COMM 512: Rhetorical Criticism
Fall, 2011
2:00-4:50 M, ASC 223AB

**DRAFT**

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: Substantial, as assigned. There are no required texts per se.

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 three stages: a descriptive analysis (DUE September 26), a historical-contextual analysis (DUE October 31), and a completed, integrated critical essay (DUE November 28). The goal is to produce a publishable work by semester’s end. There also will be a final (essay) exam.

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

Academic Integrity: The Annenberg School for Communication 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.

Tentative Weekly Syllabus

(Details are still evolving and choices remain to be made, in due time.)
Session 1: **August 22**
Introduction to the course

Session 2: **August 29**
The Process of Criticism
READ Campbell & Burkholder, Ch. 2-6
SUGGESTED Stewart, “Historical Survey: Rhetorical Criticism in Twentieth Century America”

Session 3: **September 12**
The Rise, Fall, and Haunting of a Paradigm

Session 4: **September 19**
Genre in Criticism

Session 5: **September 26**
Dramatistic Criticism

**DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSES DUE**

Session 6: **October 3**
Movement Criticism
Session 7: October 10
The Ideological Turn I

Session 8: October 17
The Turn to Story
REPORTS on (1) narrative criticism (2) fantasy theme analysis/symbolic convergence theory (3) mythic criticism

Session 9: October 24
The Ideological Turn II: Feminist Criticism
REPORTS on (1) the Campbell-Biesecker exchange in Philosophy and Rhetoric; (2) the Cloud-Condit exchange in Critical Studies in Mass Communication

Session 10: October 31
The Visual Turn

**HISTORICAL-CONTEXTUAL ANALYSES DUE**

**Session 11: November 7**
Space, Place, and Public Memory

**Session 12: November 14**
The Martin Luther Moment: Up to What Should Criticism Be?
Drawing inspiration from fora on the status of criticism published in the *Western Journal of Communication* (2001) and *Communication Studies* (2003), students will present position papers.

**Session 13: November 21**
Criticism, Metacriticism, and Publication
We will read in common a selection of manuscripts submitted for publication, as well as actual reviews.

**Session 14: November 28**
Presentation of student projects
FINISHED CRITICISMS DUE

**Session 15: December 9**
4:00 Final Exam (take-home, due by this time)