English 309C: Modern Rhetoric
Department of English Language and Literature
Winter 2020
4:00-5:20 T Th, EV3 4412

Instructor Information
Instructor: Michael Hancock
Office: Hagey Hall 369
Office Hours: 3:00-4:00 MW or by appointment
Email: m3hancoc@uwaterloo.ca (please put the course name ENGL 309C in your email subject lines)
TA: Shannon Lodoen, smlodoen@uwaterloo.ca

Course Description
An examination of contemporary rhetorical theory and its relationships to criticism, interdisciplinary studies, and digital applications. We will survey the key authors, concepts, issues, and debates of contemporary rhetoric and place them in a practical context. The course will focus on the work of contemporary rhetoricians such as Richard Weaver, bell hooks, Kenneth Burke, Jacques Ellul and Chaim Perelman, and will concentrate on contemporary rhetoric at work in culture through power relations, discourse, sexuality, race, media, advertising, and propaganda. For the most part, the course focuses on 20th century theory and 21st application, but we’ll mix it up a bit as well. Recognizing with Kenneth Burke “how overwhelmingly much of what we mean by ‘reality’ has been built for us through nothing but our symbol systems,” we will examine theories of rhetoric to better understand the pervasiveness of rhetoric in our ways of knowing.

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

- To critically investigate and discuss key theorists and theoretical movements in contemporary rhetorical theory
- To appreciate and apply critical and theoretical approaches to contemporary rhetorical scholarship
- To understand and communicate some of the history behind rhetorical theory
- To recognize how rhetoric is deployed in different media and contexts
- To apply theoretical frames from contemporary rhetorical scholarship to perform rhetorical criticism

Required Texts
None; this course has no required texts. All readings will be made available on or through LEARN.

Recommended Texts (optional)
These texts provide further background on issues of rhetoric; we may, on occasion, listen or read excerpts from them in class.

• Mere Rhetoric podcast: http://mererhetoric.libsyn.com/
• Rhetoricity podcast: https://rhetoricity.libsyn.com/

Readings
Readings are available online, through the library or through LEARN.


Loeb, Bruce. Hitler's Rhetorical Theory. Relevant Rhetoric, 1, 1-10. Available on LEARN.


McLuhan, Marshall (1964). The Medium is the Message. Understanding Media: The Extension of Man. 1-


### Course Requirements and Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date of Evaluation (if known)</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposal</td>
<td>Feb 28</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Attendance</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Essay</td>
<td>Apr 3</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>Feb 13</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the assignments will be explained in greater detail as their respective due dates approach. Note all major assignments are due by 5:00 pm on the Friday of the week that they are due; anything submitted after that class will count as late.

**Participation and Attendance.** Students will receive a portion of this mark for being present in class, a portion for active and helpful participation, and a portion for submitting two response papers throughout the term. Grading for the participation portion will be done considering the following:

90-100 Excellent: With few, if any, exceptions, the student is making frequent, substantive, useful and original contributions to class discussions; the student consistently engaged and participating, and attends all peer review sessions and classes

80-89 Good: the student is a regular contributor to discussions; the student is consistently engaged, and attends all peer review sessions

70-79 Satisfactory: The student demonstrates occasional contributions and inconsistent engagement

60-69 Marginal: Minimal contributions and/or significant lack of engagement

< 60 Failure: repeated disruptive, inappropriate or unethical behaviour; behaviour disrespectful to others; consistent lack of commitment and/or effort

**Response Papers**

Two times throughout the term, students must turn in a brief (2 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman font, 1” margins) response paper, once in the first six weeks of class and once in the last six. The paper will contain their response to one of the works to be discussed in class that week. The paper is due
before the Tuesday class that week. The papers will be marked in terms of how well the students display knowledge of the text, apply the reading to what’s been discussed in class or an outside text, demonstrate original thinking, present a coherent argument, and adhere to conventions in terms of punctuation and mechanics.

**Mid-term exam**

The mid-term exam will be on February 13th, the last class before the break. The exam will include short answer questions and passage discussion from concepts and works discussed in class up to that point. Specifically, it will cover up to the readings discussed by February 6th (So, not Perelman and Obrechts-Tyteca).

**Proposal**

Prior to the final essay, students will write a one page (double-spaced) essay plan. The proposal should identify the thesis you will be arguing, and demonstrate a degree of preliminary research: what are the important primary and secondary texts you intend to use and why are they important.

**Research Essay**

This essay is the student’s chance to demonstrate what has been learned over the course of the class. Students will receive a detailed description of this assignment along with possible essay topics well in advance of the due date. The essay will be 2750-3250 words long, and students will have to incorporate sources beyond the course readings, lectures, and discussion.

**Final Exam**

Questions will be designed to test your knowledge of the readings, and concepts discussed in class. The exam will involve identifying passages, delivering short answers, and an in-class essay. It will be comprehensive of the entire course, though it will focus slightly more on the second half of the course.

**Course Outline / Class Schedule**

Some readings may be subject to change; all readings are available from LEARN.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 7 / Jan 9</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Burton “What is rhetoric?” ; Campbell “modern rhetoric” (both on Jan 9th)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 14 / Jan 16</td>
<td>Language and Rhetoric</td>
<td>Kennedy “A Hoot in the Dark”; Burton “content/form”; Nietzsche “On Truth and Lying”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 21 / Jan 23</td>
<td>The Rhetorical Situation</td>
<td>Bitzer “The Rhetorical Situation”; Vatz “The Myth”; Miller “Kairos”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 28 / Jan 30</td>
<td>Burke in Theory and Practice</td>
<td>Burke “Terministic Screens”; “Definition of Man”; Heath “Identification”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Readings Due</td>
<td>Assignments Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 4/ Feb 6</td>
<td>Technology and Gender</td>
<td>Teresa De Lauretis “The Technology of Gender”; bell hooks “language” bell hooks “Reflections”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 11 / Feb 13</td>
<td>Argumentation / Test 1</td>
<td>Perelman and Obrechts-Tyteca “Techniques of Argumentation”</td>
<td>Feb 13th midterm test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 18 / Feb 20</td>
<td>Reading Week (no classes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 25 / Feb 27</td>
<td>Propaganda and power</td>
<td>Loebs “Hitler’s Rhetorical Theory”; Ellul <em>Propaganda</em> (3-32)</td>
<td>Proposal due (Feb 28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 3 / Mar 5</td>
<td>Media and Games</td>
<td>McLuhan “The Medium is the Message”; “Games: the Extension of Man”; Bogost “Procedural Rhetoric”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 10 / Mar 12</td>
<td>Scientific Rhetoric</td>
<td>Sidler “Chemistry Liveblogging event”; Fahnstock “Accommodating science”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 17 / 19</td>
<td>Digital Rhetoric</td>
<td>Eyman “Defining and Locating Digital Rhetoric”; Harris &amp; DiMarco “Rhetorical figures, arguments, computation”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 24 / 26</td>
<td>Space, Politics and Advertising</td>
<td>Williamson “Chapter One”; Fargo and Frith “Speaking back to our spaces”; Kelly “Donald J. Trump”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 31 / Apr 2</td>
<td>Canadian Rhetoric and wrap-up</td>
<td>“Historica Minutes” and Tim Hortons commercials</td>
<td>Research Essay due (Apr 3rd)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course Policies**

Course policies are essentially based on respectful communication and setting clear expectations. If something about the course, be it an assignment or policy, is not clear to you please write me and we will sort the issue. Please take the time to read the syllabus and the assignments carefully and ask me questions if you’re not sure about something. A syllabus functions as a kind of contract between instructor and student, but more importantly it is a resource and connects you to resources both in the classroom and around campus. I want to make this course as useful to you as possible, and that means clearly communicating our expectations of each other and making sure everyone is on the same page.

**Accessibility Statement**
The AccessAbility Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (NH 1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for all aspects of your academic career. If you require academic accommodations in regards to your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term. The office is dedicated to supporting all students with known or suspected disabilities or disabling conditions, such as full-time or part-time students taking on-campus or online courses, domestic and international students, and regular and co-op students.

**Mental Health Support**
All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health supports if they are needed.

**On Campus**
- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 ext 32655
- MATES: one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

**Off campus, 24/7**
- **Good2Talk**: Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-433 ext. 6880
- **Here 24/7**: Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- **OK2BME**: set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

For more information about the purpose of territorial acknowledgements, please see the **CAUT Guide to Acknowledging Traditional Territory (PDF)**.

**Academic freedom at the University of Waterloo**
Policy 33, Ethical Behaviour states, as one of its general principles (Section 1), “The University supports academic freedom for all members of the University community. Academic freedom carries with it the duty to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the scholarly obligation to base teaching and
research on an honest and ethical quest for knowledge. In the context of this policy, ‘academic freedom’ refers to academic activities, including teaching and scholarship, as is articulated in the principles set out in the Memorandum of Agreement between the FAUW and the University of Waterloo, 1998 (Article 6). The academic environment which fosters free debate may from time to time include the presentation or discussion of unpopular opinions or controversial material. Such material shall be dealt with as openly, respectfully and sensitively as possible.“ This definition is repeated in Policies 70 and 71, and in the Memorandum of Agreement, Section 6.

**Emergencies and Absences**

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor’s control. Relevant changes to this course will be posted onto the course website or can be obtained by contacting the instructor via email. You are expected to read your @uwaterloo.ca email on a frequent basis. Personal emergencies should be communicated to me as soon as possible, but attend first to you and your family’s well-being. Whatever happens to be your particular situation is not my business and all I need to know is there was a medical emergency. You do not need to provide any details. For extended absences I would like a note from a doctor, but again no details about why you were away ever need to be provided in these notes and you do not need to disclose the reason to me.

You are allowed up to five absences without explanation; if more than five classes are missed, I expect to receive an explanation in writing and talk with you in person about your planned schedule for the rest of the course. Again, I don’t need know the details or any personal information, but if something is affecting your attendance on a long-term basis we should be aware of it and plan for it.

**Grade Concerns and Incompletes**

Should your grades concern you then you must speak with me within the first 3/4 of the term; the last quarter of the term will not provide sufficient time to markedly improve your final grade. Finally, I will not grant an incomplete in the course; if you have concerns about completing your term please write to me as soon as possible.

**Academic Honesty**

All work in this course should be original. Any material that you paraphrase or quote must be cited according to an accepted style format (MLA, in this course). Over citing will not be penalized and, in fact, I’m always happy to see you’re doing research. If you’re not sure if you should cite something, go ahead and cite it. We can chat about it later, but when in doubt give credit. Remember you want to give credit for words and ideas. The University of Waterloo uses Turnitin software to verify original content.

**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. See the [Office of Academic Integrity webpage](#) for more information.
**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. Check the Office of Academic Integrity for more information. 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. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.

**Grievances and Appeals**

**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. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**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.

**The Writing and Communication Centre**

The Writing and Communication Centre works with students as they develop their ideas, draft, and revise. Writing and Communication Specialists offer one-on-one support in planning assignments, synthesizing and citing research, organizing papers and reports, designing presentations and e-portfolios, and revising for clarity and coherence.

You can make multiple appointments throughout the term, or drop in at the Library for quick questions or feedback. To book a 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit https://uwaterloo.ca/writing-and-communication-centre/. Group appointments for team-based projects, presentations, and papers are also available.

Please note that communication specialists guide you to see your work as readers would. They can teach you revising skills and strategies, but will not change or correct your work for you. Please bring hard copies of your assignment instructions and any notes or drafts to your appointment.