

**COMM 4301: Introduction to Rhetorical Criticism****Fall 2015****Dr. Trudy L. Hanson****West Texas A&M University****TEXTBOOK:**

Foss, S. K. (2009). *Rhetorical criticism: Exploration and practice* (4th ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

**COURSE PURPOSE AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Introduction to Rhetorical Criticism is a writing intensive course which allows students to critically evaluate communicative messages of a variety of artifacts. Designated as the capstone course in Communication Studies, COMM 4301 provides experience in preparing materials for the senior portfolio required of all Communication Studies majors. The particular learning competency stressed in COMM 4301 is written communication.

This course is designed to acquaint students with rhetorical criticism as a method of answering research questions in communication. Through discussing and applying critical methods, viewing videos of selected rhetorical artifacts, as well as writing seven original critical essays, students will:

1. Identify how basic rhetorical factors related to text and context interact to produce persuasive goals.
2. Develop a critical perspective that allows them to make informed judgments.
3. Improve their abilities to communicate effectively, especially in writing critical analyses, professional resumes, and reflective essays.
4. Identify the contribution to understanding made by professional criticism.
5. Analyze popular culture artifacts using a rhetorical perspective.
6. Write a reflective essay about their learning experiences at WTAMU, prepare a resume, and other materials for their senior portfolios and build a website on wix.com for their e-portfolios.

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

The Department of Communication sets Learning Outcomes for all of our academic programs. COMM 4301 is tied to the development and mastery of Learning Outcomes #4 and #7.

1. Competence with leadership skills by modeling leadership through individual communication and group learning experiences.

2. Ability to deliver effective presentations by producing well researched, and organized material both orally and visually

3. Understanding of effective relational management strategies by illustrating such behaviors as active listening, empathy, assertiveness, self-disclosure, conversation management, and conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships.

**4. Ability to write effectively by producing research papers that are grammatically and mechanically correct and involve the application of critical thinking.**

5. Ability to identify cultural influences by selecting appropriate communication strategies and practices for the communication context

6. Competence with group communication by integrating problem solving processes, feedback, and group roles into group interaction and participation.

**7. Understanding of communication theory by evaluating theories in a variety of contexts, recognizing the ethical responsibilities inherent in each context.**

8. Understanding of professional and civic responsibilities by synthesizing the communication principles learned in the classroom in effective service learning projects and/or communication internships.

#### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**1. Six original essays of criticism** (4 to 7 pages in length). After viewing a selected rhetorical artifact on videotape or listening to an audio and studying the text, students will write a critical analysis of the artifact using the assigned critical method. (Each essay counts 100 points)

**2. Mid-Term Exam.** There will be one exam in this course. The exam will be given in the form of a "take-home" exam. (Exam counts 100 points)

**3. Student Designed Quizzes of Critical Essays.** Students will create a five question quiz over one of the assigned critical essays. The quiz may include multiple choice items, short answer or brief essay questions. **No true/false questions should be asked.** The quiz should be tied to key points of the essay and emphasize principles or ideas that help us understand the rhetorical method that was used by the author. (Student designed quizzes count 10 points)

**4. Term Project.** Choosing from the methods studied during the semester, students will write a 10 to 15 page critical essay, analyzing a rhetorical artifact of their choosing. All topics must be approved by Dr. Hanson. A prospectus for your paper which discusses the artifact you have chosen, its significance, the methodology you will use and a list of references (at least 10 sources that you plan to consult) will be due. The top papers submitted in this class will be considered for a panel presentation at the Texas Speech Communication Association Convention or submission to the Southern States Communication Undergraduate Honors Conference. The oral presentation of your term project requires a powerpoint presentation, a typed outline (for the professors' panel) and professional appearance. This oral presentation is part of the assessment of student learning in the Communication Studies curriculum and is required for graduation. (Final Essay first draft, powerpoint, and final draft counts 200 points)

All students enrolled in COMM 4301 also will prepare a resume and cover letter. COMM majors will use their cover letters and resumes as part of their required portfolios. Students will write a reflective essay as described in the portfolio requirements for COMM majors. The revised copy of students' final projects will serve as the portfolio entry for the *Written Communication* section of your portfolio. All students will also complete a Program Assessment form, evaluating your learning experiences in Communication Studies courses.

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Week	Activity/Assignment	Reading	Essay for Student Designed Quiz
1	Course Introduction Discussion: Nature of Rhetorical Criticism Rhetorical Criticism Jeopardy	Chapter 1	None
	Discussion of Neo-Aristotelian Criticism <b>Due: Non-graded exercise: What is rhetoric?</b>	Chapter 2	Brown's essay (includes artifact pp. 51-59)
2	Rhetoric of Public Speaking Video: Randy Pausch's Last Lecture	Chapter 3	
	<b>Paper: Analyze Randy Pausch's Last Lecture Using the Neo-Aristotelian Method</b>		Montoya's essay (includes artifact pp. 173-179)
3	Discussion of Generic Criticism Video: Pres. Obama's Eulogy to Clementa Pinckney	Chapter 6	
4	<b>Paper: Analyze Pres. Obama's Eulogy to Clementa Pinckney to see how well it meets the criteria for the genre of eulogies.</b> Discussion of Feminist Criticism Rhetoric of Song	Reading to be provided	Fredal's Essay (to be provided)
	Audio/Video: Maroon 5's "Sugar" Rhetoric of Song (continued)		None
5	<b>Paper: Analyze Maroon 5's Sugar using Feminist Criticism</b> Preparing your ePortfolio and Reflective Essay	Chapter 9	None
	<b>Resume Workshop</b>		None

6	<b>Building Your Website on Wix.Com</b>		
	Rhetoric of Television Discussion of Metaphoric Criticism <b>Reflective Essays, Resumes/Cover Letters Due. Upload them through WT Class.</b>		None
7	What is a Prospectus? Application of Metaphoric Criticism Video: <i>Madame Secretary</i>	Chapter 9	Kanengieter-Wildeson's essay (pp. 300-303)
	<b>Mid-Term Exam Due (Submit through WTClass—</b> Discussion of <i>Madame Secretary</i>		None
8	<b>Paper: Analyze the metaphors found in <i>Madame Secretary</i></b> Discussion of Narrative Criticism	Chapter 9	More, Boyd, Bradley & Harris's essay ( pp. 347-350)
	Discussion of Fantasy Theme Criticism Discussion of Generative Criticism	Chapter 5 Chapter 12	Mendoza's essay (pp. 124-127)
9	Cultural Criticism Video: Release of <i>Go Set a Watchman</i>	<i>Assigned reading in Go Set a Watchman</i>	Foss, Waters, Armada's essay (pp. 406-425)
	<b>Paper: Using either a narrative, fantasy theme or a cultural criticism approach, analyze the selected chapter from <i>Go Set a Watchman</i></b> Discussion of Pentadic Criticism	Chapter 10	Ling's essay (includes artifact, pp. 392-400)
10	<b>Prospectus for Final Project is due.</b> Discussion of Cluster Criticism	Chapter 4	Reid's essay (includes artifact, pp. 71-85)

	Discussion of Ideological Criticism Rhetoric of Film Video: Documentary: <i>Prom Night in Mississippi</i>	Chapter 8	Lacroix & Westerfelhaous' essay (pp. 246-252)
11	Continuation of <i>Prom Night in Mississippi</i>		
	<b>Paper: Analyze the documentary film <i>Prom Night in Mississippi</i> using one of the following methods: pentadic criticism, cluster criticism, or ideological criticism.</b> Sign up for Oral Presentations today. We will review the presentation process.		None
12	Conferences with Dr. Hanson (conference times will be scheduled during our regularly scheduled class today)		<b>Bring your prospectus and the draft of your final project to our conference session</b>
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13	Discussion: Designing Research Presentations		
	<b>First drafts of final projects are due at 9 a.m. Upload to WTClass</b> <b>Program Assessment Forms to be completed in class</b>		
14	<b>Course Evaluation; First Drafts returned</b>		
15	<b>Oral Presentations (in front of professors' panel).</b> Provide a printed outline for the judges' panel.		
16	<b>Oral Presentations (in front of professors' panel).</b> Provide a printed outline for the judges' panel.		

	<p><b>Oral Presentations (in front of professors' panel).</b> Provide a printed outline for the judges' panel.</p> <p><b>Final Revisions of your semester projects are due today. Upload your paper to WTClass. Include a copy of your powerpoint presentation.</b></p>		
17	<p>Your final papers will be graded and available for pickup from Dr. Hanson's office. Those papers selected for submission to the SSCA Undergraduate Honors Conference must be <b>received by the date posted on <a href="http://www.sca.net">www.sca.net</a> website.</b></p>		