

Course Syllabus

COMM 367-20W Rhetorical Criticism

Fall 2018

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Meets: TTh 2:30-3:45 in SOC 010

Office Hrs:Thurs, 4-5:00 pm & by appt.

Office: SOC 207

312-915-6847

Course Description:

This is a capstone and writing intensive course designed to improve your reading, writing and critical thinking skills. The course will begin with instruction on the basic concept of rhetoric, its purpose and how it is produced. By doing rhetorical criticism through written work, you will learn methods for engaging in formal, systematic analysis of texts, contexts and artifacts you select from public social life.

The purpose of this course is to improve your analytical skills through reading and writing about important discourse that continues to shape and transform public ideology, social opinions and policies. By doing so, a goal of this course is to improve your skills as audience members and consumers of information. Research is expected as you select topics, engage in systematic interpretation and analysis while evaluating texts and artifacts. Ultimately, these skills may also enhance your everyday communication practices as you move about your life.

Objectives:

1. To understand what rhetoric is and its power as an influential source that reinforces and/or changes public opinion.
2. To gain experience doing systematic interpretation, evaluation and analysis of texts, contexts and artifacts.
3. To enhance your reading and writing skills in ways that challenge your assumptions, understandings and expressive abilities.

Required Text:

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

Course Requirements:

Consistent reading and participation in class meetings 200 points

Thoughtful Topic Selection 100 points

Four Refined Research Questions and Statements of Purpose 200 points

Four rhetorical analyses:

Cluster Criticism 100 points

Feminist Criticism 100 points

Ideological Criticism 100 points

Narrative Criticism 200 points

Total Possible: 1000 points

Grading Scale:

940-1000	A
900-939	A-
870-899	B+
830-869	B
800-829	B-
770-799	C+
730-769	C
700-729	C-
670-699	D+
630-669	D
600-629	D-

599 or Below: Not Passing

Evaluation:

Reading and Participation: You are expected to come to class prepared to participate in several important ways: 1) Have read the material for that day's class and be prepared to ask questions about it and/or contribute to discussions, 2) as an active and thoughtful member of the class community, 3) as a participant in any in-class structured activities, 4) as a respectful listener prepared to contribute to discussions, even when you disagree with others (including the instructor) 5) "Showing up" is a good start, but engaging while having prepared for the day is a requirement for outstanding performance in the class.

Topic Selection: Topics selected should be of public social importance, either historical or contemporary. Originality and clear focus matter as well.

Research Question and Purpose: As you develop your research question, it should be evident that you HAVE done some initial research on your topic in order to refine the question you ask, and as well, the point of view from which you draw your purpose for the paper. It is OKAY to refine your question and the overall purpose of the paper once you have gotten further into your analysis. However, you will achieve your best results if you begin that process PRIOR to narrowing your focus and articulating a clear purpose.

Papers: Evaluative Criteria:

Does not meet expectations: Paper's purpose is not clear. No thesis statement. No argument advanced. No supporting research and/or documentation. No sources cited. Has no clear relationship to the assigned type of analysis. Topic or purpose is too broad for a well-developed, thoughtful analysis within the page limit. Appears to be a first draft.

Meets average expectations: A good effort is made to comply with assignment requirements. Sources are cited appropriately. A thesis statement exists. Research support is used to advance an argument. There is some clear evidence that an effort has been made to adhere to the method assigned. Original thought, interpretation or analysis is minimal. Typos and spelling errors are present. Contains incomplete or awkwardly worded sentences.

Above average expectations: Writer clearly complies with assignment requirements. Thesis is clear. Purpose is clear. Point of view is well supported with research. Sources are cited appropriately. Some original thought, unique interpretation and analysis is evident. Method of analysis is clearly executed and explained. Some kind of conclusion is drawn, explaining the relevance of the discussion that preceded it. Contains few typos, well-constructed sentences and shows clear evidence of proofreading.

Outstanding work expectations: Writer has clearly researched and carefully thought about what s/he is trying to do and show with the paper. Thesis and purpose are clearly articulated. Method is consistent with type assigned. Sources are precisely cited, consistent with APA or MLA stylebook. Information included in essay clearly supports,

Outstanding work cont.

explains or proves author's point of view. No extraneous research is included to fill up pages. Paper is well organized and reader-friendly. An insightful concluding paragraph or two are included to discuss the social relevance of having done the evaluative work. Strong grammatical construction of sentences. Clear paragraphs exist. There is clear evidence of having done more than one version of the paper. It would have been difficult to have written a better paper, given the level of experience in the class.

Accommodations:

Students with Disabilities: If you have documentation from Loyola's Office for Students with Disabilities, I will gladly accept it confidentially and make accommodations if there are instances in which course requirements conflict with your needs. If you have a chronic health issue that may become a factor in your ability to complete assignments, DO NOT wait to meet with someone in that office until you have an emergent situation. If there is any possibility that you may need their services or documentation at any time during the semester, please get it now so that there are no questions should an emergency situation arise.

Absences and Tardiness: You are all grownups. If you miss a class, you do not need to explain it to me or apologize. That said, it should be clear that when you miss meetings, you will miss information that will likely affect your understanding of an assignment, reading material or performance on written work. There is a direct correlation between class attendance and overall grades. If you miss a class for any reason that is technically unexcused, please get the information you missed from a class mate. I will not repeat material taught in class.

Things that count as unexcused absences are weddings, family events, out of town visitors, leaving early for a holiday, exhaustion, working, interning, job interviews, studying for another class, protests. These experiences are absolutely essential to a well-balanced life; however, they are not sufficient for missing assignments and will count as unexcused.

Illness serious enough to warrant medical documentation and/or the death of a close family member ARE excusable, and I will ask for some kind of certifying material.

If you are late to class, please do not ask me to repeat important information I discussed at the beginning of class. Please get it from a fellow class member. If you are consistently late, your overall grade will be negatively affected.

If you miss class to represent Loyola University Chicago in some formal capacity—e.g. athletics, Model United Nations, etc., please bring me the documentation and accommodations will be made.

Academic Integrity There is no place for academic dishonesty in the School of Communication or at Loyola University Chicago. Please familiarize yourselves with ALL potential errors of judgment, intentional or unintentional that could be perceived as dishonest behavior. I will provide you with a hard copy of applicable policies the second week of class, and encourage you to make yourself familiar with it. For example, a simple failure to cite sources appropriately will likely result in, at minimum, a failing grade for that assignment and a referral to the SOC Dean's office. Since this is a writing course, these policies are especially important.