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ENG 5011-001: Studies in Composition and Rhetoric: The Rhetoric of Place, The Place of Rhetoric

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Summer 2006, English 5011

Studies in Composition and Rhetoric: The Rhetoric of Place, The Place of Rhetoric

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Course Overview:

Tarvers and Moore assert that “in some cases (and some departments), rhetoric, perceived as a theoretical discipline, has come to be privileged over composition, which is marginalized as pedagogy” (4). They suggest that they are “two sides to the same coin: rhetoric looks at the theoretical aspects of writing, while composition focuses more on praxis” (4). In this class we will investigate these assertions in relation to the history and application of rhetoric and, I hope, complicate arguments regarding the binary opposition between rhetoric and composition, while also exploring rhetoric as a situated discipline.

This course will immerse students in the history and theories of rhetoric and rhetorical analysis to provide new tools for addressing the multiple texts read in graduate classes and in life. If we begin from the premise that every speech act/text act communicates a purpose or condition, we also recognize that those acts/artifacts are situated, interpretive, and public. The meaning they communicate depends on the situation in which the artifact exists and is read. This meaning also depends on the “reader” who interprets the artifact and the act it represents (as well as the origin of the act and artifact). And the act—since it is rhetorical—is public and is meant to communicate in some way for some purpose and audience.

Texts for Class:

Rhetorical Criticism, 3rd edition

Composition Studies in the New Millenium

Post-Process Theory: Beyond the Writing-Process Paradigm

Course Packet

Your own texts
Assignments:

• **Reading Responses**

These one-page, single-spaced (with MLA-style parenthetical citations, reading responses are perhaps the most important writing you will do in this class because they will help you to think through the readings, and they will form the basis for your contributions to discussions. You will write six reading responses during the course of this class.

Please include the following in each response: A title—this will signal to your readers that you have a clear focus. A clear reference to the title and author of the piece you’re referring to. An epigraph, or a brief block quotation from the assigned reading—to demonstrate close reading and to bring readers into your response. A question, or a series of questions raised in the course of the reading. A response to the quotation and the questions it raises.

Note: Please keep all responses with my instructor comments (and/or peer feedback) in a folder/notebook. You will also be asked to lead the class discussion during one class, based on your (and your peers’) reading responses.

Grades will be assigned as follows:

**An A Response:** Has an original title that signals that you have a clear focus. You begin with an epigraph—a key quotation from the reading); you offer both a personal and critical reading of the significance of the quotation you’ve selected. You avoid summary and say something insightful about the reading. Your writing has been “crafted”—that is, carefully constructed with clear, grammatically correct prose and no distracting typos.

**A B Response:** May have many of the markers of the A response, but the explanations for why you selected your quotation are less developed. You summarize at times instead of showing insight. There may be a few typos/grammatical errors.

**A C Response:** Lacks focus; has no or unconnected title, a number of writing errors (spelling, typos, and grammatical errors), little or no direct reference to our reading, not enough reflection/questioning/evidence to be considered a substantive response.

• **Rhetorical Analyses**

Rhetorical analysis offers multiple ways to investigate a text act, especially in relation to a tangible artifact of that act. The goal is to not only study an artifact for its qualities and features, but to also discover what an artifact teaches about the nature of rhetoric.
You will be reading about a variety of approaches to rhetorical analysis, including cluster criticism, fantasy-theme criticism, feminist criticism, generic criticism, ideological criticism, metaphor criticism, narrative criticism, pentadic criticism, and generative criticism and choose a different approach for each analysis. You will write three rhetorical analyses during the course of this class, one of which can build into a final project, if you so choose. Each of these analyses should be 3-4 pages long.

• **Proposal for Final Project**

This should be a formal proposal in memo form (addressed to me) in which you propose your project’s focus, the significance of your choice, and the means by which you will address your project’s focus. Your proposal should be (again) at least a full page, single-spaced.

• **Final Project**—The major written (and oral) work for the course is a project to be submitted during the last week of classes. The project (at least 10 page product) may be one of the following:

1. A substantial analytic document exploring an artifact like documentary film, a visual art work, a speech or editorial, columns or other types of articles in magazines, a children’s book, buildings, or a protest group (or person) in relation to one critical approach.

2. A bibliographic essay on a topic of special interest to you. Brook Horvath’s “The Components of Written Response: A Practical Synthesis of Current Views” (pp. 243-257 WTS—a handout) can serve as a model.


4. An essay for a specific journal or the text of a paper for a specific conference. If you choose this option, you need to be thinking about the issue in composition theory or history you want to explore and what you have to contribute to the conversation.
Grades:

10%---Regular Attendance and Class Participation

20%--Reading Responses

30%--Three Rhetorical Analyses

10%--Proposal for the Final Project

30%--Final Project and Presentation

Attendance: As graduate students, you are asked to arrive on time and fully prepared. If you miss more than two classes, your grade will drop a full letter with each consecutive absence. If you do not come to class (when in session) you will not pass. Please keep in mind that conference time is considered class time, as well.

Students with Disabilities: If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Plagiarism: The English Department states, "Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism -- 'The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work' -- has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of "F" in the course."
Tentative Course Calendar, Subject to Change
The Place of Rhetoric, the Rhetoric of Place

June

12 Introduction to the course and to course requirements and expectations. Introduction to rhetoric and rhetorical artifacts. Handout on documentary film.

14 A brief history of rhetoric reading from packet due to day. Practice Response due to this reading.

19 “Rhetoric and Everyday Life” and chapters 1 and 2 from Rhetorical Criticism (RC) due today. Response due to this reading.

21 Chapters 3 from RC and packet reading from Aristotle due today. Response due to this reading.

26 Chapters 4-7 from RC due today—One half of class will read chapters 4 and 5 and be prepared to present. The other will read chapters 6 and 7. Response due to this reading.

28 Chapters 8 and 9 due today—One half of class will read chapter 8. The other will read chapter 9. Response due to this reading.

July

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5 Chapters 10-13 RC due today. Response due to this reading.

10 Readings from Post-Process due today. Rhetorical Analysis due.

12 Readings from Post-Process due today.

17 Readings from Composition Studies in the New Millennium due today. Rhetorical Analysis due.

19 Readings from CS due today. Proposals for Final Projects due.

24 Readings from CS due today. Rhetorical Analysis due.

26 Peer Reviews and Conferences for final projects.

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August 2 Final Projects due—Present Final Projects