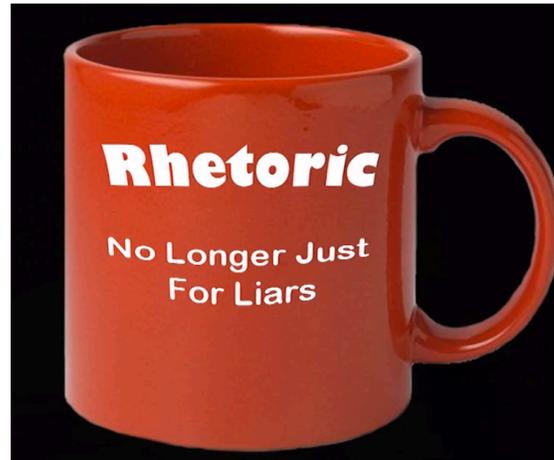


Writ 250 – M/W 1:20-2:35 in Lathrop 212

Professor Jennifer Lin LeMesurier
jlemesurier@colgate.edu

Google Classroom site - use code kg5exhr to join
 Office – Lathrop 213A
 Office hours – M/W 3-4:30 or by appointment

This class is designed as an introduction to the history, theories, and contemporary views and uses of rhetoric. Originally conceived of finding “the available means of persuasion” (Aristotle) in any situation, rhetoric has expanded to consider how persuasion is also always rooted in identification, e.g. getting your audience to identify with your views vs. your opponent’s. Rhetorical scholars consider how these main strands operate in political speeches, advertisements, interpersonal situations, newspaper articles, and social movements. Essentially, how is it possible to create impact in the world via what we write, say, and do?



In light of recent events here in the USA and abroad, it is especially important to understand how people become aligned with causes, groups, and ideas. We will be discussing these issues of alignment in relation to historical and current events; in other words, how do people use actions, texts, discourses, social movements, bodies, and objects in service of specific ideological and material goals? By the end of this course, you will have a toolkit of analytical perspectives that will enable you to understand the goals and assumptions of texts you encounter everyday.

Required Textbook – *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students* by Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee, 5th edition

ISBN: 978-0-205175-48-2

- other readings on Google Classroom space

Assignments: Assignments will include: reading responses/discussion questions, a group midterm presentation, informal presentation on a class reading, and a final exam. Class discussion and lecture will be a crucial part of passing this class.

Reading Responses: 20%

- 2-3 pages double-spaced, due in class on the date they are given on the syllabus. I will **not** accept more than one response per class day.
- Total of **4** - There are 3 assigned reading responses. You will pick another class session and respond to the theories/texts listed for that day.

The purpose of these responses is to help you dig further into complex and, in some cases, very theoretical texts. I am not looking for you to have a ‘perfect’ idea or summary, but I do expect to see you clearly discussing what you find compelling, confusing, interesting, wrong, etc... about these readings. These are NOT summaries but rather critical engagement with the concepts under discussion. You can use evidence from the readings, current events, other texts, and your

lives to explain why you are taking the stance you are taking as long as you stay focused on the course text. I will provide written comments along with your grade for each.

Some possible ways into these responses -

- What terms or phrases do you see over and over again? Does the author seem to be using those terms in a way that's different from what is ordinarily used?
- See if you can find a central quote where the author is explaining the term/concept. Even if you don't understand the entire quote, pick out what you do understand. Is the author setting up a compare/contrast relationship? An if/then relationship? An although/actually?
- How does this concept/author/theory relate to something in contemporary life? Again, this should not be the focus of the response, but please feel free to use examples that you think are worthwhile.

Class Participation: 20%

You are expected to attend class regularly and show up on time. I say this not to be punitive – missing class discussion and regularly showing up late makes it harder to form and maintain a productive class community. If you have a legitimate reason to miss class, please let me know via email or in person as soon as possible. Do not check email or text people during class time. - *Conversation Starter*: Next week, we will divide up the readings/topics between everyone. On the day of your reading, you will bring in *a short example* from current events/contemporary life that you feel resonates with, demonstrates, or exemplifies something about the reading for that day. You are not expected to understand the reading/concept fully, but you are expected to have done a bit of thinking through your example in order to help introduce the rest of us to the reading.

Twitter: 10%

The use of Twitter will help us think about how to frame ourselves within the potentially problematic spaces of social media. In addition to in-class Twitter assignments, which will be further explained, one person will be responsible for “live tweeting” class each day. Considering how to condense the various rhetorical theories and approaches into 140 characters is an excellent way to engage with the material. You can also seek out rhetoricians/language scholars on twitter and engage with them via tweets @, retweets, or questions. See the Twitter handout for more details.

Midterm Presentation: 25%

For this group project, you will work with your group members on a political campaign for a fictional candidate. Each group member will assume the persona of a specific campaign role, e.g. social media manager. More details will be given in Week 6.

Final take home exam: 25%

After studying rhetorical methods and theories, this is where you will demonstrate your ability to transfer those skills into a written analysis. Rather than ruminating on ideas in an abstract way, you will select a public text that you feel (a) performs rhetorical work and (b) is worthy of analysis. You will receive a more detailed assignment sheet in Week 13.

Accommodations

Your learning experience is a definite priority. If you have any issues with learning disabilities, learning differences, or chronic medical conditions, please feel free to speak with me after class or during office hours. There are also several on campus resources – Please contact Lyn Rugg at mrugg@colgate.edu for more information.

Writing and Speaking Center

The Writing and Speaking Center in 208 Lathrop is committed to helping all Colgate students succeed as clear, effective communicators. Peer writing consultants can help you refine a draft by reviewing with you its focus, development, organization, clarity, grammar, source integration, or other aspects. Peer speaking consultants can help you plan or organize the content of an oral presentation; they can also help you improve your delivery to an audience. Details about all sessions will remain private. For more information or to make an appointment, visit <http://www.colgate.edu/writingcenter> or call (315) 228-6085.

Reading Schedule – *please read texts in the order they are listed. All readings not in the Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students textbook will be on the Google Classroom site.*

Week ‘1’

Thu Aug 25th – intros, pass out syllabus
– What is rhetoric?

Week 2 – Rhetoric and Truth

Mon Aug 29th
– “On Truth and Lies in a Non Moral Sense” – Nietzsche
– “The Other Side is Not Dumb” – Sean Blanda

Wed Aug 31st

- Wayne Booth – *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric* excerpt
- Ezra Klein – “Understanding Hillary” on *Vox*

Week 3 – The Rhetorical Situation

Mon Sep 5th
– Lloyd Bitzer – “The Rhetorical Situation” (*Assigned reading response 1*)

Wed Sep 7th

- Vatz – “Myth of the Rhetorical Situation”

Week 4 – Ancient Rhetoric

- Mon Sep 12th – Chapter 1 in *Ancient*
- Aristotle – *Book 1, Parts 1-3* – Online

Wed – Sep 14th

- Chapter 2 and 3 in *Ancient*

Week 5 – Foundational Rhetorical Concepts

Mon Sep 19th
– Chapter 4 in *Ancient* – Topoi

Wed Sep 21st

- Chapter 6 in *Ancient* – Ethos

Week 6 – Appeals to Pathos

Mon Sep 26th

- Chapter 7 in *Ancient*

Wed Sep 28th

- Margaret Fell

Week 7 – African American Rhetoric

Mon Oct 3rd

- Frederick Douglass – “The Right to Criticize American Institutions”
 - Bring annotated passage

Wed Oct 5th

- Jesse Williams
- Key and Peele

Week 8 – Philosophy and Rhetoric

Mon Oct 10th – ~~No Class Midterm Recess~~

Wed Oct 12th

- Kenneth Burke – “Definition of Man”

Week 9 – Identification

Mon Oct 17th

- Burke – “Language as Symbolic Action” and *Rhetoric of Motives* excerpt (*Assigned reading response 3*)

Wed Oct 19th

- TBD

Week 10 – Argumentation

Mon Oct 24th

- Brockreide – “Where is Argument?”

Wed Oct 26th

- Toulmin Model

Week 11 – Presentations

Mon Oct 31st

- Candidate Presentations

Wed Nov 2nd

- Candidate Presentations

Week 12Mon Nov 7th

- McGee – “The Ideograph”

Tues Nov 8th - Election dayWed Nov 9th – Election debriefing

- Op Ed

Week 13 – Playing with EnglishMon Nov 14th

- Chapter 10 in *Ancient*
- Henry Louis Gates Jr.

Wed Nov 16th

- Amy Tan – “Mother Tongue”
- Gloria Anzaldua -

THANKSGIVING BREAK**Week 14 – Material Rhetoric**Mon Nov 28th

- Amy J. Devitt, Anis Bawarshi and Mary Jo Reiff - “Materiality and Genre in the Study of Discourse Communities”

Wed Nov 30th

- Carole Blair – “Reflections on Criticism and Bodies: Parables from Public Places”

Week 15Mon Dec 5th

- Jenny Edbauer Rice – “Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation to Rhetorical Ecologies”

Wed Dec 7th

- Wrap up

Finals WeekFinal Take Home Exam due Tues Dec 13th by 5PM