

COMM 512: Rhetorical Criticism
Fall, 2017
2:00-4:50 T, ASC 240



COURSE INFORMATION

Critic-in-Chief: Dr. Randy Lake
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Hours: TBA
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Course Website: blackboard.usc.edu

Description: This is the foundational course in critical/interpretive methods of communication inquiry. It surveys the major types of critical analysis of the diverse communicative forms (including the discursive, visual, material, and digital) that we encounter daily, including the strengths and limitations of each type. It teaches a systematic method of critical work that is compatible with all of these types. And it considers the value, significance, and risks of critical intervention into sociocultural communication practices.

Objectives: (1) to cultivate appreciation for the role of the critical act in culture and society; (2) to survey the diversity of critical paradigms and methods; (3) to become acquainted with some of the landmark exemplars of criticism; (4) to develop your own capacities 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 September 19), a historical-contextual analysis (DUE October 17), an interpretive analysis that identifies proposed methods (DUE November 7) and a completed, integrated critical essay (DUE November 28). The goal is to produce a presentable/publishable work by semester’s end.

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

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

Session 1: August 22
Introduction to the course

Session 2: August 29

The Rise, Fall, and Haunting of a Paradigm

READ Ott & Dickinson, "Introduction"; Hill, "Conventional Wisdom—Traditional Form—The President's Message of November 3, 1969," *QJS* 58 (1972): 373-86; Campbell, "Richard M. Nixon," Ch. 4 of *Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric* (1st ed.); Campbell, "'Conventional Wisdom—Traditional Form': A Rejoinder" and Hill, "Reply to Professor Campbell," *QJS* 58 (1972): 451-60; Leff & Mohrmann, "Lincoln at Cooper Union: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Text," *QJS* 60 (1974): 346-58; Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method*, Ch. 2 (pp. 27-35), 3

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: September 5

Genre in Criticism

READ Campbell & Burkholder, Ch. 2; Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *P&R* 1 (1968): 1-14; Campbell & Jamieson, "Form and Genre in Rhetorical Criticism: An Introduction"; Ware & Linkugel, "They Spoke in Defense of Themselves: On the Generic Criticism of Apologia," *QJS* 59 (1973): 273-83; Miller, "Genre as Social Action," *QJS* 70 (1984): 151-67; Luckmann, "Observations on the Structure and Function of Communicative Genres," *Semiotica* 173 (2009): 267-82; Jamieson & Campbell, "Rhetorical Hybrids: Fusions of Generic Elements," *QJS* 68 (1982): 146-57; Boser & Lake, "'Enduring' Incivility: Sarah Palin and the Tucson Tragedy," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 17 (2014):

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: September 12

Finish Genre

Session 5: September 19

Movement/Collective Rhetoric Criticism

READ Griffin, "The Rhetoric of Historical Movements," *QJS* 38 (1952): 184-88; Short, "Earth First! and the Rhetoric of Moral Confrontation," *Communication Studies* 42 (1991): 172-88; Campbell, "The Rhetoric of Women's Liberation: An Oxymoron," *QJS* 59 (1973): 74-86; Pezzullo, "Performing Critical Interruptions: Stories, Rhetorical Invention, and the Environmental Justice Movement," Ott & Dickinson, 175-92; DeLuca & Peeples, "From Public Sphere to Public Screen: Democracy, Activism, and the 'Violence' of Seattle," Ott & Dickinson, 380-400; Lake, "Enacting Red Power: The Consummatory Function in Native American Protest Rhetoric," Ott & Dickinson, 731-45; Flores, "Creating Discursive Space Through a Rhetoric of Difference: Chicana Feminists Craft a Homeland," Ott & Dickinson, 746-60; Zarefsky, "A Skeptical View of Movement Studies," *Central States Speech Journal* 31 (1980): 245-54
DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSES DUE

Session 6: September 26

Dramatistic Criticism

READ Burke, "Literature as Equipment for Living," Ott & Dickinson, 259-63; Burke, "Rhetoric—Old and New," *Journal of General Education* 5 (1951): 202-07; Burke, "Dramatism," from *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*; Hochmuth, "Kenneth Burke and the 'New Rhetoric,'" *QJS* 38 (1952): 133-44; Burke, "The Rhetoric of Hitler's *Battle*," from *The Philosophy of Literary Form*; Tonn, Endress, & Diamond, "Hunting and Heritage on Trial in Maine: A Dramatistic Debate over Tragedy, Tradition, and Territory," *QJS* 79 (1993): 165-81;

Lake, "Order and Disorder in Anti-Abortion Rhetoric: A Logological View," *QJS* 70 (1984): 425-43; Christiansen & Hanson, "Comedy as Cure for Tragedy: ACT UP and the Rhetoric of AIDS," *QJS* 82 (1996): 157-70; Carlson, "Creative Casuistry and Feminist Consciousness: The Rhetoric of Moral Reform," *QJS* 78 (1992): 16-32; Olson, "The Controversy over President Reagan's Visit to Bitburg: Strategies of Definition and Redefinition," *QJS* 75 (1989): 129-51; Cooper, "Appropriating Visual Form: The iPod 'Silhouette' Campaign as Representative Form," *Visual Communication Quarterly* 16 (2009): 90-107

Session 7: October 3

Turn I: Story

REPORTS [A] narrative criticism; [B] fantasy theme analysis/symbolic convergence theory; [C] mythic criticism

READ [A] Fisher, "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument," *CM* 51 (1984): 1-22; Farrell & Goodnight, "Accidental Rhetoric: The Root Metaphors of Three Mile Island," Ott & Dickinson, 264-89; Rowland, "On Limiting the Narrative Paradigm: Three Case Studies," *CM* 56 (1989): 39-54; [B] Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality," Ott & Dickinson, 290-300; Benoit et al., "A Fantasy Theme Analysis of Political Cartoons on the Clinton-Lewinsky-Starr Affair," *CSMC* 18 (2001): 377-94; Gunn, "Refitting Fantasy: Psychoanalysis, Subjectivity, and Talking to the Dead," Ott & Dickinson, 301-19; [C] Rushing, "The Rhetoric of the American Western Myth," Ott & Dickinson, 320-37; West & Carey, "(Re)Enacting Frontier Justice: The Bush Administration's Tactical Narration of the Old West Fantasy After September 11," *QJS* 92 (2006): 379-410; also read Campbell & Burkholder, Ch. 3

Session 8: October 10

Turn II: Ideology, Part 1

READ Black, "The Second Persona," *QJS* 56 (1970): 109-19; McGee, "The 'Ideograph': A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology," *QJS* 66 (1980): 1-16; Ewalt, "A Colonialist Celebration of National <Heritage>: Verbal, Visual, and Landscape Ideographs at Homestead National Monument of America," *WJC* 75 (2011): 367-85; Wander, "The Ideological Turn in Modern Criticism," *CSSJ* 34 (1983): 1-18; Wander, "The Third Persona: An Ideological Turn in Rhetorical Theory," Ott & Dickinson, 604-23; Kendall, "Personae and Natural Capitalism: Negotiating Politics and Constituencies in a Rhetoric of Sustainability," *EC* 2 (2008): 59-77; Condit, "Hegemony in a Mass-Mediated Society: Concordance about Reproductive Technologies," *CSMC* 11 (1994): 205-30; Cloud, "Hegemony or Concordance? The Rhetoric of Tokenism in 'Oprah' Winfrey's Rags-to-Riches Biography," *CSMC* 13 (1996): 115-37; Condit, "Hegemony, Concordance, and Capitalism: Reply to Cloud," *CSMC* 13 (1996): 382-84; Cloud, "Concordance, Complexity, and Conservatism: Rejoinder to Condit," *CSMC* 14 (1997): 193-200

Session 9: October 17

Turn II: Ideology, Part 2

READ Cloud and Gunn, "Introduction: W(h)ither Ideology?," *WJC* 75 (2011): 407-20; McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," Ott & Dickinson, 479-98; Murphy, "Critical Rhetoric as Political Discourse," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 32 (1995): 1-15; McDorman, "Controlling Death: Bio-Power and the Right-to-Die Controversy," *C&C/CS* 2 (2005): 257-279; Discenna, "The Rhetoric of Graduate Student Unionization: Critical Rhetoric and the Yale Grade Strike," *CQ* 58 (2010): 19-35; Charland, "Finding a Horizon and Telos: The Challenge to Critical Rhetoric," *QJS* 77 (1991): 71-74; Lake, "Argumentation and Self: The Enactment of Identity in *Dances With Wolves*," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 34 (1997): 66-89
HISTORICAL-CONTEXTUAL ANALYSES DUE

Session 10: October 24

Turn III: Controversy

READ Goodnight, "Controversy," in "Argument in Controversy," ed. Donn W. Parson (Annandale, VA: SCA, 1991), 1-13; Olson & Goodnight, "Entanglements of Consumption, Cruelty, Privacy, and Fashion: The Social Controversy Over Fur," *QJS* 80 (1994): 249-76; Phillips, "A Rhetoric of Controversy," *WJC* 63 (1999): 488-510; Goodnight, "Messrs. Dinkins, Rangel, and Savage in Colloquy on the African Burial Ground: A Companion Reading," *WJC* 63 (1999): 511-25; Fritch, et al., "Disingenuous Controversy: Responses to Ward Churchill's 9/11 Essay," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 42 (2006): 190-205; Ceccarelli, "Manufactured Scientific Controversy: Science, Rhetoric, and Public Debate," *R&PA* 14 (2011): 195-228; Fuller, "Manufactured Scientific Consensus: A Reply to Ceccarelli," *R&PA* 16 (2013): 753-60; Ceccarelli, "Controversy over Manufactured Scientific Controversy: A Rejoinder to Fuller," *R&PA* 16 (2013): 761-66

Session 11: October 31

Controversy Do-Over

Session 12: November 7

The Visual Turn

READ Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art*, Chapters 4-6; Olson, "Intellectual and Conceptual Resources for Visual Rhetoric: A Re-examination of Scholarship Since 1950," *Review of Communication* 7 (2007): 1-20; Messaris, "What's Visual about 'Visual Rhetoric'?", *QJS* 95 (2009): 210-23; Palczewski, "The Male Madonna and the Feminine Uncle Sam: Visual Argument, Icons, and Ideographs in 1909 Anti-Woman Suffrage Postcards," *QJS* 91 (2005): 356-94; Gallagher & Zagacki, "Visibility and Rhetoric: The Power of Visual Images in Norman Rockwell's Depictions of Civil Rights," *QJS* 91 (2005): 175-200; DeLuca & Demo, "Imaging Nature: Watkins, Yosemite, and the Birth of Environmentalism," *CSMC* 17 (2000): 241-60; Peterson, "The Rhetorical Criticism of Visual Elements: An Alternative to Foss's Schema," *Southern Communication Journal* 67 (2001): 19-32; Lake & Pickering, "Argumentation, the Visual, and the Possibility of Refutation: An Exploration," *Argumentation* 12 (1998): 79-93
INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS DUE

Session 13: November 14

Space, Place, and Public Memory

READ Dickinson, "Memories for Sale: Nostalgia and the Construction of Identity in Old Pasadena," *QJS* 83 (1997): 1-27; Biesecker, "Remembering World War II: The Rhetoric and Politics of National Commemoration at the Turn of the 21st Century," *QJS* 88 (2002): 393-409; Jorgensen-Earp & Lanzilotti, "Public Memory and Private Grief: The Construction of Shrines at the Sites of Public Tragedy," *QJS* 84 (1998): 150-70; Ehrenhaus, "Silence and Symbolic Expression," *CM* 55 (1988): 41-57; Dickinson, Ott, & Aoki, "Spaces of Remembering and Forgetting: The Reverent Eye/I at the Plains Indian Museum," *CC/CS* 3 (2006): 27-47; Blair, "Civil Rights/Civil Sites: ' . . . Until Justice Rolls Down Like Waters,'" Carroll C. Arnold Lecture, National Communication Association convention, San Antonio, TX, 2006; McGeough, Palczewski, & Lake, "Oppositional Memory Practices: U.S. Memorial Practices as Arguments over Public Memory," *Argumentation and Advocacy*, forthcoming

Session 14: November 21

Criticism, Metacriticism, and Publication

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

READ: Blair, et al., "Disciplining the Feminine," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80 (1994): 383-409

Session 15: November 28

Presentation of student projects
FINISHED CRITICISMS DUE