English 292 (Section 2)

Contemporary Issues in Language, Writing and Rhetoric
- Fall 1992 -

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Office Hrs: Tues. 2-4

Section 2: Monday and Wednesday -1:30-3:00 p.m. AL 107

Course Description: Rhetoric, the study of suasion, is a complex topic. This course is a practical overview of that topic, with particular emphases on one of its aspects, professional writing, and on its principal material, language. These three subjects - language, writing and rhetoric - are central concerns of the Rhetoric and Professional Writing Program, and this course serves as an introduction to that program.

Course Goals: 1. to engage some of the central principles of language analysis and rhetoric;
2. to explore some of social, ethical and technological issues in professional writing;
3. to apply key principles of language and rhetoric to issues in professional writing.

Required Texts: Leith and Myerson, The Power of Address
Course Readings - Kinko's

Evaluation: Dialogic Journal - 15%
Research Paper - 25%
Oral Presentation - 15%
Change the World Project - 25%
Final - 20%

Course Policies: 1. This course advocates a social constructivist's approach to learning. Consequently, students are expected to prepare the required readings and participate in discussions and workshops.

2. Late papers will be penalized 5% per day late.

Schedule

Week 1.
Sept. 14 Introduction
Sept. 16 Keywords and Theories
Read: Leith and Myerson - Introduction and Theoretical Postscript
Week 2.
Sept. 21 Keywords and theories cont'

Sept. 23 Issues in Professional Writing
Read: Kinko's material

Week 3.
Sept. 28 Issues in Professional Writing
Read: Kinko's material

Sept. 30 Issues in Professional Writing
Read: Kinko's material

Dialogic Journal due

Week 4.
Oct. 5 Language
Read: Kinko's material

Oct. 7 Language
Read: Kinko's material

Week 5.
Oct. 12 Thanksgiving

Oct. 14 Rhetoric
Read: Kinko's material

Week 6.
Oct. 19 Rhetoric
Read: Kinko's material

Research paper due

Oct. 21 Integration of Rhetoric and Language
- Performance and oratory
Read: Leith and Myerson Chapt 1. and 2

Week 7.
Oct. 26 Performance and oratory

Oral presentations

Oct. 28 Argument
Read: Leith and Myerson Chapt 3

Oral presentations

Dialogic journals due

Week 8.
Nov. 2 Argument

Nov. 4 Argument

Week 9.
Nov. 9 Prison House of Rhetoric
Read: Leith and Myerson Chapt 4
Nov. 11  Prison House of Rhetoric

Week 11.
Nov. 16  Narration
Read: Leith and Myerson Chapt 5

Nov. 18  Narration
Draft of Project due

Week 12.
Nov. 23  Reviving Rhetoric
Read: Leith and Myerson Chapt 6.

Nov. 25  Reviving Rhetoric
Dialogic journals due

Week 13.
Nov. 30  Summary and Preparation for final exam

Dec. 2
Final copy of project due.

Assignments

1. Dialogic Journal 15%

Purpose: This assignment is derived from various theories of "connected knowing" (Bruner, Dianne "Who Owns this Work? The Question of Authorship in Professional/Academic Writing" Journal of Business and Technical Communication 5 (1991): 393-411). These theories suggest that all learners need the opportunity to engage concepts and ideas in their own words and the opportunity to connect such concepts to their own experience.

Format: In your dialogic notebook or journal summarize course and research readings on the left hand side of the page. On the right hand side engage in some of the following activities:
* explain key concepts in your words
* connect concepts to your own experience
* connect concepts between various readings in the course
* explore key metaphors

It is most important that you use this journal to engage with and struggle to understand some of the central principles of the course.

Evaluation: This assignment will be assessed in terms of the quality of your engagement with the ideas in the course. Journals will be collected several times during the course (see course schedule).

2. Research Paper 25% (1700-2000 words approx.)

In this paper research a social, ethical or technological issue of importance to professional writers.

In this paper it is expected that you will conduct research
into the field's professional journals and that you will write a clear, concise paper identifying and exploring the various points of view around your issue.

3. Oral Presentation 15% (10 minutes)

Working from a script, you will deliver or analyze (orally) a lecture, sermon, political speech, story, or legal address.

At the end of your presentation, you must hand in your script together with a short report analyzing the strategies you employed in your presentation.

4. Change the World Project 25%

Purpose: This assignment is designed to put into action some of the central principles of the course.

We have all at one time or another wanted to write something that would change the world in some way.

1. Write a document designed to change a particular context in some way - a letter to the editor, a letter to your local MP, a speech for a local citizen's action group etc.
2. Write a report explaining how you used linguistic and rhetorical principles and strategies in your project.

Evaluation: Evaluation will focus on the appropriateness of your document and on the clarity and depth of your analysis.