Catalogue description: “An examination of contemporary rhetorical theory and its relations to criticism, interdisciplinary studies and computer applications.”

According to Thomas De Quincey, the age of rhetoric, like the “age of chivalry, has passed amongst forgotten things.” Taking its point of departure in this obituary for rhetoric, this introductory survey will show how the ancient art of rhetoric – far from passing away or “drying up,” as Martin Heidegger puts it – has come to play an ever more central role in modern thought since De Quincey penned these words in 1828. After exploring the relationship between rhetoric and the traditional humanistic disciplines (poetics, linguistics, philosophy, fine arts, and others), we will focus our attention on three new fields of rhetorical theory and practice made possible by modern media technologies: advertising, cyber-culture, and information warfare.

Syllabus

JANUARY

9 Administration

11 Introduction to Rhetoric
George Kennedy, “A Hoot in the Dark: The Evolution of General Rhetoric” (if you have the reader)
OR
Friedrich Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lying in the Extra-moral Sense” (download if you do not yet have the reader)

16 Rhetoric and Philosophy

18 Rhetoric and Linguistics
Kenneth Burke, “Terministic Screens”
George Bush, State of the Union Address, 2004 (introduction and section on the invasion of Iraq) (download, print and bring to class)

23 Rhetoric and Literary Theory
Stanley Fish, “Rhetoric”
Terry Eagleton, “Political Criticism”

25 Rhetoric and Poetics

30 Rhetoric and Science
Alan Gross, “Rhetorical Analysis”
Charles Brazerman, “Writing Science”

FEBRUARY

1 Rhetoric and Feminism
Teresa De Lauretis, “The Technology of Gender”
Luce Irigaray, “The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine”
6 Rhetoric and the Fine Arts
David Bordwell, “Interpretation as Rhetoric” (on cinema)
M. Bonds, “Musical Grammar and Musical Rhetoric”
Donald Preziosi, “Overview: Linguistic and Architectonic Signs”
Louis Marin, “Disneyland: A Degenerate Utopia” (optional)

8 No Class

13 Rhetoric and Propaganda
Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*

15 Rhetoric and Propaganda
Noam Chomsky, “A Propaganda Model,” “Conclusions”
Nancy Snow, “Bermuda Mind Triangle: Propaganda, Terrorism, and the Media”
**NB: ESSAY 1 DUE IN CLASS**

20 Break
22 Break

27 Rhetoric and Political Science
Joseph Nye, “Soft Power”

29 Rhetoric and Political Science
Marshall McLuhan, “Telegraph”
John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, “In Athena’s Camp”

**MARCH**

5 Rhetoric and Information Warfare
Marshall McLuhan, “Weapons”
Richard Szafranski, “What is Neocortical Warfare”? 

7 Rhetoric and Information Warfare
Timothy Thomas, “The Age of the New Persuaders”

12 Rhetoric and Cyberculture
Ian Bogost, “Persuasive Games”

14 Rhetoric and Cyberculture
James Der Derian, “CyberWar, Video Games, and the Gulf War Syndrome”

19 Rhetoric and Advertising
Jean Baudrillard, “Consumer Society”
Roland Barthes, “The World of Wrestling”

21 Rhetoric and Advertising
Jean Baudrillard, “The System of Objects”
Barthes, “Wine and Milk,” “Steak and Chips”
Analysis of advertisements

26 Rhetoric and Advertising
Roland Barthes, “The Brain of Einstein,” “The Jet Man,” “is of Advertisements
Quiz (in class)

APRIL
2 Conclusions
NB: ESSAY 2 DUE IN CLASS

Course Requirements

10% Reading Responses
In preparation for each class, students will be asked to write a response offering three reasons why the work under discussion is important to the study of rhetoric. These responses demonstrate that you have read the text and are prepared for class projects and discussion. Please submit responses at the end of each class. Responses will be read but not graded or returned – you receive credit for completing the assignments. Handwritten, late or e-mailed responses will NOT be accepted. Format: double-spaced; 1” margins; 12 point Times New Roman font; no less than 200 words.

10% Participation in class projects and discussion
As is the case with most classes in the humanities (especially those in rhetoric, of course), students are expected to participate in daily group projects (20 mins.) and contribute to class discussion on a regular basis.

15% Quiz
The quiz will ask students to define basic concepts as well as identify and interpret key passages from the readings.

25% mid-term essay (8pp.)
Write an essay in which you compare and/or contrast any two texts on the first half of the syllabus (up to and including February 15). Do not merely summarize these works. Instead, offer an interpretation that evaluates their significance to the field of rhetorical studies. Be sure to support your argument with relevant citations from the text. Format: 12 point; Times New Roman; 1” margins.

Essays will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria: 1) grammar 2) style 3) structure 4) content 5) argument 6) originality. An “A” essay will be excellent in most of these areas; a “B” essay will be good in most of them; a “C” essay will be adequate in most of them; and a “D” essay will be inadequate in most of them.

40% Final essay (12 pp.)
Write an essay in which you compare and/or contrast any two texts on the second half of the syllabus (after February 15). Do not merely summarize these works. Instead, offer an interpretation that evaluates their contribution to the field of rhetorical studies. Be sure to support your argument with relevant citations from the text. Format: 12 point; Times New Roman; 1” margins.

Course Policies

Attendance
In keeping with the University of Waterloo’s undergraduate attendance policy, students are “expected to attend all meets” of the course and may be required to “present documentation proving the reasons for non-attendance” (UG Calendar). Please note that students “removed from a class in accordance with this policy will be notified by the Registrar’s office” (UG Calendar). NB: students who miss more than three classes without providing adequate documentation will be penalized 1% (per subsequent absence) on their final grade.

Late Penalties
Unless an extension has been requested and granted in advance, the professor reserves the right to subtract 1% (per day) from assignment grade.
Reader
Rhetoric involves the close scrutiny of texts, images and other artifacts. Students are therefore required to purchase and bring the reader to every class.

Civility
Students are expected to be informed, attentive and courteous in class. Gossiping, note-passing and other types of uncivil behaviour will be discouraged. For the sake of the class, the professor reserves the right to ask disruptive students to leave the classroom.

Laptops
Please do not use PDAs, cellular phones or laptop computers in class.

Late Enrollment
Students enrolling via Quest after the two week “free enrollment” period will not be admitted, even if they are accepted (late) by the system.

Plagiarism and Other Academic Offences
“Note on avoidance of academic offences: All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their 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 Policy #71 (http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). If you need help in learning what constitutes an academic offence; how to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission; how to follow appropriate rules with respect to “group work” and collaboration; or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your TA and/or your course instructor for guidance. You may also consult the “Avoiding Academic Offenses” website at http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.”