

COM 460 - RHETORICAL THEORIES AND MODELS

SKIP RUTLEDGE (e-mail: skiprutledge@pointloma.edu)
OFFICE HOURS: M 1:00-2:30, T/R 3:00-4:00 & most afternoons by appointment
OFFICE: CABRILLO 103, office phone 849-2391

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 of western thought. Course Warning: To borrow a line from a bad movie trailer, *Be afraid . . . Be very afraid*. This may not be the toughest course you have ever taken, but expect to work a great deal. It requires much reading, writing, review time and most of all . . . thought. Do not merely parrot chapter text and verse. Explore ideas after grounding yourself in the posited theoretical foundations. Know the material, but strive for more and for a deeper understanding. These concepts if properly engaged should challenge your very assumptions of reality. But the course should also provide you with analytical tools to explore more meaningful answers, rather than leave you in the abyss of despair.

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 formulate a thesis, organize a complex idea, and support it with appropriate evidence with proper grammar and punctuation in the final formal paper.
- Students will analyze and conduct original qualitative research using scholarly journals, while critiquing rhetorical artifacts.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding and application of basic theoretical concepts relative to various rhetorical paradigms and frames of analysis.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Gill, Ann. 1994. Rhetoric and Human Understanding. Waveland Press: Prospect Heights, IL
Grenz, Stanley J. 1996. A Primer on Postmodernism. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids.
Foss, Sonja K. 1996. Rhetorical Criticism. Waveland: Prospect Heights, IL

GRADING:

Meeting minimal requirements competently is expected for a grade of "C". Outstanding scholarship will earn a "B". Exceptionally superb, publishable quality material can earn an "A". This may be the class where you will work exceptionally hard and have to be happy with a "C" and conversely where you can also work fairly hard and only receive a "D" or an "F". Although "A"s and "B"s are attainable, don't focus on what grade you will receive. Instead try as hard as you can to learn as much as you can. For those that insist on the grading formula though, here it is. A sample of the percentage of possible points and the grade earned will be demonstrated here with B grades: 80-82% = "B-", 83-87% = B, 88-89% = B+.

ASSIGNMENTS:

The required assignments are listed below. Written assignments must be carefully typed and proof read based on the APA Manual of Style, 5th edition. Purchase this manual and keep it next to your Bible, it will be almost that important.

CRITICISM PAPER & PRESENTATION	- 100 pts
CRITICAL MODEL EXPLORATION AND EXPLANATION (team)	- 100 pts
READING RESPONSIVENESS (outlines, discussion, quizzes, attendance)	- 100 pts
MIDTERM (Gill Chapters 1-6)	- 100 pts
FINAL (Cumulative covering all the readings and class notes)	- 100 pts

PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism, or any other form of cheating, will not be tolerated. Representing another's work as your own is grounds for automatic failure and recommendation to the Provost for more stringent action on behalf of the college, such as expulsion. Please keep all your draft copies in case such a question arises. Please also submit an electronic copy of your work for the major class presentations, in addition to the paper copy, not in lieu of the paper copy. Strive to be best you that is possible, rather than cutting character corners and settling for less.

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance will likely have a direct correlation on your grade. Not only will excessive tardies and absences negatively impact your reading responsiveness grade and examination grades, but I reserve the right to further reduce grades of students missing more than one week's class (2 absences) per PLNU policy guidelines. Automatic de-enrollment is an option after the second absence, and a likelihood after the third or fourth. Much of the course is lecture and discussion driven, explaining the importance of attendance in this course. If you drop the course you must actually de-enroll yourself through the records office. Do not assume that the course professor or the academic provost or vice provost will de-enroll you automatically. Should you simply stop attending without formal de-enrollment, your grade will be an F, rather than a W, which hurts your overall GPA and academic standing, not to mention chances at graduate school.

READING RESPONSIVENESS:

This class absolutely depends on the students having thoroughly read and outlined the assigned work before class. The material is difficult. Read it through at least twice and outline the material thoroughly to be prepared to discuss it in class. Familiarity with the readings and quality of class discussion, along with the required outlines, will constitute a significant portion of your grade. Please take it seriously. Give me a **photocopy** of your outlines. Keep the original for your own note taking and study purposes. You may not get the copies back from me. Outlines should be typed, double-spaced and contain adequate information to serve as study aids. They should not only give headings, but also provide the substantive data under the headings. They are typically 3-4 pages typed for each chapter. They are due on the day for which the reading is first assigned.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

Written outlines turned in one weekday late (not one class day) will still be counted for half credit. Beyond that first day they will not receive any credit. Formal Papers will be docked one grade per day they are late. Performances must be completed on the assigned day or receive an "F". All work, even late assignments, must be submitted before the last day of class to be considered for the class grade. Finals week is too late to submit material.

CURRENT EVENT AWARENESS:

Students will be required and expected to keep up with the daily news of local, national and international importance. Not only is this a hallmark of a well educated person, it is critically important in order to faithfully uphold one's citizenship responsibilities in a democracy. What good is the right to vote when votes are based on ignorance? It is not enough to simply know the big picture details. You should dig for opposing views and try to analyze issues at a deeper level. Expect quizzes to include questions on these current events. Especially, know your leaders. The reason for this is that we will explore rhetorical choices made by our leaders, celebrities, etc.

CRITICAL MODEL EXPLORATION AND EXPLANATION:

In teams with up to two students each, select a rhetorical criticism approach, model or paradigm primarily from Foss' book. Research this critical approach carefully in the scholarly field, reading carefully at least 10-15 different articles discussing this approach. Then provide a clear and concise explanation of the material provided in Foss' textbook, adding in other important elements from your research. Review and explain important elements of the model, and the model as a whole, plus provide examples of how that model has been used to help to us understand some particular rhetorical phenomena. You may use the example provide in the Foss text for this. Submit a 10 page team report in APA 5th ed style, focusing on the theoretical underpinnings, and explaining the critical elements of the model. Include a references cited list. The oral presentation needs to be no longer than 15 minutes with set up and take down time for tech, and should cover the chapter in sufficient detail for the class to be able to adequately answer exam questions on the material in the chapter (supplemented with their own reading of the chapters of course.) Sign up for a given presentation day, and be prepared that day.

FINAL PAPER: RHETORICAL CRITICISM

Purpose: To apply a recognized model of criticism or analysis to an important rhetorical discourse or artifact. The paper should reflect the students understanding of both the discourse and the model but should concentrate on an analytical application of the model to the discourse. This should also draw heavily from literature in the discipline. All papers must be clearly proofed and error free. Poor grammar or syntax, especially the use of sentence fragments or run-on sentences, could be grounds for failing a paper regardless of the quality of the content or analysis. All papers will be due on the first day of in class presentations for this assignment.

Format: Within 14 to 18 pages of text (APA style 5th ed., typed), provide a sound paper (intro, body, and conclusion) that clearly identifies

1. A remarkable discourse – (25%) - some communicative act important enough to justify your time analyzing it and the audience's time reviewing it. Explain what it is and why it is important. This can include but should not be limited to a speech, an advertising campaign, a social movement's rhetoric, a counter-movements response, a style of communication (particular forms of music, for example, rap, country western, . . .) a piece of historical literature (Luther's 95 Thesis, Jesus' cleansing of the temple or Sermon on the Mount, Hitler's Mein Kampf, the Declaration of Independence, the Magna Carta), a historical incident (protests such as the Boston Tea Party, L A Riots, the baseball strike), a current political act (Kansas's recent banning of any mention of "evolution" in their school curriculum), legislative action (treating crack cocaine offenders, often lower class, inner city minorities, as criminal scum, while merely slapping powder cocaine abusers wrists, perhaps because they are more often, better off, white, yuppie stock brokers or professional white collar workers.

2. A scholarly model of criticism or analysis – (25%) - Many such templates or analytical frames are mentioned in the books. Others can be found by reviewing communication journals at the library or conferring with me. The model typically provides some framework or standard by which a discourse can be analyzed. An example (albeit overused) is Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Pentad, allowing the critic to view a particular discourse via the Dramatistic paradigm by reflecting from perspectives of concentrating on the agent, agency, audience, . . . or ratios of two or more of these elements. Many other analytical frameworks exist. Examples include philosophical perspectives (feminist, postmodernist . . .), Linguistic approaches (myth, oral tradition, deconstructionist), medium focuses (Marshal McLuhan, Neil Postman), Psychological figures (Freud, Skinner, Jung), political or persuasive theories (inoculation theory, cognitive dissonance, ingratiation), Rhetorical standbys (Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Roman Canons, Quintilian's Good Man Theory) - or for the truly adventurous you can mix and match. You may use the same model you used in your first paper, and it would probably be smart to do so. You are not required to use that same model though.

3. Apply the model (25%) to the discourse and provide your own analysis, along with other researchers as to the legitimacy of the discourse based on the premise of your model. The bulk of the paper should be in this third section and should contribute new work not merely parrot old views. The model you chose should help provide structure and insight. For example, Burke's Pentad says we need to look at five elements. You too then can analyze your act in 5 parts, etc. Aristotle provides Ethos, Pathos and Logos. Consider those points as a framework.

4. Provide Social Implications (25%) of what your analysis unfolded. How are we different for knowing what you have revealed? Is it possible that realizing your information we should be compelled to take certain policy actions, or to change our value hierarchies as individuals or society as a whole.

ORAL PRESENTATION - prepare a 8-10 minute formal presentation of your paper. The presentation should be smooth, organized, and well delivered, not just read aloud. V.A.s OK. Limited note cards are allowed, but presentation should be nearly memorized. Reading it verbatim will impair the presentation and the grade. Practice, practice, practice. Know it so well that your explanation of it sounds conversational.

EXTRA CREDIT:

Should any class member wish to complete the rhetorical criticism final paper early and polish up the presentation to tournament readiness, it can be delivered at an intercollegiate speech tournament for 25 extra credit points. That is about a half a grade boost or more. If the speech is well enough regarded by the critics that it receives an award, it may even earn more extra credit. It is a lot of points, but the assignment reflects a lot of work. The last opportunity to deliver this speech at a tournament in San Diego will be at the Grossmont Community College hosted Griffin Invitational Speech Tournament, Saturday, November 12th, 2009. I can verify the particular day once the Grossmont Invitation is mailed, but this should be accurate. There are may be one other opportunity later, on December 4th or 6th at Moorpark College in Ventura County, for which you would be responsible to find your own transportation and lodging if necessary. Let me know well in advance if you wish to go this route.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS:

While all students are expected to meet the minimum academic standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may require academic accommodations. At Point Loma Nazarene University, students requesting academic accommodations must file documentation with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. Once the student files documentation, the Disability Resource Center will contact the student's instructors and provide written recommendations for reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet the individual needs of the student. This policy assists the University in its commitment to full compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act of 1990, and ADA Amendments Act of 2008, all of which prohibit discrimination against students with disabilities and guarantees all qualified students equal access to and benefits of PLNU programs and activities.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

- Week 1- (Begins Thursday) Class Introduction/Syllabus.
Read Rutledge Essay on Crack Cocaine – Electronic Copy to list
- Week 2- Gill Chpt 1: Signs and Symbols
- Week 3- Gill Chpt 2: Language,
- Week 4- Gill Chpt 3: Rhetoric
- Week 5- Gill Chpt 4: Meaning (& MLK Speech)
- Week 6- Gill Chpt 5: Oral Traditions
Gill Chpt 6: Word Magic
- Week 7- **Midterm: Gill chapters 1-6, MLK Speech**
Gill Chpt 7: Beginnings of Western Mind
- Week 8- Gill Chpt 8: Evolution of Western Mind
Gill Chpt 9: The Rational Paradigm
- Week 9- Gill Chpt 10: Contemporary Discourse
Gill Chpt 11: Postmodernism
- Week 10- Watch “The Matrix” re: Postmodernism
Read Rutledge Essay on Matrix, Christianity, and Pomo
Discuss Postmodern vs Christian Redemptive messages in “The Matrix”
- Week 11- Grenz Postmodernism – Chapter 1
Grenz Postmodernism – Chapters 2-3
- Week 12- Grenz Postmodernism - Chapter 4-5
Grenz Postmodernism - Chapter 6-7
- Week 13- Tuesday: Gill 12: Voice Gill, & Chptr 13
Thursday - Thanksgiving Break, no classes
- Week 14- **Criticism Paper Due, Begin Presentations**
- Week 15- **Finish Presentations, Exam Review**
- Week 16- **Tuesday Dec 13th 10:30-2:30 Final Exam (Gill, Grenz, Foss,)**
(Students responsible for Foss Reading for final exam, but not for outlines)