Course Description
This course explores how popular culture can persuade, influence, and convince in ordinary life. Using a variety of rhetorical methods, we will analyse a range of artefacts in this class, including (but not limited to) advertising, comic books, film, television, music videos, technology, video games, blogs, and webcomics. The goals of this course are both theoretical and practical: we aim to understand the rhetorical method, and then to apply those methods in order to identify and explore the various forms of popular culture that surround us. Students in the course will be expected to demonstrate their ability to apply rhetorical methods to pop culture artefacts in responses, essays, and class discussion. Popular culture is more than mindless entertainment. Whether it appears as a tool for mass media, personal recreation, or the expression of identity, popular culture is the dominant form of communication in today’s society. This course seeks to develop the rhetorical skills of the student in order to critically assess the role of persuasive structures in our daily lives.

Learning Objectives
By the end of the course, students will have been introduced to and be expected to successfully demonstrate some of the following skills:

- To define and explain basic concepts involving rhetoric, rhetorical analysis, and popular culture
- To apply these definitions and engage in the close reading of a popular culture artefact for the purposes of critical discussion, and debate
- To analyze the rhetorical functioning of a particular artefact in terms of its ideas, structure, arguments, style, and context
- To articulate a rhetorical analysis of a particular artefact in terms of the rhetorical methods discussed in class, integrating research to justify and support an argument

Course Materials

[http://books.google.ca/books?id=Npt3Q5IxmCGC&source=gbs_navlinks_s](http://books.google.ca/books?id=Npt3Q5IxmCGC&source=gbs_navlinks_s)

Evaluation
Attendance 5%
Blog Participation 10% throughout the course 1 post, 1 response, per method
Midterm Exam 20% February 17, 2011 50 Minutes, In Class
Rhetorical Analysis #1 15% February 10, 2011 4-6 Pages, due in class
Rhetorical Analysis #2 20% April 1, 2011 6-8 Pages, due in class
Final Exam 30% TBD
Blog Participation – 10%

For each method, students are responsible for one blog post and one response to another student’s post or response. The blog post must be posted by the start of the second lecture (as noted on the syllabus), and the response must be posted by the end of the week (Sunday night). The discussion question must address the rhetorical method directly, for example, “How does the ideological method account for resistance?” The blog post must engage directly with a popular culture artefact, and it must contain the following features: a link to the video/webpage/blog/comic (where possible), must be 100 words, must be original (cannot use the same artefact twice), and must comment on a specific aspect of the type of rhetorical method, for example, the use of setting as a function of the narrative method in Matt and Kim’s video “Lesson’s Learned.” The response must be critical (rather than descriptive), and engage directly with the artefact or method of criticism, and can be posted in response to either a post or a discussion question, and perhaps even to answer a discussion question! Grades are earned based on the quality of posts, responses, and questions. Attendance and active participation in class will aid in this quality. Artefacts posted on the blog may be, and are encouraged to be, the focus of further analysis in assignments. Students must email the instructor with their blog username before the blog is posted.

Rhetorical Analysis #1 – 15% - Four to Six Pages ---- Rhetorical Analysis #2 – 20% - Six to Eight Pages

Students will be required to write two essays. For each essay, the student will select one cultural artefact, and apply one of the major rhetorical methods studied in class to that artefact. Students cannot choose an artefact discussed in the textbook, and while they may choose an artefact discussed in class or in the blog, they will be expected to delve deeper into the topic in the essay. Further, students must choose a new method and artefact for the second paper, and a new type of artefact. (e.g. If a student chose a film for the first essay, they cannot choose another film for the second essay.) Write a rhetorical analysis of the artefact which demonstrates an understanding of the rhetorical method and uses the terminology of the method of criticism. The essay must follow proper essay format; in particular, there must be a thesis, a developed argument, at least two scholarly sources, and proper MLA citation. Additionally, the essays are to be double-spaced, use 12 point Times New Roman font, and have 1 inch margins. Students are encouraged to submit essays with original and well organized arguments which should engage in a close reading of the artefact within the framework of the thesis of the essay. Further, if the student is experiencing any difficulties with the essays, they are encouraged to seek the guidance of the instructor.

Late Penalties

Rhetorical Analyses 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 without a full explanation and justification submitted to the instructor.

Research Materials/Methods

Acceptable academic research materials include peer reviewed journals, academic texts, the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), and scholarly encyclopaedia, such as the Encyclopaedia Britannica Online (EBO). Websites and Wikipedia are not acceptable academic sources. For the purposes of this class, OED and EBO are acceptable resources for all research. Sources other than OED and EBO must be approved by the instructor to be accepted as a reference.
Schedule

Week One
January 4 – Introduction
January 6 – Introduction to Rhetorical Theory
**Reading:** Foss—Chapter 1.

Week Two
January 9 – Introduction to Rhetorical Analysis.
**Reading:** Foss—Chapter 2.
January 11-13 – Introduction to Popular Culture Theory
**Reading:** Storey—Introduction.

Week Three
January 16 – Neo-Aristotelian Criticism
**Reading:** Foss—Chapter 3.
January 18-20 – Cluster Criticism
**Reading:** Foss—Chapter 4.

Week Four
January 23 – Cluster Criticism
January 25-27 – Generic Criticism
**Reading:** Foss—Chapter 6.

Week Five
January 30 – Generic Criticism
February 1-3 – Narrative Criticism
**Reading:** Foss—Chapter 9.

Week Six
February 6 – Narrative Criticism.
February 8-10 – Metaphor Criticism.
February 10**th:** Submission date for first essay.
**Reading:** Foss—Chapter 7.

Week Seven
February 13-15 – Metaphor Criticism.
February 17 – Midterm exam.

**READING WEEK**

Week Eight
February 27th- March 2nd – Fantasy-Theme Criticism.
**Reading:** Foss—Chapter 5.

Week Nine
March 5**th** – March 9**th** – Ideological Criticism
**Reading:** Foss—Chapter 7.
Week Ten
March 12th – March 16th – Pentadic Criticism
Reading: Foss—Chapter 10.

Week Eleven
March 19th- 23rd – Generative Criticism.
Reading: Foss—Chapter 11.

Week Twelve
March 26th – Essay Workshops
March 28th–March 30th TBD

April 2—Review. Submission date for second essay. Final submission date for response papers.

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, 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 professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.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, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm

Academic Integrity website (Arts): http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (UW): http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:
Note 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. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.