Rhetorical Foundations
COMM 3300

Spring 2009
Meets T/Th 9:30-10:45 in MCOL W100

Prof. Peter Simonson
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Course Description

This course offers a theoretical, historical, and practical introduction to rhetoric, the 2,500 year old art of persuasion and purposive communication. Traditionally, students have learned the art of rhetoric by studying its principles and theoretical concepts, analyzing models and other real-world experience, and engaging in reflective practice. This course follows that traditional schema. Emphasis is placed on developing students’ skills of reading, listening, and critical thinking through the introduction of key ideas, texts, and figures, from the rhetorical tradition. Students will be given frequent opportunities to write, speak in class, and work within small groups assigned for the duration of the semester.

More specifically, the course aims to help students develop abilities to:

- interpret and analyze communication from rhetorical points of view;
- discuss rhetorical theory in historical perspective;
- produce better rhetoric of their own;
- read closely and think critically;
- work productively in small groups.

As part of our exploration of an art originally developed to guide the spoken word, students will not be permitted to use laptops, cell phones, or other portable electronic devices in class.

Readings/Required Texts


Other readings will be available as PDF or Word documents on the CULearn course website (culearn.colorado.edu). Simonson’s lecture notes will also be posted after each class period.

Communicating with the Instructors

Please e-mail Delgadillo with questions about assignments. If you have other questions, e-mail Simonson. Use the e-mail addresses above and not CULearn e-mail. Both instructors check e-mail a couple times a day. If you are having any problems with the class, please come by Simonson’s office hours as soon as possible. Before and after class are good times to speak with
and set up times to meet Simonson. During office hours, you can also reach him by phone (303-492-0718). Delgadillo will be doing the bulk of the grading, and not holding regular office hours.

Your Job

Be Present: Much of our learning will take place in class, in active ways—listening, speaking, writing, and problem-solving together or in small groups. This ‘live’ work is a one-time collective performance and learning experience that cannot be duplicated. Missing class will definitely adversely affect your grade on group projects, and is likely to affect your exam grades.

Be Prepared: Readings are assigned for each class, and reading questions distributed through CULearn. These assignments lead directly into the exams and group projects. Do all of them, do them carefully, and bring the original readings to class with you for discussion. Stay on top of the material, look through Simonson’s lecture notes after class, and study as you go. There is a lot of material, and cramming does not work for the exams.

Be Engaged: Learning is an active process. It is marked by physical and cognitive engagement. Listen carefully in class. Stay involved by taking notes, both of what is said, and of things that cross your mind during lecture and discussion. Class will include frequent opportunities for discussion and small-group problem solving, which give you a chance to apply or think more about ideas we have discussed. I’d like to hear everyone speak at least once during the semester.

Advice from Previous Students on How to Succeed in this Class

“Expect to work hard.”
“Do not let yourself fall behind.”
“Attend all classes so you don’t fall behind. Each class period is crucial to achieving full understanding of the material.”
“Come to every lecture, participate in discussion during the lecture, and study for the exams with a group.”
“Complete all homework assignments, which are extremely helpful in learning the material and provide a great study guide for the exams.”
“Absolutely take the time to complete the homework reading questions and work hard on them in order to get a good homework grade and be prepared for the exams.”
“Be diligent with the reading questions and engage deeply with the readings; don’t depend on the lectures to give you the info you need to succeed on the exams. You will find the exams to be much more pleasant and easy if you do the readings as they occur.”
“Read, take notes in class, and study regularly through the semester. Don’t wait till the last couple nights to study for the exams.”
“Study early for the exams.”
“Go into the course expecting a challenge, and study a lot for the exams if you want a good grade. The cliché that ‘you get out what you put in’ is certainly true of this course. As long as I stayed engaged and on top of lecture and reading questions, I did well.”
Exams, Assignments, and Grading Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Assignments</td>
<td>160 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Exam</td>
<td>25 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Exam</td>
<td>125 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Exam</td>
<td>200 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Paper</td>
<td>100 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Contribution to Group Work</td>
<td>25 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Performance &amp; Portfolio</td>
<td>125 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation as Audience of Performances</td>
<td>40 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Semester Points</td>
<td>800 pts</td>
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*Reading Assignments* are based on questions we distribute with every assigned reading. They will help you study for and do well on exams, and lay the groundwork for group projects. Stay on top of them, and complete them fully. Beginning the second week of class, you need to hand in one set of Reading Questions each week—four before the first exam, and four after. You may choose which ones you hand in to be graded. Reading Questions are due at the end of each class period, and will be assigned a grade of 0 to 20 points. **You must hand in a hard copy. No late assignments accepted and no e-mailed assignments.**

*Exams* are challenging, in-class, written (*not* multiple-choice) affairs. They ask students to define terms and explain their significance, put concepts into practice, compare ideas and authors, and discuss rhetoric as a historical tradition. Exam questions and lists of required terms are distributed ahead of time. The practice exam will involve one term, and allow students to see how the instructors’ evaluate answers and assign grades. The two formal exams will include definitions and an essay question, and both are cumulative.

*Group Projects* is a category that encompasses work you will be doing in the 5-7 person group to which you will be assigned in the third week of the semester. From that moment on, we ask that you sit with your group during lecture, so you can engage in the informal writing/discussion/problem-solving opportunities that will occur during class. Your own individual participation in those in-class learning opportunities—as evidenced in written forms we collect after most class periods and through end-of-the-semester peer evaluations—will be assigned a grade from 0 to 25 at the end of the term. Formal Group Assignments will be distributed a few weeks into the semester and will involve individual papers (worth up to 100 points) as well as in-class performances and group portfolios.

**Two Notes on Grading:**

1. *Philosophy.* Simonson and Delgadillo are ‘old school.’ ‘C’ stands for ‘competent,’ as in ‘displayed competent knowledge of the materials and skills, and completed the assignments satisfactorily.’ ‘B’ signifies ‘beyond basic expectations,’ and ‘A’ means ‘outstanding.’ We hold out high standards for you, hoping to help bring out your best work and thinking.

2. *Mechanics.* We will be entering your grades on CU Learn. It is your responsibility to monitor the grades that are recorded there and make sure they accord with the grade you received on the assignment or exam. We are very careful when we grade and enter scores, but occasionally a mistake occurs. If you find a discrepancy between your posted grade and the one written on your homework or exam, you need to let Delgadillo know **within seven days** after we pass the assignment back.
Students with Special Needs

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please give Simonson a letter from Disability Services as soon as possible so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices. If accommodation includes the need to take notes on a laptop computer during class, please let us know immediately.

Maintaining a Civil Classroom Environment

We will be talking a great deal this semester, about politics and other sometimes controversial subjects. To do that well, we need to be respectful of one another. We all have that responsibility. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name. We will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise us of this preference early in the semester so that we may make appropriate changes to my records.

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment (http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination.html), and the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships applies to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at http://www.colorado.edu/odh

Plagiarism and Other Cheating

All students are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic, dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (303-725-2273; honor@colorado.edu). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html & http://www.colorado.edu/academic/honorcode/

Students caught plagiarizing or otherwise cheating may fail the class—plus, I’ll call your parents, and send you to the principal’s office. Please respect the Honor Code, your fellow students, and your instructors.
Class Schedule

Always bring a copy of the readings to class with you. Except for Mass Persuasion, all readings available on CULearn.

Theoretical Foundations: Rhetoric in Ancient Greece

1/13: Introduction to the Course: Rhetoric as Humanist Communication Study


1/15: Historical Origins of the Rhetorical Art (Technē). The Five Canons of Rhetoric


1/20: Terms for Sophistic Rhetoric: Gorgias, Kairos and To Prepon


1/22: Sophistic Rhetoric II: Protagoras and Dissoi Logoi

Assignment for Next Time: Isocrates, excerpts from “Against the Sophists” and “Antidosis”

1/27: Isocrates and the Ideal of Eloquence. Practice Exam in class today.


1/29: Aristotle’s Means of Persuasion (Pisteis)

Assignment for Next Time: Aristotle, On Rhetoric, Book I, ch. 3

2/3: Aristotle’s Species of Rhetoric and their Topics (Topoi).

2/5: A Modern Extension of Aristotle: Bitzer’s Rhetorical Situation

Assignment for Next Time: Stasis Theory readings, TBA

2/10: Analyzing Disagreements: Stasis Theory

Assignment for Next Time: President Obama’s Inaugural Address

2/12: A Contemporary Example of Rhetoric in Practice: President Obama’s Inaugural Address

Assignment for Next Time: Prepare for the Exam Review

2/17: Exam Review

Assignment for Next Time: Prepare for the First Exam

2/19: First Exam


Rhetoric in the Twentieth Century

2/24: Rhetoric and Mass Communication in the Twentieth Century

Assignment for Next Time: Richard Weaver, “Ultimate Terms in Contemporary Rhetoric” (1953)

2/26: Rhetoric and Modern Culture: God and Devil Terms

Assignment for Next Time: Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969 [originally published, 1950]), excerpts—pay attention in particular to the paragraphs I have marked in the margins

3/3: Kenneth Burke’s Expansion of Rhetoric: Identification


3/5: Rhetoric, Social Divisions, and Othering

Assignment for Next Time: Jasinski, “Ideology,” Sourcebook on Rhetoric, 312-16; plus other readings TBA
3/10: Rhetoric and Ideology


3/12: A Case Study in Mass-Mediated Rhetoric: Kate Smith’s Radio Marathon.


3/17: Kate Smith’s Radio Marathon: A Rhetorical Case Study (cont.)


3/19: Kate Smith’s Radio Marathon: A Rhetorical Case Study (cont.)


SPRING BREAK

3/31: A Feminist Critique of Rhetoric

Assignment for Next Time: Prepare for Exam Review

4/2: In-Class Review for Exam II

4/7: Second Exam, Part I

Assignment for Next Time: Prepare for Second Exam.

4/9: Second Exam, Part II

4/13-4/16: Group Meetings with Simonson and Delgadillo about Portfolios/Performances

4/21: Group Performances/Audience Evaluations & Responses

4/23: Group Performances/Audience Evaluations & Responses

4/28: Group Performances/Audience Evaluations & Responses

4/30: Group Performances/Audience Evaluations & Responses

Saturday, 5/2: 4:30-7:00: Group Performances/Final Reflections by the Audience (attendance required for all)