COMM 512: Rhetorical Criticism  
Spring, 2015  
12:30-3:20 Th, ASC 240

COURSE INFORMATION

Critic-in-Chief: Dr. Randy Lake  
Office: ASC 206C  
Hours: TBA  
Contact: ext. 03946; rlake@usc.edu  
Course Website: blackboard.usc.edu

Objectives: (1) to cultivate an appreciation for the role of the critical act in culture and society; (2) to become familiar with the diversity of critical paradigms and methods; (3) to become acquainted with some of the landmark exemplars of criticism; (4) to develop your own skills as critics; and (5) to produce a publishable piece of criticism

Readings: (1) Brian L. Ott and Greg Dickinson, eds., The Routledge Reader in Rhetorical Criticism (Routledge, 2013) [REQUIRED]; (2) Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Thomas R. Burkholder, Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric (2nd ed.; Wadsworth, 1996) [REQUIRED]; (3) other materials as assigned.

Assignments: The major project for the course will be a finished criticism on the “text” (or critical object) of your choice, to be completed in four stages: a descriptive analysis (DUE February 12), a historical-contextual analysis (DUE March 19), an interpretive analysis that identifies proposed methods (DUE April 2) and a completed, integrated critical essay (DUE April 30). The goal is to produce a presentable/publishable work by semester’s end. There also will be a final (essay, open-book, take-home) exam.

Format: As befits a doctoral seminar, I will talk, you will present/report, and we will discuss (in ascending order of importance).

Academic Conduct  
Plagiarism - presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words - is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards  
https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct,  
http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

The Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism is committed to upholding the University's academic integrity code as detailed in the SCampus guide. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violation or pattern of violations of the academic integrity code will result in the student’s expulsion from the Communication major or minor.
If you have any doubts about what is and is not an academic integrity violation, please check with me. The University presumes that you are familiar with its standards and policies; should you be found to have committed a violation, ignorance of these standards and policies will not be accepted as an excuse.

Other Conduct

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity [http://equity.usc.edu/](http://equity.usc.edu/) or to the Department of Public Safety [http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us](http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us). This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community - such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member - can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm) provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage [http://sarc.usc.edu/](http://sarc.usc.edu/) describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute [http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali](http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali), which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs [http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with DSP each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please have the letter delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. DSP can be reached at (213) 740-0776 or ability@usc.edu. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information [http://emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu) will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Tentative Weekly Syllabus
(Significant revisions are certain, but you’ll receive adequate advance notification.)

Session 1: January 15
Introduction to the course

Session 2: January 22
The Rise, Fall, and Haunting of a Paradigm
ASSIGNMENT Browse as much of *The History and Criticism of American Public Address* (3 vols.) as you can and read any one essay (your choice) thoroughly. Come prepared to share what you have learned about what neo-Aristotelianism is, and what it isn’t.
Session 3: January 29
Genre in Criticism
ASSIGNMENT Find an exemplar of generic criticism (a study that employs a genre as an interpretive tool) or metacriticism (a study that theorizes the nature of genre as a critical tool) and prepare a ten-minute report (with handout) that summarizes the study and notes both its contributions to and limitations regarding generic criticism: What can the critic do with this tool? What can’t she do?

Session 4: February 5
Dramatistic Criticism

Session 5: February 12
Movement Criticism
DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSES DUE

Session 6: February 19
The Ideological Turn I
Session 7: February 26  
The Ideological Turn II: Alternatives  

Session 8: March 5  
The Turn to Story  
REPORTS (1) narrative criticism; (2) fantasy theme analysis/symbolic convergence theory; (3) mythic criticism

March 12  
REPORTS held over from October 17  
HISTORICAL-CONTEXTUAL ANALYSES DUE

Session 9: March 19  
Spring Break—NO CLASS

Session 10: March 26  
The Turn to Controversy  

Session 11: April 2
The Visual Turn


*INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS DUE*

Session 12: **April 9**

Space, Place, and Public Memory


Session 13: **April 16**

Criticism, Metacriticism, and Publication

We will read in common a selection of manuscripts submitted for publication, as well as actual reviews.


Session 14: **April 23**

Presentation of student projects

Session 15: **April 30**

*FINISHED CRITICISMS DUE*

Wednesday, **May 13**

4:00 Final Exam (take-home, due by this time)