

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communications Studies COMS 369 L02

Rhetorical Communication

Fall 2015

Thursdays Sept. 10 –Dec. 3 (excluding Nov. 12)

Lectures/Tutorials 12:30-15:15

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Office Hours: Thursdays 11:00-12:00

Course Description

An introduction to the basic principles of rhetorical theory and practice. Students will learn the fundamentals of rhetorical theory and terminology. They will use this theory/terminology to grapple with the persuasive power of language to transform people's thoughts, feelings, and actions. Students will also use this theory/terminology to analyze several "game-changing" speeches and essays drawn from 20th and 21st century politics and culture—and, in the process, learn to carefully and critically "unpack" the rhetorical force of modern-day communication. Students will hone their skills by crafting their own speeches and essays, using the rhetorical tools and theories explored in the course.

Objectives of the Course

Students will learn about the processes involved in critiquing and crafting *effective* and *powerful* rhetorical communication. The course is designed to help students develop:

- (1) a rhetorical approach to communication that highlights how communication can and should be tailored to specific audiences and situations;
- (2) familiarity with key rhetorical strategies used in contemporary Western oral and written communication;
- (3) competence and confidence talking and thinking about communication from a rhetorical perspective;
- (4) competence and confidence using key rhetorical "moves" in their own written and spoken communication; and
- (5) competence in the use of writing/design strategies to ensure their communication comes across as credible (e.g., documentation; grammar; spelling).

Textbooks and Readings

Sam Leith. (2012) *Words Like Loaded Pistols: Rhetoric from Aristotle to Obama*. [paper edition OR kindle edition]

Steven Vrooman. (2013). *The Zombie Guide to Public Speaking: Why Most Presentations Fail and What You Can Do to Avoid Joining the Horde*. [paper edition OR kindle edition]

Internet and electronic communication device information

Students are welcome to use laptops and tablets in class for course-related activities (e.g., taking notes, completing in-class exercises). However, using electronic devices in ways that distract the instructor or students will not be tolerated: check your email, surf the web, or play Warcraft somewhere else. Students may be asked to turn off their electronic devices—or, in extreme cases, asked to leave the room—if their gadget-habits disrupt the class.

Assignments and Evaluation

Reading Quizzes	ongoing	15%
Style Exercise	October 15	10%
Midterm Exam	October 22	30%
Workshop	December 3	5%
Final Exam (take home)	December 10	40%

Reading Quizzes: Students will complete a short, hand-written quiz at the beginning of most classes. Each quiz will ask roughly five (5) questions based on the assigned readings for that day. Questions will be straightforward “comprehension” questions (e.g., Did you complete the assigned reading? Did you understand what you read?). Eight (8) quizzes will be held, but only the top six (6) will count towards each student’s “reading quiz” grade. Six quizzes: each worth 2.5%: for a total “reading quiz” grade worth 15%. Quizzes will be held on the following dates: September 17 & 24; October 1, 8, 15 & 29; November 5, 19 & 26.

Style Exercise: Students will be asked to find 10 specific stylistic devices in an assigned speech, and they will be asked to explain what kind of impact those stylistic devices would likely have on a specific audience. On the due date, students will also give a short (2-3 minute) presentation to the class: the presentations will define, identify, evaluate one (1) stylistic device found in the speech. Students will not be allowed to use any visual aids for the presentation—just their own words and their knowledge of invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. Written exercise = 5%; Oral presentation = 5% (for a total of 10%).

Midterm Exam: Students will write an in-class exam that tests their ability to conduct a rhetorical analysis of an assigned speech/essay. Students will be given a copy of the speech/essay one week before the midterm, to give them time to read/view it in advance. Students can bring an annotated copy of the speech/essay into the exam with them. Students will be tested on their knowledge and competence regarding all five rhetorical canons: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. They will be asked to IDENTIFY key rhetorical moves in the speech/essay and EVALUATE their likely effect on a specific audience.

Workshop: On the last day of classes, students will bring in a typed draft of a speech they have crafted. It can be on any topic, but it must address a specific audience. It should be 750-1000 words long. Any sources that it draws on (i.e., quotes or

paraphrases) should be documented using APA or MLA citation style. It should aim to change the audience's thoughts, feelings, or actions in some way. It should present several appealing proofs to the audience. It should be arranged (beginning, middle, end) to be appealing. It should be written in complete sentences and showcase the author's style. It should be accompanied by a description of the target audience (approx. 100-250 words long). These drafts will be "workshopped" during class—and **students will use them in the take-home exam.** The small (5%) grade is a way of coaxing students to draft these speeches before the take-home exam is distributed.

Final Exam (take home): Students will be given one week to complete an assignment showcasing the skills they've developed in the course—both analyzing and crafting rhetorical communication. The exam will revolve around the speech each student "workshopped" in class on December 3rd. Students will (1) craft and deliver this speech—via digital recording or "live" presentation—on or before the due date and (2) complete a written analysis (details to be posted/discussed on the last day of classes). Speech script and delivery = 20%; Written analysis = 20%; for a total "final exam" grade of 40%.

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: Please hand in your essays directly to your instructor if possible. 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. **Do not upload assignments to D2L or email assignments to your instructor.**

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.

Assignments submitted late due to serious illness will not be penalized with the loss of a grade, as long as they are submitted with a doctor's note.

Select assignments can be handed in a few days after the deadline to accommodate students with crazy schedules or trying to cope with wacked-out levels of stress; however, all extensions must be negotiated at least 5 days before the assignment deadline, and the reading quizzes, midterm, and workshop assignment are not eligible for extensions.

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 & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

Final grades are reported as letter grades. However, assignments, exams, and other work in this course will be graded using a combination of letter grades and raw scores: reading quizzes are graded as raw scores (e.g., 4/5); the midterm is graded as a raw score (e.g., 83/100); the style assignment is graded as a raw score (e.g., 8/10); while the take-home exam is graded as a letter grade (e.g., A+).

The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department. If letter grades are used for an assignment or other course component, the percentage equivalent in the final column will be used for calculating the final grade:

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.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436> . 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/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@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 	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ 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

September 10: Leith "Introduction"; "Rhetoric Then and Now"

September 17: Leith: "The First Part of Rhetoric: Invention" (*)=**reading quiz**

September 24: Leith: "The Second Part of Rhetoric: Arrangement" (*)

October 1: Leith: "The Third Part of Rhetoric: Style" (*)

October 8: Leith: “The Fourth Part of Rhetoric: Memory” “The Fifth Part of Rhetoric: Delivery” (*)

October 15: Leith: Review for Midterm [STYLE EXERCISE]

October 22: [MIDTERM EXAM]

October 29: Vrooman: “Introduction”; “Part One: Reclaiming Speaking’s Soul” (*)

November 5: Vrooman: “Part Two: Reanimating the Bones” (*)

November 12: **reading day**

November 19: Vrooman: “Part Three: Resuscitating the Flesh” (*)

November 26: Vrooman: “Part Four: It’s Alive! Alive!” (*)

December 3: [WORKSHOP]

December 10: **no class ** [FINAL EXAM ... submitted to special office hours]