

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communications Studies COMS 463, L01
RHETORICAL COMMUNICATION IN ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS
WINTER 2015

Wed., Jan. 14 – Wed., April 15 (excluding Feb. 18 & 20, April 3)
Lecture W/F 12:00-12:50; Tutorial W/F 13:00-13:50

Instructor: Monique Solomon
Office: TBA
Office Phone: n/a
E-Mail: solomonm@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

The course brings together rhetorical theory and practices of rhetorical analysis providing students with an opportunity to examine communication in online environments and to build an understanding of the ethical and social implications of professional and personal communication online. In this course students apply rhetorical theory to explore and assess information posted by organizations and individuals on the internet and social media. The course emphasizes close readings of a variety of topics presented in online materials. Students use rhetorical analysis to examine and critique the effectiveness of online content and design elements for specific purposes, audiences, and messages. Individually and in groups, students apply rhetorical theory to understand how effective online communication relates to social contexts and ethical messaging. The course includes discussion of theoretical perspectives regarding communication, society and the internet.

Prerequisite(s): One of Communications Studies 363, 383 or 369.

Additional Information

The lecture and tutorial components of the course run concurrently as a single two-hour class on Wednesdays and Fridays. Tutorial activities take place anytime during class.

Objectives of the Course

- To understand how rhetorical theory and practice are used in the evaluation of online communication
- To apply rhetorical practices and resources to assessments and criticism of online communication
- To practice and communicate assessments and critiques of online communication using written and oral presentation formats

Textbooks and Readings

Textbooks are available at the university bookstore or online at coursesmart.com

Required:

Carroll, B. (2014). *Writing and Editing for Digital Media* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Online eTextbook website:

http://www.coursesmart.com/IR/4074852/9780415729789?__hdv=6.8

Recommended:

Brummett, B. (2010). *Techniques of Close Reading*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Online eTextbook website:

http://www.coursesmart.com/IR/4074852/9781412972659?__hdv=6.8

Additional readings will be assigned in class.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops and other computer devices may be used during class for course related work and note taking, but not during student presentations. Cell phones must be turned off for the duration of class.

E-Mail: Include COMS 463 in the subject line, and be sure your name appears somewhere in the email not just your email address. Please allow up to 48 hours for responses to emails (business days). E-mails to your instructor and your fellow students regarding group projects and/or assignments should be addressed and written in a courteous, professional manner.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignments for COMS 463 L01 W15	Weight	Due Date
In-class Essay #1 Students write a 5-page, double-spaced essay during class time applying course concepts to answer questions about a topic and sample texts provided.	15%	January 30
In-class Essay #2 Students write a 5-page, double-spaced essay during class time applying course concepts to answer questions about a topic and sample texts provided.	15%	March 13

Assignments for COMS 463 L01 W15	Weight	Due Date
<p>Website Comparison Presentation/Discussion In a 15-minute class presentation pairs of students discuss their rhetorical and ethical assessments of the ways different websites address a topic or issue. Students will provide 2 class discussion questions ahead of their scheduled presentation. Presentation notes are to be handed in. The students who are not presenting will participate in discussion, and complete peer reviews to provide feedback for presenters.</p>	15%	To be scheduled throughout term
<p>Participation Students are encouraged to take part in class discussions, individual and group activities, peer reviews, and impromptu speaking and writing exercises to gain checkpoints indicating participation in class.</p>	5%	On-going throughout term
<p>Online Strategic Communications Plan Student groups prepare an online strategic communications plan which includes a formal review, analysis, and recommendations for an organizational website. The assignment is comprised of three parts:</p> <p>Proposal: Groups submit a 7-10 page proposal for their online communications plan.</p> <p>Presentation: Groups prepare and deliver a 20-minute visual and oral presentation of the online strategic communications plan for their organization.</p> <p>Plan Report: Groups prepare and submit 15-20 page online strategic communications plan report.</p>	<p>10%</p> <p>15%</p> <p>25%</p>	<p>February 13</p> <p>April 8, 10, 15</p> <p>April 15</p>

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Submission of Assignments: Essay and project assignments are due in class, in hard copy, on the due date. Please hand in your essays directly to your instructor. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams in SS 320 after classes have ended. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. (Including the version date or version number in your file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of your written assignments.)

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Student Accessibility Services (220-8237, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of the course.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>.

Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization. **Sources used in research papers must be properly documented.** If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Grading System & Department of Communication, Media and Film

Grade Scale: Work in this course will be graded using percentage grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film:

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Department grade scale equivalents	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%

3.00	Good—clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	00 - 49.99%	0%

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

In this class students will be using the APA referencing and citation formatting style. For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/node/208> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/research/research-ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (PIC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 picarts@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

A schedule of lecture topics and readings will be provided on the first day of class and posted on the D2L course website.