

COMM 321-001: Rhetorical Theories
Boise State University
Communication Department

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Course Website: <http://www.commstudy.com/321-001.html>

Office: Communication Building, C-104

Office Hrs: **M:** 1:30-2:30 pm **F:** 12:00-1:00 pm

& by appointment

Course Description: An examination of theories concerning the complexity of interaction among ideas, messages, and people, including analysis of various message strategies. This course focuses on the theories that add to our understandings and investigations of rhetoric throughout history. We will survey the Ancient roots of rhetorical theory and discuss these theories as they are conceptualized, interpreted, and applied in the contemporary world. You will gain experience as both a rhetorician and a rhetor as we explore various rhetorical theories and their implications for how we understand the world.

Program Learning Outcomes: This course supports the following: PLO1) Employ relevant theories, perspectives, principles, and/or concepts that influence communication; PLO3) Demonstrate competent communication practices for different purposes and across contexts; and PLO4) Engage in socially responsible communication across cultures.

Course Learning Outcomes: (1) Understand a variety of rhetorical theories and their main concepts; (2) Understand how rhetorical theories inform analyses of rhetoric both academically and “in the world”; (3) Synthesize and analyze rhetorical texts through the lenses of a variety of rhetorical theories; (4) Apply various rhetorical concepts, theories, and perspectives to various texts and within a variety of contexts.

Required Text:

Smith, Craig R. *Rhetoric and Human Consciousness: A History*, 5th ed. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2017. ISBN-13: 978-1-4786-3454-6; ISBN-10: 1-4786-3454-5

Supplemental Readings (Links Posted on Course Website):

Aristotle. *On Rhetoric* (350 BCE). Available at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.1.i.html> [Book I, Parts 2 & 3]

St. Augustine. *On Christian Doctrine* [*De doctrina Christiana*] (397 AD). Available at

<http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/jod/augustine/ddc4.html> [Book IV, Chapter 1-6, 9-13, 17, 19, 22, 26-29]

Bacon, Francis. *The Advancement of Learning*. London: MacMillan and Co., 1898. Available at

<http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/adv2.htm#1> [Book II, Section XVIII, Parts 1-9]

Bitzer, Lloyd. "The Rhetorical Situation." *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 1 (1968), 1-14.

Burke, Kenneth. *A Grammar of Motives*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1945. [Intro & Part I-Chapter 1]

Campbell, George. *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. [Chapters VII & X]

Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *De Oratore* (55 BCE). Available at

<http://www.archive.org/stream/cicerodeoratore01ciceuoft#page/196/mode/2up> [Book II, Sections II (p. 201-203); IX (p. 223-227); XV (p. 243-247); XVI (p. 247-251); XXXIV (p. 303-305); XXXV (p. 305-307)]

Confucius, *The Analects* (500 BCE) Available at <http://classics.mit.edu/Confucius/analects.html> [Section 3, Part 15]

Corax & Tisius Dialogue. Available at <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/corax&tisias.htm>

Horne, Charles F. *The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East, Vol. II: Egypt*. New York: Parke, Austin, &

Lipscomb, 1917. [Ptahhotep Excerpt pp. 62-78. – written approximately 2200 BCE]. Available at

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/ptahhotep.html>

All readings are to be completed **BEFORE** each class period under which they are listed on the course website. *Be sure to bring the text and all relevant readings to class on the day they are discussed.*

Attendance: Class attendance is important and expected as a vital part of understanding material through class discussion and participation in class activities. If you know you will be missing class in advance, a discussion prior to the absence is strongly suggested. For illness, an e-mail no later than the end of class is required to be considered for any make-up work.

At the beginning of some class periods, I will pass around a sheet with your names on it. Be sure to sign next to your name to receive credit for that day. If you come in late, it is your responsibility to sign up with me *after* class. This sheet will be the official attendance document for the course and determine whether or not you receive participation points for that day. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get the notes and any additional information presented on that day *before* you come to office hours. Your participation grade is highly correlated with your attendance – if you are not in class, you cannot participate.

Mobile Devices: Due to the large number of mobile devices in our daily lives, I unfortunately must now include consequences of failing to respect this class as a “disturbance free zone.” You are *always* expected to turn your notification sounds OFF when you are in this classroom (this does not mean it is on vibrate, making noise against your notebook in your bag when someone next to you is trying to concentrate). It also means that you may not read or send texts during class at any time. All personal mobile device use unrelated to what we are immediately doing in class is *prohibited*. If there is a pressing reason for your phone to be on vibrate, please be sure you can answer it as discreetly as possible *outside the classroom*.

When other students are presenting, this is of utmost importance (just like in the “real world,” there is a time and a place to make sure your phone is silenced!). If another student is presenting in front of the class and your device becomes a distraction in any way, you will lose your attendance for the day. If your device becomes a distraction during YOUR presentation, you will lose your attendance for the day and lose points from your presentation grade.

Assignments: All assignments are due during the class period listed on the syllabus. **Late work is not accepted**, nor are unexcused absence make-up or extra-credit assignments allowed. Make-up work can be arranged for legitimate absences (e.g., verified health condition, participation in university-sponsored activities, serious family emergencies, and religious observances). If the absence is known ahead of time, you *must* make arrangements before the date the assignment is due. This class will include group work, homework, and participation in activities; you are expected to participate in all of these with your highest level of integrity, preparation, and effort.

Grades: In this course, you will be required to turn in homework and participate in all activities. You will specifically be responsible for contributing to your assigned discussion lead group presentation in addition to regularly participating in your classmates’ presentations week-to-week. You will have one midterm examination and a final paper that analyzes a persuasive rhetorical act that integrates the concepts, theories, understandings, and methods addressed in this class. Your final paper will address a particular personal, social, institutional, or political context that is conducive to analyzing persuasion and will be discussed in greater detail later in the semester.

Your final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Participation: Homework & In-Class Activities (ex. Impromptu writing; oral assessment activities)	100 pts.
Discussion Lead	100 pts.
Midterm Exam	200 pts.
Final Topic Proposal	100 pts
Peer Review Workshop	50 pts
Final Paper	100 pts
Final Exam	100 pts
Total	750 pts.

The letter grade for the course will be assigned as follows:

A+	720-750	B+	645-674	C+	570-599	D+	495-524		
A	705-719	B	630-644	C	555-569	D	480-494	F	0-449
A-	675-704	B-	600-629	C-	525-554	D-	450-479		

Your work is expected to be of high quality, demonstrating a genuine understanding of the subject matter. The following offers insight into how I grade.

A is outstanding. *Such work presents sophisticated, complex, and intellectually challenging argument. Resources are adroitly used to explore the thesis. Papers and presentations are structured and delivered in a way that successfully employs standard form. It takes intellectual risks and succeeds in them, exploring topics thoroughly and within the prescribed time or page limit. The A paper or presentation concludes by exploring the assumptions and implications of the thesis and argumentation (rather than merely summarizing previous points), drawing significant and insightful conclusions out of the analysis that has been presented.*

B is commendable. *Often similar to A work, it may offer slightly less complex or intellectually engaging argument. It is fairly successful in its use of analysis. The B paper or presentation does more than fulfill the assignment by going beyond a routine response and shows evidence of thought and planning; it takes risks and succeeds fairly well, showing originality and intellectual enthusiasm. Oftentimes, the B paper or presentation lacks the polish or sophistication of the A paper or presentation or does not have the same success in organization or argumentation.*

C is acceptable. *This work adequately fulfills the assignment in a routine way. Although it engages the topic and offers a thesis argument, it may not offer a fresh or challenging approach. It needs to delve deeper with analytical questions and approach the topic more imaginatively. The delivery and organization are acceptable but not thoughtfully or carefully constructed. The C paper or presentation often tries to prove rather than explore an argument or interpretation. The supporting materials become merely a means for substantiating a thesis instead of serving as a tool for further exploration of the issues raised in the thesis. Often, supporting materials are not convincingly used in support of the thesis. In addition, the conclusion does not move much beyond the initial thesis.*

D is deficient. *The D paper or presentation may be similar to the C paper or presentation but not as completely argued. The thesis is often bland or does not present a clear argument. Supporting materials are often poorly used or left unexplained. There are often serious organizational flaws or problems with the logic of the arguments and conclusions. In spite of these flaws, however, the D paper or presentation does address the topic and attempts to construct an argument with support.*

F is failing. *Although there can be many reasons for not receiving credit, the most common are: (a) summary without an argument or interpretation of the supporting materials, (b) absence of a thesis argument, (c) serious misreading of the text or absence of supporting materials, and (d) plagiarism of outside materials. Plagiarism, as will be discussed later, will minimally result in an F in the course, and also possible expulsion or formal academic reprimand.*

I am always happy to discuss the evaluation of your work. If you believe that I have made an error in grading your paper or presentation, please bring your concerns to my attention. **I will not discuss grades during or after class or via e-mail.** To discuss a grade change I expect you to (a) bring your paper or presentation comments to your meeting with me and (b) have reviewed your feedback and prepared a coherent dissent to the comments provided. I will reevaluate the paper or presentation on the condition that I also may find errors that I did not catch in the initial grading process. Your grade, therefore, is subject to gain and/or lose points in this process. Please be aware that any discussion not contesting a grade is ALWAYS welcome and very much encouraged to allow for future improvement.

Academic Misconduct: All students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the Boise State University Student Code of Conduct, available on the following webpage: <http://deanofstudents.boisestate.edu/student-code-of-conduct/>

It specifically reads: “The University upholds the values of honesty, trust, fairness, civility, respect, and responsibility as the foundation for a successful academic environment. As a tool, the Student Code of Conduct will help promote growth and learning as students interact with their environment and accept responsibility for decision-making....

The term “**academic dishonesty**” may include cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty. All assignments submitted by a student must represent her/his own ideas, concepts, and current understanding or must cite the original source. Attempts to violate the academic integrity of an assignment do not have to be successful to be considered academic dishonesty...[please see website for a list of examples]...

The term “**cheating**” includes any action where an individual or group either carries out or attempts to carry out dishonest work and/or where an individual or group either assists or attempts to assist an individual or group to carry out dishonest work. If students are uncertain whether an action constitutes cheating, they have a responsibility to ask the faculty member for the course for clarification...[please see website for list of examples]...

The term “**plagiarism**” at its most basic level means to steal someone else’s words, composition, research, and/or ideas. Plagiarism is both cheating and theft. Given the seriousness of this offense, students have a responsibility to understand its meaning and implications for the academic community. Plagiarism can be committed in any type of assignment...[please see website for list of examples]...

Any student found to have committed, or attempted to commit, any of the following misconduct is subject to sanctions outlined in the Student Code of Conduct...[see website for specific procedures and sanctions]”

Educational Access Statement: Students with registered disabilities needing accommodations to fully participate in this class should contact the Educational Access Center (EAC). All accommodations must be approved through the EAC prior to being implemented. To learn more about the accommodation process, visit the EAC’s website at <https://eac.boisestate.edu/new-eac-students/>.

Boise State University Firearm Policy: Idaho law permits concealed carry of firearms on the Boise State University campus by some students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Other than qualified law enforcement officers, only persons who have been issued and are in possession of an Idaho enhanced concealed carry license are permitted to do so. Firearms must remain concealed at all times. If a firearm becomes visible it is a violation of university policy and the person may be removed from campus. Please notify Boise State Campus Security (call 208.426.6911) or the Boise Police Department (call 911) for any reports of firearms on campus. Use of firearms is prohibited on campus.

Course Schedule: The following is a *tentative* course schedule for the next 17 weeks. Each day, we cover a new topic through a combination of lecture and discussion. The items in bold text are readings to be completed before the class period that are assigned (see website for specific daily assignments). *The readings are short and pointed, and imperative for effective class discussion and processing. Please make sure that you have all reading completed prior to the start of class.* Please check the class website for the weekly detailed assignments and due dates: <http://www.commstudy.com/321-001.html>. **Be sure to visit the website before each week to find out the daily reading assignments as well as check for any announcements, notes from your professor, or changes to the general schedule below.**

<u>Week 1</u> <i>What is Rhetoric?</i> <i>What is Theory?</i>	Aug 26-28	CH 1-An Introduction to Rhetorical Theory; Bitzer (1968) HOW TO READ (& UNDERSTAND) AN ACADEMIC ARTICLE
<u>Week 2</u> <i>The Ancients:</i> <i>The Sophists</i>	Sep 2-4	NO CLASS MONDAY (LABOR DAY) CH 3- The Development of Rhetorical Theory in Greece; Corax & Tisius (5th Century BCE) WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THEORY IN ACADEMIC ARTICLES?
<u>Week 3</u> <i>The Ancients:</i> <i>Egyptians & Chinese</i>	Sep 9-11	Preface (pp. xi-xiii); Ptahhotep (2200 BCE); Confucius (500 BCE) [Excerpt] WHAT ARE SOME NON-WESTERN CONTRIBUTIONS TO RHETORICAL THEORY? LIBRARY ACTIVITY
<u>Week 4</u> <i>The Ancients:</i> <i>Aristotle</i>	Sep 16-18	CH 4 – Aristotle’s <i>Rhetoric</i>; Aristotle (350 BCE) [Excerpt] HOW DID ARISTOTLE CONTRIBUTE TO RHETORICAL THEORY?
<u>Week 5</u> <i>The Ancients:</i> <i>The Romans</i>	Sep 23-25	CH 5 – The Roman Rhetorical System; Cicero (55 BCE) [Excerpt] HOW DID THE ROMANS EXPAND RHETORICAL THEORY?

<u>Week 6</u> <i>Christianity & Rhetoric</i>	Sep 30-Oct 2	CH 6 – The Fall of Rome & Rise of Christianity; Augustine (397 AD) [Excerpt] WHAT DID THE AUGUSTINIAN TURN AND THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD PROVIDE RHETORICAL THEORY?
<u>Week 7</u> <i>The Transition to Modern Rhetoric</i>	Oct 7-9	CH 7– The Renaissance of Rhetoric (p 192 top; pp 195-208 “Florence, the Humanists, & the Practice of Rhetoric”; pp 210-211 “Erasmus”; pp. 213-217 “Protestant Revolt” & “Luther”); CH 8 – Epistemology & the Modern Rhetorics (pp. 235-253); Bacon (1898) [Excerpt] WHAT WAS RHETORIC’S ROLE DURING THIS TRANSITION?
<u>Week 8</u> <i>Modern Rhetorics</i>	Oct 14-16	CH 8 –Epistemology & the Modern Rhetorics (pp. 253-262); Campbell (1776) [Excerpt] WHAT IS THE FOCUS AND CONTRIBUTION OF MODERN RHETORICAL THEORY?
<u>Week 9</u> <i>Rhetoric & Burke</i>	Oct 21-23	CH 2 –Rhetorical Dimensions of Myth & Narrative (pp. 17-22); CH 11 – Identification & Ideology (pp. 316-317 “Freud, Marx, and their Followers”; pp. 321-322 “The Theory of Identification”); CH 12 – Kenneth Burke’s Expansion of Rhetoric (pp. 339-341; pp. 343-344 “Locating Motives”; pp. 347-349 “Rhetorical Frames” & “Symbolic Action”; pp. 351-354 “The Pentad”); Burke (1945) [Excerpt] HOW DOES KENNETH BURKE REVOLUTIONIZE RHETORICAL THEORY & ENABLE CRITICAL/IDEOLOGICAL RHETORICAL THEORY TO EMERGE?
<u>Week 10</u> <i>Rhetoric As...</i>	Oct 28-30	CH 16 – Rhetorical Consciousness WHAT DOES RHETORICAL THEORY HELP US TO UNDERSTAND/EMPHASIZE ABOUT THE WORLD?
<u>Week 11</u> <i>Midterm Exam</i>	Nov 4-6	MIDTERM EXAM
<u>Week 12</u> <i>Thinking through Final Papers</i>	Nov 11-13	FINAL PAPER TOPIC PROPOSAL Q&A FINAL PAPER TOPIC PROPOSAL DUE
<u>Week 13</u> <i>Final Paper Prep</i>	Nov 18-20	INDIV PAPER WORK; ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS (REQUIRED)
<u>Week 14</u>	Nov 25-27	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK
<u>Week 15</u> <i>Final Paper Prep (cont)</i>	Dec 2-4	PEER-REVIEW WORKSHOP (REQUIRED) FINAL PAPER DUE
<u>Week 16</u> <i>Final Exam Prep</i>	Dec 9-11	FINAL EXAM Q&A
<u>Week 17</u> <i>Final Exam Week</i>	Dec 16	FINAL EXAM - MONDAY, DECEMBER 16th, 12:00-2:00PM

Assignments: There are three major components to this class beyond weekly readings, participation, and homework:

1. **Discussion Lead:** You will be responsible for leading discussion during ONE week of class this semester. This will be a group activity resulting from a sign-up sheet distributed in the beginning of the semester. This discussion should thoughtfully engage your classmates in an attempt to synthesize the major theories, figures, and ideas discussed during the week. You should provide an example of a rhetorical text that can be analyzed and thoughtfully understood in a new way by using ONE of the theories we have discussed that week. You should devise an activity for the class to engage in their own *brief* analysis of this text and generate discussion around how their analysis aligns and/or differs from your own. A more detailed assignment sheet and evaluative rubric for this activity will be provided in the beginning of the semester.
2. **Final Paper:** Your final paper in this class will focus on explicating a specific rhetorical theory. You will be expected to use scholarly sources outside of class readings to help you articulate your chosen theorist's definition of rhetoric, explanation of how rhetoric is relevant "in the real world," and detailed explanation of the specific parts s/he deems important to understanding rhetoric in his/her perspective. You will need to apply that particular rhetorical theory as a frame for understanding of a chosen rhetorical text in a particular way. You are required to turn in a paper topic in Week 13 to begin focusing your paper and provide an opportunity to get feedback about your ideas before turning in the final draft. You are also required to participate in a peer review workshop of your paper in Week 15 (detailed information forthcoming). ***A detailed assignment sheet for the Final Paper and all its components will be handed out in class and discussed in Week 12, immediately following completion of the Midterm Exam.***
3. **Midterm & Final Exams** – Your midterm and final exams will test your knowledge of important concepts discussed in class, theories addressed and discussed in our readings and class discussion, and your ability to apply these theories to draw conclusions about the evolution of rhetoric over time and historical circumstance. The exam will be in an essay format.

The midterm exam will test your abilities in 4 general areas in conjunction with a 300-level course: (1) your objective knowledge from readings and class discussions (ex. terminology, concept characteristics, etc.); (2) your ability to explain relevant course concepts, theories, strategies, and terminologies; (3) your ability to connect theories to "real world" situations; and (4) your ability to explain how rhetorical theories discussed in the class throughout the semester have emerged and adapted over time and circumstance.

The final exam will test your ability to clearly and coherently synthesize knowledge about the specific rhetorical theory you chose to discuss in your final paper in relation to other rhetorical theories discussed in the course.

We will discuss the specific format of both the midterm and final exam closer to their scheduled dates.

Remember—explore your interests. Challenge your understandings. Learn new things. Most importantly, have fun making new discoveries as you think about the world around you in new ways!