Catalogue description: “An examination of contemporary rhetorical theory and its relations to criticism, disciplinary 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 (poetry, drama, linguistics, philosophy, and others), we will focus our attention on new fields of rhetorical theory and practice made possible by new media technologies (advertising, videogames, information warfare, and others).

January
6 Administration
8 No class
20 Shakespeare, Hamlet
22 Shakespeare, Hamlet
29 Kenneth Burke, “Terministic Screens,” “Definition of Man”

February
7 Jacques Lacan, “The Function and Field of Speech in the Unconscious”
5 Michel Foucault, “The Order of Discourse”
12 Alan Gross, “Rhetorical Analysis”; NB: Essay 1 due in class
24 Adolph Hitler, Mein Kampf
26 Noam Chomsky, Manufacturing Consent

March
3 Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media
5 Ian Bogost, Persuasive Games
10 John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, “In Athena’s Camp”
17 Paul Virilio, Desert Screen
24 Roland Barthes, “Wine and Milk,” “Steak and Chips”; analysis of advertisements
26 Roland Barthes, “The Brain of Einstein,” “The Jet Man”; analysis of Advertisements
31 Conclusions

April
2 Quiz; Essay 2 due in class

10% Reading Responses
In preparation for each class (unless specified otherwise) students are required to write a one page response to the readings that offers 1) three reasons why the work under discussion is important to the study of rhetoric (as you
understand it), and 2) three citations from the text that support your claims. These responses demonstrate that you have read the text and are prepared to discuss it in class. Please submit responses at the end of each class. Responses will be read but not graded or returned - credit is awarded 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 Discussion and Group Work

This is a lecture and discussion course. As is the case with most classes in the humanities (especially those in rhetoric), students are required to contribute to class discussion and group work on a regular basis.

10% Quiz

The quiz will ask students to 1) define and discuss rhetorical concepts examined in class; 2) identify and interpret key passages from readings; and 3) answer questions about material covered in lecture, discussion and group work.

30% 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 Irigaray). Do not merely summarize these works. Instead, offer an interpretation that assesses 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 must be submitted as hard copies (no email attachments).

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 Irigaray). Do not merely summarize these works. Instead, offer an interpretation that assesses 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. Essays must be submitted as hard copies (no email attachments).

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.

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 5% (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 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.

**Food**
Please do not bring food to class (drinks are fine)

**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.”