

CMST 4167-1
CONTEMPORARY RHETORICAL THEORY
FALL 2014

Lyman D. Hunt, Ph.D.
109a Prescott Hall
578-5989
lhunt@lsu.edu

OFFICE HOURS:
M,W,F, 8:30 - 9:30
11:30 - 12:30

THE COURSE:

"All truth is simple. - Is not this a double lie?" – Nietzsche

In this course we will examine contemporary theories of rhetoric. Rhetoric is an art and discipline with a twenty five hundred year history, dating at least to the fifth century B.C.E.. Accordingly, a term like “contemporary” might well be defined in a number of ways. For our purposes, we will confine the notion to the period beginning in the second half of the 20th century and extending to the present. Since social life is, after all, a humanly constructed phenomenon negotiated in civic engagement, rhetoric, as the art concerned with the constructed and the contingent, is embedded in and productive of the realities we experience. However, the construction of civil society is not the only work done by rhetoric. Rhetoric is as well the avenue by which we argue for particular views of the world. As such, rhetoric is intimately involved in all culture and knowledge production. Finally, with the emergence of modernized societies rhetoric is more and called upon for developing our collective and individual identities – it allows us to manufacture the necessary equipment for living. Rhetoric is at the core of all that is social whether we are engaging the latest Medicare reform proposal, debating which television show is coolest, or deciding how to perform ourselves to the world in our daily interactions. A knowledge and understanding of rhetorical theory provides an individual with a better understanding of the individual and collective behaviors encountered in our lives.

THE TEXT

Lucaites, Condit, & Caudill(1999). *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader*. New York: Guilford Press.

THE SIMPLE MATH:	<u>PTS.</u>
Mid-Term Exam	350
Final Exam	350
Short Paper 1	150
Short Paper 2	150
Total	<u>1000</u>

THE GRADING SCALE:	<u>Letter Grade</u>
≥ 90%	A
80 - 89.99 %	B
70 - 79.99 %	C
60 - 69.99 %	D
≤ 59.99 %	F

THE SCHEDULE (LCC = *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader*):

WEEK 1	Class introduction, etc.: LCC pp. 1-15
WEEK 2	Visions of Rhetoric: LCC pp. 19-34
WEEK 3	Visions of Rhetoric ctd.: LCC pp. 65-100
WEEK 4	Epistemology: LCC pp. 127-139
WEEK 5	Epistemology ctd.: LCC pp. 140-152
WEEK 6	Rhetorical Situation: LCC pp. 213-232
WEEK 7	Ethics and Reason: LCC pp. 247-287 <i>Short Paper 1 due: 9/28</i>
WEEK 8	Ethics and Reason ctd.: LCC pp. 288-305 <i>Mid-Term Exam: 10/10</i>
WEEK 9	Ethics and Reason ctd. LCC pp. 306-326 / Audience: LCC pp. 327-340
WEEK 10	Audience ctd.: LCC pp. 341-356
WEEK 11	Social Change: LCC pp. 381-384, 411-424
WEEK 12	Social Change ctd.: LCC pp. 464-474
WEEK 13	Mass Media: LCC pp. 475-493 <i>Short Paper 2 due: 11/16</i>
WEEK 14	Mass Media ctd.: LCC pp. 494-511 / Fringe V. Middle: LCC pp. 535-551
WEEK 15	Fringe V. Middle ctd.: LCC pp. 552-562
WEEK 16	<i>Final Exam: 12/9 12:00pm*</i>

***University policy requires that this exam be given during the scheduled final exam period. Keep this imperative in mind when scheduling end-of-semester plans.**

THE ASSIGNMENTS:

Exams (350 points each): Your mid-term and final exams will be a mixture of short answer and essay questions.

Paper Assignments (300 points total): As part of your grade, you will write two short 5-6 papers. Since we are reading only about half of the articles in the text, these papers will afford you the opportunity to engage some of the articles not covered in the assigned readings. Accordingly, for each of these papers, select one of the articles from the text that is *not assigned* on the syllabus and that you are curious about or interested in. For the first two pages provide a concise summation of the key theoretical precepts and terminology of the piece. Then spend a couple of pages relating this article's perspective to that of the other articles from the same section of the book. Finally, provide your thoughts, analysis, reflections, reactions, and judgments – in other words, your interpretation of the article. This assignment will thus; reveal your understanding of basic course concepts and allow you the opportunity to theorize a bit yourself.

Grade Guidance: You will be evaluated on: 1) your ability to understand and articulate a theory/rhetorician, 2) how well you connect it with others of a like type and, 3) your willingness to engage the material and offer an opinion.

THE RULES:

I'm not going to insult your intelligence with a litany of specific rules. Rather, I simply expect decorum appropriate to a class at this level. Participation is important in any communication class. You are certainly going to find out what I think -- I want to know what you think as well. It is through such a dialectic that knowledge is sharpened, wisdom gained. Accordingly, I will expect you to have read the assigned material prior to class discussion. I will ask questions and not be shy about humiliating the unprepared. Moreover, *you will find that it is important to your overall success that you keep up with the reading schedule and attend class.* My experience teaches me that these two factors correlate tightly with the final grade earned by a student.

FINALLY:

Communication Studies departmental policy requires that students obtain critical class materials from Moodle through their PAWS accounts. Failure to do so could adversely affect an individual's final grade. For information on your PAWS account contact the Computing Services Application Service Center at 578-0100 or use the PAWS link at www.lsu.edu.

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office of Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations can be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letter, you must meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.