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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11:30-12:00, Thursdays, 9:15-9:45, 11:30-12:00

Course Description:  
In classical Greece and Rome rhetoric had a clear aim and role: it was the study of persuasive public  
speech and its aim was to train citizens in the art of speaking well. Two thousand years later, its role is  
less clear, not because speaking (and writing) well is less important or less pervasive, but because the  
public world is so full of speech that aims to persuade that its study has become too complex for any  
one discipline. As a result, the kinds of things that rhetorical theory would have studied in the past  
are now parcelled out amongst sociolinguistics, literary criticism, communication theory, media  
and social psychology, and so on. There are still scholars who produce work that they call "rhetorical  
theory", but there are equally many who study rhetoric something else.

We will therefore take a two-pronged approach to the study of contemporary rhetorical theory.  
Initially, we will study a sample of works by twentieth-century writers devoted to the study of rhetoric  
(I.A. Richards, Kenneth Burke, Chaim Perelman). Then we will examine in detail two of the most  
important forms of persuasive, public speech in the last century: political appeals to nationalism, and  
advocating. We finish with a brief consideration of how the techniques of modern rhetoric have  
changed in response to developments in new information and media technology.

Aims and outcomes:  
This course aims  
• to introduce students to fundamental texts in recent rhetorical theory  
• to help students understand how the form and nature of public speech in the twentieth  
century has changed  
• to train students in the critical, rhetorical analysis of basic forms of public, persuasive speech  
• to prepare students for advanced work in rhetoric and communication  
• to introduce students to basic methods of research in rhetoric

By the end of the course students should  
• have a basic grasp of some of the most important ideas and issues in recent rhetorical theory  
• be comfortable using some rhetorical terms derived from recent theory  
• understand and appreciate the distinctiveness of public, persuasive speech in the twentieth and  
twenty-first centuries  
• be skilled in the critical analysis of public speech  
• have basic research skills in rhetorical theory and analysis
Readings:
Readings for the course are available on reserve in the library and on electronic reserve. You should buy a copy of Judith Williamson, Decoding Advertisements from the University Bookstore.

UW-ACE
The class will have a website on UW-ACE on which announcements, reading links and other material will be posted. Details will be announced in class.

Assessment:
You will be assessed by a mid-term examination, a final paper, a group presentation, and the work of your group during class discussions, weighted as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group presentation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group work in class</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Final paper</td>
<td>35%</td>
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Mid-term examination: the mid-term exam will take place on February 7. It will have a section devoted to the definition of theoretical terms we have discussed and a section in which you will have to discuss issues raised by the theorists (Sennett, Nietzsche, Richards, Perelman and Bakhtin) we cover in the first 5 weeks of the course.

Final paper: the final paper will be due on Monday, April 3 (please put it in the English Department drop-box). It will be devoted either to the rhetorical analysis of a text you choose from a list I'll provide you with or to a particular issue in rhetorical theory. It should be 7-10 pages long and set out in accord with ordinary scholarly conventions. The essay will be graded on: presentation and correct use of scholarly referencing; clarity and elegance of writing and argument; ability to use the rhetorical theory we have studied correctly and creatively; independence and sophistication of argument.

Group presentation and class work: in the first class we will divide the class into groups. Each group will work together during class discussions, and their performance in class discussions will be a given a mark (according to the frequency, relevance and thoughtfulness of their contributions). Each group will also be responsible for a presentation in the penultimate week of class. The presentation will focus on the analysis of an advertisement, using the tools we’ve worked on in class. Each presentation should last no more than 12 minutes and it should be accompanied by a one-page handout summarizing the analysis. The presentations will be graded on both the quality of the analysis and the quality of the presentation itself.

Late work and plagiarism
Final papers submitted late will have 6% deducted for the first day late and 2% for each additional day late.

Instances of plagiarism will be treated in accordance with Faculty and University policy. The following is excerpted from Faculty policies:
Note on avoidance of academic offences: All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offence, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offence is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (section 1; on the Web at http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). If you need help in learning how to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your TA or course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

"Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to Policy #70, Student Grievance, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm."

Arts Faculty Web page, "Avoiding Academic Offences"
http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Schedule of topics and readings

January 3  Introduction

January 5: The state of rhetoric today

January 10: The nature of modern public speech I

January 12: The nature of modern public speech II
Richard Sennett, The Fall of Public Man, "Collective Personality"

January 17: Rhetoric and language I


January 24: Rhetoric and language III
Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense"

January 26: Rhetoric and language IV
March 21: Group presentations

March 23: Group presentations

March 28: Net Rhet: the new media and rhetoric
Reading to be announced

March 30: Consultations on final papers

April 3: Final papers due.