



COMM-541, Rhetorical Theory & Criticism, Fall, 2020

Instructor: Dr. Christopher M. Duerringer

Phone: (562) 985-1647

Office Hours: Tu/Th, 8:15-9:15am

Course: COMM-541

Class Days/Times: Tu, 7:00-9:45pm

Office: AS-363

Email: Christopher.Duerringer@csulb.edu

Prerequisites:

Term: Fall, 2020

Class Location: AMI

Class During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The university has determined that our graduate seminar should be conducted via Alternative Modes of Instruction (AMI) during this stage of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike a fully online class, an AMI class has a scheduled meeting time and regular activities together. If you are unable to be with us at these times, you must drop the class. Until the university permits us to return to campus, our class discussions will occur via weekly Zoom meetings. Consistent and enthusiastic attendance is expected of all.

Course Description

Introduction to research in rhetorical studies. Examination of major figures and schools of thought on rhetorical theory and criticism from the Pre-Socratics through the contemporary modern British era.

Course Goals/Student Learning Objectives

- Students are expected to engage primary texts, commentary about the theories developed in those primary texts, and criticism that employs and refines those theories.
- Students should be able to understand the history of the development of rhetorical theory.
- Students should be able to describe prominent rhetorical theories from the pre-Socratic era to the modern.
- Students should be able to adapt methodologies from theorists and use the methodologies to analyze rhetorical artifacts.
- Students should be able to understand various forms of rhetorical theory and criticism, including but not limited to, Aristotelian, argumentation, Sophistic, and hermeneutic.
- Students should be able to understand the ways in which rhetorical theory informs rhetorical criticism, and how rhetorical criticism refines theory.
- Students should be able to produce a conference-ready piece of rhetorical scholarship.

Required Texts/Readings

Bizzell, P. & Herzberg, B. (2000). *The rhetorical tradition: Readings from classical times to present* (2nd ed.). Boston: Bedford / St. Martins.

Computer Access

Two open access computer labs are available for current CSULB students. Both the Horn Center (located in lower campus) and the Spidell Technology Center (located in Library) are a great resource for students needing to use a computer. Visit the [Open Access Computing Facilities - http://www.csulb.edu/library/guide/computing.html](http://www.csulb.edu/library/guide/computing.html) website for an extensive list of all available software installed in both computer labs.

BeachBoard Access

There is an online component to this course. It is your responsibility to know how to access and interact with the BeachBoard site. Check the BeachBoard site often! This is where course material, weekly readings, and course updates will be posted. You will also submit your essays through the TurnItIn system on BeachBoard. I will not accept any assignments via email. To access this course on [BeachBoard - https://bbcsulb.desire2learn.com/](https://bbcsulb.desire2learn.com/) you will need access to the Internet and a supported Web browser (Firefox is the recommended browser). You log in to [BeachBoard - https://bbcsulb.desire2learn.com/](https://bbcsulb.desire2learn.com/)



COMM-541, Rhetorical Theory & Criticism, Fall, 2020

with your CSULB Campus ID and BeachID password. Bookmark this link for future use, or you can always access it by going to [CSULB - http://www.csulb.edu/](http://www.csulb.edu/)'s homepage and clicking on the BeachBoard link at the top of the page.

Once logged in to BeachBoard, you will see the course listed in the My Courses widget on the right; click on the title to enter the course.

Course Schedule

08/25: Welcome, Orientation, and Overview (41 pages)

- General Introduction (pp. 1-16)
- Classical Rhetoric Introduction (pp. 19-41)

09/1: The Sophists (39 pages)

- Gorgias - Encomium of Helen (pp. 42-46)
- Dissoi Logoi (pp. 47-55)
- Aspasia (pp. 56-59)
- Isocrates – Against the Sophists & Antidosis (pp. 67-79)
- Poulakos – Toward a Sophistic Definition of Rhetoric (12 page PDF)

09/8: Plato (89 pages)

- Plato (pp. 80-86)
- Plato – Gorgias (pp. 87-137)
- Plato – Phaedras (pp. 138-169)

9/15: Aristotle (51 pages)

- Aristotle (pp. 169-178)
- On Rhetoric (pp. 179-212)
- Catherine Palczewski – What is 'Good Criticism'? (7 page PDF)

9/22: Aristotle Part II (54 pages)

- On Rhetoric (pp. 213-240)
- Thomas Farrell – Practicing the Arts of Rhetoric (27 page PDF)

9/29: Cicero (60 pages)

- Cicero (pp. 283-288)
- De Oratore (pp. 289-338)
- Orator (pp. 339-343)
- **Project Proposal Due**

10/6: Quintilian (69 pages)

- Quintilian (pp. 359-363)
- Institutes of Oratory (pp. 364-428)

10/13: Rhetorica Ad Herennium & On the Sublime (53 pages)

- Rhetorica ad Herennium (pp. 243-282)
- On the Sublime (pp. 344-358)



10/20: Rhetoric in the “Dark Ages” (62 pages)

- Introduction (pp. 429-449)
- Augustine (pp. 450-455)
- Augustine – On Christian Doctrine (pp. 456-485)
- Boethius – (pp. 486-487)
- Boethius – An Overview of the Structure of Reason (pp. 488-491)

10/27: Renaissance Rhetoric (72 pages)

- Introduction (pp. 553-580)
- Desiderius Erasmus (pp. 581-584)
- Desiderius Erasmus – Copia (pp. 597-627)
- Baldesar Castiglione (pp. 651-66)
- Baldesar Castiglione – Book of the Courtier (pp. 661-673)

11/3: Renaissance Rhetoric Part II (50 pages)

- Peter Ramus (pp. 674-680)
- Peter Ramus – Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian (pp. 681-697)
- Margaret Fell (pp. 748-752)
- Margaret Fell – Women’s Speaking Justified, Proved, and Allowed by the Scriptures (pp. 753-760)
- Madeleine de Scudéry (pp. 761-772)
- Madeleine de Scudéry (pp. 773-779)

11/10: Enlightenment Rhetoric (63 pages)

- Introduction (pp. 791-813)
- John Locke (pp. 814-816)
- John Locke – An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (pp. 817-827)
- Mary Astell (pp. 841-846)
- Mary Astell – A Serious Proposal for the Ladies, Part II (pp. 847-861)
- **Project Outline Due**

11/17: Enlightenment Rhetoric Part II (71 pages)

- Giambattista Vico (pp. 862-864)
- Giambattista Vico – On the Study Methods of Our Time (pp. 865-878)
- Thomas Sheridan (pp. 879-880)
- Thomas Sheridan – A Course of Lectures on Elocution (pp. 881-888)
- George Campbell (pp. 898-901)
- George Campbell – The Philosophy of Rhetoric (pp. 902-943)
- Hugh Blair (pp. 947-949)

11/24: Nineteenth Century Rhetoric (79 pages)

- Introduction (pp. 983-999)
- Richard Whately (pp. 1000-1002)
- Richard Whately – Elements of Rhetoric (pp. 103-1030)
- Sarah Grimké (pp. 1045-1049)
- Sarah Grimké – Letters on the Equality of the Sexes (pp. 1050-1060)
- Frederick Douglass (pp. 1061-1069)



COMM-541, Rhetorical Theory & Criticism, Fall, 2020

- Frederick Douglass – Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (pp. 1070-1074)
- Frederick Douglass – My Bondage and My Freedom (pp. 1075-1078)
- Frederick Douglass – The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass (pp. 1079-1084)

12/1: Nineteenth Century Rhetoric Part II (41 pages)

- Frances Willard (pp. 1114-1123)
- Frances Willard – Woman in the Pulpit (pp. 1124-1134)
- Frances Willard – Woman and Temperance (pp. 1135-1140)
- Friedrich Nietzsche (pp. 1168-1170)
- Friedrich Nietzsche – On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense (pp. 1171-1180)
- Stephen Hunt – An Essay Publishing Standards for Rhetorical Criticism (6 page PDF)
- **Project Due**

Course Policies and Requirements

Reading Policy

Almost every professor will tell you that reading is strongly correlated with success in the classroom. This is especially the case in rhetoric. If you are to pass this class, you **must** devote yourself to carefully reading all the assigned material before each class; arrive prepared to actively discuss all readings and examples in class; and be able to write academically about your analysis of readings, discussions, and ongoing controversies. You can expect that I will come to each class prepared and ready to engage you in discussion, that I will encourage you express your ideas, and that I will provide a fun, safe, and positive learning environment.

Writing Policy

All written work for this course must be typed using 12 pt font, Times New Roman, properly cited (APA), and turned in in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format. All written assignments must be turned in on time: NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED without a University approved excuse (religious observance, illness, University-sponsored activity, or compelling circumstances beyond the student's control).

Evaluation Method

Assignment	Points	Weight
Reading Responses (14 @ 5pts each)	70	~17.72%
Reading Expert (2 @ 25pts each)	50	~12.66%
Project Proposal	25	~6.33%
Project Outline	50	~12.66%
Semester Project	125	~31.65%
Take-Home Final Exam	75	~18.99%



Course Grading Scale

Percent Range	Letter Grade
90 – 100%	A
89 – 80%	B
79 – 70%	C
69 – 65%	D
Below 64%	F

Grade Descriptions

- **A: Highest Level of Performance!** Exceptional work with superior organizational and presentational abilities. Clear understanding and application of complex concepts, audience adaptation, and consistent quality of work.
- **B: High Level of Performance!** Student clearly understands the material and has met all and often exceeded some of the requirements.
- **C: Adequate Performance.** All assigned work completed. This is the bare minimum required. It has everything required and little else. If it were a job, you would not be disciplined, but not promoted either.
- **D: Less Than Adequate Performance.** Came up short. Did not complete all work. Clearly made some attempt, but failed to satisfy some of the requirements.
- **F: Failure.** Did a minimal amount of work. Final work product is ineffective.

If you would like above-average grades, you must do more than the bare minimum requirements.

Grade Dispute Policy

If you have a warranted disagreement and argument against my grading on a specific assignment, you may approach me to discuss it, following these standards. First, please wait 24 hours before approaching me. Second, please approach me within seven days of receiving your grade. Third, I will ask that you have a written list of reasons supported with evidence warranting a grade change. This list should be clear and concise, and should focus on the work, not issues relating to your personal life, your effort, etc. I will review your written argument in relation to the assignment, and I will consider your case accordingly.

Communication Policy

The fastest way to reach me is via email (Christopher.Duerringer@csulb.edu). Of course, you are always welcome to come to office hours or to make an appointment if those hours don't work for you.

Late work/Make-up Policy

Generally speaking, I will not accept late work. However, the university recognizes religious holidays, government obligation (jury duty), or university sponsored events as excused absences. If you will be absent due to one of these reasons, you must inform me in writing prior to your absence in order to make up any missed work.

Plagiarism/Academic Integrity Policy

Academic dishonesty includes plagiarizing (using someone else's words or ideas without citation), cheating, and inappropriate collaboration on coursework. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students who plagiarize or cheat may receive an F on an assignment, an F in the entire course, or face further penalty at the instructor's discretion. If you have any doubt about this policy, please ask. Additionally, the instructor will report each and every case to the Academic Integrity Committee. The Committee may, in turn, choose to enforce its own sanctions, such as expulsion from the University.

Work that you submit is assumed to be original unless your source material is documented appropriately, such as a Works Cited page in correct APA format. Using the ideas or words of another person, even a



COMM-541, Rhetorical Theory & Criticism, Fall, 2020

peer, or a web site, as if it were your own, is plagiarism. Students should read the section on [cheating and plagiarism in the CSULB catalog](http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/catalog/current/academic_information/cheating_plagiarism.html) - http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/catalog/current/academic_information/cheating_plagiarism.html.

University Withdrawal Policy

Class withdrawals during the final 3 weeks of instruction are not permitted except for a very serious and compelling reason such as accident or serious injury that is clearly beyond the student's control and the assignment of an Incomplete grade is inappropriate (see [Grades](http://www.csulb.edu/depts/enrollment/student_academic_records/grading.html) - http://www.csulb.edu/depts/enrollment/student_academic_records/grading.html). Application for withdrawal from CSULB or from a class must be officially filed by the student with Enrollment Services whether the student has ever attended the class or not; otherwise, the student will receive a grade of "WU" (unauthorized withdrawal) in the course. Please refer to the [CSULB Course Catalog](http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/catalog/current/academic_regulations/withdrawal_policy.html) - http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/catalog/current/academic_regulations/withdrawal_policy.html to get familiar with the policy.

Attendance Policy

At the graduate level, unswerving attendance and passionate participation is simply expected. If you wish to succeed in this course, you must attend class diligently. I understand that circumstances may require that you miss a class meeting. If this is the case, it is your responsibility to arrange for a classmate to take notes for you. Please refer to and get familiar with the [CSULB Attendance Policy](http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/catalog/current/academic_information/class_attendance.html) - http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/catalog/current/academic_information/class_attendance.html.

Technical Assistance

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or need to report a problem with BeachBoard, please contact the Technology Help Desk using their [online form](http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/academic_technology/thd/contact/) - http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/academic_technology/thd/contact/ or by phone at (562) 985-4959 or visit them on campus in the Academic Service (AS) building, room 120.

Inform Me of Any Accommodations Needed

Students with disabilities who need reasonable modifications, special assistance, or accommodations in this course should promptly direct their request to the course instructor. If a student with a disability feels that modifications, special assistance, or accommodations offered are inappropriate or insufficient, they should seek the assistance of the Director of the CSULB Disabled Student Services, please see their [website](http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/students/dss/) - <http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/students/dss/> or contact them via email at dss@csulb.edu or by phone at (562) 985-4635.

Classroom Respect

I request that you maintain respect for instructors, guests, and one another in the class regardless of different opinions, values or other group differences. While studying rhetoric that circulates in our popular culture and politics, it is not uncommon for very different opinions and beliefs to emerge. Our goal is to create a supportive and cooperative learning environment in which these differences can be expressed and explored. Students should give one another equal opportunity for discussion, and practice good speaking and listening skills.

Class Material Disclaimer

Because this is a discussion-oriented course that involves discussion of culture, identity, and inherently political issues, it is possible that we may cover contentious and potentially inflammatory material. I am stating this up front so that you are aware of the possibility, and so that your continued enrollment in this course, following the reading of the syllabus, indicates that you are aware of this material and you have chosen to stay in this particular section of the class. I do not anticipate any problems, but it is important



COMM-541, Rhetorical Theory & Criticism, Fall, 2020

you are aware of this disclaimer from the beginning. Please talk to me if you have any questions or concerns.

Intellectual Property Policy

The classroom materials are the intellectual property of this instructor and/or the university. They are made available to you solely for your personal educational use. Students may not record (audio or video) in this class except in accordance with ADA accommodations. Any recordings made in connection with a disability accommodation are for the student's personal academic use only and may not be distributed in any manner to any other individual.

Assignment Descriptions

Reading Responses

Each Tuesday through December 1, our class will read important works in rhetorical theory. Beginning on August 31, you will, each Monday, be expected to submit a response paper, which summarizes your thoughts about the assigned readings for the next day. What did you find thought-provoking or useful about them? What did you find most confusing, challenging, or disagreeable? Include direct quotes where appropriate. These brief 2-3 page responses are due on BeachBoard by 12pm (noon) each Monday before our Tuesday meeting.

Reading Expert

Twice this semester, you will serve as the class expert on a reading. On these days, you will be expected to have very deeply read one of our scheduled readings. It would be wise to read additional materials that explain and contextualize the reading and to talk about the reading with me during office hours a few days prior to that day in class. At least 24 hours before our class, you will email to me five suggested discussion questions for the article. Then, on the day of the class, you will be prepared to offer smart responses and help foster thoughtful discussion. Finally, you will provide the class with a complete bibliography of works in communication studies that make use of your reading.

Final Project

Students will have some flexibility in satisfying the requirements for a final project in this course.

After considering their desired future careers, students may choose to craft any of the following:

- A 12-15 page rhetorical criticism essay, employing critical theory, suitable for a conference, academic journal, or application to doctoral program
- A 12-15 page thorough and reflective review of literature in some part of critical theory, which would be suitable for submission to Review of Communication
- A pair of smartly written smaller papers (including a 2000-word G.I.F.T. **and** a 3000-5000 word think-piece suitable for The American Prospect, Vox, Slate, The Atlantic, etc.) employing rhetorical theory from this course

Final Project Proposal

In this brief (2-3 pages, not including references) paper, you will describe the project you intend to complete. If you will write a critical essay or a review of literature, summarize the central claim(s) you hope to make, articulate a rationale for the worthiness of such a project, and furnish a list of at least 15 scholarly sources you expect to employ. If you will write a GIFT and think-piece, summarize the point of the teaching exercise; and the venue and major argument you hope to make for your think-piece.



Final Project Outline

Many undergraduates seem to believe that they produce their best work at the last moment. They write in long streams of consciousness and submit right under the deadline. This will not be good enough at the graduate level. Your scholarly writing must be well-researched, deliberately argued, and highly structured if it is to survive peer review at a conference or a journal publication. I will help you along this path by demanding that you submit a complete outline of your project weeks in advance of the final due date. This outline should be detailed enough that it could be used by some other person to produce a final product which is more or less identical to the one you'll submit at the end of the semester.

Final Project

Option 1: Critical Essay

Your task in this term paper is to summarize, apply, extend, and/or critique concepts and issues related to our engagement with scholarship this semester. Your complete draft should be 12-15 pages, not including references; and contain a minimum of 25 sources, 20 scholarly.

Basic Components of a Typical Critical Essay in Rhetorical Studies

1. Introduction
 - a. Intriguing hook or set-up
 - b. Specification of topic/research questions
 - c. Justification for study (why is this worth doing?)
 - d. Preview of theses/claims
 - e. Preview of subsequent essay sections
2. Body
 - a. Literature Review(s)
 - i. Informed selection of scholarly sources
 - ii. Description of key concepts and disputes
 - iii. Clear statement of your position with regards to such issues
 - b. Elaboration of "method" or approach—how will you do your analysis? What procedures will you follow?
 - c. "Thick Description" (rich, detailed explanation) of context(s)
 - i. Socio-economic and cultural factors and influences
 - ii. Historical factors or influences
 - iii. Political factors or influences
 - d. "Thick Description" of text(s)
 - e. Analysis of text(s)
3. Conclusion
 - a. Review of theses/claims
 - b. Clarification of your contributions—what did your project show us about this artifact, about theory, about rhetoric generally?
 - c. Acknowledgements of specific limitations of your study
 - d. Suggestions for future research

Option 2: Review of Literature

Your task in this term paper is to summarize, synthesize, and evaluate a growing body of literature



COMM-541, Rhetorical Theory & Criticism, Fall, 2020

dealing with a given concept or theory. Your complete draft should be 12-15 pages, not including references; and contain a minimum of 25 sources, 20 scholarly.

Literature reviews attempt to provide a service to the reader—they organize and explain the research around a given topic. In our field, *Review of Communication* is the primary venue for the publication of such reviews. Your paper should succeed in doing three things: providing a clear organization of the research; properly and succinctly summarizing the major claims/implications of the research; and critically evaluating the merits and limitations of the research.

Option 3: GIFT & Think-Piece

This project is intended to provide a more useful exercise for students who have no intent to pursue research or a doctoral degree.

GIFT

A Great Idea for Teaching (GIFT) is a brief description of a teaching activity, designed to be shared with others in the discipline at conferences and in NCA's pedagogy journal *Communication Teacher*. These brief (2000 word maximum) papers should contain the following components: (1) a brief title; (2) the course(s) for which the activity is intended; (3) the objective(s) for the activity; (4) a brief theoretical rationale for conducting the activity; (5) a description/explanation of the activity, including any preparation/preliminary steps and materials needed; (6) a debriefing paragraph, including typical results; (7) an appraisal of the activity, including any limitations or variations; and (8) references.

Students should refer to published GIFTS to get a sense of how these papers ought to be constructed.

Think-Piece

Sometimes, although not often enough, scholars attempt to make their work helpful to the public by translating research into the language of the public sphere. We might look to the good works of Neil De Grasse Tyson, Noam Chomsky, Carl Sagan, and Marshall McLuhan as examples of the value of public intellectualism. Your job in this think-piece is to craft an essay, which could be published by a serious mainstream venue (Slate, Vox, American Prospect, Politico, Jacobin, The Hill, etc.). Your 3000-5000 word think-piece should provide a scholarly, critical perspective on some matter pertaining to the mass media, journalism and democracy, popular culture, or emerging technology.

To get a sense of how such an essay might work, consider the following works published by rhetoric scholars in mainstream media:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/george-lakoff/understanding-trump_b_11144938.html

https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/03/09/how-donald-trump-gets-away-with-saying-things-other-candidates-cant/?utm_term=.dc87d3301a5b

<https://www.thenation.com/article/killing-commons/>

<http://washingtonmonthly.com/2016/03/31/why-trumps-promises-of-disaster-might-be-part-of-his-appeal/>



Final Exam

Prior to the final exam period, you will be provided three short-answer question prompts. These comp-like questions are intended to guide you to synthesize and critically reflect upon the material we have covered this semester. As this is a take-home test, you are expected to take advantage of your access to scholarship, and cite sources accordingly.

Useful Sources of Information for Rhetorical Studies

- Academia.edu – A new-ish web platform designed to help make scholars and their research more accessible. In some sense, it is like Facebook for researchers—you can build a profile, post links to your scholarly work, and follow others whose research you value. It is an excellent place to locate CVs and publications that are hard to find elsewhere.
- Google Scholar – Once you tell Google Scholar to search within CSULB’s library, it becomes the most useful search engine for scholarly research, spanning multiple databases.
- Selective Lists of Published Resources:
 - Scholarly Journals Publishing Excellent Work in Rhetorical Theory & Criticism:
 - The Quarterly Journal of Speech (QJS)
 - Communication & Critical/Cultural Studies (CCCS)
 - Critical Studies in Media Communication (CSMC)
 - The Journal of Communication Inquiry
 - Argumentation & Advocacy
 - Philosophy & Rhetoric
 - Rhetoric & Public Affairs (RPA)
 - The Western Journal of Communication
 - Communication Theory
 - Communication Monographs
 - The Southern Communication Journal
 - Excellent Readers/Anthologies in Rhetoric, Critical Theory, and Cultural Studies
 - Burghardt, C. (Ed.) (2010). *Readings in rhetorical criticism* (4th ed.). State College, PA: Strata Publishing.
 - During, S. (2007). *The cultural studies reader* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.
 - Lucaites, J. L., Condit, C. M., & Caudill, S. (Eds.) (1993). *Contemporary rhetorical theory: A reader*. New York: Guilford Press.
 - Olson, L. C., Finnegan, C. A., & Hope, D. S. (Eds.) (2008). *Visual rhetoric: A reader in communication and American culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
 - Richter, D. H. (2006). *The critical tradition: Classic texts and contemporary trends* (3rd ed.). Boston: Bedford/St.Martins.
 - Storey, J. (2013). *Cultural theory and popular culture: A reader* (4th ed.) New York: Routledge.
 - Useful Textbooks for Those Just Getting Their Feet Wet (**NB: These are excellent places to begin or augment your education in rhetoric, but—because they oversimplify for the purpose of teaching novices—they are not the sort of thing you should cite in a serious paper for a graduate seminar, conference, or publication.**)
 - Borchers, T. (2006). *Rhetorical theory: An introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Waveland Press.



COMM-541, Rhetorical Theory & Criticism, Fall, 2020

- Foss, S. K. (2008). *Rhetorical criticism: Exploration and practice* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Waveland Press.
- Kuypers, J. A. (2009). *Rhetorical criticism: Perspectives in action*. Lanham, MA: Lexington Books.
- Stoner, M. & Perkins, S. J. (2004). *Making sense of messages: A critical apprenticeship in rhetorical criticism*. London: Routledge.
- Tyson, L. (2014). *Critical theory today: A user-friendly guide* (4th ed.). New York: Routledge.