

Department of Communication and Culture
University of Calgary
Communications Studies 607 – Seminar 01
Socio-Cultural Approaches to Communication: *Rhetoric and Popular Culture*
Winter 2014
Thursdays 13:00 - 15:45 SS 315

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Course Description

The course covers “theoretical perspectives on communication as a symbolic process that produces and reproduces shared meanings, social practices, and social structures.” This section of the course will focus on rhetorical perspectives on communication in popular culture. “Popular culture” may be broadly defined as pervasive cultural ideas, perspectives and attitudes communicated primarily via mass media, new media, performance, and marketing.

Course Objectives

- To become familiar with rhetorical theory and criticism insofar as it is used to analyze communication in popular culture.
- To develop advanced skills in rhetorical criticism.
- To explore the relationship between one’s research topic and rhetorical studies.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Instead of Blackboard, the *Instructure Canvas* system (<http://www.instructure.com/>) will be used for course information, scheduling, assignment submission, and grading. For convenient access, the course’s area on Blackboard will provide a link to the course’s area on Canvas. Canvas is a learning management system that is adopted widely across many universities, and is offered free of charge to teachers and their students in up to 3 courses. It is user-friendly, provides tools for online engagement, protects student privacy, and is compatible with up-to-date computer systems and browsers. Students will be sent an email invitation and will register during the first two weeks of class.

During class time, use electronic devices for course related functions only. Show professional courtesy and attentiveness to the instructor and fellow students by using technology silently and discreetly. Minimize visual distractions from your screen.

Textbooks/Readings

- Longaker, M. G., & Walker, J. (2011). *Rhetorical analysis: A brief guide for writers*. Glenview, IL: Pearson Longman. (Print, \$20. CourseSmart e-text approx. \$10)
- Links to additional online readings (available within U of C Library holdings or freely accessible online) will be provided on the online learning management system.

Assignments and Evaluation

Book/article review presentation *As scheduled* **15%**
Give a 10-15 minute oral review of a book or article employing a rhetorical theory to discuss popular culture artifacts or phenomena. The review should include a critique of the item's methods of analysis, using sample passages. Use at least 10 presentation slides and a 1-page minimum handout including quoted passages and questions for discussion. Co-facilitate the post-presentation discussion. Use proper APA citation throughout.

Rhetorical Analyses *As scheduled* **40%**
During the term, each student will write 4 (four) 500-750w rhetorical analyses worth 10% each, submitted to the class's online forum 2 days before class, as scheduled. Each analysis paper must discuss a unique rhetorical artifact, discuss the artifact's rhetorical situation and make use of concepts from the week's assigned readings. The artifact(s) analyzed should be possible to read or view within 5 minutes, and submitted along with the paper. Class discussion that week will include a review of the artifact and discussion of the student's rhetorical analysis paper. The final version of the paper must be submitted for grading within 2 days after the class.

Term paper *Draft March 27; Final April 10* **30%**
Write either a rhetorical analysis, a rhetorical history, a rhetorical theory paper, or rhetorical criticism methodology paper of 2500 to 3500 words + references. The paper may build on one's book review and/or one short rhetorical analysis paper submitted earlier in the term. Cite the course textbook at least once in a meaningful way. Use proper APA citation throughout.

Peer Reviews *As scheduled* **15%**
Students will submit a draft of their final essay 2 weeks before the final is due and will submit their presentation materials before class on their presentation day so that these materials are well prepared for written peer reviews. Each student will write two 250-word minimum peer review memos and point-form notes for designated peers, as described below:

- 1) Presentation Materials & Reviews:
 - a. Presentation materials (PowerPoint and handout, complete and on time)
Submitted to forum before class on presentation day **2%**
 - b. Peer Review Memo on 1 peer's presentation and point-form notes on a 2nd presentation. *Due 2 business days after each presentation* **5%**
- 2) Term Paper Draft & Review:
 - a. Term paper draft (meeting standards for draft completeness, on time)
Due March 27^h before class begins **3%**
 - b. A Peer Review Memo on a peer's *Term Paper draft* and point-form notes on another peer's draft *Due April 3rd before class begins* **5%**

Drafts and presentation materials will be scored only for timeliness and completeness, and they will receive feedback only from peers, not from the instructor. Peer Review Memos will be graded for their quality, and point-form notes for their timeliness of submission. Each late item may result in a penalty. (see "Policy for Late Assignments").

Registrar-scheduled exam: No

Assignment submission

All assignments must be submitted electronically via Canvas to each assignment's designated submission area. Do NOT email your assignments directly to the instructor.

File format: Please name your files thus: 607-TermPaper-Lastname-Firstname-DRAFT.docx (course number, assignment name, student name, draft or final version, using hyphens instead of spaces). Submit files only in the requested file formats (i.e. .doc/.docx/.pdf/.pptx).

It is the student's responsibility to verify each online submission, and to keep a secure backup copy of each submitted assignment. Immediately after submitting a file, download your file from the course management system and open it to verify that it is the correct version and there were no file transfer errors. In case of a hard drive failure, keep backup copies of all assignments on a memory stick and/or use an online file storage program such as Box.com or Drop Box.

Temporary alternative submission methods:

- 1) If Canvas file submission is not working or is unavailable to you for any reason, temporarily submit your assignment via Blackboard (Tools > Digital Drop Box > SEND file) and notify the instructor by email that you have temporarily submitted it there.
- 2) If internet access is unavailable, you may submit in paper within the 16 hour grace period. 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.

If you use a temporary alternative submission method, re-submit the assignment electronically via Canvas as soon as possible when access is available.

Assignment deadlines

All assignments are due online by 8:00 PM on their deadline date, with the following exceptions:

- *Presentation materials and Term Paper peer reviews* must be submitted online to the appropriate discussion forum before the beginning of class on one's presentation day and the scheduled in-class peer review day.
- *Presentation peer reviews* must be submitted within 2 business days after your designated peer's presentation is delivered in class.

A 16-hour grace period for late submission (until 12pm noon the following day) is permitted for unexpected technical difficulties, short-term illness or scheduling challenges. This is not a deadline extension. During the grace period no late penalties will be applied, but after it expires, the item will be considered late from the original deadline.

Policy for late assignments

- At the discretion of the instructor, assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. Missing one's scheduled presentation without advance notice may result in one grade penalty.
- For components of the *Peer Reviews* assignment, the instructor may apply a penalty of 1% for each late component (i.e. a 1-point deduction from a component worth 5 points).
- Verifiable documentation (i.e. doctor's note) may be required to reduce or waive late penalties.

All assignments (except Draft & Peer Review components) must be completed, even if submitted late, in order to pass the course.

Assignment length

Assignments may be up to 10% longer than the maximum or 10% shorter than the minimum. An excellent assignment fulfills all requirements, does not wander off topic, and is not wordy or repetitive. On all assignments, students will be asked to provide a word count calculation.

The number of *words*, *not pages* is used for length calculations. The official word count focuses on the student's own headings and sentences within the body of the document. *Do NOT count words in long quotations (over 40 words), title page, table of contents, tables & figures, captions, footnotes, references, appendices, page numbers, or running heads.* To calculate word count in Microsoft Word, select the text to calculate and use Review > Word Count. Alternatively, paste text into an online counter: <http://www.textfixer.com/tools/online-word-counter.php>

Grading System

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture for all Graduate courses:

Letter Grade	Grading Scale	Grade Point Value (see U of C Calendar: Academic Standing)
A+	96-100	4
A	90-95.99	4
A -	85-89.99	3.7
B+	80-84.99	3.3
B	75-79.99	3
B-	70-74.99	2.7
C+	65-69.99	2.3
C	60-64.99	2
C-	55-59.99	1.7
D+	53-54.99	1.3
D	50-52.99	1
F	0-49	0

Assignment grades may be provided as letter grades, percentages, or points, as follows:

- Major assignments will be given a letter grade (A-, B+), and the instructor will convert this to a percentage using its midpoint on the Grading Scale. For example, an “A minus” will be converted to 87.5%. However, A+ grades will be converted to 100% and F grades to 0%. Each assignment's score will then be weighted by its % of the final grade.
- Partial assignment components (i.e. Drafts and Peer Reviews) will be given points equal to their percentage of the final grade. Their mathematical equivalent on the Grading Scale will be used in final grade calculations. For example, for materials submitted to the *Presentation Materials (2%) & Peer Review (5%) forum*, a score of 5 out of 7 points will be calculated as 71% and weighted by 7% of the final course grade.

According to the Graduate Calendar, a *final grade* of B is considered “satisfactory performance,” and a *final grade* of B- is considered a “minimal pass.” All *final course grades* of C+ or lower “are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements.” <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/grad/current/gs-e-1.html>

Revision option: If a student earns a score of B- or lower on any short rhetorical analysis paper, he or she may request a revision option within 5 days. The revised paper will be due within 2

weeks after an appointment with the instructor. The new assignment score will be the average between the original and revised assignment scores.

Grading timeline: The instructor will make an effort to return graded assignments via Canvas within two weeks (14 days), with some exceptions. A grading period may be extended to accommodate a holiday. Any assignment submitted late may be returned later than normal.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). Students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their full names on the first page and by submitting files via Canvas login. However, keep your private information secure. Do NOT place your UofC ID number or other private information on drafts or assignment files that will be viewed by your peers. More information:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow> . Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Support Centre. 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. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (MacEwan Student Centre 4th floor, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Graduate Calendar at the following link:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/grad/current/gs-o.html>

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

Students' Union

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts, see www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/su

Graduate Students' Association

For details on the Graduate Students' Association, please see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/GSA/>

Student Ombudsman

For details on the Student Ombudsman, please see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/GSA/services/ombudsperson.html>

Emergency Evacuation and Assembly Points

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and assembly points, please see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (ie. Surveys, interviews, observation) as a 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 Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB) <http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/ethics/cfreb>

Reading List – To be provided online

Schedule of readings – To be provided online.