

English 4312: Rhetorical Criticism
T/R 4:00-5:15
Fall 2017
Texas A&M University - Central Texas

Instructor: Dr. Jeff Kirchoff

Office: Founder's Hall 217C

Phone: 519-5773

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Office Hours: M/W 1:00 – 2:00 PM and T/R 2:00 – 3:00 PM; other times may be available by appointment

UNILERT (The Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University–Central Texas)
UNILERT is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in UNILERT through their myCT email account. Connect at www.TAMUCT.edu/UNILERT to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in UNILERT, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.

COURSE OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

Official Catalog Description

This course introduces students to rhetorical criticism. Through a survey approach, students will be introduced to a wide range of analytical tools and strategies to effectively describe, analyze, and interpret a wide range of discourse.

Dr. Kirchoff's Description

This class is intended to help you use prominent theories of rhetorical criticism to better recognize how people design symbolic forms (think photographs, speeches, memes, comics, monuments, short stories, poems, film, etc.) to facilitate rhetorical action. Put differently, we're dissect a tremendous variety of texts to see how they are structured to elicit a specific kind of response from a specific audience. As noted scholar David Zarefsky posits, in its most simplified form, rhetorical criticism invites individuals to ask "What is going on here [in this text]? Why does it [the text and the way the text is presented] matter?" Simply put, these two questions will be guiding our inquiry and interrogation of texts this semester. The tools of our interrogation will be a wide range of lenses from the body of scholarship known as rhetorical criticism.

This class focuses very specifically on *practical application* of rhetorical criticism, ensuring a thorough understanding of the ideas we discuss in class. As such, I am devoted to providing a range of low-stakes opportunities for students to practice using these lenses to analyze, criticize, and make new meaning from different text-types. Students need to be prepared to be active and engaged learners, which means participating in individual, small group, and large

group work and being attentive listeners during any kind of lecture. Additionally, there should be plenty of space to ask questions—and have said questions answered—throughout each class period, so do not hesitate to ask comprehension or clarification questions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should:

- Become familiar with the prominent tools, theorists, and texts of rhetorical criticism
- Be able to use a range of rhetorical criticism strategies to analyze and discuss a variety of texts
- Make connections between the various rhetorical criticism approaches
- Be comfortable using specialized vocabulary in rhetorical criticism

Communicating with Dr. Kirchoff

Email is the best way to reach me. I typically check my email at least once a day, and will make a good faith effort to respond to email within 24 hours of my receipt of your message. If you would like to meet in person, I am available during office hours, and am often amenable to appointments outside my regular office hours.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice (4th edition) by Sonja K. Foss. ISBN 9781577665861

Other readings may be required throughout the semester; if so, they will be provided by Kirchoff either in print, via email, or via Canvas.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Graded Work

Exercises: 30%

- For each lens we cover, there will be some kind of in-class “exercise” or “activity” that will require students to thoughtfully interact with and use said lens. These activities could range from in-class writing exercises to small impromptu presentations and just about everything in between. As these are designed to be completed in-class, directions for these exercises will be given to students on the day the activity is to commence. That said, there may be days we need to turn exercises into homework.

Attendance and Participation: 30%

- Participation is expected of all of us. Please come to class ready to ask questions, share ideas, and provide feedback to others. After each class period, through questions asked and ideas shared with others, I should be able to clearly tell that students completed the assigned reading. Pop quizzes, in-class discussions, take-home work, and so forth are all part of participation as well. Attendance is discussed at length in the “course policies” section; simply put, showing up to class on a regular basis is key to your success in this course. When you are not here, you cannot participate meaningfully and thus you lose out on some interaction that can facilitate your rhetorical education.

Paper One: 20% [DUE 10.31 at the start of class]

- An assignment sheet will be distributed at the appropriate time in the semester; however, I can briefly note that this is a 6-8 page paper that will use either “Cluster” or “Fantasy Theme” rhetorical criticism to analyze a symbolic form.
- This assignment will be largely graded using a slightly modified version of the criteria put forth by Sonja Foss (see pp. 17-19); details will be discussed when the assignment is distributed

Paper Two: 20% [DUE 12.12 at 5 PM CST]

- An assignment sheet will be distributed at the appropriate time in the semester; however, I can briefly note that this is a 6-8 page paper that will use either “Generic,” “Ideological,” or “Pentadic” rhetorical criticism to analyze a symbolic form.
- This assignment will be largely graded using a slightly modified version of the criteria put forth by Sonja Foss (see pp. 17-19); details will be discussed when the assignment is distributed

Grading Scale

90-100 = A

80-89 = B

70-79 = C

60-69 = D

59 and below = F

Note About Resources and Time Management

Please note that you have a bevy of resources at your disposal to help you with your work this semester. First and foremost, please know that I am here to help and answer questions. Utilizing my office hours to chat about course readings and course material is a great way to informally see how you’re doing with the material. Emailing questions about your work and how you are understanding it is perfectly acceptable. Secondly, please be aware that the Writing Center is an excellent resource made available to all TAMUCT students. Whether you’re struggling to come up with an idea, battling over how to wrap up your essay, or simply want an extra set of critical eyes to peruse your work, the Writing Center is there to help. I encourage each and every one of you to visit the Writing Center at least once during the semester.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not urge all of you to be very mindful of deadlines. Please do not wait until the last minute to (a) do course reading or (b) complete course writing. Studies have shown time and time again that the more time you allot yourself to complete projects, the more successful you will be.

Course Policies

Attendance: Because so much of the learning process takes place in the classroom, attendance is an integral part of this class. Additionally, I value all voices in the classroom and enjoy the dynamic a full class offers. That said, I understand emergencies do occur and that individuals

have a life beyond academia. Thus, students are afforded four “free” absences (the equivalent of two weeks of class); please note I do not need to know about the nature of your absence— just let me know ahead of time if you will miss class (a 24-hour notice is appreciated). For each absence after the fourth, the offending student’s “Attendance and Participation” grade will go down a full letter grade (e.g., five absences will mean the best possible “Attendance and Participation” grade will be a “B”). If a student has missed eight or more classes, a passing mark cannot be achieved for the course.

Students who fall asleep or spend an entire class period on their phone will be counted absent.

Respect for people’s ideas, thoughts, and questions are paramount to your success in this class. My goal is for everyone to feel welcome and comfortable this class, so please treat everyone in a courteous manner. This should be a friendly, positive (online) environment open to discussion and feedback. Bear in mind, though, that disrespect—towards peers or to the instructor—will not be tolerated in any form.

Email is a great tool for communication. However, I ask that when you send me an email to use a proper salutation (e.g. Hi Dr. Kirchoff), complete sentences, and identifying information. This is a matter of common courtesy. As I mention above, I will make a good faith effort in responding to email queries within 24 hours.

Late Assignments are not accepted unless prior arrangements have been made. This is a non-negotiable policy; however, if you have questions or are worried about completing an assignment on time, talk to me well before the due date and we can come up with a plan of action. Note: “well before the due date” does not mean 24 hours before the assignment is due. I generally like to hold these sorts of conferences a week ahead of the due date. If someone contacts me 24 hours before a project is due, my response may not be very favorable. This policy extends to daily/weekly work as well.

Plagiarism occurs when one person presents another person's words or ideas as her/his own. It is a serious offense that will result in an F for the course. Please see me if you have any questions concerning plagiarism.

PROGRAMMATIC ASSESSMENT

To ensure the learning outcomes are met in the English Department, there is a program-wide artifact collection process. To that end, some of the projects you complete for ENGL 4312 this semester may be used for programmatic assessment. Please note that all efforts will be made to keep your identity anonymous; as such, all identifying markers will be removed from your work if used for programmatic assessment. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Kirchoff.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR

--*Schedule is tentative and subject to change. To that end, some class periods may shift to*

“online”; however, fair notice will be given to each student.

--Be sure you read the sample analyses at the end of each chapter—we will be doing work with these for each lens we discuss

--As you can see, we will be spending three class periods on each lens. These classes will be a combination of lecture, small group work, large group work, and the graded individual activities discussed above.

8.29: Introductions and course overview

8.31-9.7: Neo-Aristotelian

Read Chapter 3 (Neo-Aristotelian Criticism) by August 31st

9.12-9.19: Cluster

Read Chapter 4 (Cluster Criticism) by September 12th

9.21-9.28: Fantasy-Theme

9.21: NO CLASS: Kirchoff out of town

Read Chapter 5 (Fantasy-Theme Criticism) by September 21st

10.3 and 10.5: Paper One Prep

Be sure to get your topics to Kirchoff by the end of the week

10.10-10.17: Generic

Read Chapter 6 (Generic Criticism) by October 10th

10.19-10.26: Ideological

Read Chapter 7 (Ideological Criticism) by October 19th

10.31-11.7: Pentadic

Read Chapter 10 (Pentadic Criticism) by October 31st

11.9 NO CLASS: Kirchoff out of town

11.14: Paper Two Prep

Be sure to get your topic to Kirchoff by the end of the week

11.16 NO CLASS: Kirchoff out of town

11.20 and 11.21: Conferences with Kirchoff [sign-up in class]

11.23 NO CLASS: Thanksgiving

11.28-12.7: Narrative and Metaphor

Read Chapters 8 (Metaphor Criticism) and 9 (Narrative Criticism) by November 28th

12.12 and 12.14: NO CLASS

PAPER TWO will be due 12.12 by 5 PM CST.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Students should assume that all course material is copyrighted by the respective author(s). Reproduction of course material is prohibited without consent by the author and/or course instructor. Violation of copyright is against the law and Texas A&M University-Central Texas' Code of Academic Honesty. All alleged violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

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TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

- Students are encouraged to save work to multiple locations (e.g. computer hard-drive and thumb drive); papers lost due to technological issues will not be a sufficient excuse for failing to turn in work.

Technology Support

For technology issues, students should contact Help Desk Central.

Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu

Phone: (254) 519-5466

[Web Chat](http://hdc.tamu.edu): <http://hdc.tamu.edu>

When calling for support please let your support technician know you are a TAMUCT student.

For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Drop Policy

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must go to the Registrar's Office and complete a drop request form.

Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the University Calendar for which the form must be completed, signed and returned. Once you return the signed form to the Registrar's Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled.

If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar's Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

Academic Integrity

Texas A&M University -Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives

for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student's academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

Access & Inclusion

At Texas A&M-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier free education. The Department of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the University's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Department of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information please visit <http://www.tamuct.edu/departments/access-inclusion>.

Tutoring

Tutoring is available to all TAMUCT students, both on-campus and online. On-campus subjects tutored include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111.

If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-519-5796, or by emailing Kim Wood at k.wood@tamuct.edu.

Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables TAMUCT students to log-in and receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in over forty subject areas. To access Tutor.com, go to the 'My Courses' tab in Blackboard.

University Writing Center

Located in 416 Warrior Hall, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University-Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10am-5pm Monday-Thursday. Students may arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing

tutor by visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available). Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process.

While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the University Writing Center is here to help!

If you have any questions about the University Writing Center, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu.

University Library

The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 72,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at TAMUCT are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On-campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.

Research assistance from a librarian is also available twenty-four hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the TAMUCT main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit <https://tamuct.libguides.com/>