

# Communication 201 - Rhetoric and the Public Sphere

## Fall 2013

**T/TH 9:30 – 10:50 am      ASC 204**

### **Instructor Information:**

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### **Teaching Assistants:**

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Specific information about how and when to communicate with your instructors is available in this Frequently Asked Question document available on blackboard at [https://blackboard.usc.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-2749274-dt-content-rid-4170275\\_2/xid-4170275\\_2](https://blackboard.usc.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-2749274-dt-content-rid-4170275_2/xid-4170275_2)

### **Course Description:**

This course is designed to provide a foundation for the humanistic study of communication. The course will trace significant contributions in rhetorical theory and understandings of the public sphere. As a foundational course, we will primarily introduce theorists and concepts needed for the Media, Law and Politics concentration as well as many other communication courses.

### **Student Objectives:**

1. At the conclusion of the course, students will be familiar with prominent theorists and controversies in rhetorical theory.
2. Students will be introduced to a range of perspectives about the public sphere and be able to identify significant features of these constructs.
3. Students will become familiar with constant challenges in rhetorical theory and the influence of changes in social practices, technology and culture.
4. Students will have opportunities to begin practicing rhetorical criticism.

### **Course Policies:**

**Academic Integrity** - The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's academic integrity code. 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. 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. You should be familiar with the following resources:

- "Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism" addresses issues of paraphrasing, quotations and citations in written assignments, drawing heavily upon materials used in the university's Writing Program (by Student Judicial Affairs) <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/docs/tig.pdf>
- "Understanding and Avoiding Academic Dishonesty" addresses more general issues of academic integrity, including guidelines for adhering to standards concerning examinations and unauthorized collaboration (by Student Judicial Affairs) <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/docs/tio.pdf>
- The "2013-2014 SCampus" (the student handbook) contains the university's Student Conduct Code and other student-related policies. <http://www.usc.edu/scampus>.
- The USC Code of Ethics is also linked to every blackboard course menu in at the bottom of the left side navigation bar.

**Attendance** – Students are expected to attend each day and have completed the reading due for that day. Attendance will be taken each day. Any absences for medical or university excused reasons should be coordinated with the instructor at the earliest possible opportunity.

**Late & Unfinished Work** – Students must complete all assignments in order to earn a grade in the course. Any material turned in late will be reduced one letter grade per calendar day late.

**Grievance Procedure** - Occasionally, students are dissatisfied with evaluation of their work or some other dimension of a course. For concerns with specific grades, students should first provide a written argument in support of their position to the appropriate teaching assistant. All grade appeals on specific assignments must be made within one week of the return of the assignment. The TA will then review that petition and evaluate its merits. Dr. Stables will consider grade appeals only after this process has been completed. You may, of course, approach any of the instructors with any general concerns.

**Special Assistance** - Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure that the letter is delivered 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 and can be reached at (213) 740-0776.

### **Assignments:**

**Exams** (20% each, 60% total) – There are three exams, all of which are in-class and writing intensive. Each successive exam will assume that you have working knowledge of materials from the earlier units, but you will be primarily tested on material from that unit. Each exam will be drawn from both the lectures and readings.

**Papers** (13.3% each, 40% total) - There are three writing assignments, each asking for 5 pages of analysis. The specific prompts for each paper are included.

**Quizzes** – There are no quizzes scheduled, but the instructor retains the prerogative to give unscheduled quizzes if student engagement with the course materials is lagging. Each quiz would be worth 1% of the overall grade (and all other assignments would be correspondingly reduced in value).

## Common Standards for All Course Papers

In addition to providing a quality response to the prompt, each paper should be a high-quality product and consistent with the expectations for submission in a university environment. In introducing students to the discipline it is important to appreciate the norms of written culture. Failure to adhere to these standards will result in a lower grade. The expectations include:

- All papers should all utilize common font and margin settings (such as Times New Roman 12 point fonts and 1 inch margins).
- Papers must be submitted using blackboard (to allow use of Turnitin) **and** emailed to [rhetoric201@gmail.com](mailto:rhetoric201@gmail.com). Do not print copies of the paper.
- **Use of a style manual** - Papers should feature consistent use of a style manual. All papers in the course should be submitted using APA style. A PowerPoint resource is available on blackboard to help you. You should also consult a formal style manual for additional questions
- **Structure** - Quality papers should demonstrate a clear writing plan and basic structure. A clear thesis should be evident early on the first page to preview the fundamental elements of the essay. This section should also preview the organizational structure of the project. Each section should reflect an organizing principle which utilizes previews, summaries, and transitions. You shouldn't be trying to build suspense in these essays. If you don't provide a sense of your final direction in the first two to three paragraphs, you are too weakening the focus of the essay. Good essays also should include a quality conclusion that draws together the basic details. Simply finishing your last point doesn't accomplish this task.
- **Focus on specific arguments** - Your essays are all designed to analyze specific political contexts so it is important that you closely detail the relevant articles and texts, including properly citing them, and provide specific analysis. You are free to use your own perspectives to accent these essays, but ultimately they need to provide analysis of the specific artifacts in question as their primary task.
- **Writing Style** - In any essay, the medium of your language is the technique that you will use to make your arguments. Even in our visual culture, the ability to make a professional argument in writing is an essential skill, especially in an argumentation course. When your language begins resembles the spoken word it loses its authority and it distracts from your contentions. These essays are intentionally short to provide you with time to edit and revise your work. Junior level college writing should be free of:
  - (Thinking out loud comments in parenthesis)
  - Misspelled words or words that are poorly spell-checked and come back as different words. There is a huge credibility problem for your writing when these errors appear.
  - Conversational or sarcastic tones. This is a formal essay and it should be treated as such. Individuals should be cited with their appropriate, such as President Obama (not Obama).
- **Use of qualified sources** – In cases where you need or want to make an authoritative claim, you should utilize a well-qualified source. Suggestions involve experts in the field, scholarly journals, and other professional sources, including our texts. The easiest Google results, especially including Wikipedia, should be treated as starting points for reference and not stand-alone references. When essay topics refer to specific concepts covered in the readings, it is important that these essays display a competent grasp of the material.
- **Evidence matters** - Evidence should be carefully analyzed before usage. Materials cited as proof of your claims should be timely, relevant, and well scrutinized. Materials should reflect your awareness of the ideological foundations of all evidence (i.e., using materials from a traditional print publication

arguing that digital media is inherently limited is acceptable; however, the use of that material should reflect your awareness that this source is highly partisan).

- **Bibliography & Citations** - Citations must be provided for all researched information. Any use of additional material, even as background, must be cited within the body of the paper and then again in a works cited or bibliography. The format for these citations should consistently reflect a style manual.

### Evaluation Criteria

Each assignment will receive a numerical grade. Students should understand that the following scale is used to govern grades, with the understanding that pluses and minuses are qualifications on the general scale.

‘A’ work signifies excellence in both design and implementation of work. This material can be considered outstanding and should be understood as far superior to the average effort. Simply completing the assignment prompt does not automatically constitute A quality work.

‘B’ work signifies above average work. Strong effort is involved and visible through clear organizational planning and attention to detail.

‘C’ work signifies average and adequate work. This grade is earned when material completes the minimum threshold of an assignment, even though conceptual, organizational or writing problems may exist.

‘D’ work signifies below average work. This is usually the product of either a substantial problem adhering to the nature of the assignment or a substantially problematic effort.

‘F’ work signifies an unacceptable level of work. This is usually the product of an incomplete assignment or a fundamental failure to engage the nature of the assignment.

Final course grades are assigned on the following scale

94-100 % = A	90-93 % = A-	87-89 % = B+	84-86 % = B	80-83 % = B-	77-79 % = C+
74-76 % = C	70-73 % = C-	67-69 % = D+	64-66 % = D	60-63 % = D-	59 % & below = F

### Required Readings:

1. Catherine Helen Palczewski, Richard Ice, John Fritch, Rhetoric in Civic Life, 2012. Strata Publishing. (This listed in the daily schedule as RCL)
2. Aristotle. (2006). On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse. George A. Kennedy (Translator). Oxford University Press
3. The Course Blackboard site contains a virtual library of other readings listed on the daily schedule

## Daily Schedule:

Date	Topic	Readings
27-Aug	Course Introduction	
<b>Part 1 - Introduction to Rhetoric &amp; Civic Life</b>		
29-Aug	Overview to Rhetoric as Symbolic Action	RCL 1
3-Sep	Democracy: Rhetoric as Governance	Gutman "Deliberative Democracy"
5-Sep	Rhetoric as Civic Engagement	Hikins & Cherwitz, "The Engaged University: Where Rhetorical Theory Matters"
10-Sep	The Debate - Plato vs. the Sophists	
12-Sep	Aristotle	Aristotle "On Rhetoric"
17-Sep	<b>Paper 1 Due</b> Gender & Agency in the Classics	Gorgias "Encomium of Helen" (in the Rhetoric)
19-Sep	Public and Collective Memory	Schwartz, "History, Commemoration, and Belief: Abraham Lincoln in American Memory, 1945–2001"
24-Sep	Power, Ideology, and Hegemony	Foucault: Discourse, Knowledge, and Power
<b>Part 2 - Forms of Symbolic Action</b>		
26-Sep	Overview to Language	RCL 2
1-Oct	<b>Exam #1</b>	
3-Oct	The Misuse of Language	Orwell "Politics and the English Language"
8-Oct	Overview to Visual Rhetoric	RCL 3
10-Oct	Visual Culture: Televised Sport	Kellner, "Sports, Spectacle and Jordan"
15-Oct	Bodies as Visual Rhetoric	Bordo - Selections from "Unbearable Weight"
17-Oct	Monuments, Memorials, and Museums	Blair "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity"
22-Oct	<b>Paper 2 Due</b> Argument	RCL 4
24-Oct	Argumentative Controversies	Goodnight - "Public Discourse"
29-Oct	Narrative	RCL 5
31-Oct	<b>Exam #2</b>	
<b>Part 3 - Components of Symbolic Action</b>		
5-Nov	Rhetors	RCL 6
7-Nov	Audiences	RCL 7
12-Nov	Rhetorical Situations	RCL 8
14-Nov	Rhetoric as Conflict	Payne, "Waging Communication War"
19-Nov	Public and Counterpublics	RCL 9
21-Nov	Public Opinion	Hauser, "Reading Public Opinion from Vernacular Rhetoric"

26- Nov		Science and Symbols	Condit, "Studying the Symbolizing Animal"
28- Nov	Thanksgiving		
3-Dec		Cyberpublics	1 - Shirky, "The Political Power of Social Media" 2- Morozov, "Why Social Movements Should Ignore Social Media"
5-Dec	<b>Paper 3 Due</b>	Globalization of Information: Communication Networks	Castells, "The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance"
12- Dec	<b>Exam # 3</b>		

## Essay Assignments

### Paper #1 – Rhetorical Perspectivism

Early in the course you are introduced to Hikins and Cherwitz’s notion of rhetorical perspectivism. They frame this trait as important to the role of modern education. For the first essay we ask you to explore this concept in the context of your specific educational experiences. This essay should include an effort to explain rhetorical perspectivism, using both the Hikins and Cherwitz’s description, as well as your own. You should also explain how this concept has been present in your educational experiences. In other words, to what degree has your educational experiences been marked by the tenets that they explain? Finally, identify one specific reform that you would identify that would move your current educational experiences closer to their goals?

Remember that your reform should be designed to enhance rhetorical perspectivism as its core principle This essay should be an exercise in making specific applications from this concept to specific experiences in your educational career. You must specifically cite Hikins and Cherwitz. You have the option to introduce additional materials.

### Paper #2 – Aristotle and Modes of Persuasion

Aristotle is recognized as essential to helping us understand the foundations of persuasion. In particular his work helps to explain how three primary modes of persuasion function (ethos, pathos, and logos). By emphasizing on these artistic proofs, Aristotle provided us with a lens to assess the nuances of persuasion. For your second essay you are to explore how USC is explaining and justifying its campus expansion policy for the USC Village. The subject (or text) of your analysis should be the presentation by Kristina E. Raspe, USC’s Vice President, Real Estate Development and Asset Management. The video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmAy-GTVzIo>

First, identify her primary persuasive challenge. What was she trying to accomplish? What evidence can you point to validate your judgment? Second, assess those goals using the modes of persuasion. Which modes were most prominent? How did the modes interact? You should treat the presentation as an artifact that requires close analysis. Aristotle is clear on the importance of specific argument forms and your essay should focus on specific

arguments. Make sure to fully explore your conclusions about the speech and include outside research when needed.

### Paper #3 – Public Sphere analysis

For your final paper you will be identifying and analyzing the public sphere in a specific context. We have discussed the public sphere in a variety of contexts and for this assignment you should select a specific example of a public sphere in rhetorical conflict. In other words, there needs to be a community engagement of some form of public argument. The community needs to have some sense of shared values or beliefs and engage the issue in one or many public forums. The example should be from within the last few years, so you can include a digital (internet) dimension to your analysis.

Once you have identified the sphere in conflict, you should conduct an analysis of how the community functions in conflict. In other words, how does the crisis influence the nature of the community? Are specific norms expressed or changed? How are manifestations of popular will (the public, public opinion, elite views, etc.) expressed? Utilize the three case study chapters in the Hauser text to help frame your analysis.

This essay will require outside research and you must include examples of the ‘texts’ from this argument conflict along with your final paper.