English 292: Contemporary Issues in Language, Writing, and Rhetoric
Fall 2001
Section 1 of 2

Instructor: Neil Randall
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Office times: Tuesday 12:00-1:30
               Wednesday 2:00-3:00

Class times: 292: Tuesday 10:00-11:20 (EL 208), Thursday 10:30-12:20 (EL 106)
               392B: Wednesday 4:00-6:50, AL 211
               408B: Tuesday 7:00-9:50, AL 211
               408C: Tuesday 4:00-6:50, AL 208

Required Texts

   Canada, 1993.

Recommended Text


Assignments

Each assignment is worth one-third of your final grade. Each will be given a mark out of
100; at the end of the course the three grades will be added together and then divided by
three to arrive at the final numeric grade.

Assignment #1: 1500-word paper on rhetorical theory (Oct. 23)

In an essay of 1400-1500 words (no more, no fewer), analyze one rhetorical situation
according to Bitzer’s definition and to three additional major theories outlined in chapters
4-10 of Hauser’s book. When selecting the rhetorical situation to analyze, be certain that
it is indeed a rhetorical situation – i.e., one in which the exigency can be surmounted by
the rhetor’s audience. In the first part of the paper, demonstrate precisely how Bitzer’s
articulation applies to the situation, then analyze the situation to propose a strategy for
resolution of the situation, according to three primary rhetorical theories covered by
Hauser (chpt 4-10). Important: You must append a separate page that explains the
rhetorical situation briefly but substantially; this page does not count against the word requirement.

Assignment #2: Magazine article with rationale (Nov. 20)

Working from the ideas and guidelines presented in both the Yudkin book and in class, write feature article of 1800-2000 words for a magazine of your choice, and include a separate 500-word rationale outlining the choices and decisions you made in writing the article as you did. The article must cohere with both the explicit and implicit requirements for that magazine. You must obtain the writer’s guidelines for the magazine (append them to your article or point to the URL), and you must demonstrate in your rationale the implicit requirements such as audience analysis, the magazine’s past practices, the ethos of the magazine, the acceptable writing style, and the types and purposes of your quotations from interviews. You will be graded according to the degree to which you satisfy the magazine’s requirements as well as the guidelines from Yudkin and class. Important: Begin planning this article by the end of September. Plan to conduct interviews during October. Begin writing by the first of November.

Assignment #3: Take-home exam on neologism, specialty diction, and slang (Dec. 4)

Distributed in class on Thursday, Nov 29, due in HH 224 by 2 p.m. Tuesday, Dec 4.

Schedule

Week 1 (Sept 11/13): Introductions, discussions on language and knowledge
Week 2 (Sept 18/20): Hauser chpt 1-2
Week 3 (Sept 25/27): Hauser chpt 3-4
Week 4 (Oct 2/4): Hauser chpt 5-6
Week 5 (Oct 9/11): Hauser chpt 7-8
Week 6 (Oct 16/18): Hauser chpt 9-10
Week 7 (Oct 23/25): Hauser chpt 11-12; Assignment #1 due
Week 8 (Oct 30/Nov 1): Magazine writing (Yudkin first half)
Week 9 (Nov 6/8): Magazine writing (Yudkin second half)
Week 10 (Nov 13/15): Neologism (Ayto TBA)
Week 11 (Nov 20/22): Specialized diction (Ayto TBA); Assignment #2 due
Week 12 (Nov 27/29): Slang and inventions (Ayto TBA): Take-home exam assigned
Professor Michael MacDonald
Office hours (HH 255): M 12:00-1:00, W 11:00-12:00, and by appointment.

In a phrase that captures all the modern hostility toward the systems of rhetoric devised by the ancient Greek and Roman orators, the poet and novelist Jose Ortega Y Gasset describes rhetoric as the “cemetery of human realities”: the age of rhetoric, it seems, like the “age of chivalry, has passed amongst forgotten things” (Thomas De Quincey). One of the principal objectives of this introduction to the realm of rhetoric is to show that reports of the death of rhetoric in the modern period have been greatly exaggerated. In fact, as we shall see over the course of the semester, the ancient art of rhetoric – far from being the graveyard of human realities – continues to exercise a decisive influence over some of the most radical endeavors of modern and “postmodern” thought in the humanities and social sciences. After a brief survey of the main currents of Greek rhetorical theory in the Fifth Century B.C.E. (the Sophists, Plato, and Aristotle), we will explore several modern reflections on the role of rhetoric in the fields of philosophy (Nietzsche), law (Perelman), science (Lyotard), popular culture (Barthes), and feminism (Irigaray), devoting particular attention to the perennial ethical and philosophical questions that draw ancient, modern, and "postmodern" theories of rhetoric into communication.

Reading List (in order): Gorgias, “Encomium of Helen” (in reader); Plato, Phaedrus; Aristotle, Rhetoric; Nietzsche, The Gay Science; Perelman, The Realm of Rhetoric; Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge; Barthes, Mythologies; Irigaray, This Sex Which Is Not One.

Requirements:
30% Participation (class discussion, group projects, and, of course, attendance)
30% Class presentation (5pp)
40% Final essay (10 pp)

September
10 Introduction
17 Gorgias, “Encomium of Helen”
19 Plato, Phaedrus
24 Plato, Phaedrus
26 Plato, Phaedrus

October
1 Aristotle, Rhetoric
3 Aristotle, Rhetoric
8 Thanksgiving
10 Perelman, The Realm of Rhetoric
15 Nietzsche, The Gay Science
17 Nietzsche, The Gay Science
22  Nietzsche, The Gay Science
24  Barthes, Mythologies
29  Barthes, Mythologies
31  Barthes, Mythologies

November
5   Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition
7   Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition
12  Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition
14  Irigaray, This Sex Which Is Not One
19  Irigaray, This Sex Which Is Not One
21  Irigaray, This Sex Which Is Not One
26  Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa”
28  Conclusions

Guidelines for Presentations (5pp.):

The purpose of the class presentations is twofold: first, to survey a wide range of essential texts in the history and theory of rhetoric, and second, to familiarize students with the special difficulties involved in presenting scholarly work in a public forum. Since your colleagues are not required to read the text under discussion, your first task is to provide a detailed exposition of the main points of the argument; you are then asked to explore the concepts or themes that most interest you, offering an assessment of their significance for the history and theory of rhetoric (as you have come to know it). Be sure to support your exposition and argument with relevant citations from the text.

Presentations (please print name beside a text):

September
12  Isocrates, “Against the Sophists,” “Antidosis”
17  Plato, Gorgias (part 1) (2)
19  Plato, Gorgias (part 2) (2)
24  Plato, Gorgias (part 3) (2)
26  Cicero, Of Oratory

October
1   Anonymous, Rhetoric ad Herennium
3   Quintilian, Institutes of Oratory (part 1)
8   Quintilian, Institutes of Oratory (part 2)
10  Augustine, On Christian Doctrine
15  Erasmus, De Copia
17  Ramus, Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian
22  Wilson, The Arte of Rhetorique
24  Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding
29  Vico, On the Study Methods of Our Time
31  Campbell, The Philosophy of Rhetoric
November
5  Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*
7  Whateley, *Elements of Rhetoric*
12 Day, Bain, Hill and Hill on composition
14 Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action* (2)
19 Burke, *A Grammar of Motives, A Rhetoric of Motives* (2)
21 Weaver, *Language is Sermonic; “The Phaedrus and the Nature of Rhetoric”*
26 Gates, “The Signifying Monkey and the Language of Signifyin(g)” (2)
28 Foucault, “The Order of Discourse” (2)