

Utah State University
Department of Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies
CMST 3460: Communication Criticism

Spring 2018, MWF
1:30-2:20 PM, Family Life 109

Instructor: Mollie Murphy

Office: Old Main 341

Office Hours: Mondays 9:30-11:15AM or by appointment (appointments must be made at least 48 hours in advance)

Email: mollie.murphy@usu.edu

Course Description

This course offers students with the resources to think critically about the implications and effects of public discourse. The course will engage a variety of case studies through the analytical tools of rhetorical theory, a practice that necessitates intensive reading, writing, and thoughtful discussion. Ultimately, students will learn to describe, interpret, and evaluate a variety of rhetorical artifacts, including—but not limited to—political speeches, social movement discourse, and media. Upon completion of the course, students will have written an in-depth analysis of a rhetorical artifact of their choosing.

Students will apply core concepts in various assignments that will contribute to the course grade.

Required Text

Foss, Sonja K. *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice* (5th edition). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2018.

Additional readings will be uploaded to Canvas.

Points Distribution

Quizzes/Activities	15%
Participation	5%
Thought piece/discussion	15%
Drafts	5% (2% lit review, 3% analysis) *You will write a draft of the literature review and analysis component of the final paper before submitting the final versions to me for grading.
Criticism Project	60% (proposal 5%, literature review 15%, final paper 30%, presentation 10%)
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 absolutely no exceptions.

In order to uphold a fair and ethical course for all students, I do not change or reconsider a grade unless there has been a clerical entry error. **If you are ever unhappy or confused about a grade, please make an appointment to meet with me about it in person.**

All grades are considered final 48 hours after posted to Canvas.

Although I evaluate assignments based on the criteria discussed in class and on written instructions, many factors that contribute to excellent work—insight, creativity, originality—cannot be reduced to technique. That is why there is no “recipe” for getting an A on an assignment, and it is why A work is the exception rather than the rule. At the same time, evaluating assignments is not a purely subjective process. Instructors do use objective criteria to make basic distinctions during grading. I grade written assignments according to the following general guidelines in addition to the specific individual requirements of each assignment.

To earn a C: The assignment must be complete, thoughtful, and meet the basic requirements of the assignment. It should conform to the page limit, be free of basic grammatical errors and typos, and should exhibit clear organization.

To earn a B: The assignment must be executed well. It must meet the criteria of C work, but must also be well written, insightful, and supported by credible outside sources.

To earn an A: The assignment must be outstanding in its execution. It will exhibit exceptional effort, polished writing, and must go beyond the basic substantive requirements of the assignment in some way, perhaps by demonstrating a new, thoughtful or creative way of understanding the course material, or by illustrating an especially meaningful application of the course material. Importantly, A work is not earned by going “beyond” in terms of page length. Aim for concise, polished writing.

Grades of D and F are earned by failing to meet the basic criteria of the assignment. Work that lacks clear focus, is very poorly written or lacking in organization, or is obviously unfinished, unedited, or inappropriate for the assignment or course will earn a D or F.

*The starting assumption for grading is that with moderate effort, everyone is capable of earning a C in the course. The movement of your grade from that midpoint is largely in your hands.

Specific Course Assignments

Quizzes/Activities (together worth 15% of final grade)

Quizzes: Completing the assigned readings will be essential to your success in this course. To ensure your completion and comprehension of the readings, we will have quizzes/reading questions during the first 6 minutes of class time throughout the semester. Come to class prepared to complete a quiz on any date on which there are assigned readings. Dates of quizzes will not be announced. Each student is permitted to use one page of hand written notes during quizzes (double-sided is fine). All students must pass in their quizzes 6 minutes after class begins. That means that if you show up five minutes late, you will have a minute or less to complete the quiz. Come on time!

Activities: Equally important to the readings is your participation in artifact workshops and other in-class assignments (e.g., workshops on components of your final paper). If you come to class prepared (e.g., with your draft if necessary, your notes on the reading) and actively participate in these activities, you can expect full credit on these assignments.

Participation (10%)

Come to every class with ideas and questions you would like to discuss. All students are encouraged to “try out” ideas, pose questions, and ask for clarification when having difficulty understanding the material (which is expected, that’s why we’re having class!). Your participation grade will be based on attendance, oral contributions to class discussion, and your attentiveness/respect to your peers and the instructor. Guidelines for participation grading will be available on Canvas. For some students, participating in class is difficult. If this is you, please visit with me and we can discuss strategies for making sure you can engage our discussion.

Thought Piece (15%)

Each student will be responsible for writing a “thought piece” for one of our assigned readings.

Artifacts and chapters from the Foss text are not an option for this assignment. You may write your thought piece on any starred (*) reading on the week-by-week calendar below.

This should be 3-4 pages in length (double-spaced), and should be structured as follows:

First, identify and explain 2-3 of what you perceive to be the most important concepts/key points of the reading. There may be more than 2-3 key points, but you only need to identify a few. Key points should be expressible in a full sentence (not one noun such as “narrative fidelity” or “Ronald Reagan”). Be specific by drawing attention to passages in the text, citing page numbers (limit use of direct quotes), and make attempts to discern what you think the author means.

Second, offer some questions and/or thoughts you have after reading the essay, and spend about half a page discussing them. If you pose questions, they should be specific and pointed. Alternatively, you might draw attention to an artifact (a speech or other piece of public rhetoric) that could be usefully looked at through the lens offered in this essay. Thought pieces are due to Canvas on the day the reading addressed is assigned. You must use APA or MLA citation style.

On the day your paper is due, you will be expected to offer the class a brief summary of the key points you identified in your paper and at least two questions to help facilitate class discussion. It is a good idea to base class questions on the questions/thoughts you posed in your paper.

Drafts of Papers (Through Writing Fellows Program)

Two times during the semester, you will be required to submit a draft of a paper to a Writing Fellows mentor ~one week before you submit a paper to me. Due dates are listed on the calendar below. What you submit to the mentor for the literature review must be a minimum of three pages. You will turn in the draft you worked on with your mentor in to me on the day you submit your final literature review electronically. You also have a draft of the analysis section of your final paper due to a mentor before you submit the final paper. I will not be reviewing analyses, but rather will read this component once it is incorporated into a final version of the paper. The analysis draft you worked on with the mentor will be submitted on the last day of class.

Final Paper

Your seminar course paper will be a formal criticism of a rhetorical artifact. In addition to having in-class workshops, I will “check in” with you on your project two times before you submit your final paper. The goal of this is to make the project manageable and to ensure your final submission is of high quality. *Note: I will provide detailed guidelines for each paper.*

Paper Proposal: The proposal will include a discussion of the artifact you will analyze for your final paper. In the proposal you should describe your artifact, justify your choice (e.g., why is this an appropriate artifact for analysis? What makes it rhetorically interesting/significant? What do you hope to learn through examining it?) and provide contextual information (e.g., when and where did the artifact appear? Who observed/heard/read it? Who delivered/wrote/created it?). 3 double-spaced pages

Literature Review: The literature review will overview scholarly research on the methodological “lens” through which you will analyze your rhetorical artifact. You are strongly encouraged to use one of the methodologies we will discuss during the first half of the semester: dramatistic, narrative, ideographic, metaphor, or neo-Aristotelian/close textual. Other approaches should be discussed with the instructor. Start with the readings on the syllabus, and engage additional external literature to make for a more comprehensive methodology. A minimum of 6 excellent sources is required, cited in APA or MLA style. Citation style should be consistent. Information on citing is available online, but publication manuals are well worth purchasing. 4-5 double-spaced pages

Final Essay: The final essay will be a compilation of your proposal, literature review, and **an analysis** of your artifact. We will discuss the analysis at length in class and you will work on a draft with a writing mentor, though I will not review this component until it is submitted as part of the final paper. For the final paper, you will weave together the first two papers, revise them, and add an analysis, introduction, and conclusion. A minimum of 10 sources is required, cited in APA or MLA. Each student will present her or his paper at the end of the semester. If you present as part of the Department Research Symposium or University Research Symposium, you do not have to present in class. We will talk more about this. There will be time for Q&A. The final paper will be 12-18

double-spaced pages, not including title page and references.

Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance is required and will be taken at every class. For each absence over three, you will receive a 10% deduction on your participation grade. Exceptions to this policy will *only* be made in the case of absences related to participation in a University-sanctioned event as an official representative of USU, for classes missed in observance of a religious holiday, or for a **documented** emergency or other extenuating circumstance. All exceptions for religious holidays and participation in University events must be approved **one week in advance**. If you are sick or have some other sort of emergency, you must get in touch with me as soon as possible and provide documentation upon returning to class (it must say that you were unable to attend class). If you are frequently tardy, leave class early, or are distractive/inattentive/disrespectful in class, your final grade will also be subject to a deduction.

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, 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. Questions related to the course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor. Follow the most recent manual of the APA or MLA for citing sources. I will report any case of academic misconduct to the University after which I will determine the appropriate outcome.

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 so we can ensure you are accommodated.

Respect and Etiquette

In-class: In this class we will cover topics that may make you or your peers uncomfortable; this is an expected part of the learning process. I expect all students to show respect for one another and for the instructor; comments that are disrespectful will not be tolerated. Of course, you are allowed to disagree, raise doubts, or challenge material, but keep it dialectical, or open to response. College courses are a place to learn and grow. A supportive environment is important to everyone’s success in the course.

Email: You may address me as Mollie, or as Ms. Murphy if you are more comfortable with a formal tone. Adopting a formal tone when constructing emails is a good practice for academic and other professional environments. Write an email similar to how you would write a letter (include salutation: “Hello Ms. Murphy/Dear Mollie” sign your name “Regards, Nadia/Best, Miguel”). This model is useful to learn for other classes (and your professional careers) as well.

If you are providing information that does not necessitate a reply, I may not reply. I will reply if a question is asked. I'll also reply if there is a request for me to confirm receipt of your email. 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.

Cellphone/Computer Use: Although technology has its place, research shows that students who do not use laptops in class consistently outperform their peers. Though I strongly recommend going old-fashioned and using a notebook, I understand that some students may be accustomed to using a computer to take notes. If this is you, please sit in the last row of class so as not to distract students behind you who choose not to use technology.

Late Work

All papers are due to Canvas at the beginning of the class for which they are assigned. Work submitted after a ten-minute grace period will receive a 10% point deduction. An additional 10% will be deducted for every 24 hours it is not turned in.

Course Schedule

Note: This is a *general plan* for the course. Deviations may be necessary, and will be announced either in class or via email.

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignments Due
Week 1	Intro to Rhetorical Criticism	
Jan 8	Course intro & overview What is rhetoric?	
Jan 10	What is rhetoric? What is rhetorical criticism?	Foss, Chapter 1
Jan 12	Discuss thought pieces	Email me your top three choices for presentation dates by the end of the day!
Week 2	The Rhetorical Situation; "Doing Criticism"	
Jan 15	MLKJ Day, no class	
Jan 17	The rhetorical situation	*Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation" *Vatz, "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation"
Jan 19	Discuss artifacts, artifact proposal	Foss, Chapter 2, p. 9-13
Week 3	Neo-Aristotelian	
Jan 22	Neo-Aristotelian	Foss, Chapter 3, p. 29-36
Jan 24	Neo-Aristotelian	*Hill, "Conventional Wisdom, Traditional Form" (Canvas)
Jan 26	Neo-Aristotelian workshop	<i>Artifact:</i> Nixon, "Checkers" (Canvas)
Week 4	Contemporary Neo-Aristotelian	
Jan 29	Neo-Aristotelian concerns	*Campbell, "The Forum" (Canvas)
Jan 31	Contemporary Neo-Aristotelian criticism	*Zarefsky, "Making the Case

		for War” (Canvas)
Feb 2	Artifact workshop	Bring information on your artifact to class! (rhetor, audience, situation, message)
Week 5	Dramatism	
Feb 5	Dramatism	Foss, Chapter 11, p. 367-380 Artifact proposal due to Canvas by the start of class!
Feb 7	Dramatism and pentadic analysis	*Tonn, Endres, and Diamon, “Hunting and Heritage on Trial” (Canvas)
Feb 9	Pentadic workshop	<i>Artifact</i> : Kennedy, “Chappaquiddick” (Canvas)
Week 6	Narrative	
Feb 12	Narrative	Foss, Chapter 10, p. 319-338
Feb 14	Narrative	*Lewis, “Telling America’s Story” (Canvas)
Feb 16	Narrative workshop	<i>Artifact</i> : Cuomo, Keynote Address at 1984 DNC (Canvas)
Week 7	Ideology	
Feb 19	No class, President’s Day	
Feb 20	Attend Monday classes; Discuss literature reviews	Foss, Chapter 2, p. 13-18
Feb 21	Ideology	Foss, Chapter 8, p. 237-248
Feb 23	Ideology	*McGee, “The Ideograph” (Canvas)
Week 8	Ideology	
Feb 26	Ideology	*Lucaites and Condit, “Reconstructing <Equality>” (Canvas)
Feb 28	Ideology workshop	<i>Artifact</i> : Sanger, “The Morality of Birth Control” (Canvas)
Mar 2	Research workshop	Bring a bibliography of four excellent sources to class with a brief description beneath each
Week 9	Recline and Relax!	
March 5-9	SPRING BREAK	
Week 10	Metaphor	
Mar 12	Metaphor	Foss, Chapter 9, p. 285-294
Mar 14	Metaphor	*Ivie, “Metaphor and the Rhetorical Invention” (Canvas)
Mar 16	Metaphor workshop	<i>Artifact</i> : King, “I Have a

		Dream” (Canvas) <u>Literature Review Draft due to Writing Mentor!</u>
Week 11	Comedy and Tragedy	
Mar 19	The Comic and Tragic Frames	No reading
Mar 21	Comedy and Tragedy	*Ott and Aoki, “The Politics of Negotiating Public Tragedy” (Canvas)
Mar 23	Comedy and Tragedy workshop	<i>Artifact</i> : Obama, Sandy Hook Prayer Vigil (Canvas)
Week 12	Visual	
Mar 26	Visual	*Blair and Michel, “AIDS Memorial Quilt” (Canvas)
Mar 28	Visual	Identify a visual rhetorical artifact and bring it with you to class! (electronic or print)
Mar 30	Writing an analysis	Foss, Chapter 2, p. 18-27 Literature Review due to Canvas by start of class! Pass in draft you worked on with mentor in hard copy.
Week 13	On Writing and Presenting	
Apr 2	Piecing together the final paper	
Apr 4	Presenting a paper	
Apr 6	Analysis workshop	Bring outline of your 2-3 sub arguments to class!
Week 14	Presentations	
Apr 9	Present papers	
Apr 11	Present papers	
Apr 13	Present papers	<u>Analysis Paper Due to Writing Mentor!</u>
Week 15	Presentations	
Apr 16	Present papers	
Apr 18	Present papers	
Apr 20	Present papers	
Week 16	Presentations	
Apr 23	Present papers	
Apr 25	Present papers	
Apr 27	Present papers	Pass in analysis draft you worked on with your mentor.
May 2	Paper due by 1:30 to Canvas!	