Rhetorical Foundations  
COMM 3300-001

Fall 2009  
Meets T/Th 12:30-1:45 in MCOL W100

Prof. Peter Simonson  
peter.simonson@colorado.edu  
Hellem 95; Office Phone: 303-492-0718  
Office Hrs: T 2-3:30, Th 4-5, and by appt.

Teaching Assistant: Katie Cruger  
katherine.cruger@colorado.edu  
Hellem 65  
Office Hrs: T/Th 11-12

Course Description

This course offers a theoretical, historical, and practical introduction to rhetoric—a 2,500-year-old art and intellectual tradition that has served many purposes over its history. It emerged in classical Greece as an art of oratorical performance and public persuasion in civic settings—part of the work done by citizens in a democracy. Over the centuries, the art was applied to media newer than the human body—from writing to the internet—and systematically practiced in widely different contexts and collective activities—from philosophy to religion, science, advertising, and public relations. Rhetoric is both an art of producing things (e.g. speeches, letters, performances, identities) and a framework for interpreting and navigating the world. Over the course of the semester, we will explore rhetoric’s classical roots and modern manifestations, focusing on both rhetorical thought and practice in those eras, and learning about some of its key theorists.

Emphasis is placed on developing students’ skills at reading difficult texts, understanding concepts, thinking historically, and engaging independently with ideas and rhetorical practices. Students will be given frequent opportunities to write, speak in class, and work within small groups.

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;
- compare ideas and thinkers;
- 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 Cruger with questions about assignments (which she will be grading). 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 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).

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 without doubt affect your grade adversely.

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>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Questions (10 @ up to 20 pts/assn)</td>
<td>200 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Exam</td>
<td>25 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Exam</td>
<td>150 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>Meeting w/ Simonson/Cruzer</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal Presentation</td>
<td>90 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audience Responses</td>
<td>25 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Semester Points</strong></td>
<td>700 pts</td>
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Typed responses to the Reading Questions are due from you at the start of the class period every Tuesday, unless otherwise noted on the schedule. They are designed to help you engage with the readings, focus on the parts the instructors consider most important for this class, and prepare for exams. The more time you put into them, the more likely you are to learn and succeed in this class. See the Reading Questions Instructions sheet (available on the course website) for more information.

Exams are challenging, in-class, written—i.e. not multiple-choice—affairs, scheduled for Sept 29 (or the 30th for those observing Yom Kippur), and Nov 17-19. They ask students to define terms and explain their significance, put concepts into practice, compare ideas and authors, and discuss rhetoric in historical and contemporary contexts. Possible exam questions and lists of required terms are distributed ahead of time. The practice exam (Sept 10) 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. Students need to do significant independent thinking to score an ‘A’ or a ‘B’ on the exams.

Group Projects are culminating assignments conducted in groups of 4-7 students, and issuing in 11-13 minute rhetorical performances in front of the class, supported by a written document. They will be opportunities for you to work creatively with classmates, apply course material to topics of current interest, and reflect ideas back to us as a group. Points for the project will also be available for meeting with the instructors, and responding as an audience member to other presentations. More details will come later in the semester.
Two Notes on Grading:

1. Philosophy. Simonson and Cruger 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 competence,’ and ‘A’ means ‘atta way to go, superior answer, with really nice thinking on your own.’ We hold out high standards as a way to push students to do their best work and to reward excellence.

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 Cruger 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/academics/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 Absences

If you know you are going to miss class the day an assignment is due, make sure to hand in the assignment early. If you wake up ill and can’t get to class, you may e-mail your Reading Questions to Simonson—but you must do so before class starts at 12:30. With the threat of a Swine Flu outbreak this fall, please stay home if you are running a fever and potentially contagious; the Center for Disease Control recommends staying home for 24 hours after your fever has subsided. Lecture notes and assignments are available on CULearn, so you can keep up from home while you’re sick.
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

8/25: Introduction to the Course


9/1-9/3: The Sophistic Rhetoric of Gorgias and Protagoras: Logos, Dissoi Logoi, Pistis, Kairos, To Prepon, Terpsis

Reading Assignment for Next Tuesday: Plato, excerpts from his dialogues, the Gorgias and the Phaedrus

9/8-9/10: Plato’s Critique of the Sophists: Dialectic, Rhetoric, and Distrust of New Media

Practice Exam will take place in class on Thursday, Sept 10

Reading Assignment for Next Tuesday: Isocrates, excerpts from Antidosis and Panegyricus; Aristotle, On Rhetoric (trans. Kennedy), Book I, chs. 1-3

9/15-9/17: Rhetoric as a Civic Art in Isocrates and Aristotle: Eloquence, the Common Good, Pisteis, Topoi, and the Three Species of Oratory

Distribute exam review sheets this week.


9/22: Judeo-Christian Rhetorics in the Ancient World: Logos, Pisteis and Kairos revisited; Covenants, Prophecies and Preaching
9/24: Exam Review

9/29: **First Exam**

If you will be observing Yom Kippur on Monday 9/28 and would like to take the test on Wednesday 9/30, I will arrange a makeup exam to be given early that morning.


**Rhetoric in the Twentieth Century**

10/1: Rhetoric’s Social History and Intellectual Revival in the Twentieth Century

*Reading Assignment for Next Tuesday*: *Mass Persuasion*—finish the book

10/6-10/8: Mass Media, Celebrity, and the American National Creed: The Case of Kate Smith on Radio during Wartime—Rhetoric and Public Images, Cultural Contexts, and Socially Structured Emotions

*Reading Assignment for Next Tuesday*: Richard Weaver, “The Great Stereopticon” (1948), and “Language is Sermonic” (1963)

10/13-10/15: Rhetoric, Media, and Cultural Criticism: Richard Weaver’s Humanist Vision and Revival of Classical Rhetoric

*Reading Assignment for Next Tuesday*: Kenneth Burke, “The Human Actor: Definition of Man” (1966), and selections from *The Rhetoric of Motives* (1950)

10/20-10/22: Symbols, Hierarchies, Identifications, and the Negative: Kenneth Burke’s New Rhetoric


10/27-10/29: Extending and Rejecting the Rhetorical Tradition: Lloyd Bitzer’s Rhetorical Situation and Sally Miller Gearhart’s Feminist Critique

11/3-11/5: Rhetoric, Race, and Ethnicity in the Late Twentieth Century: Nakayama and Krizek on Whiteness

Exam Review Sheet distributed.

Group Project Topics distributed and discussed.

11/10: Exam Review Day

11/12: Meet with your group during class time. No lecture—instructors at national convention.

11/17-11/19: Second Exam, Parts I and II

11/24-26: Thanksgiving Break—no class.

12/1: Meetings with Simonson and Cruger about Group Presentations (some will also take place on Monday, 11/31)

12/3: Group Performances/Audience Evaluations & Responses

12/8-12/10: Group Performances/Audience Evaluations & Responses

Wednesday, 12/16, 1:30-4:00 p.m.: Group Performances/Final Reflections by the Audience (attendance required for all)