**Description**

Rhetoric is classically defined as the art of persuasion -- the strategies a writer or speaker uses to convey a message to an audience in order to gain their assent to a particular idea, belief, or action. Rhetorical acts, whether spoken or written, are “transactional,” that is, the reader/audience plays an important role in how a particular message is construed and thus how effective or successful the writer has been. Rhetorical acts are also "situational” and “contextual”: they arise in situations where meaning and agreement are not univocal, or universally agreed upon, and who is speaking and who is listening matter as much what is said.

Rhetoric is inextricably linked to power and to civic life. Who gets to determine the prevailing meanings by which we live our lives is the primary question or subject of this course. Race, class, and gender are three of the most important social categories—or frames of experience—through which we live and act in the world. By examining rhetorics of race, class, and gender through the practical arts of written composition, we will engage in intensive inquiry and critical thinking, the sine qua non of higher education.

While we will study and analyze a great many texts, from popular advertisements to academic articles, our primary datum is culture itself--how race, class, and gender are represented and performed in a continual dialectical process of normalization and disruption.

**Course Objectives**

This course focuses upon rhetorical modes of inquiry you will use in college, in the workplace, and in the civic domain across a full spectrum of persuasive strategies, including analysis and argument. This course reinforces and builds upon skills taught in first-year writing and rhetoric, with a greater emphasis on the rhetorical context: the relationship between writer, reader, subject, and purpose in composing and revising a text. Although this course focuses on race, class, and gender, this topic is not intended to supplement your knowledge in a major. Rather, the topic serves as a means to an end. Through class discussion and workshops, you will engage in dialogue with your peers, working out meaningful theses, testing rhetorical strategies, responding to objections and
potential objections, and revising to meet the needs of your audience. Like other instructors of WRTG 3020 courses, I demand a high level of student participation.

Objectives for this course include four key areas: Critical Thinking and its Written Application; The Writing Process; Rhetorical Situation; and Mechanics and Style.

**Critical Thinking and Its Written Application**

You should leave WRTG 3020 able to:

- See writing as a form of personal engagement, demanding an awareness of the inherent power of language and its ability to bring about change.
- Pose a question, problem, or issue at issue.
- Locate and use resources when necessary to exploring a line of inquiry.
- Critically evaluate information sources for credibility, validity, timeliness, and relevance.
- Draw inferences from a body of evidence.
- Distinguish flawed from sound reasoning, and be able to respond to and challenge claims.
- Recognize a thesis or central claim and understand the organic relationship between thesis and support in an essay.
- As a writer, structure and develop points of argument in a coherent order to build a case; as a reader, recognize this structure and development within texts.
- Critique your own works in progress and those of others.
- Recognize that academic and public writing is dialogic, addresses an audience, and anticipates the thinking, the questions, and the possible objections of readers.

**The Writing Process**

As a writer, you should be able to:

- Understand writing as an ongoing process that requires drafting and various strategies for developing, revising and editing texts.
- Understand that revision is informed by critical dialogue.
- See the critical analysis of others’ work as relevant to your own writing.
**Rhetorical Situation**

You should learn to:

- Exercise rhetorical skills: frame issues, define and defend theses, invent and arrange appeals, answer counterarguments, and contextualize conclusions.

- Value writing as a collaborative dialogue between authors and audiences, critics, and colleagues.

- Make decisions about form, argumentation, and style based on the expectations of different audiences.

- Recognize that a voice or style appropriate to one discipline or rhetorical context might be less appropriate for another.

- Develop "topic"-specific language that is appropriate for the defined audience while also intelligible to a non-expert audience.

**Mechanics and Style**

You should be able to:

- Convey meaning through concise, highly readable language.

- Apply the conventions of grammar, sentence structure, and other mechanics basic to communication in the English language.

- Develop skills in proofreading.

- Use voice, style, and diction appropriate to the rhetorical context.

- Use paragraph structure and transitional devices to aid the reader in following a complex train of thought.

**Texts**

There is no required textbook in this course. Reading material will include articles, stories, and visual images that I will distribute in class or place on D2L.
Grading Scale

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“A” level work reflects excellence in all areas. An “A” suggests that work is not only thought provoking and structurally polished, but that assignments are completed with a high level of stylistic and critical independence. “A” level work presents the reader with fresh and independent thinking, logical organization, and excellent control over mechanics and style.

“B” level work is very good, well above average. This work explores difficult questions in a way that is creative, critical and thought provoking. “B” level work is critically and organizationally sound, is stylistically competent, and contains few errors.

“C” level work indicates that assignments are completed adequately, meeting minimum requirements. This grade indicates that the work is functional at a college level and that all aspects of the assignment have been addressed. However, the work may be hindered by a lack of sufficient critical inquiry, organizational clarity, and control over mechanics and style.

“D” level work is substandard at the college-level. It is usually completed in haste and reflects little thought or attention to detail. A “D” indicates that major portions of the assignment are completed poorly.

“F” level work is incomplete or inadequate. An “F” will also be given if plagiarism has occurred.

**Attendance**

If you miss more than four classes, your final grade will drop by one increment for each absence. Please try to contact me ahead of time if you know you must miss a class. If you are absent, contact a classmate for the information and assignments you missed.

**Conferences**

During the course of the semester, we will meet for two 30-minute conferences to discuss your writing. I sincerely want to know how I can best help you as a writer, how I can help you to achieve what is most important to you. You can help me be a better reader of
your work if you prepare questions and concerns about a piece of writing ahead of our conference.

**Writing Center**

If you want additional help with your writing, the Writing Center in Norlin Library is a great place to go to talk about ideas, improve your thesis or essay organization, or just generally work on your writing skills. Check the Writing Center website for more information about hours and services, or request an appointment online at: http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html.

**Additional University Policies**

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is defined as the use of another’s ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgment. Examples of plagiarism include failing to use quotation marks when directly quoting from a source; failing to document distinctive ideas from a source; fabricating or inventing a source; turning in someone else’s work as your own; and copying information from electronic sources. In this course, if you hand in a piece of writing that is plagiarized in full or in part, you will receive a failing grade on that assignment and the F will be factored into your final course grade.

**The Honor Code**

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). 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 on the Honor Code can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/.

**Disabilities**

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices).

**Religious Observances**

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. In this class, I ask
that you contact me at least one week ahead of the date(s) that you will be absent so that we can discuss any assignments/class material that you will miss.

Classroom Behavior
Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. (See policies at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.)

Discrimination and Harassment
The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply 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, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at http://www.colorado.edu/odh.

Assignments and Grade Value

Autoethnography: “...an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience. “

Your writing, reading, and research this semester will culminate in a 30+ page autoethnography, a semester-long writing and research project containing three primary components.

Part I: Personal Experience Essay
Your work will begin with a personal narrative grounded in an experience related to our course topic: race, class, gender. You will compose an essay that explores, makes meaning of, and theorizes your personal story as emblematic of a larger social dynamic: How does your personal account intersect with social and cultural realities? (25%)

Part II: Analysis and Argument
You will formulate a claim, thesis, or hypothesis based on your essay—your personal experience, observations, and question(s). You will support your central claim with
reasoning and evidence, and raise and answer at least one counter-claim or objection to your argument. Next, you will locate at least three academic studies that place your inquiry in a scholarly context: What have other scholars, researchers, theorists or critics said about your topic? What do you make of these studies in light of your own questions and thinking about your topic? (25%)

Part III: Fieldwork
You will conduct a fieldwork project in which you become the primary researcher—collecting and analyzing data in support of your central project. How does your data mesh with or conflict with your own claims and reasoning and with scholars’ assumptions and findings? (25%)

Part IV: Autoethnography and Presentation
Finally, you will synthesize the components of your semester-long project into a coherent whole. You will decided on the overall form and structure; you will revise the separate parts and sections as needed; write an introduction in which you summarize your project and reflect on your writing and thinking; and you will present highlights of your project to the class in the last week of the term. (25%)

Schedule

Jan. 14-16 Introduction to the course
Kittredge, “Interlude”; essaying personal experience
Assignment: Read Ellis, et al on Autoethnography, Boo on “The Marriage Cure.”

Jan 21-23 Discussion of Ellis, Boo
Assignment: Begin drafting a personal narrative, a story or scene from personal experience that involves a question or conflict of race, class, or gender.

T Jan. 28
Workshop drafts
Observation, description, and the telling detail
Assignment: Continue drafting personal narrative based on peer feedback.
Make copy to hand in.

TH Jan. 30
Draft due.
Narrative as inquiry: formulating a question, problem, or issue
What concepts/ideas emerge from the story you tell? What questions or issues of race, class, gender does your narrative raise?
Assignment: Begin essaying your experience from a question or problem you’ve posed.

T Feb. 4
Workshop essay in progress
Deepening inquiry; developing ideas
Assignment: Continue drafting essay
What meaning do you make of the situation you describe?
What questions or problems does your narrative leave unresolved, or open to further speculation and inquiry?
Have you provided enough information and descriptive detail that your reader feels he/she can share in your experience?

TH  Feb. 6
Workshop essay
Organizing your essay
Style and voice
**Assignment**: Complete essay
Read:  Lorber: “‘Night to his Day’: The Social Construction of Gender”

T  Feb. 11
**Essay due**.
Discussion of Lorber
Elements of argument: claims, reasons, evidence
**Assignment**: Read Schwartz, “‘The Social Construction of Heterosexuality’”
Identify central claim, supporting claims, reasons, evidence.

TH  Feb. 13
Discussion of Schwartz
In-class writing: arguing a claim
Rhetorical considerations: voice, tone, point of view, purpose, audience, context
**Assignment**: Formulate a claim, thesis, or hypothesis based on personal experience essay

Feb. 18-20  From I to we, the personal to the intersubjective
Inquiry and analysis
Assumptions, facts, interpretations
Reasoning: claims and warrants
Theorizing race, class, and gender
**Assignment**: Write a 3-5 page essay in which you pose a question about race, class, gender or disability that arises from reflection on your personal narrative and your peer’s response. Then speculate about a possible answer or answers to the question. Your speculation might take the form of a single answer—a central idea or thesis statement—that you support with reasoning and evidence. Or it might take the form of several hypotheses for which you weigh the evidence and reasoning to arrive at a claim or conclusion.

Feb. 25-27 **Essay due Mon. Feb. 25**
Inquiry, research, and argument
Locating your inquiry in an academic context: What do other scholars say about the question, conflict, issue, or problem you’re exploring?
Facts, claims, warrants, and statistics as evidence. Authority as ethos.

**Assignment:** Locate at least three scholarly sources in Norlin Library, books or articles, related to your topic and issue. Compose an annotated bibliography—a summary of each source and a statement about how it informs your inquiry (its value or usefulness to your project.)

*Conferences*

**We will meet for half-hour conferences in my office Feb. 26**

Mar. 4-6  They say, I say
Responding to scholarly works
The believing and doubting game
Appreciative inquiry; critical analysis
Eg., Kennedy, “The N-Word”

**Annotated bibliography due Wed. Mar.6**

Mar.11-13  Revisioning your analytic essay
Quoting and citing sources in your text
Incorporating your responses into your argument
In-class workshop: three works in progress

**Assignment:** Revise previous essay based on your reading and response to academic sources.

*Conferences March 19*

Mar. 18-20  Workshop drafts of researched (informed) essay
Fieldwork: research methods and processes
Interview, survey, case study
Site observation, media analysis
Choosing methods, venues, subjects

**Revised essay due Mar. 20**

**Assignment:** Begin fieldwork; data collection

Mar. 25-29  Spring Break

Apr. 1-3  Data collection and analysis
The arts of looking and listening
Field notes and storytelling
Searching for patterns
Making your data “speak”
In-class exercise on data analysis

**Assignment:** Draft preliminary analysis, explanation of data collected through your fieldwork.

Apr. 8-10  Workshop data analysis
Problems and pitfalls
Ethics of representation
Essaying your fieldwork
Recognition and rhetorical identification
Assignment: Complete fieldwork section of your autoethnography and submit as coherent essay.

Apr. 15-17  **Fieldwork essay due Apr. 15**
Workshop
Finishing your autoethnography
A return to the personal: How has your story changed?
Organizing the autoethnography—some approaches and strategies
Integrating the parts: subheadings, themes, and transitions
Beginnings, endings and . . . beginnings?
Polishing the final draft
Assignment: Complete final version of autoethnography. Prepare ten-minute presentation.

*Conferences*
We will meet for half-hour conferences in my office Apr. 23

Apr. 22-24  Course review and autoethnography revision

Apr. 29-May 1  Presentations
Food and celebration!
**Final version of autoethnography due May 1.**