

**CMST 7966: Rhetoric and Citizenship(s)<sup>1</sup>**

Professor Bryan McCann, PhD  
Time: Tuesday 3:00pm-6:00pm  
Location TBD  
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Office hours: TBD  
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**Course Description**

One of the defining characteristics of rhetorical scholarship in Communication Studies is its investment in, and critique of, the concept of citizenship. Growing alongside the land-grant university system, the discipline once known as Speech focused primarily on training students in the practices of eloquent citizenship. More recent scholarship in the field, while still connected to this founding impulse in important ways, also deploys the tools of rhetorical criticism and cultural studies to critique the normative foundations of citizenship.

Drawing from a wide range of readings in rhetorical studies and other fields, this seminar engages citizenship as an object of rhetorical critique. Throughout the semester, we shall address several questions, including: What is the role of rhetoric in constituting norms of citizenship? What is the/a public? To what extent does the notion of a public sphere enhance or limit our understanding of citizenship? What is the role of marginalized communities in traditional models of citizenship?

**Required Texts/Materials**

Chávez, Karma R. *Queer Migration Politics: Activist Rhetoric and Coalitional Possibilities*. Urbana, IL: The University of Illinois Press, 2013.

Engels, Jeremy. *Enemyship: Democracy and Counter Revolution in the Early Republic*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2010.

Gehrke, Pat J. *The Ethics and Politics of Speech: Communication and Rhetoric in the Twentieth Century*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2009.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Translated by Thomas Burger. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991.

Lundberg, Christian. *Lacan in Public: Psychoanalysis and the Science of Rhetoric*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Mike Butterworth, Jay Childers, Dana Cloud, and Josh Gunn, whose sample syllabi were instrumental in the development of this one.

Mouffe, Chantal. *The Democratic Paradox*. London: Verso, 2005.

Watts, Eric King. *Hearing the Hurt: Rhetoric, Aesthetics, and Politics of the New Negro Movement*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2012.

West, Isaac. *Transforming Citizenships: Transgender Articulations of the Law*. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2013.

Additional readings (listed below) will be posted on Blackboard.

### ASSIGNMENTS

**Reading Responses:** Three times in the semester, each enrolled participant will write and deliver a short reading response, followed by discussion questions. I will distribute a sign-up sheet on the first day of class to determine who will present on which readings. In most cases, there will be two presentations per reading. These responses must be typed and composed like a professional academic essay (i.e. *not* an outline). They should be 3-5 pages in length.

A good response will, first, briefly summarize the reading and then explore one to three issues or concepts that *you* find interesting, compelling, frustrating, etc. You may use textual analysis to illustrate your point, or may choose to write a straightforward theory essay. Think of this as a slightly more casual version of a conference presentation.

Some pointers:

- It is not your job to “teach” the reading in your essay. That’s my job. Rather, use this essay as an opportunity to explore your own areas of interest as they relate to the material.
- Please, please, *pretty please*, base your responses on issues and concepts about which you care deeply. Boring responses do a disservice to you and the rest of the seminar.
- Responses that clearly reflect a lack of preparation and/or effort will receive zero credit. All others will be graded seriously, but will also be approached in the spirit of dialogically interrogating difficult material. Still, this is half your grade, so please do your best.
- Responses should be read aloud and should last no more than ten minutes.
- End your response with two or three good questions that can sustain class discussion for the remainder of that day’s seminar (responses are to be delivered during the second half of class).
- It is your responsibility to email a copy of your response to the entire class at least an hour before we meet.

**Term Paper:** Your final paper should be between 7,000 and 9,000 words. It must explore some dimension of the intersection of rhetoric and citizenship. You may choose to perform a criticism

of a relevant text or discourse, or opt for a more theoretically oriented paper (not that those two options are mutually exclusive). While you need not (indeed, *should not*) limit yourself to course material, the paper must reflect a faithful engagement of one or more of the readings/themes we cover. I encourage you to use this essay as an opportunity to develop ideas and themes connected to your broader research agenda. *Term papers must be submitted via email.*

This and all written assignments must be typed, double spaced, use one-inch margins and 12-point font. All pages must be numbered and include a running head. Your work must be grammatically correct and proof-read. You may use either the most recent versions of Chicago, APA, or MLA styles. *Papers that do not meet the professional norms of conference/journal submission will not be graded.*

In addition to the final essay, you are also required to submit a topic proposal halfway through the semester. This should be five to ten pages and provide a thorough rationale for the project's relevance to the study of rhetoric and citizenship.

**Minutes:** For the sake of continuity, one enrolled participant will provide a summary of the previous week's class at the beginning of every seminar. While this need not be an exhaustive regurgitation of all that was said and done, it should provide sufficient set-up for the proceeding discussion. A good minute-taker will take especially rigorous notes the week prior and describe highlights from the opening discussion/lecture, as well as the response paper presentations and ensuing discussion.

#### AVAILABLE POINTS

Assignment	Actual Points	Possible Points
Reading Response 1		25
Reading Response 2		25
Reading Response 3		25
Minutes		10
Term Paper Proposal		25
Term Paper		50
<b>Total</b>		<b>160</b>

#### Grading Key

*Outstanding achievement* relative to requirements  
139-135 = A

*Good work* relative to requirements  
122-138 = B

*Unsatisfactory work* relative to requirements  
107-121 = C  
92-106 = D  
91 and below = F

## COURSE POLICIES

Office Hours and Availability If, for whatever reason, my posted office hours do not work for you, please do not hesitate to contact me and arrange an alternative meeting time. After one year of working at LSU, I still have no clue how to operate my office voicemail. Therefore, email is your best bet. Please allow up to 24 hours for a response to emails. I do not generally respond to emails on weekends.

The Communication Environment The study of rhetoric engages a wide range of philosophical, political, and ethical questions that cut to the very core of what it means to be a citizen, even a human. I am committed to ensuring that our classroom is a hospitable environment where we can respectfully discuss and debate a wide range of relevant issues. Everyone should feel comfortable to speak their minds, but must do so in a way that enables others to do the same. You should also prepare to be held accountable for anything you say in class.

Participation and Attendance This graduate class is discussion-oriented and practice-centered. Preparation for class and faithful attendance is directly correlated with success. If you miss more than two classes without an adequate excuse, you will receive a failing grade.

Readings I expect you to arrive to class each week having completed all required readings and prepared to engage in thoughtful and mature discussion.

If you are aware of readings, television clips, etc. that reflect the day's discussion, you should feel free to share them with the class (provided they are appropriate) via Moodle or during the designated class session.

Late Work Unless you have made arrangements with me beforehand, I am not inclined to accept late work.

Incompletes Incompletes are reserved for extraordinary circumstances such as personal emergencies that can be documented. An incomplete is granted when, in my judgment, a student can successfully complete the work of the course without attending regular class sessions. Incompletes, which are not converted to a letter grade within one year, will automatically revert to an F (failing grade).

Academic Integrity I trust students in this class to do their own work. Students are responsible for adhering to the college's standards for academic conduct. Even revising another student's work, collaborating to share research with other students,<sup>2</sup> or adapting your own work from another class is academic misconduct. Failure to acknowledge sources in written assignments or oral presentations constitutes plagiarism. If you are ever confused about how these policies apply to your own work, please play it safe and consult me.

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<sup>2</sup> You may, however, choose to co-author your final essay with a classmate.

If you do engage in academic dishonesty, you will automatically fail the course and will be subject to disciplinary action from the college and/or university. For more information on this important issue, please look online at <https://grok.lsu.edu/Article.aspx?articleId=17072>

Drops/Withdrawals If you wish to drop this class, you must do so by 4:30pm on January 23. After this point, you will be issued a withdrawal grade. If you fail to withdraw by 4:30pm on March 27, you will receive and “F” for the semester.

Religious Observances It is LSU’s policy to respect the faith and religious obligations of students, faculty and staff. Students with exams or classes that conflict with their religious observances should notify me well in advance (at least 2 weeks) so that we can work out a mutually agreeable alternative.

Special Needs Louisiana State University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. The syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to speak with Disability Services and the instructor, as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. This publication/material is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact the Disability Services, 115 Johnston Hall, 225.578.5919.

E-mail All students must obtain and regularly check an email account. Expect periodic updates from me about what’s happening in class via Moodle as well.

I will not, under any circumstances, communicate grade information via email or over the phone.

Moodle Please check Moodle for updates to the class schedule, assignment guidelines, grade information, etc.

Commitment to Conversation I believe in the right and responsibility of students to take an active interest in their education. If there is anything inside or outside this class that you care to discuss with me, please do not hesitate to do so.

I understand that “life happens” and will work with you to make REASONABLE accommodations for issues that may be negatively impacting your performance in this class. The sooner you consult me on such matters, the better.

While I am happy to discuss grades on individual assignments throughout the semester (provided you do so no sooner than 24 hours after but within two weeks of receiving the grade), I do not respond well to having responsibility for your entire academic future thrust upon me. In other words, how your performance in this class will impact your GPA, ability to graduate, job prospects, etc. are not sufficient grounds for discussing a grade on an assignment. More generally, I will not entertain discussions about final grades once the semester is over. If you wish to challenge your final grade, you must do so through the proper university channels. Please visit this link for further information:

[http://catalog.lsu.edu/content.php?catoid=1&navoid=27&hl=%22appeals%22&returnto=search#Grade\\_Appeals](http://catalog.lsu.edu/content.php?catoid=1&navoid=27&hl=%22appeals%22&returnto=search#Grade_Appeals)

Cell Phones, Laptops, etc. I am a technology junky and appreciate the important role smart phones, laptops, and the like play in our information society. That said, I also know they can function as a huge distraction in the classroom. If you have a cell phone, smart or otherwise, keep it in your pocket and on silent (vibrate is not silent). Failure to do so will result in my confiscating your phone for the duration of the class period. Please feel free to use your laptop to take notes and otherwise organize course material; however, if I notice you chatting on Facebook, visiting non-class related websites, etc., you must discontinue your use of the computer for the rest of the semester. In other words, technology is fine as long as it doesn't call attention to itself.

Contractual Agreement Your acceptance of these conditions, as well as the policies outlined in this document, is implied by your continuance in the class. To maintain the integrity of everyone's grade, and ultimately, degree, all course policies are non-negotiable.

Everything in this document, including the daily schedule, is subject to revision or modification due to unforeseen circumstances.

### SEMESTER SCHEDULE (Tentative)

Date	Topic	Reading	Notes
January 20	Course Introduction	Gehrke	Select reading response dates
January 27	Public Sphere	Habermas	
February 3	Counterpublics	Fraser, Warner, Brouwer & Asen, Asen, Loehwing & Motter	
February 10	Agonism	Mouffe	
February 17	<b>NO CLASS</b>		
February 24	Friends and Enemies	Engels	<b>WSCA</b>
March 3	Citizenship, Violence, and (In)civility	Montag, Lozano-Reich & Cloud, Rand, McKerrow, Bach	
March 10	Citizenship and Capitalism	Negt & Kluge, May, Greene	<b>Term paper proposals due</b>
March 17	Citizenship and Affect	Lundberg	
March 24	Race and Citizenship	Watts	
March 31	Queer Citizenship	West	
April 7	<b>NO CLASS</b>		
April 14	Citizenship at the	Chávez	

	Intersection(s)		
April 21	Citizenship and Its Discontents; or, Kitchen Sink Week	Rufo & Atchinson, Greene & Hicks, Bratich, Hartnett, Biesecker	
April 28	<b>FINAL PAPER PRESENTATIONS</b>		<b>LOCATION TBD</b>
May 4			<b>FINAL PAPERS DUE</b>

### Additional Readings

Asen, Robert. "A Discourse Theory of Citizenship." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90 (2004): 189-211.

Bach, Betsy Wackernagel. "Engage All Voices." *Spectra*, December 2009, 3.

Biesecker, Barbara A. "The Obligation to Theorize, Today." *Western Journal of Communication* 77 (2013): 518-22.

Bratich, Jack Z. "From Embedded to Machinic Intellectuals: Communication Studies and the General Intellect." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 5 (2008): 24-45.

Brouwer, Daniel C., and Robert Asen. "Public Modalities, or the Metaphors We Theorize By." In *Public Modalities: Rhetoric, Culture, Media, and the Shape of Public Life*, edited by Brouwer and Asen, 1-32. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010.

Fraser, Nancy. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." In *The Cultural Studies Reader*, 2nd Ed., edited by Simon During, 518-36. London: Routledge, 1993.

Greene, Ronald Walter. "Rhetorical Capital: Communicative Labor, Money/Speech, and Neo-Liberal Governance." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 4 (2007): 327-31.

Greene, Ronald Walter, and Darrin Hicks. "Lost Convictions." *Cultural Studies* 19 (2005): 220-6.

Hartnett, Stephen John. "Communication, Social Justice, and Joyful Commitment." *Western Journal of Communication* 74 (2010): 68-93.

Loehwing, Melanie, and Jeff Motter. "Publics, Counterpublics, and the Promise of Democracy." *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 42 (2009): 220-41.

Lozano-Reich, Nina M., and Dana L. Cloud. "The Uncivil Tongue: Invitational Rhetoric and the

- Problem of Inequality.” *Western Journal of Communication* 73 (2009): 220-6.
- May, Matthew S. “Hobo Orator Union: Class Composition and the Spokane Free Speech Fight of the Industrial Workers of the World.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97 (2011): 155-77.
- McKerrow, Raymie E. “Coloring outside the Lines; the Limits of Civility.” *Spectra*, January 2001, 7-10.
- Montag, Warren. “The Pressure of the Street: Habermas’s Fear of the Masses.” In *Masses, Classes, and the Public Sphere*, edited by Mike Hill and Montag, 132-45. London: Verso, 2000.
- Negt, Oskar, and Alexander Kluge. *Public Sphere and Experience*. Translated by Jamie Daniel, Peter Labanyi, and Assenka Oksiloff. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. (pp. 1-95)
- Rand, Erin J. “Thinking Violence and Rhetoric.” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 12 (2009): 461-77.
- Rufo, Kenneth, and R. Jarrod Atchison. “From Circus to Fasces: The Disciplinary Politics of Citizen and Citizenship.” *Review of Communication* 11 (2011): 193-215.
- Warner, Michael. “Publics and Counterpublics.” In his *Publics and Counterpublics*, 65-124. New York: Zone Books, 2005.