



LOYOLA

UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

COMM 367: Rhetorical Criticism Spring 2023 Syllabus

Course Title:	Rhetorical Criticism
Course Number:	COMM 367-20W
Credit Hours:	3
Semester:	Spring 2023
Meeting Day:	MWF, 8:15 a.m. – 9:05 a.m.
Location:	School of Communication – Room 014
Instructor:	Carrie O'Connell
Email:	coconnell8@luc.edu
Office Hours:	Monday, 9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

COURSE INFORMATION

Prerequisite: Pre-requisite: UCWR 110 with a grade C- or higher Prerequisites: COMM 100 & 175 or 201, UCWR 110

Note: This is a writing intensive class. A grade of C- or better in UCWR 110 is required to enroll.

Catalog Description: This course examines theory, research, and application of critical methods for analyzing historical and contemporary persuasive discourse.

Outcomes: Students will be able to analyze rhetorical situations and critically assess efforts to respond to them.

Course Objectives: This is a capstone and writing intensive course designed to improve students' reading, writing, and critical thinking skills for communication as a discipline. By learning about and doing Rhetorical Criticism, students will learn crucial skills they will need as practitioners through methods for engaging in formal and systematic analyses of texts and artifacts in public social life.

The purpose of this course is to augment students' analytical skills through reading and writing about popular discourses that continue to shape everyday ideology, social opinions and policies. Signs, symbols, and signifiers are everywhere, and this course will assist students in identifying them and analyzing them. By doing so, this goal will assist students in engaging the public as both audience members and consumers and producers of information. Each of these skills will prepare students as professionals and civil citizens.

It is our responsibility as citizens who exist together in a society to see and understand how rhetoric navigates our everyday lives and the people around us.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand and analyze the interactions between texts and contexts.
- Be self-reflexive and introspective about your own rhetorical skills by applying the concepts learned in class to your writing.
- To apply a range of methods and heuristic vocabulary from the lectures and textbook to your own writing.
- Fully understand the degree to which rhetoric governs, constructs, maintains, and even challenges everyday reality.
- Prepare students for how to collaborate and constructively engage with their peers.

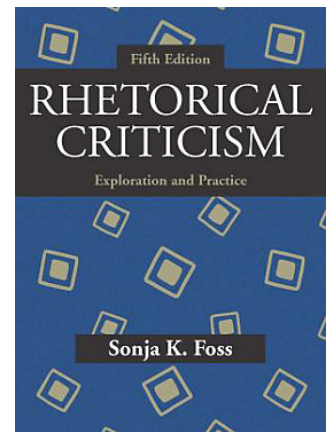
REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND MATERIALS

Textbook: Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration & Practice
(Required) 5th edition (2017)

Author: Sonja K. Foss

Notes:

- You can acquire an earlier version of this textbook, but it will be your responsibility to account for any changes to the readings.
- The latest edition **is available through the Loyola bookstore or through an online provider of your choice.**
 - <https://luc.follettdiscover.com/courses/COMM.367/terms/1232/division/DFLT/materials/9781478634898/details>



Occasionally, I will provide additional readings in the form of PDFs provided to you in Sakai, however **NO ADDITIONAL TEXTBOOKS ARE REQUIRED.**

Additional Supplies and Equipment:

Students should have access to a Loyola email account and Sakai because communication and information about the course will be sent via these methods.

Instructional Modalities:

This class is lecture-based and will be taught in-person Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in Corboy Law Center room L09. Each week, you will participate in class discussion as well as complete individual and group assignments.

All written assignments will be submitted to Sakai—*nothing will be handed out and/or submitted physically.*

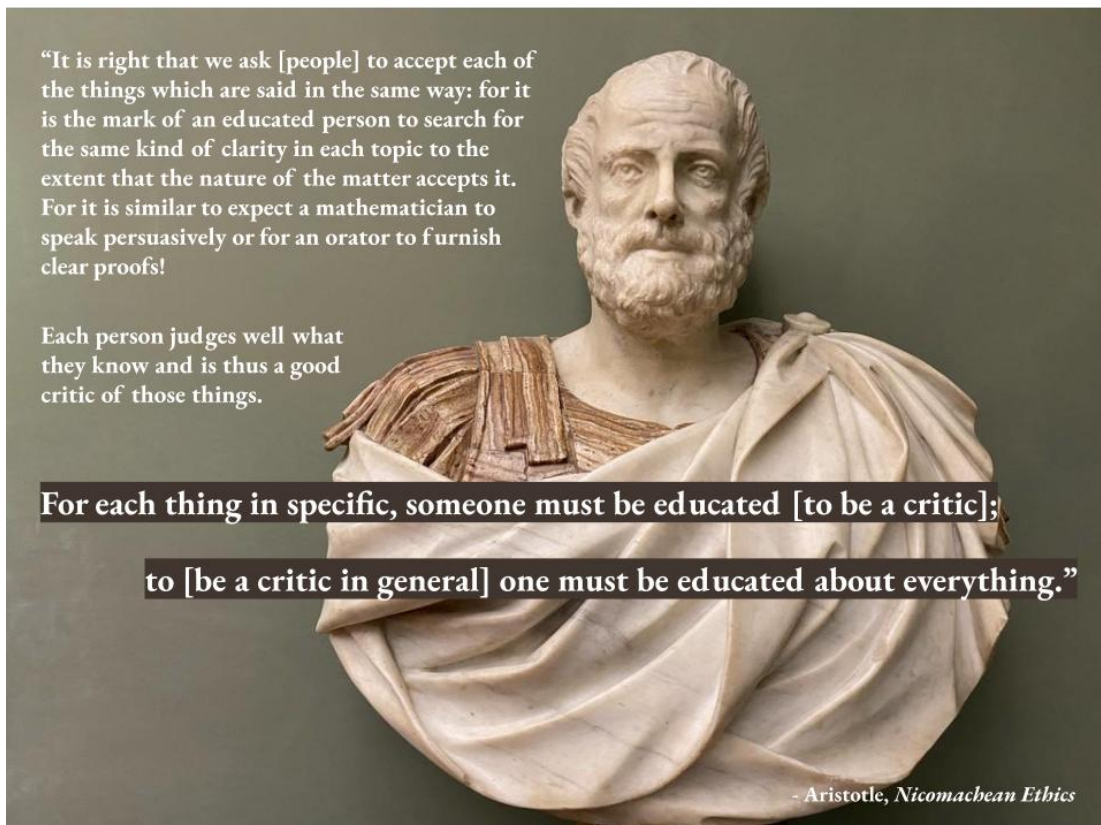
Please review the mask policy for LUC and in-person meetings (below under “Course Policies”). All appointments and meetings beyond our scheduled class time (e.g., office hours) can take place either in-person or on Zoom.

COURSE POLICIES

Participation/Critique and Involvement

Active participation in all discussions and critiques is essential. Critiques are the fundamental exercise in developing your skills as a critical thinker and rhetorician. It is in this arena where interaction and collaboration with your peers determines the success of your work.

Professionalism means that you communicate clearly and respectfully with your professor and peers, and that you are committed to producing high quality work. In addition, it also means you must coordinate your work and personal business around your class schedule.



Classroom Etiquette

- Arrive on time. I understand that being late once in awhile happens, but please do not make a habit of this or your tardiness may negatively impact your attendance and participation.
- Class discussions in class should be comfortable and respectful. **As is the nature of the course, we will be addressing current issues of importance, and I expect absolute professionalism at all times whether we are having casual conversation or structured discussion.**
- Cell phones are awesome, and I encourage use of tech (laptops, tablets, mobile phones) in the classroom for research purposes. That said, please be professional with your tech use, and take care not to be distracted by these tools.

Late Work

I understand that unmitigated circumstances may cause students to miss assignments or in-class work. For this reason, students are expected to communicate with me directly about submitting make-up work. Please note, however, that papers and homework may be downgraded by 10% for every (class session) day late.

Privacy and Defamation

I realize that this is course that deals with contemporary communication topics, and you may be personally well-versed in social media. If you choose to communicate regarding this course on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, Storify, etc., please remember to use discretion. Inappropriate communications have the potential to become privacy issues for class members and/or the instructor, as well as defamation risks for yourself. Absolutely no photography or video recordings are permitted during class sessions unless otherwise authorized by instructor for ADA purposes.

Grade Book

Assignment scores will be posted in the grade book no more than one week after the assignment has been submitted. Please check the grade book in Sakai frequently to stay abreast of your class standing.

Face Masks

Masks covering **both the mouth and nose** must be worn at all times by students, faculty, and staff while on campus and inside any building, ***regardless of vaccination status***. If you do not wear a mask, you will be asked to leave the classroom and will not be allowed back in class unless or until you wear a mask. If you have forgotten your mask, you may pick one up from one of the student information desks on campus during the first two weeks of campus. Students who do not comply with the mask wearing policy will be reported to the Dean of Students. **Eating and drinking is not allowed in classrooms due to the mask policy.**

Communication with Instructor

My preferred outlet for communication is in-person immediately preceding and following class or during **Office Hours (Mondays, 9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.)**. I **strongly** urge you to talk with me about your essays, class work, or any aspect of this class at any time. I can help you generate ideas, proofread drafts, and answer any questions you may have. If you have any questions, I do expect you to communicate with me. I will do everything in my power to make this a comfortable and meaningful experience.

Email policy

I reachable by email Monday – Friday between 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., which means I use that time (when not teaching) to check email and respond. I will return emails in the order they are received and within a 24-hour period Monday – Friday, meaning if you send an email at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, you will have a reply by 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, barring any major and unexpected circumstances. Any email received after 5 p.m. on Friday will be returned the following Monday.

Attendance & Participation

This is a communication course, which means *student involvement is essential*. Repeated unexcused absences will negatively impact your final grade. In-class debates, or other in-class activities that require group involvement may NOT be made up unless you have clear, dated, and specific documentation (e.g., doctor's note).

If you have a chronic medical condition that you think may interfere with your performance in class, please visit the Student Accessibility Center early in the semester or with the first onset of symptoms. If you are experiencing a personal dilemma, such as a family crisis or emergency, speak with me as soon as possible.

Student Accommodations

Any student that requires special accommodations or accessibility for this course—including for online exams and assignments—should provide documentation from the Student Accessibility Center confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course format and content; however, it is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and course expectations.

Managing Life Crises

If you are experiencing a crisis pertaining to your personal, physical or mental well-being, you have access to the Loyola University Wellness Center, which includes emergency and crisis care for mental health, group counseling, and self-assessment tools. For more information, visit: <https://www.luc.edu/wellness/mentalhealth/emergencycrisiscare/> or call 773-508-8883. Similarly, I encourage you to contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE referral (LUC.edu/csaa) for yourself or a peer in need of support.

If you are experiencing mental or emotional distress beyond your ability to manage safely right now: The Wellness Center has a service for students who are in crisis and need immediate assistance to speak to counselors and to receive crisis consultation, information on emergency resources, or even be directed to the Emergency Department, if appropriate. This service is available by calling **773-508-2530, Option 3** after hours, which includes weekends and holidays.

Academic Integrity

Students who commit an act of plagiarism or academic dishonesty, whether deliberately or accidentally, will still be held responsible. Ignorance of academic rules, or failure to fact check work, sources and citations, is not an acceptable defense against the charge of plagiarism. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others **without proper acknowledgement of the sources**.

For more information on standards for academic integrity at Loyola, visit: https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml

REQUIRED COURSEWORK AND GRADE SCALE

Required Coursework & Grade Distribution		
Rhetorical Analyses	100 points (4 short essays x 25 pts each)	Students will rhetorically analyze (4) written or visual / mediated artifacts – (2) assigned by the instructor and (2) of their choice. Each rhetorical analysis must be between 350-500 words (1.5–3 pages), double-spaced, and adhere to MLA or APA style (student’s choice).
Midterm Short Essay	100 points	For the Midterm essay, students will analyze a visual artifact using rhetorical analysis and decoding strategies. The essay must be between 750-1,000 words (3-5 pages), double-spaced, and adhere to MLA or APA style (student’s choice).
Final Research Paper	200 points - Topic Proposal: 25 pts - Lit Review / References: 25 pts - Rough Draft: 50 pts - Final Paper: 100 pts	Each element of the final research paper will have its own prompt. The final paper must be between 2,000-2,500 words (10-12 pages) and be formatted in MLA or APA style.
Chapter Presentation	50 points	Individually or in pairs, students will lead discussion on one of the textbook chapters by summarizing the key points, providing QTP analysis, and incorporating an example from contemporary culture.
Attendance and Participation	50 points	Occasionally, you will be asked to engage in discussion questions in Sakai and participate in in-class activities. All of these tasks are considered class work and count towards participation. To meet attendance and participation requirements, you also must regularly attend all class sessions and contribute to the overall class discourse.
TOTAL	500	

Grade Scale	
A: 100-94	D+: 69-67
A-: 93-90	D: 66-63
B+: 89-87	D-: 62-60
B: 86-83	F: 59-0
B-: 82-80	
C+: 79-77	
C: 76-73	
C-: 72-70	

Explanation of Assignments:

Rhetorical Analysis Papers: Your goal in this rhetorical analysis is twofold: summarize by extracting central ideas and *review the artifact by interpreting and analyzing it*. As you read the article, think about *what* (what the essay says) and *why* (why is the author choosing to write, organize, argue, etc. the way she/he is). As you write start to discuss HOW the author is doing what he/she is doing? How is the author achieving his/her purpose? How successful is the author at doing this?

Midterm Essay: Your task for the midterm essay is to choose a visual artifact (advertisement, news photograph, fine art piece) and using Stuart Hall's concepts of encoding / decoding, extract meaning from the visual artifact by:

1. identifying the dominant hegemonic, negotiated, and oppositional readings, and
2. performing a rhetorical analysis of the artifact.

Final Research Paper: For your final research paper, you will perform a rhetorical analysis of a long-form artifact of your choice. Examples of long-form artifacts include films (rather than images), novels or larger non-fiction texts (rather than essays), and advertising campaigns (rather than a single advertisement). The type of artifact is up to you, but must be approved by the instructor. You will choose an appropriate rhetorical analysis strategy that fits the artifact you choose (Neo-Aristotelian, Feminist, Fantasy, Narrative, Ideological, etc.) to perform the analysis.

Final papers should be 2,000 – 2,500 words (10-12 pages) in length, double-spaced, 12 pt. font (Times New Roman or the like), 1-inch margins, etc. You will submit your final paper online via Sakai during the two-hour window of our final exam period (see below). Essays must be formatted in either MLA or APA style (student's choice). You may also use the Online Writing Lab at Purdue (OWL) for reference:

- [APA Style Guide](#)
- [MLA Style Guide](#)

Chapter Presentation: In pairs (or individually if preferred), students will lead discussion on one of the chapters / rhetorical critique approaches by summarizing the key points of the chapter, providing Question, Thought, Provocation (QTP) analysis, and including an example of a contemporary unit of analysis that would be appropriate for the critical approach being discussed. Chapter presentations will take place on Mondays and cover chapters 4-12. Sign-ups will take place week 2.

Participation and Attendance: Your success in this class is contingent upon your participation and attendance. This means **active engagement** in class and in discussion on Sakai. **Active engagement** is defined as participation in discussions, as well as the submission of weekly assignments.

****Each written assignment will have its own dedicated prompt, posted to Sakai at least 4 weeks in advance of the due date.****

Course Calendar – Spring 2023

COMM 367: Rhetorical Criticism

MWF, 8:15 a.m. – 9:05 a.m. | School of Communication (SOC) 014

Part 1: The Classical Period / Understanding Rhetorical Criticism			
Date	Topic	Readings	Deliverables
1/16	MLK Day – No Class		
1/18	Introduction and Welcome! - Syllabus Review - Course Calendar		
1/20	Rhetoric – An Introduction		
1/23	Week 2 Lecture Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Classical Period • Rhetorical Appeals • Writing as Technology 		
1/25		Handouts: - “Phaedrus” (Plato)	
1/27		Handouts: - “Plato’s Pharmacy” (Derrida)	
1/30	Week 3 Lecture Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhetorical Criticism 	Chapter 1: The Nature of Rhetorical Criticism	<i>**Last day to withdraw without a "W" grade.</i>
2/1		Chapter 2: Doing Rhetorical Criticism	
2/3		Handouts: - “Lifeboat Ethics: A Case Against Helping the Poor” (Hardin)	
2/6	Week 4 Lecture Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional Form Rhetorical Criticism 	Chapter 3: Neo-Aristotelian Criticism	
2/8		Watch (in-class): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nixon’s “Silent Majority” speech 	
2/10		Chapter 3: “Convention Wisdom – Traditional Form: The President’s Message of November 3, 1969”	

Part 2: Critical Approaches

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Deliverables</i>
2/13	Week 5 Lecture Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cluster Criticism Textual Analysis 	Chapter 4: Cluster Criticism	Chapter Presentation
2/15		Chapter 4: “Crisis Leadership and Hurricane Katrina: The Portrayal of Authority by the Media in Natural Disasters”	
2/17		<u>Activity (in-class):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of media reporting of COVID-19 	DUE: Rhetorical Analysis #1
2/20	Week 6 Lecture Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fantasy-Theme Criticism Thematic Analysis 	Chapter 5: Fantasy-Theme Criticism	Chapter Presentation
2/22		<u>Handouts:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Developing a Method of Critical Thematic Analysis for Qualitative Communication Inquiry” 	
2/24		Chapter 5: “Coping with Loss: U2’s ‘One Tree Hill’”	DUE: Research Paper: Topic Proposal
2/27	Week 7 Lecture Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feminist Criticism Spectatorship, The Gaze, Power 	Chapter 6: Feminist Criticism	Chapter Presentation
3/1		<u>Handouts:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Practices of Looking” - Excerpts (Sturken & Cartwright) “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (Mulvey) 	
3/3		<u>Activity (in-class):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of Pride & Prejudice (2005) 	DUE: Midterm Essay (Due in Sakai by 11:59 p.m.)
3/6 – 3/11	Spring Break – No Class		

Date	Topic	Readings	Deliverables
3/13	Week 9 Lecture Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic Criticism • Descriptive Analysis 	Chapter 7: Generic Criticism	Chapter Presentation
3/15		Chapter 7: “The Transference of Power: A Generic Description of Handover Rhetoric”	
3/17		Handout: - “ <i>The Address Book: Origins</i> ” (Mask)	DUE: Rhetorical Analysis #2
3/20	Week 10 Lecture Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic Criticism, cont’d. 	Film (in-class): <i>Push</i>	
3/22		Film (in-class): <i>Push</i>	
3/24			DUE: Research Paper: Literature Review and Working References
3/27	Week 11 Lecture Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideological Criticism 	Chapter 8: Ideological Criticism	Chapter Presentation
3/29		Handouts: - “The rediscovery of ‘ideology’; return of the repressed in media studies” (Hall) - “Encoding / Decoding” (Hall) - Visual Rhetoric – Thinking About Image as Argument” - excerpts	
3/31		Activity (in-class): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of photojournalism artifacts 	
4/3	Week 12 Lecture Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metaphoric Criticism 	Chapter 9: Metaphoric Criticism	Chapter Presentation
4/5		Activity (in-class): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of political campaigns 	DUE: Rhetorical Analysis #3
4/6 – 4/10	Easter Break – No Class		

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Deliverables</i>
4/12	Week 13 Lecture Topics: • Narrative Criticism	Chapter 10: Narrative Criticism	Chapter Presentation
4/14		Handouts: - “The Yellow Wallpaper” (Perkins Gilman) - “Shooting an Elephant” (Orwell)	
4/17	Week 14 Lecture Topics: • Pentadic Criticism	Chapter 11: Pentadic Criticism	Chapter Presentation
4/19		Handouts: - “A Modest Proposal” (Swift)	
4/21			DUE: Research Paper: Rough Draft
4/24	Week 15 Lecture Topics: • Generative Criticism	Chapter 12: Generative Criticism	
4/26		In-class: One-on-One Meetings	
4/28		In-class: One-on-One Meetings	DUE: Rhetorical Analysis #4
5/5	Final Class Session: Thursday , May 5 from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.		DUE: Final Paper (Due in Sakai by 11:00 a.m.)

Notes:

- Readings must be completed **prior to the class session** for which they are scheduled.
- Written essays must be completed **by 11:59 p.m.** on the day for which they are scheduled.
- I will provide written feedback on all rhetorical analyses, short essays, and the final paper proposal and literature review. Verbal feedback during our scheduled one-on-one meetings will be provided for your final paper rough drafts.