Comm 441: Foundations in Critical Cultural Methods  
Fall 2014

Class Information:  
M 245  
W 4:00 – 6:45  
#20943

Contact information:  
George N. Dionisopoulos  
Office: Com 241  
Office Hours MW 12:30-1:50  
dionisop@mail.sdsu.edu

In this class we will discover and explore some of the critical methods used to examine the various forms of rhetoric that exist in our culture. Toward that end we will examine a number of different methods of rhetorical criticism spanning a range of ideological assumptions.

Learning outcome goals:  
- To develop and articulate a coherent definition of “rhetoric”, “rhetor”, “rhetorical situation”, “rhetorical artifact”, and “rhetorical criticism”.  
- To read and evaluate a wide range of critical rhetorical projects.  
- To gain a sense of the various critical methods employed by scholars in our field and the trends in contemporary rhetorical criticism.  
- To understand the manner in which rhetorical criticism is conducted and what kind of knowledge it produces.  
- To demonstrate an understanding of the process of critical investigation by completing a research paper.  
- To comprehend the role of rhetorical criticism as a communication research method.

Books and materials:  
The following are required for this course.


Additional Reading material posted on Blackboard

Blackboard and email:  
We will be utilizing the University Blackboard system throughout the semester. Discussion questions will be posted there, as well as assignments, grades, etc. If you are not already familiar with this system, I encourage you to peruse the Blackboard site. You log into the system with your Red ID and PIN at [https://blackboard.sdsu.edu/webapps/login](https://blackboard.sdsu.edu/webapps/login). All of the students enrolled in this course will automatically be entered on the Comm 441 course. I will communicate with the class through Blackboard announcements and email sent from the Blackboard site, so make sure that you have your current email address on file with the University. Also, you should be in the habit of checking your email daily in order to insure that you do not miss any class messages.
Course grades:

Your grade in this class will be based on the total number of points accumulated during the semester. I will use the following criteria for determining grades:

- A = 90%+
- A- = 88.5
- B+ = 87
- B = 80%
- C or Pass = 70%
- D = 60%

Points are awarded on the following:

- Midterm Examination: 100
- Cumulative Final Examination: 150
- Group Presentation: 100
- Prospectus: 25
- Rhetorical Criticism: 100
- Quizzes: depends on how many we have

An Incomplete will only be given with written documentation from a physician.

Exams and Quizzes:

We will have a midterm examination and a cumulative final exam. The exams will test the assigned reading and information presented in class lecture/discussion. You will need a Scantron 882 and a number two pencil to complete the objective portion of each exam. I will not provide them. Exams will not be returned in class, but you are welcome to make an appointment to view your exam. All exams are destroyed the semester following the end of the course. Periodic quizzes will be given during the semester and cannot be made up or taken at any other time than when it is done in class.

Group Presentation on Chapter Lesson

Chapter Lesson:

- Each group will be assigned a critical method to present to the class. Each group is responsible for at least one hour of class time. This time can be divided into lecture and activity, but at least 40 minutes must be lecture. Criteria for evaluation will include length, content, creativity, effectiveness, organization, delivery, cohesiveness and energy. Presentations should be dynamic and engaging. Grading is on a 100 point scale and everyone in the group gets the same grade. (see attached grading rubric)
- Groups must create a Power Point presentation to go along with the lecture portion of the presentation. The PP should be simple yet effective. It should complement the presentation, not replace it. It should be organized with a clear introduction and conclusion.
- An important element of an oral presentation is a preview detailing for the audience what you will cover and how you will cover it. That lays out the organizational structure of the presentation and makes it easier for the audience to track your ideas.
- Each group will be required to prepare and distribute “study guide” for the material covered in the presentation. Study guides should list and define the main concepts that were covered in the chapter. It should not simply answer the questions submitted.
• Because the class is structured heavily around the concept of participant discussion, each group will create and distribute three thought-provoking discussion questions that can be used to guide class participation during the presentation. Discussion questions pertaining to the reading should focus on (1) the main argument of the essay (the reasoning pattern offered, the data that was used as evidentiary support, justifications); 2) what did we learn about "how discourse works in the real world"; and 3) what did the author[s] say concerning the implications of this work in contributing to our understanding of the process[es] of human symbolic behavior. (In point of fact, any study that explains only the event under examination is a pretty worthless endeavor.)

• Groups will write and submit three multiple choice test questions covering the material from their chapter. Each question should be keyed and should be accompanied with a brief “debriefing” explaining of the concept or idea it focuses on and why that is important. Failure to debrief (justify) the question will negatively affect the group grade. Test questions will be handed in by the end of class on the night of your presentation and will be evaluated on intelligence and clarity.

• Groups may assume that the class has read the assigned chapters and essays. Thus, simply representing this material will not result in a good evaluation. It is important to relay the information in the text and you can and should devote part of your presentation to the week’s assigned readings, but it is also important that you expand our understanding beyond this material. You need to examine additional material concerning the methodological perspective of your group. Such supplemental materials can be found in rhetorical criticism textbooks and in additional essays that employ this perspective. Each chapter in the book lists additional examples of criticisms that you can and should examine for your report. In your report you need to tell us what kinds of questions this method encourages and what it can tell us about communication.

• Groups must hand in a list of References used to create the presentation. It should follow the APA Style format and should be submitted in hard copy the night of the presentation.

Analysis of a Rhetorical Artifact

You will do a rhetorical analysis that should be of enough quality that you could submit it for consideration to a communication convention. You must analyze one of these artifacts that have been pre-selected for this class. These artifacts are:

Remarks by the President on Election Night

Remarks by the President at Sandy Hook Interfaith Prayer Vigil

President Obama’s Speech, “A More Perfect Union”

President Obama’s Second Inauguration Speech
http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/01/21/inaugural-address-president-barack-obama
Proposal (25 points)

This is a proposal for your larger criticism and should be 4-5 pages not including References and title page, using 12 point font and one inch margins. When done correctly it can serve as the beginning of the larger essay. The proposal should be in three distinct and clearly labeled sections. The first is a brief presentation of the artifact and a discussion of its “rhetorical situation”. That is, you need to situate the artifact as a response to whatever exigency led to its creation. Why was this rhetorical artifact created, and what was the rhetorical problem[s] facing the rhetor. This section should provide whatever background is necessary for understanding your work, including the socio-political conditions in which the text was created and the specifics of the situation in which it was presented. This should take up NO MORE THAN two pages of the essay (about 500 words). The second section of the proposal discusses the artifact in relation to a particular method of rhetorical criticism. Here you are making an argument that seeks to justify studying this artifact in a particular way. This justification needs to address what a deeper understanding of this artifact can teach us about communication. This section of your proposal needs to demonstrate your knowledge of relevant literature concerning your proposed analysis of this artifact. This obviously means that you should support your claims with relevant source materials and cite them appropriately. This section of your proposal should be NO MORE THAN two pages. The final section of your proposal is a brief presentation of the organizational structure of your final paper. Lay out clearly WHAT you will do, HOW you will do it, and WHY this is important. The Proposal is due to Turitin.com by 7:00 p. m. on November 12, 2014 and late papers will not be accepted.

Rhetorical Criticism

The beginning of this essay can be drawn from the Prospectus. The essay needs to provide a description of the artifact situated within its “rhetorical situation”, and a discussion and justification of the critical methodology employed in your essay to deconstruct the artifact. The introduction section should end with an explicit statement of WHAT you will do, HOW you will do it, and WHY it is important. The bulk of the essay is the critical analysis. DO NOT TELL ME – SHOW ME. Illustrate your critical points with explicit examples drawn from the artifact.

The text of this essay – not including References and title page should be 8-12 pages, using 12 point font and one inch margins. You will need to cite a minimum of 10 outside sources – not including the artifact. DO NOT CITE class lecture notes, dictionaries or encyclopedias. Be certain to paginate your work. You can do this project with one other person but both people get the same grade. If you do co-author your essay, make certain that only one of you submits it and that all authors’ names are on the first page.

Final essays must be submitted by 7:00 p. m. on December 10, 2014 to Turnitin.com. Late essays will be marked down 10 points for each day late and will not be accepted after noon on December 12, 2014. All written work in this class is submitted to Turnitin.com.
PROCEDURAL MATTERS

It is expected that students will conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the classroom.

No class November 19, 2014 due to the convention of the National Communication Association.

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

According to the policy of the San Diego State Faculty Senate, the instructor is not considered bound by the specific policies laid out in this syllabus and the instructor retains the right to adjust the course design as needed during the semester.

The website of the School of Communication can be found at: http://communication.sdsu.edu/

The Academic Dishonesty Policy of the School of Communication is attached at the end of this document.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/27</td>
<td>Course Introduction and housekeeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion of rhetorical criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9/3</td>
<td>What is rhetoric? What is rhetorical criticism?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Determine groups &amp; select artifact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Foss Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>Conducting Rhetorical Criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Foss Chapter 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kuypers – “The Art of Rhetorical Criticism”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brockriede “Rhetorical Criticism as Argument”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dionisopoulos &amp; Goldzwig “The Meaning of Vietnam”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 – 9/17
Importance of Situation

Reading
Farrell and Young, “The Situational Perspective” in Kuypers (pp. 33-55)
Bitzer “The Rhetorical Situation”

5 – 9/24
Traditional Criticism

Reading
Foss Chapter 3
Hill, “The ‘Traditional Perspective,’” in Kuypers (pp. 56-84)

6 – 10/1
Non-pentadic Burkean Criticism

Reading
Foss Chapter 4
Tonn, Enders & Diamond, “Hunting And Heritage on Trial”
Goehring & Dionisopoulos “Identification by Antithesis.”
Presentation: Burkean analysis other than the Pentad

7 – 10/8
Ideological Criticism

Reading
Foss Chapter 7
Smith & Dionisopoulos, “The Abu Ghraib Images”
Presentation: Ideological Criticism

8 – 10/15
Generative Criticism

Reading
Foss Chapter 11
Presentation: Generative Criticism

9 – 10/22
Fantasy theme analysis

Reading
Foss Chapter 5
Review for Midterm

10 – 10/29
MIDTERM
11 – 11/5 Metaphor Criticism

Reading
Foss Chapter 8
Perry “Rhetorical Functions of the Infestation metaphor in Hitler’s Rhetoric”
Presentation: Metaphor Criticism

12 – 11/12 Narrative Criticism

Reading
Foss Chapter 9
Osborn & Bakke, “The Melodramas Of Memphis”
Presentation: Narrative Criticism

Turn in Proposal

13 – 11/19 No Class due to NCA

14 – 11/26 Generic Criticism

Reading
Foss Chapter 6
Hanson & Dionisopoulos, “Eulogy Rhetoric as a Political Coping Mechanism”
Presentation: Generic Criticism

15 – 12/3 Pentadic Criticism

Reading
Foss Chapter 10
Brummett, “A Pentadic Analysis of Ideologies”
Presentation: Pentadic Criticism

16 – 12/10 Turn in final papers and Review for Final

Final Examination
Monday, December 17, 2014 4-6 p.m.
# Group Presentation Grading Sheet

**Communication 441**

**Topic:** _________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Names:</th>
<th>Time:</th>
<th>Overall Grade: 100/ ( )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Below Avg.</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Superior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a preview helps us to follow your presentation)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesiveness</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerpoint</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Guide</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Questions</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference List</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plagiarism is theft of intellectual property. It is one of the highest forms of academic offense because in academe, it is a scholar’s words, ideas, and creative products that are the primary measures of identity and achievement. Whether by ignorance, accident, or intent, theft is still theft, and misrepresentation is still misrepresentation. Therefore, the offense is still serious, and is treated as such.

Overview:
In any case in which a Professor or Instructor identifies evidence for charging a student with violation of academic conduct standards or plagiarism, the presumption will be with that instructor’s determination. However, the faculty/instructor(s) will confer with the director to substantiate the evidence. Once confirmed, the evidence will be reviewed with the student. If, following the review with the student, the faculty member and director determine that academic dishonesty has occurred, the evidence will be submitted to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. The report “identifies the student who was found responsible, the general nature of the offense, the action taken, and a recommendation as to whether or not additional action should be considered by the campus judicial affairs office.” (CSSR Website[1]).


Intellectual Property:
The syllabus, lectures and lecture outlines are personal copyrighted intellectual property of the instructor, which means that any organized recording for anything other than personal use, duplication, distribution, or profit is a violation of copyright and fair use laws.

Proper Source Attribution:
Proper attribution occurs by specifying the source of content or ideas. This is done by (a) providing quotation marks around text, when directly quoted, and (b) clearly designating the source of the text or information relied upon in an assignment. Text that is identical with another source but without quotation marks constitutes plagiarism, regardless of whether you included the original source.

Specific exemplary infractions and consequences:
a. Reproducing a whole paper, paragraph, or large portions of unattributed materials (whether represented by: (i) multiple sentences, images, or portions of images; or (ii) by percentage of assignment length) without proper attribution, will result in assignment of an “F” in the course, and a report to Student Rights and Responsibilities.

b. Reproducing a sentence or sentence fragment with no quotation marks but source citation, or subsets of visual images without source attribution, will minimally result in an “F” on the assignment. Repeated or serious cases will result in assignment of an “F” in the course, and a report to Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Self-plagiarism:
Students often practice some form of ‘double-dipping,’ in which they write on a given topic across more than one course assignment. In general, there is nothing wrong with double-dipping topics or sources, but there is a problem with double-dipping exact and redundant text. It is common for scholars to write on the same topic across many publication outlets; this is part
of developing expertise and the reputation of being a scholar on a topic. Scholars, however, are not permitted to repeat exact text across papers or publications except when noted and attributed, as this wastes precious intellectual space with repetition and does a disservice to the particular source of original presentation by ‘diluting’ the value of the original presentation. Any time that a writer simply ‘cuts-and-pastes’ exact text from former papers into a new paper without proper attribution, it is a form of self-plagiarism. Consequently, a given paper should never be turned in to multiple classes. Entire paragraphs, or even sentences, should not be repeated word-for-word across course assignments. Each new writing assignment is precisely that, a new writing assignment, requiring new composition on the student’s part.

Secondary citations:
Secondary citation is not strictly a form of plagiarism, but in blatant forms, it can present similar ethical challenges. A secondary citation is citing source A, which in turn cites source B, but it is source B’s ideas or content that provide the basis for the claims the student intends to make in the assignment. For example, assume that there is an article by Jones (2006) in the student’s hands, in which there is a discussion or quotation of an article by Smith (1998). Assume further that what Smith seems to be saying is very important to the student’s analysis. In such a situation, the student should always try to locate the original Smith source. In general, if an idea is important enough to discuss in an assignment, it is important enough to locate and cite the original source for that idea. There are several reasons for these policies: (a) Authors sometimes commit citation errors, which might be replicated without knowing it; (b) Authors sometimes make interpretation errors, which might be ignorantly reinforced; (c) Therefore, reliability of scholarly activity is made more difficult to assure and enforce; (d) By relying on only a few sources of review, the learning process is short-circuited, and the student’s own research competencies are diminished, which are integral to any liberal education; (e) By masking the actual sources of ideas, readers must second guess which sources come from which citations, making the readers’ own research more difficult; (f) By masking the origin of the information, the actual source of ideas is misrepresented. Some suggestions that assist with this principle:

- When the ideas Jones discusses are clearly attributed to, or unique to, Smith, then find the Smith source and citation.
- When the ideas Jones is discussing are historically associated more with Smith than with Jones, then find the Smith source and citation.
- In contrast, Jones is sometimes merely using Smith to back up what Jones is saying and believes, and is independently qualified to claim, whether or not Smith would have also said it; in such a case, citing Jones is sufficient.
- Never simply copy a series of citations at the end of a statement by Jones, and reproduce the reference list without actually going to look up what those references report—the only guarantee that claims are valid is for a student to read the original sources of those claims.

Solicitation for ghost writing:
Any student who solicits any third party to write any portion of an assignment for this class (whether for pay or not) violates the standards of academic honesty in this course. The penalty for solicitation (regardless of whether it can be demonstrated the individual solicited wrote any sections of the assignment) is F in the course.

TurnItIn.com
The papers in this course will be submitted electronically in Word (preferably .docx) on the due dates assigned, and will require verification of submission to Turnitin.com.
“Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to TurnItIn.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the TurnItIn.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. You may submit your papers in such a way that no identifying information about you is included. Another option is that you may request, in writing, that your papers not be submitted to TurnItIn.com. However, if you choose this option you will be required to provide documentation to substantiate that the papers are your original work and do not include any plagiarized material” (source: language suggested by the CSU General Counsel and approved by the Center for Student’s Rights and Responsibilities at SDSU)

Specific exemplary infractions and consequences

- **Course failure:** Reproducing a whole paper, paragraph, or large portions of unattributed materials without proper attribution, whether represented by: (a) multiple sentences, images, or portions of images; or (b) by percentage of assignment length, or solicitation of a ghost writer, will result in assignment of an “F” in the course in which the infraction occurred, and a report to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities (CSRR²).
- **Assignment failure:** Reproducing a sentence or sentence fragment with no quotation marks, but with source citation, or subsets of visual images without source attribution, will minimally result in an “F” on the assignment, and may result in greater penalty, including a report to the CSRR, depending factors noted below. In this instance, an “F” may mean anything between a zero (0) and 50%, depending on the extent of infraction.
- **Exacerbating conditions--Amount:** Evidence of infraction, even if fragmentary, is increased with a greater: (a) number of infractions; (b) distribution of infractions across an assignment; or (c) proportion of the assignment consisting of infractions.
- **Exacerbating conditions--Intent:** Evidence of foreknowledge and intent to deceive magnifies the seriousness of the offense and the grounds for official response. Plagiarism, whether ‘by accident’ or ‘by ignorance,’ still qualifies as plagiarism—it is all students’ responsibility to make sure their assignments are not committing the offense.
- **Exceptions:** Any exceptions to these policies will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and only under exceptional circumstances.

HOWEVER, THERE ARE NO EXCUSES ALLOWED BASED ONignorance of what constitutes plagiarism, or of what this policy is