

SPCM 3300:
Rhetorical Criticism

Dr. John M. Murphy
129 Terrell Hall
OH: 1:00-2:00 T/TH; 10:00-2:00 W; by appointment
OP: 2-3250
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Required Texts:

- 1) Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Susan Schultz Huxman, *The Rhetorical Act: Thinking, Speaking and Writing Critically* (3rd ed.). (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003). (TRA)
- 2) Course packet available at Bel-Jeans. (PK)

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the critical analysis of rhetoric, designed to enhance students' abilities to become effective critics of public discourse and active citizens in the nation. Specifically, we'll focus on understanding variables of situation, audience, and rhetor and how they influence the creation and reception of persuasive messages. Case studies of significant rhetorical acts and controversies will be used to introduce and vivify important concepts. Students will be expected to develop an understanding of the nature and function of rhetoric in various forms as a pragmatic tool that is used by rhetors to influence audience perceptions of symbolic reality.

Course Requirements:

1. 3 exams—40 points each. **February 7, March 18, May 1 (3:30-6:30)**
2. 3 papers—50 points each. **Due February 12, March 21, May 1 (3:30)**

Grading Scale (non-negotiable):

Total Points Possible: 270
243-270=A
216-242=B
189-215=C
162-188=D
0-161=F

Course Policies: Read the following policies carefully. Enrollment in class constitutes

understanding of and agreement to these policies. Your ignorance of them will not be an acceptable excuse for violating them.

Grading:

No papers will be accepted after the due date except by prior arrangement or in the case of verifiable emergency (such emergencies must be verified through the Office of Student Affairs). All requests to extend a due date will be handled on a case by case basis, and the instructor has final say about any such arrangement. If a student does not turn in an assignment on the due date and has not made arrangements with the instructor beforehand, the student will receive a "0" (zero) on the assignment. Late papers will automatically be docked 10 percent per day (not class day–work day) late. After four late days, a late paper will automatically be given a zero. After a grade is returned, students have one week to resolve questions about the grade with the instructor. Questions about a grade must be submitted first in writing. After one week, the grade is final. I do not give make-up exams. If a student has a legitimate reason for needing to miss an exam (and only the instructor determines what is legitimate) she/he may, if the instructor agrees, take the exam early.

Academic Honesty:

“Academic honesty is–defined broadly and simply–the performance of all academic work without cheating, lying, stealing, or receiving assistance from any other person or using any source of information not appropriately authorized or attributed” (From the Preamble to “A Culture of Honesty”). The University, the Department of Speech Communication, and the instructor take academic honesty very seriously as should you. All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The link to more detailed information about academic honesty can be found at:

<http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>

Attendance:

Attendance at all class meetings is expected, and students will be held responsible for all information given in class, whether or not they are present. Material will be covered that is not available in your textbooks, and analysis of texts that will take place in class cannot be recreated from another student’s notes. When I explain assignments, review for exams, or distribute additional materials, I will assume that all students are present. If you are not present, it will be your responsibility to inquire about what you have missed. **Students may miss two class periods with penalty to their grade. Each absence after that, unless for documented illness, emergency, or University business, will result in the loss of 5 points from the student’s final grade. **Simply informing the instructor that you will not be in class does not constitute an excused absence, and simply presenting proof that you visited the health center does not constitute an excused absence. For a health related excuse, the student must present a University Health Center “Plan of Care/Instructions” from a doctor, nurse practitioner, or physician’s assistant that says the student is/was too ill to attend class.** This means that you must see someone other than a nurse. Undocumented illness on your part or on the part of a family member, a family funeral, court dates, or doctor’s appointments do not**

constitute excused absences unless agreed to by the instructor. Save your two penalty-free absences for such occasions.

Special Needs: Any student who needs special accommodations for learning or who has special needs should share those concerns with the instructor as soon as possible.

Withdrawals/Incompletes:

Students wishing to file a “W” grade must meet with the instructor prior to taking any action. All requests will be handled on a case by case basis, and the instructor has final say on whether any such grade will be assigned. There will be no incompletes.

Tentative Daily Schedule

The source syllabus is a general plan for the semester; deviations announced to the class by the

instructor may be necessary. **The material assigned for a particular date should be read and analyzed by the start of class on that date. Come to class ready to discuss the material. Bring both of your textbooks to class each day.**

Section I: Fundamentals of Rhetorical Action

1/8 Introduction to the course
READ: TRA, Chapter 1.

1/10-17 The first stage of criticism: Descriptive Analysis
READ: TRA, Chapter 2, John F. Kennedy's speech to the Houston Ministerial Association (PK).

1/22-24 The second stage of criticism: Historical Contextual Analysis and Rhetorical Problems.
READ: TRA, Chapters 8-10, Bill Clinton's 1992 speech to the American Legion (PK).

1/29-2/5 The third stage of criticism: Evaluative Criteria
READ: TRA, Chapter 11, Richard Nixon, "Vietnamization" (PK).

Paper #1 Assignment distributed January 31.

2/7 **Examination #1**

Section II: Resources for Rhetorical Action

2/12-19 The Use of Evidence and Argument
READ: TRA, Chapters 4-5, Robert F. Kennedy Speech on Vietnam (PK).

Paper #1 Due On February 12.

2/21-26 Structure, Cultural Barriers, and the Creation of Identification
READ: TRA, Chapter 6, John Anjain Speech (PK)

2/28-3/6 Language, Persona, and Tone
READ: TRA, Chapter 7, Martin Luther King, Jr. "I Have a Dream" (PK).

Paper #2 Assignment Distributed on March 4

3/11-13 Spring Break

3/18 **Examination #2**

Section III: Occasions for Rhetorical Action

3/20-27 Deliberative Rhetoric and Eulogies
READ: TRA Chapter 14, Zyskind (PK), Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (PK).

Paper Assignment #2 Due on March 20.

4/8-10 Epideictic Rhetoric and Eulogies

READ: Clinton Speech at Oklahoma City Memorial Service (PK).

4/15-17 Forensic Rhetoric and Apologia

READ: Richard Nixon, "Checkers" (PK).

4/22-24 Inaugural Addresses and Created Audiences

READ: Franklin Roosevelt, "First Inaugural Address" (PK).

Paper Assignment #3 Distributed on April 22

5/1 Examination #3 3:30-6:30

Paper Assignment #3 Due

Packet Contents

Murphy
SPCM 3300

Spring 2008

1. John F. Kennedy, Campaign Speech to the Houston Ministerial Association
2. Bill Clinton, Address to the American Legion Convention
3. Vietnam Chronology
4. Richard Nixon, Vietnamization: The President's Address on War
5. Robert F. Kennedy, Address Delivered in Chicago, Illinois, February 8, 1968
6. Nuclear Testing Chronology
7. John Anjain, Speech before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
8. Civil Rights Chronology
9. Martin Luther King, Jr., I Have a Dream
10. Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address
11. Harold Zyskind, A Rhetorical Analysis of the Gettysburg Address
12. Bill Clinton, Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial Prayer Service Address
13. Richard M. Nixon, Checkers
14. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, First Inaugural Address