

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film
Communications Studies COMS 369 L02
Rhetorical Communication
Winter 2015
Tuesdays and Thursdays 14:00-15:15

Tuesday, January 13–Tuesday, April 14 (excluding Reading Week, Feb. 17 and 19)

Instructor: Prof. L. Bryce
Office: SS 216
E-Mail: bryce@ucalgary.ca
Office Hours: Tuesdays 13:00-15:00 and by appointment.

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the basic principles of rhetorical theory, criticism, and practice. You will learn rhetorical perspectives on elements of communication such as argumentation, persuasion, audience, situation, genre, and ethics. You will develop your rhetorical skills through in-class activities and assigned written and oral presentations. Class activities will include practice in writing and speaking. The out-of-class assignments will contribute to your understanding of written and spoken discourse.

Objectives of the Course

The objectives of this course are the following:

- To understand the basic principles and terms of classical and modern rhetorical theory.
- To apply rhetorical theory to the criticism of a variety of public communication topics, media, and genres
- To enable you to apply rhetorical theory to the development of your own writing and speech.
- To develop expertise in the mechanics of writing so you can produce well-written essays and speeches.

Textbooks and Readings

The following textbook is required for this class. You will need to do specific readings for a full understanding of the course material.

Mauk, J., Stayer, J., Mauk, K. (2014). *Think About It: Critical Skills for Academic Writing*. Boston: Wadsworth.

The library has a copy of this textbook on reserve.

Internet and electronic communication device information

You are welcome to bring and use your laptop for in-class assignments; however, the use of laptops for any purpose unrelated to this class is not acceptable.

Cell phones must be put away during class: texting is **not** permitted during class time. Students who are unable to comply with this requirement will lose their class participation grade and possibly be asked to leave.

Assignments and Evaluation

Table 1, following, gives the assignments, due dates, and percentages worth.

Table 1: Assignments and Evaluation

| Assignment | Due Date | Percentage Worth |
|--|---|------------------|
| Informative presentation (group project) | February 3 (topics assigned in class on January 29) | 10% |
| Rhetorical analysis speech (done individually) | February 24, 26, March 3, 5 | 15% |
| Rhetorical analysis essay (done individually) | March 10 | 20% |
| Persuasive speech (done individually) | March 31, April 7, 9, 14 | 20% |
| Persuasive essay (done individually) | April 14 | 25% |
| Class participation (in-class assignments) | ongoing | 10% |

In-class Assignments

The in-class assignments are produced collaboratively. You will work in groups (the number of members per group will vary according to the assignment). Most in-class assignments will require a written piece. Some assignments will ask you to make a short 3-5 minute presentation for the class. (Presentation time depends on the complexity of the assignment topic.) All in-class assignments require group members to participate in class discussions.

Please note that because of their nature, the in-class assignments cannot be “made up” at a later date.

Informative presentation: creating effective presentations (group project)

Working in groups assigned by the instructor, you will prepare a short presentation (10 minutes) on one of the topics given in class on January 29. This presentation must include a power point presentation or any other visual aid that helps the listeners follow your points.

On January 29, the groups will be assigned, and you will be given time in class to prepare your presentation. It is most important that you come to class on time both days. Those who arrive late on January 29 (more than 10 minutes) will need to find another topic (not one of the assigned topics) and work individually to create a useful presentation.

Rhetorical analysis speech (individual project)

For this speech, you will use the same advertisement you are using for your rhetorical analysis essay. (See next paragraph.) This speech should be 7-8 minutes long. The speech and essay cannot be identically worded.

Rhetorical analysis essay

Using the principles of analysis covered in the textbook and in class, write an analysis of a magazine advertisement that intrigues you. Choose an advertisement that offers sufficient imagery and text for analysis. Your points must be grounded on the principles we discuss in class and in the textbook: thus, your argument must show that you have read and understood the material. This assignment gives you an opportunity to do a practical application of theoretical principles. The essay should be approximately 3-4 pages, double spaced, about 1000 words. The essay must include an APA style references page and in-text citations, done correctly. Please include the word count at the end of the essay.

Please note that the essay cannot be a word-for-word rewrite of the speech. Although their content will be similar, they cannot be identical because essays and speeches require different persuasive strategies. If your speech and essay are identical, the essay will not receive a passing grade.

Persuasive Presentation

This assignment requires that you prepare a speech that will influence your listeners' thinking and behaviour. You need to choose a topic that you feel has particular relevance to your audience (the class and instructor); however, the topic cannot be one that involves graphic images or descriptions of violence or cruelty to any living creature. The topic must have some academic merit, which means at least two of the sources you use must be scholarly sources. In addition, the topic needs to be an issue, so the presentation makes an argument as opposed to simply giving information.

You will present your individual paper to the class in an 8-minute presentation. You will be evaluated on the professionalism with which you present in addition to the content of the presentation.

Persuasive Essay (2 parts)

Using the same topic you used for the persuasive speech, write an essay that is designed to influence your readers' thinking and behavior. The essay should be approximately 1250 words. Please include the word count at the end of the essay.

Please note that the essay cannot be a word-for-word rewrite of the speech because essays and speeches require different persuasive strategies. If your speech and essay are identical, the essay will not receive a passing grade.

For the second part of the essay, please write a one-page reflection in which you discuss the persuasive strategies you used in your argument. The purpose is for you to be conscious of the rhetorical techniques you are using and also to show your understanding of these techniques.

Class participation

Regular attendance and participation in class activities are essential components of this course. The course assignments are designed to reinforce your learning and mastery of the material through active engagement and doing. We will be doing activities each class: these will be included as part of the ten percent participation grade. Being present physically in the class is not enough: you need to be involved intellectually, contributing to each other's learning and participating in the creation of a positive atmosphere and learning environment.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Please note: All assignments and presentations must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Submission of Assignments: Please hand in a paper copy of your essay directly to your instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams in SS 320 after classes have ended. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. (Including the version date or version number in your file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of your written assignments.)

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. Late assignments will be graded but not marked. Speeches must be delivered on the day assigned by the instructor. In case of illness or other circumstances that prevent you from handing in your assignment on the due date, or if you need to reschedule your presentation date for a legitimate reason, you will need to provide appropriate documentation to the instructor as evidence.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Student Accessibility Services (220-8237, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of the course.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Grading System and Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

Work in this course will be graded using percentage grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film:

| Grade Point Value | Description | Grade | Department grade scale equivalents | Letter grade % equivalent for calculations |
|-------------------|--|-------|------------------------------------|--|
| 4.00 | Outstanding | A+ | 96 - 100% | 98.0% |
| 4.00 | Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter. | A | 90 - 95.99% | 93.0% |
| 3.70 | | A - | 85 - 89.99% | 87.5% |
| 3.30 | | B+ | 80 - 84.99% | 82.5% |
| 3.00 | Good—clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally | B | 75 - 79.99% | 77.5% |

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|-------------|--|-----------|-------------|-------|
| | complete. | | | |
| 2.70 | | B- | 70 - 74.99% | 72.5% |
| 2.30 | | C+ | 65 - 69.99% | 67.5% |
| 2.00 | Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter. | C | 60 - 64.99% | 62.5% |
| 1.70 | | C- | 55 - 59.99% | 57.5% |
| 1.30 | Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject | D+ | 53 - 54.99% | 54.0% |
| 1.00 | | D | 50 - 52.99% | 51.5% |
| 0.00 | Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements. | F | 00 - 49.99% | 0% |

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/node/208> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/research/research-ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

| For information about . . . | Visit or contact . . . |
|--|---|
| ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (PIC) | SS 102 403-220-3580 picarts@ucalgary.ca |
| CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program | http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ |
| DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line | http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca |
| STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App | http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents |
| STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman | http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds |
| SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips | 403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line. |

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

The readings will be given in class.