

**Point Loma Nazarene University**  
**Department of Communication Studies**  
**COM4060: Rhetorical Theories and Models**  
**Fall Semester, 2019**

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Instructor: Walter O. Williams, Ph.D. [wwilliam@ptloma.edu](mailto:wwilliam@ptloma.edu)  
Office Hours: T/R 9:30 – 11:00 pm, or by appt.

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**Course Objectives:**

The course objective is to teach you to think critically, focusing on the interaction between language, philosophy, reality, and persuasion. A further goal is to familiarize you with the rhetorical theories in western thought. During the semester, you will perform historical and critical examinations of rhetorical artifacts as to how they shape social, symbolic, psychological, and political factors in a contextual setting. Specific emphasis on language perception and development, and problems related to language as an epistemological and ontological tool.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

- Students will develop a sophisticated understanding of communication as the exchange of meaning.
- Students will display communication competence both verbally and nonverbally in rhetorical presentations.
- Students will analyze and conduct original rhetorical research, while critiquing rhetorical artifacts.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding and application of basic theoretical concepts relative to various rhetorical paradigms and frames of analysis.

**TEXTS:**

Foss, Sonya. *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration & Practice*. Recent Edition. Waveland.  
Gill, Ann. *Rhetoric and Human Understanding*. Waveland, 1994.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION**

- I. Meetings: We will meet once each week to discuss the readings, make presentations, and narrow research topics. This course will be a seminar format, not a lecture format. It is essential that you all actively participate in class discussions. In other words, the more you participate in the discussion the greater your benefit. It is necessary, therefore, that you **read the material** and be prepared not only to critically discuss it, but to relate it to your own work in the class as well. Toward this end, I have included a LOC (Life of Class) component in your grade.
- II. Quizzes: There will be four “quizzes” (perhaps “quests” would be more accurate) on the Gill material. Each quiz will cover the material due for that session. The quests will be short answer questions.

- III. Presentations/Critiques: You will present three (3) group critical 25 minute analyses during the semester. I will provide the artifacts to be critiqued. Each group will be graded as a group. I will discuss this further in class.
- IV. Final Rhetorical Critique: Your group will develop a rhetorical critique of an artifact, using one of the critique methods presented in Foss. Artifacts may include (but are not limited to) films, major television shows/events, political speeches/events, books, poems, ad campaigns, comic books, works of art, buildings, etc. Topics are open, but must be rhetorical in nature. Selection of artifacts is subject to my approval. Papers should be between 4000 and 4500 words. MLA style manual should be used throughout.
- V. Critique Presentation: Each group will make a presentation to the class summarizing the findings of you Rhetorical Critique. The presentation should (again) be extemporaneous in style, 25-30 minutes in length, and involve your classmates and me through interesting rhetorical techniques.

**100 POINT GRADING SCALE:**

| <u>GRADE</u> | <u>POINT VALUE</u> |
|--------------|--------------------|
| A            | 93-100             |
| A-           | 90-92              |
| B+           | 87-89              |
| B            | 83-86              |
| B-           | 80-82              |
| C+           | 77-79              |
| C            | 73-76              |
| C-           | 70-72              |
| D+           | 67-69              |
| D            | 63-66              |
| D-           | 60-62              |
| F            | 0-59               |

Grading for this course will be determined in the following manner:

|                                 |                 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Presentations/Critiques.....    | 3 @ 13.3% = 40% |
| Gill Quests.....                | 4 @ 5% = 20%    |
| Rhet Crit Presentation.....     | 15%             |
| Rhetorical Criticism Paper..... | 15%             |
| LOC.....                        | <u>10%</u>      |
| <br>TOTAL.....                  | <br>100%        |

# COURSE SCHEDULE

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Topic</u>   | <u>Assignment</u>                                    |
|-------------|--|--|
| 9/6         | Course orientation and overview<br>Class introduction          | Syllabus   |
| 9/13        | Print Ads  | <b>Foss: Part 1</b>                                  |
| 9/27        | The Signifying Animal<br>Team Assignments                      | <b>Gill: Part 1<br/>Quiz # 1</b>                     |
| 10/4        | Rhetorical Artifact  | <b>Foss: 4-7</b>                                     |
| 10/11       | Rhet Crit  | <b>Round 1</b>                                       |
| 10/18       | The Mythological Mind<br>Team Assignments                      | <b>Gill: Part 2<br/>Quiz # 2</b>                     |
| 11/1        | Rhetorical Artifact  | <b>Foss: 8-11</b>                                    |
| 11/8        | Rhet Crit  | <b>Round 2</b>                                       |
| 11/15       | The Modern Western Mind<br>Team Assignments                    | <b>Gill: Part 3<br/>Quiz # 3</b>                     |
| 11/22       | Rhetorical Artifact  |  |
| 12/6        | Rhet Crit  | <b>Round 3</b>                                       |
| 12/13       | Challenges to the Rational Paradigm<br>Paper Topics Discussion | <b>Gill: Part 4<br/>Quiz # 4<br/>Preliminary Bib</b> |
| 12/20       | <b>Final Project Presentation (1:30-4)</b>                     |  |