Course Description

This course counts toward the rhetoric methodology requirement for a PhD; it is not a simple survey of 1960s rhetoric, though students will increase their familiarity with texts, issues, and themes from that period. By studying a combination of theoretical pieces, rhetorical criticisms of rhetoric from the 1960s, and selected primary texts from the period, students should come to understand and be able to articulate how and why the rhetoric of the 1960s substantially altered rhetorical scholarship and its view of its mission and approaches. By closely analyzing texts and a wealth of instances of rhetorical criticisms trained on rhetoric from the 1960s, the course cultivates students’ ability to produce their own well-argued, full-length original rhetorical criticism, grounded in both intrinsic and extrinsic investigations, that is related to the themes of the course and fits with this revised understanding of rhetorical scholarship.

This course contributes to the 15-credit post-baccalaureate Rhetorical Leadership Certificate (stand-alone credential) or Concentration (as part of a Communication graduate degree). For details, please talk to the instructor or visit http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/rhetlead/ or the department website.

Course Materials

All course materials will be on D2L or full citations will be provided so that students may locate the readings themselves. There are no materials to purchase.

“Projected” Assignments

First Day Paper on Wingspread Reports

In January of 1970 some of the era’s most eminent scholars of rhetoric met at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin, to launch a discussion of what an essential outline of a conception of rhetoric that was useful in the second half of the twentieth century might look like. This gathering was followed in May of 1970 with a second larger meeting of scholars, organized into three committees (Scope of Rhetoric and the Place of Rhetorical Studies in Higher Education, Advancement and Refinement of Rhetorical Criticism, Nature of Rhetorical Invention) and charged with refining, amplifying, and translating the Wingspread ideas into recommendations meeting the needs and potentialities of a humanistic study of rhetorical communication. The three essays from Bitzer and Black’s 1971 volume The Prospect of Rhetoric that are part of the readings for the first class day are the three committee reports that resulted. The work of this group was obviously and profoundly influenced by events of the
1960s and how they suggested that traditional rhetorical approaches might fall short of accounting adequately for how rhetoric on the ground was being or might be practiced.

After reading and reflecting on those three essays, write a short (2-3 pages, double-spaced) paper identifying and justifying what you see as the most important and enduring themes or recommendations across these three committee reports and speculating on how they specifically bear the imprint of rhetoric from the 1960s. Each student will read his or her paper to the class to provide a basis for discussing these issues and readings. **Submit a copy to the D2L Dropbox before the first class meeting.**

**Intrinsic Analysis Notes on an Assigned Text**

To refine our essential close reading skills for approaching texts, at the first class meeting each student will be assigned to one of the speech texts for the second class meeting. After reading and reflecting on the Campbell and Burkholder reading for the second, she or he should prepare typewritten notes in outline or similar form (1-2 pages, single-space) that identify, characterize, and point to examples of the most important key patterns in the text’s rhetorical choices that might help the class best understand how this text operates and achieves its effects rhetorically. All evidence should be intrinsic to the text itself, and you are not simply reporting the thesis or content but looking for how textual choices operate in pursuit of making its message persuasive. Patterns might include rhetor persona, positioning of purpose, tone, structure, implied audience, supporting materials, argument strategies, language choice that can be identified in the text and of which you can textual examples. Each student will use her or his notes during the second class to help guide the class in analyzing that speech. **Submit a copy to the D2L Dropbox before the second class meeting.**

**Deconstructing a Rhetorical Analysis Paper/Discussion**

*Thanks to Dr. John Jordan, who authored this assignment, for permission to use it in this class.

It cannot be stressed enough that, in a course that counts toward a methodology requirement, there is a stronger emphasis on means than content, the “how” over the “what.” It is still important to get “the point” out of rhetorical analysis readings—what they say—but it is just as vital to understand how the author got you to that point. Painters study works of art, directors study films, and writers study literature. They do so not to copy but to learn, appreciate, and draw inspiration. Good critics study published rhetorical analyses to learn and refine their craft or art, too. In fact, rhetorical criticism is learned not through formulas or lecture but by training one’s sensibilities through exposure to a wealth of critical models or examples (strong and weak) and rhetorical concepts, conscious analysis of those models, and much practice at using, combining, developing, and improvising with what one finds there to more richly experience and use other texts. (If you haven’t previously read Barry Brummett, “Rhetorical Theory as Heuristic and Moral: A Pedagogical Justification,” *Communication Education* 33 (April 1984): 97-107, you should.)
This assignment consists of two elements. The first requires you to select an eligible class reading and write an analysis of it as an example of rhetorical criticism. At an early point in the semester, we will decide who is analyzing what reading on the schedule. Use these questions as guides to direct your attention or develop others: How is the thesis introduced? How is the object of analysis justified? What theoretical perspective is taken, and why? What features of the object of analysis are highlighted, and what explains those choices? Where does the analysis seem to run into trouble, and how does the critic try to work through it? What moments of brilliance are achieved, and how does the critic communicate those effectively? What conclusion is offered, and how does it situate the reader? How is the essay structured to maximize insight and understanding without being cumbersome? Your purpose is to explain not just what the article is about, but how it is assembled purposefully and usefully as an act of rhetorical criticism, including its strengths and weaknesses. Your task is not merely to summarize the article, but to analyze it as a demonstration of the craft we seek to master.

The second element in this assignment is for you to facilitate the class discussion of your article. To do this, you will post a one-page analytical outline of your article to D2L. This outline should include a paraphrase of the article’s thesis, a summation of the article’s major arguments, and a brief statement of the pros/cons of the article based on your first element’s analysis. In addition, you will need to develop three engaging questions about your article that are designed to spark conversation among your colleagues. Finally, you will be responsible for leading the discussion of those questions and that article at class. The rest of the class is charged with being good discussants. Submit the paper to the D2L Dropbox and the analytical outline with discussion questions document to the D2L Discussion section before 9:00 a.m. on the Wednesday preceding the Friday on which your article is scheduled. There will be automatic and hourly accumulating point deductions on the whole project for an analytical outline with discussion questions document posted to D2L after 9:00 a.m. on the appropriate Wednesday; the paper portion will not be accepted after 9:00 a.m. on the appropriate Wednesday except under the emergency terms outlined in Course Standard 4, so start well ahead of time, knowing that there are always non-emergency delays along the way, and plan accordingly.

Semester Project (in 4 stages):

A. **Project Proposal.** (Include in D2L Dropbox with your proposal an electronic copy of the text(s) or artifact(s) you will analyze. Appropriate texts or artifacts include, but are not limited to: speeches, newspaper articles, personal papers to which there is public access, transcripts of interviews, rhetoric surrounding national or international events, films, photographs, museum exhibitions, lyrics of music, government publications, performances, pamphlets. Do not propose a project unless you have constant access to the text(s) throughout the semester.)

In this short, but well-considered proposal (2-3 pages), propose a tentative thesis for a course project that is related to the themes of the course and which you will research and work on for the remainder of the semester. This proposal should explain how your thesis will help you answer a critical rhetorical question that is of shared interest to the class and field and should identify and justify the text(s) or artifact(s) your project will analyze.
in light of that thesis. Remember that this project is not just about self-enlightenment; you are responsible to develop and support a rhetorical argument that (given the developments spurred in rhetorical scholarship by 1960s rhetoric) other rhetorical scholars will find illuminating and provocative. Do some serious thinking and research before writing, and be realistic. Do not go with a whim but interrogate your own assumptions about what the project should do and why.

Avoid stating a thesis such as “I want to analyze the 1964 presidential campaign” or “I am interested in Goldwater’s presidential campaign rhetoric” or “I will argue that Goldwater’s presidential campaign was a precursor to other conservative campaigns.” These are too broad and unfocused. The subject they identify would not necessarily have to be pursued from a rhetorical criticism approach. Even if the subject is rhetoric, the result or argument is not automatically a rhetorical criticism; the scholarly approach in both purpose and method is what makes it so (review the Wingspread Report on Rhetorical Criticism). These also only state a topic area, not an argument or a rhetorical concern of shared interest. A better thesis would be “I argue that the Goldwater campaign film ‘Choice’ rhetorically projected a subject position that helped constitute the subsequent New Right’s social conservatism, even though such social conservatism was anathema to and resisted by the fiscally conservative, libertarian-leaning Goldwater.”

This more specific thesis raises (for readers’ inspection as well as the author’s) a rhetorical argument, puzzle, and theoretical critical approach to a designated text that is not obvious and would be of interest to other readers and make them smarter when encountering other texts in the future, not just illuminate this text; it provides direction for the author and suggests where justifications, research, and analysis need to be strengthened.

Look at this course’s critical analysis readings (not the primary speech texts) and those from other rhetoric courses or rhetorical analyses articles that you have encountered for additional examples on how to frame and discuss the importance of a topic, argument, and thesis, to justify critical approach and the text selection’s adequacy in making the case, engaging a rhetorical readership’s interest, and stating the project’s implications.

B. Intrinsic Analysis Paper

This paper (8-12 pages) is a detailed close reading of the text(s) or artifact(s) that you have chosen. This is a re-creative and evidence-gathering phase of the project in which you are looking for patterns in the artifact(s) in order to characterize it (or them) as fully as possible. The paper should be guided by a preliminary argument or interpretation that reflects your project’s likely thesis and implications. It should establish priorities as well as indicate what is characteristic of and distinctive about the artifact(s).

C. Critical Perspective and Historical/Cultural Analysis Paper

This paper (8-12 pages) further advances your project’s thesis by identifying, developing, and justifying your chosen artifact(s)’ context in two senses that are foundational for your original project: the theoretical critical perspective of your larger argument and the
relevant historical/cultural context of your chosen text. This is also an evidence-gathering phase and testing ground for your final argument. With respect to a theoretical critical perspective, you should research prior criticism on your topic and the rhetorical concepts/theories that seem especially pertinent given your intrinsic analysis and your analysis of the appropriate historical/cultural context for your artifact in light of your larger argument. Your critical perspective may be modeled on other critics’ work, may blend approaches, or may be your own creation, as long as you explain and justify your choices within an argumentative review of the relevant scholarly work. This paper explains the appropriateness of your perspective to the text(s) that you are analyzing. In terms of historical/cultural context, select and advance an argument for an appropriate rhetorical context for your artifact(s) in light of your argument, indicating its distinctive features. Relevant historical/cultural contexts might include historical events or conditions that allowed this phenomenon to take shape, prior and subsequent rhetorical action concerning a certain issue, the dynamics of the occasion, the audience[s], cultures, climate of opinion, or other texts. After reading this paper, your reader should understand the academic importance of the project as well as the historical/cultural relevance of the issue and your analysis of it. You should NOT do the actual critical analysis of the text(s) in this paper.

D. Full Critical Analysis

This paper (20–25 pages) is a full-blown work of criticism. It provides an interpretive argument about the artifact(s) you have chosen, and it integrates the intrinsic and historical/cultural analyses through your critical perspective and draws conclusions from the full-blown combination. This paper draws heavily on earlier work but does not simply string previous papers together; those were foundations or testing grounds for a coherently organized and well-argued case for your final rhetorical thesis and its significance and implications. Rather, insights from your earlier analyses are creatively blended and supplemented into a complete, polished piece of criticism; do not assume that the reader has read those earlier papers, and remember that not everything in those earlier papers will make the final into the finished product while new research that was not in the earlier papers will likely be needed. Present and justify your larger rhetorical argument, present and justify the text and its selection as a way to answer a critical rhetorical question that is of shared interest, situate the text theoretically and contextually, offer a thorough and directed analysis of the significant aspects of the text that advance the central argument, facilitate the readers’ understanding of your argumentative analysis and its future implications.

During the final class session, each student will deliver a polished, well-rehearsed 10- to 12-minute (depending on how many students are in class; we’ll decide closer to the final session) oral presentation of the analysis that would be appropriate to an academic conference. The presentation should feature the thesis early and justify the argument’s larger importance and relevance to the audience. The presentation will sketch your argument broadly, but with sufficient supporting details, and give listeners a satisfying conclusion and sense of the argument’s implications for the future. There will be discussion of and questions regarding the presentation.