

**University of Calgary**  
**Department of Communication, Media and Film**  
**Communication and Media Studies COMS 369 L01**  
**Rhetorical Communication**  
**Spring 2017**

**Tuesday May 16 to Tuesday June 27**  
**Tuesdays & Thursdays,**  
**13:00 – 15:45**

**Instructor:** Dr. Marcia Jenneth Epstein  
**Office:** SS 316  
**Office Phone:** 403-220-4848  
**E-Mail:** epstein@ucalgary.ca  
**Web Page:** D2L available through MyUofC portal  
**Office Hours:** By appointment, Tuesdays and Thursdays

### **Course Description**

An introduction to the basic principles of rhetorical theory, criticism and practice. Students will learn rhetorical perspectives on elements of communication such as argumentation, persuasion, audience, situation, genre, and ethics. Students will apply rhetorical theory to the criticism of samples of public communication and will practice their rhetorical skills through in-class activities and assigned writing and oral presentations.

### **Objectives of the Course**

- To understand the basic principles and terms of classical rhetorical theory
- To apply rhetorical theory to the criticism of a variety of public communication topics, media, and genres
- To apply rhetorical theory to the development of your own analytical, informative and persuasive writing and speech
- To improve your skills for public speaking
- To enhance your writing skills and learn to cite and integrate sources.

### **Textbooks and Readings**

Ramage, J.; Bean, J.; Johnson, J. (2016), *Writing Arguments: A Rhetoric with Readings*.  
At Bookstore; may be other sources.

Casson, L. E. (Ed.). (2011). *A writer's handbook: Developing writing skills for university students* [Est. \$15 paper, \$10 PDF at [Broadview](#)]

**Additional readings available online** (for your information)

A good basic summary of what rhetoric is about:

Dlugan, A. (2013, Sept. 2). Ethos, Pathos, Logos: Three Pillars of Public Speaking. Available at <http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/ethos-pathos-logos/>

Also recommended:

Zinsser, W. (2010). Writing English as a second language. *American Scholar*. Retrieved from <http://theamericanscholar.org/writing-english-as-a-second-language/>

**Note:** Assigned readings should be done *before* class so that you are ready to put them to use in class.

### Internet and electronic communication device information

-No restriction on the use of laptops and tablets in class during lectures and discussions if they are used to take notes or find information relevant to the class, and if there is *no disturbance or distraction of other students or the instructor*. YouTube and social media are not appropriate during class time. At all times, use technology silently and discreetly.

-During student presentations, all electronic devices must be put away or laid face-down, and laptop monitors must be closed. No audio/video recordings are allowed without advance permission of the presenter(s) or instructor.

-Phones must be turned off during class time unless you are a health care or law enforcement professional with appropriate ID.

### Assignments and Evaluation (see Guidelines below)

### Due

<b>Individual speech # 1</b> on a topic of your choice, to inform: 6-7 min. Hand in edited script with rhetorical analysis & references	10%	May 23,25
<b>Midterm:</b> closed book, short answers & commentaries	20%	June 1
<b>Individual speech # 2</b> on a topic of your choice, to persuade: 6-7 min. Hand in edited script with rhetorical analysis & references	10%	June 6,8
<b>Critiques</b> of two other people's speeches: ca. 250 words x 2, submit online in D2L 'Discussions'	5%	by June 12
<b>Group task:</b> Persuasive blog article on a controversial topic (ca. 1000 - 1500 words) with rhetorical analysis of your work, <i>for Portfolio</i>		
<b>Group presentation</b> on your blog article: 20 min.	20%	June 20-22
<b>Final Group Portfolio:</b> Blog article, references, rhetorical analysis, learning journal: submit online in D2L 'Dropbox'	20%	by June 25
<b>Participation/Teamwork</b>	5%	
<b>In-class final exam</b> , form TBA	10%	June 27

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination:** No

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

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## ***Assignment Guidelines***

### **Individual Presentations**

**Length:** The presentation should be 6 or 7 minutes long.

You have the option of showing a short video clip if it is less than 1 minute long, and this 1 minute is not considered part of the time of your presentation. It should be well integrated into your presentation.

### **Presentation topics**

Topics should be well focused and aimed at informing an adult university-level population. You may use written, recorded, and/or visual sources as evidence. The informative speech can be based on personal experience.

**-Informative presentations** should choose topics that build on common knowledge of your audience and take that knowledge further. You may inform them of lesser known individual or local stories, historical information, or reveal lesser known contexts, interrelationships between things, or complexities within topics. Sample topics or main points:

- o The challenges and benefits of learning a foreign language
- o History of an indigenous or immigrant culture in Canada or Alberta
- o Health benefits of particular foods, with a few recipe ideas

**-Persuasive presentations** should go beyond information into the realm of motivating audience belief and/or action, and the actions or beliefs you recommend should be relevant to your audience's lives and within the abilities of your audience. Aim to move people, but don't be unrealistic in aiming to move them too far, too quickly. Persuasion has to be based on logos as well as pathos. Sample topics or main points:

- o Consider volunteering for or supporting a particular charity
- o Certain common stereotypes about [country, city, group] are false
- o Social media are/are not addictive

### **Your audience**

Your audience consists of the people in the room where you present: primarily your fellow COMS 369 students, and secondarily your instructor. Within that audience, you may target certain kinds of students, or aspects of your audience.

## Your persona

Speak as yourself, not as a fictional person—consider yourself as a citizen of the world, resident of Calgary, and student at the University of Calgary, as well as the unique features of your identity and background that relate to your presentation topic.

As you build your ethos, protect your own privacy and do not reveal information that may make you or the people in the room feel embarrassed or uncomfortable. The classroom is not a private forum, and what you say may be paraphrased and repeated to others who are not present.

## Your tone

Your tone toward the audience and topic should be appropriate to the classroom forum, and appropriate to the subject matter and purpose of your speech. In persuasive presentations, avoid a tone that might communicate disrespect of any group of people for their race/ethnicity, religion, sex/gender, economic class, appearance, etc.

## Delivery

The oral delivery of your speech is crucial to its success. *If you tend to get nervous with presentations, please see your instructor for advice the week before your presentation is scheduled. Admitting that you are nervous is the first step toward overcoming stage-fright.*

## Use of PowerPoint

Your individual presentations do not require a PowerPoint to be used: you are welcome to use one if you choose. A PowerPoint (or Prezi, etc.) is required for your group presentation.

*Guidelines for PowerPoint:*

- -Use when your presentation requires quotations, images, and/or statistics to be displayed to the audience. Do not both post and read long quotations: it confuses the audience.
  - -Use if the flow of reasoning and relation of your main points to sub-points would be aided by the display of text in headings, bullet points, and sub-points that a PowerPoint can provide.
  - -Use if your presentation would not suffer from reduced eye contact and less gesture (informative presentations are more conducive to the use of PowerPoint slides).
- All slides should be designed for visibility from the back of the room: be sure that print and images are large enough, and that colour contrast is optimal (e.g. light on dark or vice versa; no busy backgrounds under lettering).

**Note:** *Please do not read aloud from a script word-for-word.* Reading aloud can work for quotations, but it does not work well for expressing your own points and transitions.

**Note:** *Online submission of the portfolio file requires a title that includes your group number and the assignment preceded by the course number, e.g. COMS 369 Group 1 Portfolio.*

## Presentation Critiques

Each student is responsible for two brief and constructive critiques of other students' speeches. Please include comments about whether you were informed, convinced, or otherwise motivated (e.g. to question a prior assumption or try a new activity) by the speech, what you especially liked and/or what could be improved. Keep comments polite: they will be posted on D2L in a Discussion forum.

*Comments will not be used to determine the speaker's grade score; they will be used to evaluate the commentor's participation score.*

## **Group Blog Article and Portfolio**

Each group will collectively construct a sample blog article on a controversial topic, along with a list of references and any visual aids used for the blog and the presentation (see below). Individuals within the group may divide tasks and concentrate on research or writing, but at least two people must be responsible for proofreading and corrections: that includes grammar, punctuation, syntax, style, and catching typos. (*This is a collaborative effort. If members of your group are challenged by writing in English, help them; if you are challenged, ask your group for help.*) Time will be taken in class to be sure that group dynamics are smooth.

The blog article and all references will be submitted in D2L as part of the Group Portfolio. Each group will also give a 20-minute presentation to the class on the content of the article, the controversy it discusses, how the controversy was handled by the group, the research involved, and what rhetorical stances were used.

The portfolio will also include a Learning Profile for the group. This will consist of a collection of discussion notes, statements, sketches, images, wild ideas, or any other material that demonstrates the group process over the course of the term.

Each group should include the following roles:

- **Scribe(s)** writes/draws what becomes the “artifact” of the group’s answers, notes, or sketches. These notes contribute to the final document.
- **Coordinator** keeps the group on task and ensures efficient use of time and resources.
- **Archivist(s)** could be any group member(s) available to play the role that day. He/she takes one or more clear photos of the artifact(s) and posts them to the group’s area on D2L within 2 days.

(**Note:** Roles should change from class to class; e.g. the same person should not scribe every time)

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## ***University Regulations***

**Submission of Assignments:** Please hand in hard-copy assignments 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.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. 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 and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

### **Policy for Late Assignments**

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with a loss of points unless there is a good – and verified – reason. Penalties can amount to a maximum of 5 points per week late; not turning in the assignment will result in a zero.

### Student Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.

When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.

For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

### 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. 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. Grading for the course will be done with a point system: a 10% assignment totals 10 points, for a total of 100 points. The calculated final score will then be assessed before conversion to a letter grade: a score 1 point or less below the next grade cutoff will usually be rounded upward.

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below. Point scores will be converted to letter grades by means of this chart.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF 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%

<b>3.30</b>		<b>B+</b>	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
<b>3.00</b>	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	<b>B</b>	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
<b>2.70</b>		<b>B-</b>	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
<b>2.30</b>		<b>C+</b>	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
<b>2.00</b>	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	<b>C</b>	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
<b>1.70</b>		<b>C-</b>	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
<b>1.30</b>	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D+</b>	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
<b>1.00</b>		<b>D</b>	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
<b>0.00</b>	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	<b>F</b>	0-49.99%	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 (3<sup>rd</sup> 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 (e.g., surveys, interviews, or observations) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve 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 . . .
<b>ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)</b>	SS 102 403-220-3580 <a href="mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca">artsads@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>CAMPUS SECURITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calgary Police Service</li> <li>• Emergency Text Messaging</li> <li>• Emergency Evacuation &amp; Assembly</li> <li>• Safewalk Program</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a> <b>403-220-5333</b> <b>403-266-1234</b> <b>Emergency: call 911</b> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</a> <p>If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (<b>220-5333</b>). For more information, see <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a></p>
<b>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT help line</li> </ul>	<a href="http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students">http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</a> 403-220-5555 or <a href="mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca">itsupport@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Support Services</li> <li>• Student Services Mobile App</li> </ul>	<a href="http://ucalgary.ca/ssc">http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support">http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</a> <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents">http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</a>
<b>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty of Arts Reps</li> <li>• Student Ombudsman</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/">https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds">http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</a>
<b>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling Services</li> <li>• Health Services</li> <li>• Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE</li> <li>• Online resources and tips</li> </ul>	<b>403-210-9355</b> (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</a> <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</a> <b>403-266-HELP (4357)</b> <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</a> <p>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.</p>



## Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

- 16/5 Introduction: *What is rhetoric, anyway, and what's it for?*  
*Ethos, logos, pathos*; the rhetorical "argument"  
Perusal of course outline, introduction to the textbook  
Your voice and how to use it  
Voice, gesture, and posture in presentation  
READ: WA ch. 1-3 and 17
- 18/5 How rhetoric works: information, evidence, persuasion, argumentation  
Presenting a speech:  
Individual exercise: Draft a 6-minute informative speech on a topic of your choice  
*Signing up for speaking dates*  
READ: WA ch. 4-6
- 23-25/5 Presentation of individual informative speeches  
READ: WA ch. 7-8
- 30/5 Review of ch. 1-8 and lecture material  
Individual exercise: Draft a 6-minute persuasive speech
- 1/6 **Midterm exam** (90 min.)  
Learning outcomes from informative speeches  
Drafting of persuasive speeches, continued
- 6-8/6 Presentation of individual persuasive speeches  
READ: WA ch. 9-11
- 13/6 Claims and definition arguments  
Stasis theory  
Group work  
READ: WA ch. 14-16
- 15/6 Proposal arguments, using sources effectively  
Group work
- 20-22/6 Group Presentations
- 25/6 **Portfolios due online.**
- 27/6 **Final exam in class.**

Appendix:

**Rubric for Evaluation of Presentations**

	PPT file Posted in discussion forum before class began
	Be prepared to use technology if needed during presentation (bring files on memory stick, PDF backup version, contingency plans in case of problems with Internet or technology)
	Within 10% over/under required total length (time). No less than 6 min, not more than 9
	Good use of time within presentation
	Appropriate handling of any unexpected interruptions or technical challenges

**CONTENT**

	Content fit within assigned genre, focus, and purpose of an informative or persuasive presentation. It did not wander off topic, or off genre.
	All assigned sections included (Intro, thesis, body, conclusion)
	Introduction: sufficient coverage of theme & purpose, Thesis clear and appropriate
	Body: coverage, degree of detail and scope appropriate for length and audience common knowledge/belief.
	Conclusion content: Not a mere summary, appropriate to genre

**ARGUMENT**

	Main claims within the body are clearly expressed and related to overall thesis and genre
	Sufficient and relevant data and evidence were provided for each claim
	Sufficient explanation of any facts from secondary sources
	Sufficient reasoning/analysis provided to comment on claims and data provided
	Insightful and audience-relevant conclusions at the end
	Any Images, video clips, or other supporting media integrated well and relevant.

**ORGANIZATION**

	All information clearly belongs within its section, both in Oral delivery and in PowerPoint
	Covered major topics / sections of presentation in a

	logical order, not random.
	Within main points, information, arguments, and data presented in logical order.
	Effective transitions
	No <i>unnecessary</i> repetition

#### STYLE AND DELIVERY

	Verbal, oral delivery: rate, volume, pitch, enunciation, dramatic pause
	Nonverbal delivery: Appearance, facial expression, posture, gesture, eye contact, movement
	Clarity, correctness and appropriateness of oral, verbal style, word choice
	On PowerPoint, correctness and style of text on screen
	PowerPoint Slide design: effective use of style, font size, bullets, colors, contrast
	Main points of specific content were reflected in key words/phrases on slides
	Appropriate coordination, balance and timing between any visuals and oral delivery

#### REFERENCES & CITATION

	Citation clarity & ethics in oral verbal presentation – attributing authors and other source info as necessary for ethical quoting and citing of ideas, and use of others' works
	PowerPoint: APA format used properly in citations (quotes, paraphrases, image captions)
	Reference list complete and properly formatted