ENGLISH 309C
CONTEMPORARY RHETORICAL CRITICISM

Instructor: D. Goodwin
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Course Objectives: After completing this course students should have

1. a variety of theoretically-informed rhetorical perspectives from which to view and critique non-literary discourses
2. the ability to modify, challenge, or refine theories of rhetoric in light of practical critiques

Course Text: Sonya K. Foss, Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice
309C Course Book (Bookstore)

Course Assignments: The course requires that the student write study sheets, two in-class tests and one final examination.

Assignment Descriptions:

1. Every week students must submit a study sheet that
   a. summarizes and comments on the readings and
   b. poses two critically-informed questions.

Each week, the student questions will apply the ideas and methods of a particular critical approach to an assigned target text. These study sheets are not graded. However, they do form the basis of the tests: that is, the instructor will draw questions for each student’s test from that student’s study sheets. Specifically, the instructor will include the best TWO of six submitted questions on the test; the student will then answer ONE question out of the two during the examination. The target text for the first test will be a puritan sermon; for the second test, a piece of popular fiction; for the final examination, a 20th-century political speech. Only students who have completed and submitted all their study sheets in advance will be allowed to write the tests and examinations. Students who complete all their study sheets on time (see schedule) will receive a 5% professionalism mark.

2. A 3 hour final examination on
   a. all the perspectives discussed throughout the course and
   b. the critical approaches discussed in the final three weeks of class.
Course Mark Breakdown and Due Dates:

First in-class exam: 25 marks
Second in-class exam: 30 marks
Final examination: 40 marks
Professionalism: 5 marks

Course Policies: Study sheets must be typed. Students who do not submit all their sheets in advance of the tests or final examination will not be allowed to write them. Students who do not show up for a test must provide signed documentation stating and verifying the reasons for their absence.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Jan.

5 The Nature of Rhetorical Criticism
    Doing Rhetorical Criticism

10 Neo-Aristotelian Criticism (Study Sheet #1 Due)
12 see above (Question Sheet #1 Due)

17 Cluster Criticism (Study Sheet #2 Due)
19 see above (Question Sheet #2)

24 Fantasy-Theme Criticism (Study Sheet #3 Due)
26 see above (Question Sheet #3)

31 First In-class Examination

Feb.

2 no class

7 Feminist Criticism (Study Sheet #4 Due)
9 see above (Question Sheet #4 Due)

14 Reading Week
16 see above

21 Generic Criticism (Study Sheet #5 Due)
23 see above (Question Sheet #5 Due)

28 Ideological Criticism (Study Sheet #6 Due)
Mar.

1 see above (Question Sheet #6 Due)

6 Second In-class Examination
8 no class
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<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Metaphoric Criticism (Study Sheet #7 Due)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>see above (Question Sheet #7 Due)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Narrative Criticism (Study Sheet #8 Due)</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>see above (Question Sheet #8 Due)</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Pentadic Criticism (Study Sheet #9 Due)</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>see above (Question Sheet #9 Due)</td>
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**Guidelines for Course Study Sheets and Question Sheets**

**Format:**

a. 1.5 typed, single-spaced pages, 1" margins
b. at the top: include your name, the number of the study sheet (#1, #2, etc.), the name of critical school (Pentadic, Narrative, etc.)
c. if you submit more than one page, number your pages
d. use MLA documentation (bracketed citations, etc.)

**Organization:**

Course Study Sheets:

1. a. Main summary of the school of criticism ("generic criticism," "ideological criticism")
   b. Summaries of the Sample Essays
      i. sample essay #1
      ii. sample essay #2
      iii. sample essay #3
c. Your comments and reflections on the above

Critical Questions Sheet:

a. first critical question
b. second critical question (this question MUST refer to, and draw upon, ideas found in the *Background Readings* to the object text under discussion)

**Content:**

1a. Main summaries should try to **select** the distinguishing features of the school of criticism, **identify** and **define** its key terms (you may want to boldface or italicize these terms for quick reference), **explain** the relationship among these terms, and **outline** its critical procedures. This summary should be about 6 sentences.

b. Summaries of the Sample Essays should **highlight** how each essay conforms to, or departs from, the distinguishing features of that school of criticism, as well as **summarize** its particular argumentative claims and strategies. Each summary should be about 3-4 sentences.

c. Commentary should **raise issues**. These may include whatever you consider noteworthy: for