September 30
Dramatism: Comedy/Tragedy
Burke, “Poetic Categories” (excerpts)
Burke, “Comic Correctives”
Burke, “The Rhetoric of Hitler’s ‘Battle’”
Ott and Aoki, “The Politics of Framing Public Tragedy: Media Framing of the Matthew Shepard Murder”

Week 6, October 7
Narrative
Kuypers, Chapter 10
Fisher, “Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument”
Lewis, “Telling America’s Story: Narrative Form and the Reagan Presidency”
Banister, “Narrativizing the Surge: From Quagmire to Counterinsurgency in Iraq”

Week 7, October 14
Ideological
Wander, “The Ideological Turn in Modern Criticism”
Cloud, ‘Hegemony or Concordance? The Rhetoric of Tokenism in ‘Oprah’ Winfrey’s Rags-to-Riches Biography”
Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois”

Week 8, October 21
Discuss paper projects
Preparation paper due by the start of class!
Week 9, October 28
Ideographic
Kuypers, Chapter 14
McGee, “The ‘Ideograph’: A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology”
Lucaites and Condit, “Reconstructing <Equality>: Culturetypal and Counter-Cultural Rhetorics in the Martyred Black Vision”
de Onís, “Lost in Translation: Challenging (White, Monolingual) Feminism’s <Choice> with Justicia Reproductiva”

Week 10, November 4
Tropes: Synecdoche, Irony, Metaphor, Metonymy
Burke, “The Four Master Tropes”
Cisneros, “Contaminated Communities: The Metaphor of ‘Immigrant as Pollutant’ in Media Representations of Immigration”
Terrill, “Ironic, Silence, and Time: Frederick Douglass on the Fifth of July”
Murphy, “Maternal Dissent in Mainstream News: ‘Peace Mom’ Confronts the Nation’s Strict Father”

Week 11, November 11
Feminist and Gender Criticism
Kuypers, Chapter 13
Campbell, “The Rhetoric of Women’s Liberation: An Oxymoron”
Shugart, “She Shoots, She Scores: Mediated Constructions of Contemporary Female Athletes in Coverage of the 1999 US Women’s Soccer Team”

Week 12, November 18
Voice
Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”
Watts, “‘Voice’ and ‘Voicelessness’ in Rhetorical Studies”
Draft of paper due by the start of class!

Week 13, November 25: NO CLASS

Week 14, December 2
Spheres of Argument
Goodnight, “The Public, Technical, and Personal Spheres of Argument”
Paliewicz, “Global Warming and the Interaction Between the Public and Technical Spheres of Argument: When Standards for Expertise Really Matter”
Murray, “For What Noble Cause: Cindy Sheehan and the Politics of Grief in Public Spheres of Argument”

Week 15, December 9
Discuss papers and moving forward

Final paper due Wednesday, December 16th by 4:30pm