

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

Spring 2018
Tuesday May 15 – Tuesday June 26

TTh 13:00 – 15:45

Instructor: Dr. Marcia J. Epstein
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Office Phone: 403-220-4848
E-Mail: epstein@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: By appointment, before or after classes

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.

Additional Information

Regular attendance is strongly advised.

Objectives of the Course

By the end of this course, students should be able:

- 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 skills for public speaking
- To enhance 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; there 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)

Altman, C. (2013). *The Writer's Toolbox*. At <https://christopheraltman.wordpress.com/> This blog includes useful posts on punctuation, parallelism, and counterarguments.

Aristotle. (n.d.) *Rhetoric*. (Trans W. Rhys Roberts). Available at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.1.i.htm>

Burton, G. O. (2007). *Silvae Rhetoricae: The forest of rhetoric*. At <http://rhetoric.byu.edu/> This site summarizes key concepts in rhetoric and defines a huge number of stylistic devices.

Clark, R. P. (2016, July 26). 8 writing lessons from Michelle Obama's DNC speech. Retrieved August 18, 2016 from *Poynter* at <http://www.poynter.org/2016/8-writing-lessons-from-michelle-obamas-dnc-speech/423307/>

Duke, G. (2012). The Sophists [opening overview, 5 paragraphs], in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, available at <http://www.iep.utm.edu/sophists/>

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

Dlugan, A. (2014). *Six Minutes: Speaking and presentation skills*.
At <http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/>.

- For the site's collection of short but useful articles on delivering effective talks, designing visuals, and analysing speeches, see <http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/articles/>
- For links to 18 other blogs on public speaking, see <http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/public-speaking-blogs/>

Wheeler, L. K. (2016). Logical Fallacies Handlist. Available at <https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/>

Zinsser, W. (2010). Writing English as a second language. *American Scholar*. Retrieved from <http://theamericanscholar.org/writing-english-as-a-second-language/> [Despite the title, this essay on writing style has good advice for all students]

Internet and electronic communication device information

Enter rules and guidelines about the use of internet and electronic devices (laptops, cell phones etc.) during class time.

Assignments and Evaluation

-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, games and social media are not appropriate during class time. At all times, use technology silently and discreetly.

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

Assignments and Evaluation (also see Guidelines and Schedule, below)

5% in-class writing task 1 – rhetorical analysis of a political speech (1-2 pages).....
May 17

10 % Individual speech # 1 on a topic of your choice, to inform: 6 min. Hand in edited script with rhetorical analysis and references..... **May 22, 24**

20% Midterm: closed book, short answers and commentaries..... **May 29**

5% In-class writing task 2 - Rogerian argument or refutation (1-2 pages) **May 31**

10% Individual speech # 2 on a topic of your choice, to persuade: 6 min.. **June 5, 7**

Group task: Persuasive blog article on a controversial topic
(ca. 1000 - 1500 words) with rhetorical analysis of your work, for Portfolio

10% Group presentation on your blog article and rhetoric: 15-20 min...**June 14, 19, 21**

20% Final Group Portfolio: Blog article, references, rhetorical analysis, learning journal: submit online in D2L 'Dropbox'**by June 16 / 21 / 23**

Participation:

5% Critiques of two other people's speeches (one informative, one persuasive): ca. 250 words x 2, submit online in D2L 'Discussions'

(These will count on your participation score, not on the grades of the people whose speeches you critique.)..... **by June 25**

5% Class Participation/Teamwork **by June 25**

10% In-class Final exam, form TBA**June 26**

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note:

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

Assignment Guidelines

Individual Presentations

Length: The presentation should be 6 minutes long.

You have the option of showing a short video clip if it is less than one minute long, and this one 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 Personal experiences: travel, special interests, family customs, etc.
- o History of an indigenous or immigrant culture in Canada or Alberta
- o Health effects of particular foods, exercises, habits, etc.

-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 or campus activity
- 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. Avoid scolding or begging your audience.

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.
- 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 the assignment title preceded by the course number. The surname of one group member must be included in the file title. Example: McGillicuddy - COMS 369 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 commenter's participation score.

Participation scores will also be determined by participation in discussions in class or on D2L, and by evidence of frequent presence in class.

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)

University Regulations

Submission of Assignments: Please hand in your hard-copy essays directly to your instructor if possible (except as noted). 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/legalservices/foip/foip-hia>

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 the loss of points for each day late, unless a legitimate reason, with proof, is conveyed to your instructor.

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/.

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>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Final grades are reported as letter grades. 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.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%

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 support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library). Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

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>. Research and citation resources are also available on the website of the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/> If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or visit the writing support services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor, Taylor Family Digital Library, at <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>

If this course requires (or allows) students to conduct (or participate in) primary research involving surveys, interviews, or observations, state that here, describe the nature of students' participation, and indicate whether (1) you have course-based ethics approval from the Faculty of Arts Research Ethics Committee or (2) you expect students to apply for ethics approval themselves. If neither of these apply, then you should not assign course work requiring (or allowing) research involving human participants. *(One approved exception is usability studies in COMS 363 in which students may conduct anonymous online usability surveys to get their classmates' opinions on the usability of a website.)* [Delete this paragraph if your course will not require research with people.]

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	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging 	403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	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 Lecture Topics and Readings

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

15 / 5 Introduction: *What is rhetoric, anyway, and what's it for?*
Ethos, logos, pathos; the classical rhetorical “argument”
 Perusal of course outline, introduction to the textbook
 Presenting a speech: Your voice and how to use it
 Rhetorical analysis
READ: WA ch. 1-3 and 17

17 / 5 How rhetoric works: information, evidence, persuasion, argumentation
Voice, gesture, and posture in presentation
Individual exercise: Plan a 6-minute informative speech on a topic of your choice
Writing task # 1 in class: rhetorical analysis
Signing up for speaking dates
READ: WA ch. 4-6

22, 24 / 5 **Presentation** of individual informative speeches
(24 : Review Ch. 1 – 6)

29 / 5 Midterm exam (90 min.)
Learning outcomes from informative speeches
Planning persuasive speeches
Signing up for speaking dates
READ: WA chapters 9-11

31 / 5 Claims and definition arguments, proposal arguments
Logical Fallacies and how to avoid them
Visual rhetoric
Formation of Project groups
READ: WA chapters 7, 12-14, and p.397-404

5, 7 / 6 **Presentation** of individual persuasive speeches

12 / 6 Group Work

14 / 6 Stasis theory and Rogerian rhetoric
Writing Task 2 in class: Rogerian process
Group presentations may start
Review of WA chapters 7 - 11

19, 21 / 6 Group Presentations
(21 / 6 : Review of WA chapters 12-16)

26 / 6 : **Final exam** in class