COMM 382: Theories of Rhetoric  
Tuesday Evening – Spring 2008  
Robert Scott Small Building 002

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Course Goals:
Contemporary communication studies originated with the classical liberal arts trivium (grammar, logic, rhetoric). The media educate us, entertain us, inform us, and enable us to form communities that are not limited temporally or spatially. In order to function effectively as citizens and consumers, knowledge of how the media construct and disseminate meaning is essential. After taking this course, students should:

- acquire a broad overview of classical and contemporary rhetorical theory,
- become acquainted with the major currents and themes of this body of scholarship,
- know the key theoretical contributions of major rhetoricians,
- possess a working knowledge of the key axiological, epistemological, methodological, and ontological issues informing rhetorical scholarship,
- develop proficiency in using the technical vocabulary of rhetorical theory,
- appreciate the role of aesthetics, logic, ethos, and pathos in effecting persuasion,
- gain insights into the socio-cultural milieus informing, and the debates driving, the development of rhetorical theories,
- understand the ways in rhetoric reflects and constructs the social realm,
- identify discourse communities and locate themselves and others within these communities,
- demonstrate the ability to reason rhetorically and conduct informed critiques of literary, media, and other artifacts,
- be able to offer informed commentary regarding rhetorical critiques offered by others, and
- cultivate skill in critical reading and critical thinking.

Assignments/Grading
Your grade for COMM 384 will be based upon the following:

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>Exams (3)</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<td>Group Presentations (2)</td>
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<td>Individual Presentation (1)</td>
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1 On January 15, February 05, February 12, March 11, April 08, I will be in my office 05:15 pm – 06:00 pm.
**Exams:** The three exams are designed to assess you knowledge of key concepts, names, and terms. All material covered in assigned readings, lectures, class discussions, and group presentations is fair game. The exam will have two or three sections: 1) fill-in-the-blank (*no word bank*), 2) definitions, and 3) maybe an essay.

**Presentations:** Every student will be assigned a group for each of the two presentations. Each group will be assigned a topic per the syllabus. Students will be allowed to choose topics for their individual presentations, pending instructor approval. Each student will also be assigned an individual presentation.

**Course Policies:**

**Attendance:** There are no excused absences. I have found that people who attend class regularly usually do well and those who do not usually do poorly. If you miss class, **DO NOT:** 1) ask me about schedule changes announced in class (you will be responsible for these, though, so ask a friend), 2) inquire about lecture material (ask a friend), 3) expect me to hand back graded work in class on another day (I will bring graded work to class only one time, after which you must come to my office to get it). Absence from class is never an excuse for missed assignments or poor performance! **An absence on any day group or individual presentations are scheduled will result in a full letter grade deduction from your presentation.**

**Disabilities:** Reasonable accommodation will be made for students with disabilities. Please see me at the beginning of the semester regarding such accommodations.

**Conferences:** I strongly encourage you to visit me during my office hours to discuss concerns, obtain feedback about class performance, etc.

**Extra credit and make-ups:** **Absolutely no extra credit,** late assignments, or make-up exams. **Nor will exams be given earlier than the scheduled date,** as I typically write them the night before they are scheduled to be given.

**Electronica:** Please turn off beepers, pagers, cell phones, etc., before entering class.

**Exams:** **The final exam must be taken the day it is assigned.** ² No exceptions. **You MUST be on time in order to take an exam.** Those who show up more than five minutes after the time that class is scheduled to start on the day of the exam will not be allowed to take it, which will result in a grade of 0 = F. No one will be allowed to leave an exam for any reason. To leave the room you must turn in the exam.

**Email Correspondence:**

Official course correspondence will be conducted solely via College of Charleston email accounts. **I will only read and respond to email messages sent from your Edisto account.** If you use another account, there is a very good chance that I will neither read nor respond to your message. If you have a problem with your Edisto account, you must take whatever steps are necessary to have your account fixed. Correspondence via email is preferred over other forms of electronic communication. For better service, please put “COMM 382 Student” in the subject line of any email message you send to me. The college’s student email policy can be found at: [http://www.cofc.edu/~register/STUDENTEMAILPOLICY.pdf](http://www.cofc.edu/~register/STUDENTEMAILPOLICY.pdf)

**Please note:** I do not answer questions related to grades via email.

**Honor Code:** All rules outlined in the College of Charleston Code of Civil and Honorable Conduct will be strictly enforced.

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² Per college policy: **Permission to reschedule one (1) final exam must be obtained from the Office of Undergraduate Academic Services with written permission of the instructor (which I am not in the habit of giving). THIS PERMISSION MUST BE OBTAINED PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY OF THE EXAM PERIOD.**
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (subject to change)

WEEK ONE (01/15)
Class Introduction
Chapters One and Two

WEEK TWO (01/22)
Chapter Three
Groups 1 and 2
(Presentation One)

WEEK THREE (01/29)
Groups 3 and 4
(Presentation One)
Exam 1

WEEK FOUR (02/05)
Chapter Four
Groups 5 and 6
(Presentation One)

WEEK FIVE (02/12)
Chapter Seven
Group 7
(Presentation One)

WEEK SIX (02/19)
Chapter Eight
Groups 1 and 2
(Presentation Two)

WEEK SEVEN (02/26)
Chapters 12 and 13
Groups 3 and 4
(Presentation Two)

WEEK EIGHT (03/04)
SPRING BREAK

WEEK NINE (03/11)
Chapter 15
Groups 5 and 6
(Presentation Two)

WEEK TEN 03/18
Group 7 – 03/18
(Presentation Two)
Exam #2

WEEK ELEVEN (03/25)
Chapters 16 and 17

WEEK TWELVE (04/01)
Individual Presentations

WEEK THIRTEEN (04/08)
Individual Presentations…continued

WEEK FOURTEEN (04/15)
Chapters 20 and 21

WEEK FIFTEEN (04/22)
Last Day -- 04/22 TBA

FINAL EXAM (COMPREHENSIVE)
Tuesday, April 29 @ 07:30 pm
For college policy regarding the rescheduling of final examinations, see footnote 1 on page 2 of this syllabus.

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus as necessary.
COMM 382: Group Presentations (2)
Due: Per syllabus.
Length: Thirty (30) minutes.

The group presentation assignments are designed to: (1) encourage students to work collaboratively toward accomplishing a common goal; (2) provide students with a forum for collaborative exploration of rhetorical theories, the theorists who developed them, and the exigent circumstances in which these theorists labored; and (3) encourage students to polish their presentational skills. NB: Presentation grades will take into account both content and delivery.

Content:
Each group will provide a well crafted thirty (30) minute long informative presentation regarding assigned topic (see below). Presentations should tie the practice and study of rhetoric to the exigent circumstances of the assigned historical period or thematic focus. An outline with all cited sources referenced per the APA style manual will be turned in prior to each presentation. If you reference a source, it must be cited in your speech, and if you cite a source it must be referenced. The outline should be typed (of course), and include the names of all group members—listed in alphabetical order by last name—at the top of the first page.

Delivery:
Presentations should be entertaining as well as educational. Thus, creativity is strongly encouraged. Try to incorporate skits, interactive games, etc. As this is an upper level communication class, it is therefore assumed that students know how to present in a polished, professional manner. Like good speeches, good presentations should be organized, with a discernable introduction, body, and conclusion. Segues, signposts, and transitions are to be used in moving from topic-to-topic, from one segment to another (e.g., from a skit to a class debriefing), and from speaker-to-speaker. If using media/technology, be sure it is in working order BEFORE you present.

NB: Anyone who simply reads from a manuscript will earn an F for this assignment. Using any source without citing it constitutes oral plagiarism, and will be dealt with according to college policy.

Grading scale:
A = well organized, highly creative, and near perfect delivery coupled with stunningly original insights that are grounded in an accurate and extensive knowledge of material covered in class discussions AND the text
B = well organized, above average delivery that makes appropriate and accurate use of material covered in class discussions AND the text, some interesting original insights
C = adequate organization and delivery, spotty use of material covered in class discussion AND the text, few original insights
D = uninspired and disorganized delivery, confused, inadequate and/or inaccurate use of material covered in class discussions AND the text, no worthwhile insights
F = failure to meet minimum delivery standards, confused and disorganized, inadequate and/or inaccurate use of material covered in class discussions AND the text, no worthwhile insights

GROUP PRESENTATION ASSIGNMENTS
Presentation One
- **GROUP ONE:** Rhetoric and the Ancient Greek World
- **GROUP TWO:** Pericles, Aeschines, Isocrates, and Demosthenes
- **GROUP THREE:** Rhetoric and the Ancient Roman World
- **GROUP FOUR:** Cato the Elder and Cicero
- **GROUP FIVE:** Rhetoric & Christian Apologetics
- **GROUP SIX:** St. Paul, St. Justin Martyr, and St. Augustine
- **GROUP SEVEN:** The Jewish Rhetorical Tradition

Presentation Two
- **GROUP ONE:** Rhetoric and the Renaissance
- **GROUP TWO:** Rhetoric and the Enlightenment
- **GROUP THREE:** Rhetoric and Symbols
- **GROUP FOUR:** Rhetoric and Ethics
- **GROUP FIVE:** Rhetoric and Feminism
- **GROUP SIX:** Rhetoric and the Contemporary World
- **GROUP SEVEN:** The African American Rhetorical Tradition
COMM 382: Individual Presentation
Due: Per syllabus.
Length: Five (5) minutes.

The individual presentation assignment is designed to provide students with a forum for reporting the results of a rhetorical analysis of a contemporary artifact (advertisement, film, political speech, religious sermon, television show, etc.). NB: As with the group presentations, grades will take into account both content and delivery.

Content:
Each student will present a well organized five (5) minute analytical speech examining a contemporary rhetorical artifact. This analysis should draw upon rhetorical theories discussed in class and in our text. In addition, students must cite five (5) peer reviewed academic journal articles. A typed outline with all cited sources referenced per the APA style manual will be turned in prior to each presentation. If you reference a source, it must be cited in your speech, and if you cite a source it must be referenced.

Delivery:
NB: The same criteria used to judge group presentations will be used to assess individual presentations (for which, see page 4). Speeches that are well planned and rehearsed in advance do not exceed the maximum number of allotted minutes. Thus, I will deduct a full letter grade from any speech that exceeds five (5) minutes, and an additional letter grade for each additional minute over the maximum allotted time.