English 104: Rhetoric in Popular Culture

Instructor: Christine Horton
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Lecture: T/Th 10:00 -11:30 am HH 138
Office hours: T/Th 11:30-12:30
Office PAS 2217

Course Description

This course explores the role of persuasion in popular culture – the everyday messages to which the public is exposed – and examines how symbols influence and persuade in daily life. Using a variety of rhetorical theories and methods, this class will analyse a range of artefacts, including the following (among others): advertisements, literature, music, film, television, music, technology, radio, art, politics, and fashion. The goals of this course are both theoretical and practical: we aim to understand the rhetorical method and then practice the art to demonstrate how power structures are manifest in popular culture artefacts. Far from being ‘merely entertainment’, popular culture, especially mass media, is a dominant form of communication in contemporary society; this course seeks to develop the critical lens of the student in order to increase awareness of how these influences impact daily life.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to

- articulate a coherent definition of "rhetoric", "rhetorical criticism", and "popular culture"
- engage in the processes of close reading of an artefact
- analyse how a particular artefact operates rhetorically through its ideas, arguments, structure, style, and context
- develop and structure a rhetorical analysis of a popular culture artefact using a reasoned argument and integrated source material to articulate and support positions

Course Materials


Evaluation

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<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Week 6 – June 10, 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rhetorical Analysis #1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Week 9 – June 29, 2010</td>
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<td>Rhetorical Analysis #2</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Week 12 – July 22, 2010</td>
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<td>Final In-class Test</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Week 13 – July 27, 2010</td>
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Please Note:
1. Written assignments must be typed in a 12 point Times New Roman font, be double spaced, and have 1 inch margins.
2. Written assignments must adhere to MLA citation style in every way.
3. Students are encouraged to submit essays with original and well organized arguments which should engage in a close reading of the text within the framework of the thesis of the essay.
4. Papers must be submitted in class. Late papers may be submitted in the English Department Drop Box, HH2016E (beside HH228). Late papers will be penalized at the rate of 2% per day. No extensions or exceptions. A doctor’s note or a note from the registrar is required to avoid a late penalty. Email submissions of assignments will not be accepted.
5. Please keep a copy of all assignments.
6. Acceptable academic research materials include peer reviewed journals, academic texts, OED, and scholarly encyclopedia, such as the Encyclopedia Britannica. Websites and Wikipedia are not acceptable academic sources. Please consult the instructor with any questionable reference materials.

Schedule

Week One
May 4 - Introduction
May 6 - Introduction to Rhetorical Theory
Reading: Foss – Chapter 1

Week Two
May 11 – Introduction to Rhetorical Analysis
Reading: Foss – Chapter 2

May 13 – Introduction to Popular Culture Theory
Reading: Storey – Introduction – Web

Week Three
May 18 – Neo-Aristotelian Criticism
Reading: Foss – Chapter 3

May 20 - Cluster Criticism
Reading: Foss – Chapter 4

Week Four:
May 25 – Cluster Criticism

May 27 – Narrative Criticism
Reading: Foss - Chapter 9
Week Five
June 1 – Narrative Criticism

June 3 - Metaphor Criticism
Reading: Foss – Chapter 8

Week Six
June 8 - Metaphor Criticism
June 10 – Midterm Exam – 25%

Week 7
June 15 – Generic Criticism
Reading: Foss - Chapter 6
June 17 – Generic Criticism

Week 8
June 22 – Ideological Criticism
Reading: Foss Chapter 7
June 24 – Ideological Criticism

Week 9
June 29 – Fantasy-theme Criticism - Rhetorical Analysis #1 due – 20%
Reading: Foss Chapter 5
July 1 – Canada Day (no Class)

Week 10
July 6 – No Class – mandatory appointment with instructor
July 8 – No Class – mandatory appointment with instructor

Week 11
July 13 – Fantasy-theme Criticism

July 15 – Pentadic Criticism
Reading: Foss Chapter 10

Week 12
July 20 – Pentadic Criticism
July 22 – Review – Rhetorical Analysis #2 due – 30%

Week 13
July 27 – Final In-Class Exam – 25%
Course Policies

Services for students with disabilities:
The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.]

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity [check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/] to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) (other than a petition) or Policy 71 (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm. When in doubt please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.