

COMM 201

RHETORIC & THE PUBLIC SPHERE

FALL 2014

LOCATION ASC 204
TIME Tuesday/Thursday 9:30 AM – 10:50 AM
INSTRUCTOR Dr. M. A. Dawkins
OFFICE G21F
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EMAIL mdawkins@usc.edu
OFFICE HOURS Tuesdays/Thursdays 7:00 am – 8:00 am; 11:05 am – 12:05 pm; and by appointment

TEACHING ASSISTANT Marcus Shepard // mcshepar@usc.edu Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11am – 1pm; and by appointment

REQUIRED TEXTS

Dawkins, M. A. (2013). *Eminem: The real Slim Shady*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Press.

Sellnow, D. D. (2010). *The rhetorical power of popular culture*. London: Sage.

***Additional readings will be distributed in class or electronically as appropriate.*

GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THE COURSE

This course presents humanistic approaches to inquiry in communication; qualitative research techniques; core theories of message production and reception in social, political, cultural and mediated contexts. Translation: This course provides an introduction to rhetoric and the public sphere, how communication is used to shape the minds and actions of individuals and the broader public. The class traces the development of rhetoric and public discourse from its origins in ancient Greece, China and Egypt, to its new and exciting uses right now as in narrative, dramatic, musical, visual, political, and new media contexts. Students will have the opportunity to study rhetorical theorists from each era and to begin practicing rhetorical criticism.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

Students successfully completing this course will:

1. Study the major theories and principles of rhetoric
 - a. define and understand the philosophical, theoretical, historical and contemporary foundations
2. Identify significant features of the public sphere and its many constructs
 - a. debates, speeches, the arts, news, media (including social and new media), and public demonstrations
3. Examine rhetorical scholarship in terms of:
 - a. the theoretical and conceptual tools that have been used,
 - b. the limitations of existing data, the impact of societal and technological changes, and the need for further research.
 - c. the most effective qualitative research techniques for humanistic inquiry.
4. Create, critique and consume nuanced, well-researched rhetorical criticism.

GRADING AND REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation.....	100 pts.
Paper #1	100 pts.
Paper #2.....	100 pts.
Exam #1	100 pts.
Exam #2	200 pts.
Final Examination	200 pts.
Final Paper	200 pts.
Total:	1000 pts.

EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Readings

Readings are assigned to enhance our understanding of rhetorical theory and practice as well as to stimulate class discussion. **All readings are mandatory**, unless indicated otherwise (i.e., as *recommended). Readings will come from the text(s) and articles that can be accessed on the web via Blackboard. In some cases readings will be distributed via email or in class as handouts.

Examinations

There will be three (3) examinations during the course of this semester. The exams will consist of multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, matching, definition of key terms, and/or short answer questions. Exam material will be taken from class activities, readings, and lectures. Exam #1 and #2 and final exam dates are listed on the tentative class schedule. You can also find the date of the final exam for our course by searching the USC Schedule of final exams website for this semester.

Writing Assignments

Paper #1: Neo-Aristotelian Public Address Criticism

In preparation for this assignment, you are to watch the following speech:

Steve Jobs – Stanford University Graduation Speech, 2005

Text and Video – <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2005/june15/jobs-061505.html>

Speeches from any other source are not acceptable. Failure to follow this rule will result in the worksheet receiving a grade of zero. Remember, there are no opportunities to rewrite or resubmit assignments in this course.

Please write a 5-7 page Neo-Aristotelian criticism of this speech. Analysis must be thorough in terms of thought and written in complete sentences with APA citation, as appropriate. You will submit this assignment directly to Blackboard on the date it is due (listed on the Tentative Schedule, p. 8).

Paper #2: Media-Centered Web Series Criticism

In preparation for this assignment, you are to watch three webisodes from one of the web series listed below:

- *Awkward Black Girl* – (<http://awkwardblackgirl.com/>)
- *Kam Kardashian* – (<http://www.youtube.com/user/kamkardashian>)
- *The Guild* – (<http://www.watchtheguild.com/>)
- *Web Therapy* – (<http://webtherapyshow.com/>)
- *Away We Happened* – (<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCFB1AEEE89E7D285>)
- *East Willy B* – (<http://www.eastwillyb.com/>)

Please write a 5-7 page Media Centered criticism of the web series of your choice. Analysis must be thorough in terms of thought and written in complete sentences with APA citation, as appropriate. You will submit this assignment directly to Blackboard on the date it is due (listed on the Tentative Schedule, p. 8).

Final Paper: Your Own Rhetorical Criticism

As we have discussed in class, contemporary theorists see rhetoric as the means by which we purvey values and motivate audiences and individuals to action. If this is so, any text that enters the public sphere promotes some set of values and presses listeners to some sort of action. For your 15-20 page final paper, you are to take a more contemporary approach to a rhetorical text of your own choosing. More detail on this assignment will be provided in class.

OFFICIAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

If you want a good grade come to class! You are expected to arrive on time to every class meeting. If you must miss a session please note the following: Medical emergencies require a doctor's note. Funerals require a memorial program.

GRADING POLICY

Listed below are the criteria for the various letter grades used in this course:

- A: This is a superior grade and is given to work that has **far exceeded the specific requirements of the assignment**. Additionally, a student receiving this grade must have shown both **insight** and **initiative** in completing the graded task.
- B: This is a very good grade and is given to work that has **carefully and thoroughly met the specific requirements** of the assignment and shows evidence of **extra effort**.
- C: This is an average grade and is given to work that has **met the specific requirements** of the assignment.
- D: This is a below average grade and is **indicative of work not completed**. It is given when the specific requirements of an assignment are not met.
- F: This is a **failing grade** and is **given to work that is wholly an inadequate representation** of college-level work.
- O: This is a grade **given when an assignment is not turned in**. Most work will be assigned some points. Avoid not doing your assignments.

Final letter grades will be assigned on the following numerical basis: **A=100-94; A-=93-90; B+=89-87; B=86-84; B-=83-80; C+=79-77; C=76-74; C-=73-70; D+=69-67; D=66-64; D-=63-60; F=59-below**

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Within any classroom it is imperative that students and teachers establish a relationship built on mutual respect and trust. Students should be able to rely on the fact that the teacher will prepare their classes in earnest, respond fully to their questions, and test them appropriately on subject matter covered in the course and issue grades fairly using established criteria. The teacher should be able to rely on the fact that students will rigorously and honestly perform the tasks assigned to them, ask questions when they don't understand reading or lecture material and comment on any aspect of the course that they feel is not addressing their needs or expectations.

In accordance with stated University policy I expect that you will adhere to ethical academic practices in the writing and reporting of your work. The following is the USC Annenberg School of Communication's policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school: USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, (www.usc.edu/scampus or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as Communication school administrators. In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION BASED ON OFFICIAL PARTICIPATION IN UNIVERSITY SPONSORED ACTIVITIES

It is your responsibility to get class notes if you miss a session due to an official USC sponsored activity. In addition, you are expected to turn in assignments on time. If you will miss class on the due date of an assignment speak to instructor IN ADVANCE so that we can make proper arrangements. If you have to schedule a makeup exam for this reason, you must discuss this with Dr. Dawkins and provide official documentation.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION BASED ON DIFFERING ABILITY

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 the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) 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. Website and contact information for DSP: http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Please turn off your cellphones or set them on silent mode when you come to class and *put them away!!!* You are welcome to bring your laptop/tablet to class and use it. You are **NOT** welcome to perform non-class-related activities during class. Violations of this policy will result in a lowered grade for the course.

MORE OFFICIAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

LAPTOP POLICY

Effective fall 2014, all undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors will be required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the Annenberg [Virtual Commons](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

STRESS MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

Students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at (213) 740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

SEXUAL ASSAULT RESOURCE CENTER

The Center for Women & Men and the Sexual Assault Resource Center are one and the same. Student Counseling Services is a separate place that also offers confidential counseling and support groups on a variety of other topics. To schedule an appointment with Student Counseling Services, call (213) 740-7711 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays or visit the Engemann Student Health Center on the University Park Campus.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/COURSE CONTINUITY IN A CRISIS

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

EXAM COMPLETION

Exams will be taken in class and proctored by Dr. Dawkins and your TAs. Exams are not to be rescheduled under any circumstance unless sponsored by the University (see above).

DISCUSSION SECTIONS

There are no discussion sections scheduled for this course.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Please read the assigned readings for the class meeting for which they are listed. **All written assignments are to be posted, submitted by 11:59 pm Pacific Standard Time (PST) unless otherwise instructed.** Please also be advised that this syllabus is subject to change – and probably will change – based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.

Date	Topic	Reading	Deadlines
8-26	Introduction, Review Syllabus	Syllabus	
8-28	How To Learn Rhetoric	**Rich, "Claiming an Education"; **Deresiewicz, "Disadvantages of an Elite Education"; **CSULB, "How to Study" (*recommended); **APA Guide (*recommended)	
9-2	Intro to Rhetorical Criticism	**Foss, "The Nature of Rhetorical Criticism"; Sellnow, Appendix	
9-4	Expanding the Rhetorical Tradition	Sellnow, Ch. 2; **Losh et al, "Why Rhetoric?"	
9-9	Expanding the Rhetorical Tradition	**Chimamanda Adichie, "The Danger of A Single Story" **COMM 201 Library Guides (recommended)	Tumblr #1
9-11	Narrative Perspective	Sellnow, Ch. 3	
9-16	Narrative Perspective	**Latitude, The Future of Storytelling: Phase 1 of 2" **Vaynerchuck, "Characteristics of Great Content & Compelling Stories" Sellnow, Ch.1	Paper #1
9-18	Ancient G@eeks	**Herrick, "Origins & Early History of Rhetoric" **YouTube, "The Cave: An Adaptation"	
9-23	Ancient G@eeks	**Palczewski, Fritch & Ice, Ch. 1; **Turner-Lee, "Civic Engagement"	
9-25	Exam		Exam #1
9-30	Neo-Marxist Perspective	Sellnow, Ch. 6	
10-2	Neo-Marxist Perspective	Sellnow, Ch. 6	
10-7	Feminist Perspective	Sellnow, Ch. 7; **Herrick, "Feminism & Rhetoric" **Smith, "Feminism After Postmodernism" **Bloggess, "Women Who Are Ambivalent About Women Against Feminism"	Tumblr #2
10-9	Feminist Perspective	Dawkins, Chapters 1, 7	
10-14	Dramatism	**Burke, "Definition of Man" Sellnow, Ch. 4	Tumblr #3
10-16	Dramatism	Dawkins, Ch. 4 Sellnow, Ch. 4	
10-21	Persona as Performance	Dawkins, "Introduction" and Ch. 8 **Losh et al, "Revealing the Performer..." (*recommended)	
10-23	Exam		Paper #2
10-28	Media-Centered Perspectives	Sellnow, Ch. 10	
10-30	Media-Centered Perspectives	Dawkins, Ch. 5, 6	
11-4	Illusion of Life Perspective	Sellnow, Ch. 8	Tumblr #4
11-6	Illusion of Life Perspective	Sellnow, Ch. 8	
11-11	Visual Pleasure Perspective	Sellnow, Ch. 9	
11-13	Visual Pleasure Perspective	Sellnow, Ch. 9	Worksheet #2
11-18	Welcome to the Public Sphere!!	**Herrick, "Argumentation & Rational Discourse" **Pariser, "The Public is Irrelevant" **Warnick & Heineman, "Internet & the Public Sphere" **Qualman, "Social Media 2014"	
11-20	Controversy, Privacy & Public Sphere	**Boyd, "Networked Privacy"; **Bogost, "Prof. Impressions of FB" **Losh, "Going Public?"; **4 th Amendment to US Constitution	Tumblr #5
11-25	Controversy, Privacy & Public Sphere	**Boyd, "Networked Privacy"; **Bogost, "Prof. Impressions of FB" **Denhoed, "A Fake FB Wedding"	
11-27	THANKSGIVING	Class Cancelled ☹	
12-2	Controversy, Copyright & Public Sphere	Dawkins, Ch, 9	
12-4	Connecting the Dots	Review for Final Exam; End of semester Wrap Up	Final Paper
12-11	11:00AM – 1:00PM		Final Exam

***reading found on Blackboard under "Assignments"*