

ENGL 4311: History of Rhetoric



Fall 2022

Modality: This is a blended course with face-to-face meetings in Founder's Hall 212 on Mondays from 12:30-1:45 p.m. and asynchronous activities throughout the week.

Instructor: Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr.

E-mail: bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu

Office: Warrior Hall 420A, University Writing Center, or WebEx Meeting

Office Hours: Walk-in or Email for an Appointment

TAMUCT Course Description: This course investigates the history of rhetoric from the origin of rhetorical studies in classical Greece and Rome through contemporary discussions of rhetoric in the digital age.

Dr. Bowles' Course Description: This course introduces students to the history of, and key concepts in, the study of rhetoric; to frameworks useful for the analysis of texts, events, communication, and other phenomena; and to the principles of rhetoric in the contexts of many media and cultures. The primary goals of this course are for students to develop expertise in the history of rhetoric, a vocabulary of key rhetorical terms, a firm grasp of major rhetorical concepts, the ability to critically evaluate texts and other communicative endeavors through various rhetorical lenses, an awareness of how media and culture shape rhetoric, and—most importantly—a keen understanding of how rhetoric influences how we interpret and experience reality.

Course Outcomes:

By the end of the semester, students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Summarize the history of rhetoric from classical Greece to the 21st century, including how various epistemological influences shaped rhetorical theory during different time periods
- Define and explain major rhetorical terms and concepts throughout the history of rhetoric
- Understand how the cultures we communicate in, and the media we communicate through, influence our rhetoric
- Analyze a variety of texts by applying key rhetorical terminology and concepts to produce meaningful interpretations and insights
- Articulate the various ways rhetoric influences our interpretations and experiences of reality

Required Textbooks and Materials:

- *The Rhetoric of Western Thought: From the Mediterranean World to the Global Setting (11th Edition)*, George McHendry, Jr., M. Elizabeth Thorpe, Jessica Kurr, James Golden, Goodwin Berquist, William Coleman, J. Michael Sproule, ISBN (13) # 9781524979133
- Various .pdf articles and selections from texts (available through Canvas)
- Access to a Computer (the university provides a number of computer labs)

Technology Requirements:

This course will use the A&M–Central Texas Instructure Canvas learning management system. We strongly recommend the latest versions of Chrome or Firefox browsers. Canvas no longer supports any version of Internet Explorer.

Logon to A&M-Central Texas Canvas [<https://tamuct.instructure.com/>] or access Canvas through the TAMUCT Online link in myCT [<https://tamuct.onecampus.com/>]. You will log in through our Microsoft portal.

Username: Your MyCT email address; Password: Your MyCT password

Grading Scheme: Various activities and discussion boards, two major tests, and three major written projects will comprise students' grades. The weights for each component are as follows:

Activities and Discussion Boards= 10%

Unit #1 Test= 10%

“Let Me, Let Me Update (Your Rhetorical Theory)! Reimagining Classical Rhetoric in the Modern World”= 20%

Unit #2 Test= 10%

“Rhetoric—It’s Everywhere! A Rhetorical Analysis of a Seemingly Trivial Text”= 20%

“Enter the Matrix! How Rhetoric Frames Reality”= 30%

Once you submit a final assignment (not a draft) through Canvas, it is the text I will grade, and you will not be given the opportunity to revise. Make sure that the text you are submitting is one you can be proud of and is the text you want me to grade. (If, for any reason, you believe you have submitted the wrong text, please contact me as soon as you submit to rectify the issue.) **Remember, once you submit—that is it!**

Posting of Grades: All assignments will be returned to you through Canvas as a .doc or as feedback in Canvas. When your assignments are returned as a .doc, you will receive your grade after the end comment in the comment box.

I do not use Canvas to calculate grades. Instead, I use a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. A sample of the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for this course is available on the “Syllabus” page of our course Canvas site so you can see how your grade is calculated. I will go over this the first day of class as well.

At any time, you are free to email me to ask me to send you the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with your grades inputted. I can also provide you with a rough estimate of where your grade stands at that time. However, be alert that as a result of the weight of various assignments, your grade can change substantially when major projects are submitted.

Activities: As this is a blended course, you will have various asynchronous activities to complete and—on certain weeks—artifact sharing and discussion boards to participate in. The activities you are asked to complete will vary substantially depending on the content being covered in class. However, you are expected to read the instructions for the activity carefully and complete all of the requirements of the activity within the parameters set forth. Your activities will be graded on a 0-100 scale. Mere participation does not ensure a 100—you are expected to offer quality work in order to receive an exemplary grade.

Discussion Boards: You will participate in discussion boards at other times as well. Most often, the initial discussion board topics and/or questions will be predetermined. Some weeks, however, they will be more wide open.

Throughout the week, you should contribute a total of at least three times (or as many times as the prompt indicates) to the discussion board, including making your first post by the date indicated. Your contributions should be roughly two to three paragraphs each, yet I will evaluate this across all of your posts. Thus, you can write longer posts and couple them with shorter posts, reply more succinctly to five or six classmates, etc. Furthermore, make sure to directly engage with what other students in the class are discussing and questioning. Your discussion board posts should form a cohesive thread and narrative with the discussions of your classmates. As with your activities, grades will be awarded on a 0-100 scale and will account for both your initial post as well as your contributions throughout the week.

Unit Tests: You will have two in-depth unit tests over the course of the semester. These unit tests will consist of a mixture of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions. For the essay questions, you will be given a choice of completing 1-2 questions from a selection of questions.

We will go over the material that will be covered on each unit test through review videos. Furthermore, the unit tests will be online, so you are allowed to use your textbook. Any of the readings, lectures, and/or class activities that occurred during the time frame being covered for the unit test are available to be drawn upon for the examination. Nevertheless, do not worry—if you are actively engaged in class, I will make sure that you perform well on these unit tests.

Class Attendance Policy: Attending class is vital if you are to get the most out of this course and to build a productive community of engaged learners. As a result, I do require that you have **no more than two uninformed absences** throughout the semester. You will lose points for every uninformed absence thereafter.

The distinction between uninformed and informed absences is critical here. An uninformed absence occurs when you do not contact me ahead of class (or immediately after) to alert me to your absence, do not provide a reasonable rationale for the absence, and do not discuss how you will engage with the material from the class that day in order to account for the absence. If you inform me of your absence, though, provide a reasonable rationale for the absence (in rare instances, I may ask for documentation), and discuss with me how you will engage with the material you missed, your absence will be considered an informed absence and will not be counted against you. I am more than willing to work with you if you miss class. **However, these issues cannot be dealt with retroactively at the end of the semester. This is your one and only warning.**



If you have more than two uninformed absences by the end of the semester, your grade will be penalized 10 points—an entire letter grade—for each unexcused absence beyond two. I will inform you when you have two uninformed absences; additionally, I will inform you each time you receive a 10-point penalty. You may contest any uninformed absence, yet you will need to provide tangible evidence as to how you informed me or why you were unable to inform me.

Lastly, incompletes should be reserved for unexpected, life altering situations that develop after the drop deadline. Students should drop a course should something happen that prevents them from completing the course ahead of the drop deadline. Failure to do so may result in failing grades on assignments or the course if missing work is not completed and submitted before the last day of the semester. Please let me know immediately if serious health or life issues prevent you from attending class or submitting assignments.



Class Civility Policy: This class will tolerate neither disruptive language nor disruptive behavior. Disruptive language includes, but is not limited to, violent and/or belligerent and/or insulting remarks, including sexist, racist, homophobic or anti-ethnic slurs, bigotry, and disparaging commentary, either spoken or written (offensive slang is included in this category). While each of you has a right to your own opinions, inflammatory language founded in ignorance or hate is unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately.

Disruptive behavior includes the use of cell phones or any other form of electronic communication during the class session (email, web-browsing, etc.). Disruptive behavior also includes whispering or talking when another member of the class is speaking or engaged in relevant conversation (remember that I am a member of this class as well). This classroom functions on the

premise of respect, and you will be asked to leave the classroom if you violate any part of this statement on civility.

However, please do feel free to engage in constructive criticism and debates. This policy is not meant to discourage disagreement or passionate conversation. We will be engaging in discussions and/or debates about a host of potentially controversial topics; it is not my intention to censor your opinions. Yet, I do feel it is important to foster an environment conducive to learning where no one feels threatened and/or not entitled to their opinion.

Remember, if you disagree with someone (including myself), always remember to argue against the **IDEA** the person is presenting—not the individual.

Late Work: While I understand that circumstances may arise that could prevent you from turning an assignment in on time, **I penalize late work severely! You will lose 10 points from your grade for each day that the assignment is late.** Here is a breakdown of how the penalties will be applied:

- 15 minutes–24 hours late= -10 points
- 24 hours, 1 minute–48 hours late= -20 points
- 48 hours, 1 minute–72 hours late= -30 points
- 72 hours, 1 minute–96 hours late= -40 points
- 96 hours, 1 minute–120 hours late= -50 points
- 120 hours, 1 minute–144 hours late= -60 points
- 144 hours, 1 minute–168 hours late= -70 points
- 168 hours, 1 minute–192 hours late= -80 points
- 192 hours, 1 minute–216 hours late= -90 points
- 216 hours late or more= 0 for the assignment

However, **I am always willing to discuss extensions ahead of time.** If you have a reasonable reason why you believe you should be entitled to an extension, either come see me after class, arrange to visit me in my office or the UWC, or e-mail me. **Once an extension is agreed upon in writing, the due date of the extension will become your new due date. Penalties will then only be incurred predicated off of the new due date.**

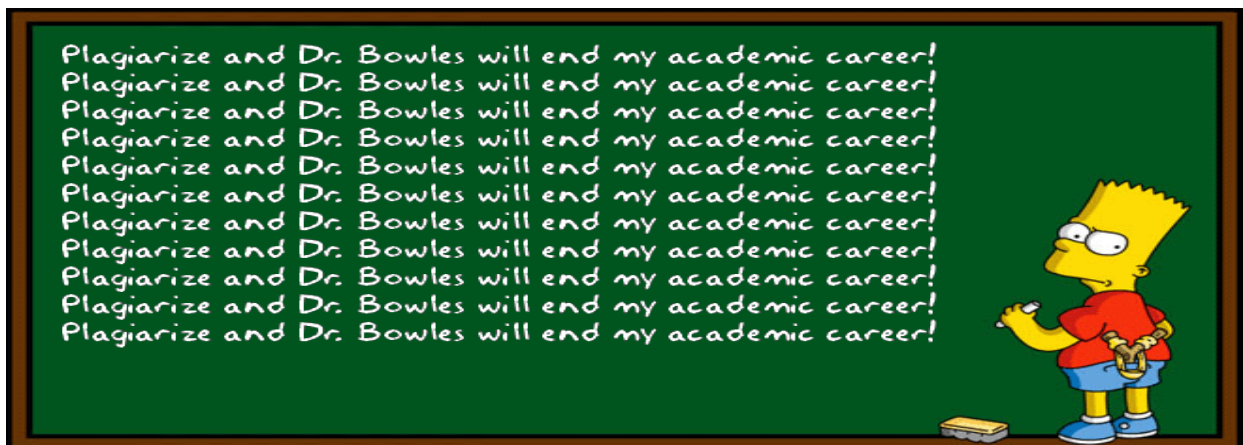
Academic Integrity: Texas A&M University–Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M–Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. All academic misconduct concerns will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

For more [information regarding the student conduct process](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html), [<https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html>].

If you know of potential honor violations by other students, you may [submit a referral](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=0), [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=0].

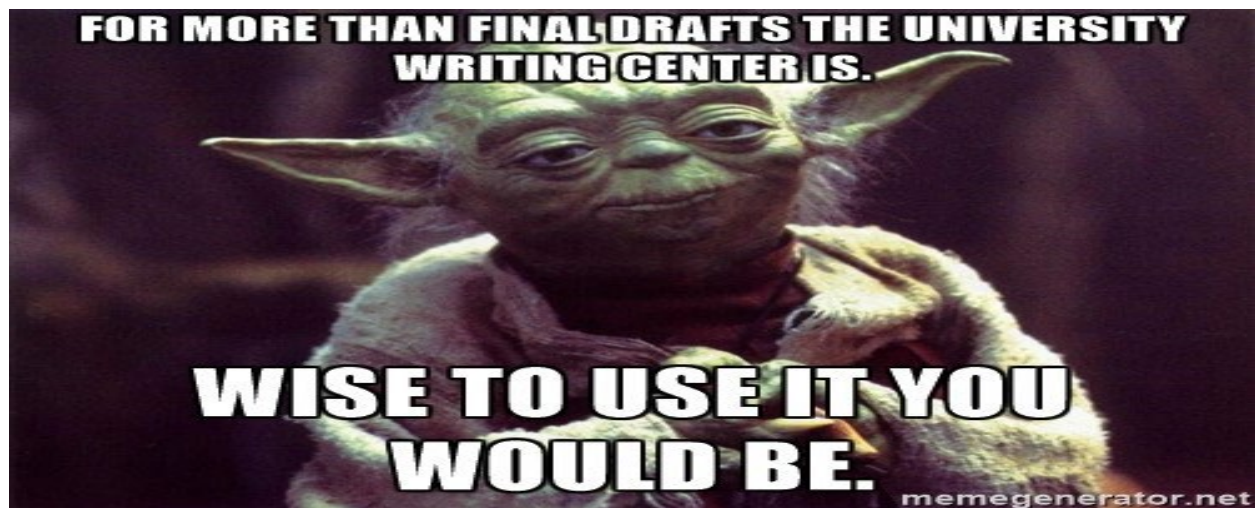
Class Plagiarism Policy: As an instructor, I operate by the CWPA (Council of Writing Program Administrators) definition of plagiarism: “In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer **deliberately** uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source.” The key here is deliberate—I do not want you to be so paranoid about plagiarism that it inhibits your creativity.

To that extent, any instance of “plagiarism” that **does not appear to be deliberate in intent** will be dealt with “in house.” You may be asked to revise; I may even deduct from your grade if this was a result of negligence. However, unless intentional, you will not fail merely as a result of plagiarism, nor will you be brought up on plagiarism charges.



That being said, **deliberate plagiarism will not be tolerated in any manner.** If you willfully steal someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledgment, or submit an assignment for this class that you submitted for another (without previously discussing it with me), **be forewarned—you will receive a 0 for the assignment, and I will pursue plagiarism charges with the utmost zeal!** Such behavior hinders your learning, is unfair to your classmates, is a violation of my trust, and—above all else—is highly unethical. **This is your one and only warning—you would be wise to heed it!**

University Writing Center: Located in Warrior Hall 416, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University–Central Texas (A&M–Central Texas) is a free service open to all A&M–Central Texas students. The hours of operation are from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday thru Thursday in Warrior Hall 416 (with online tutoring available every hour as well) with satellite hours available online only Monday thru Thursday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. and Saturday 12:00-3:00 p.m.



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 UWC is here to help!

Students may arrange a one-to-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by making an appointment via WOnline at <https://tamuct.mywconline.com/>. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu if you have any questions about the UWC, need any assistance with scheduling, or would like to schedule a recurring appointment with your favorite tutor.

Tutoring: Tutoring is available to all A&M–Central Texas students, both virtually and in-person. Student success coaching is available online upon request.

If you have a question, are interested in becoming a tutor, or in need of success coaching contact the Warrior Center for Student Success, Equity and Inclusion at (254) 501-5836, visit the Warrior Center at 212 Warrior Hall, or by emailing WarriorCenter@tamuct.edu.

To schedule tutoring sessions and view tutor availability, please visit [Tutor Matching Services](https://tutormatchingservice.com/TAMUCT) [https://tutormatchingservice.com/TAMUCT] or visit the Tutoring Center in 111 Warrior Hall.

Chat live with a remote tutor 24/7 for almost any subject from on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables A&M–Central Texas students to log in and receive online tutoring support at no additional cost. This tool provides tutoring in over 40 subject areas except writing support. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.

University Library & Archives: The University Library & Archives provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 400,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 96,000 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 A&M-Central Texas 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 24 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 virtually through WebEx, Microsoft Teams or in-person at the library. [Schedule an appointment here](https://tamuct.libcal.com/appointments/?g=6956) [https://tamuct.libcal.com/appointments/?g=6956]. 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 A&M-Central Texas 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 our [Library website](http://tamuct.libguides.com/index) [http://tamuct.libguides.com/index]

Canvas Support: Use the Canvas Help link, located at the bottom of the left-hand menu, for issues with Canvas. You can select “Chat with Canvas Support,” submit a support request through “Report a Problem,” or call the Canvas support line: 1-844-757-0953.

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

Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University–Central Texas SAFEZONE: SafeZone provides a public safety application that gives you the ability to call for help with the

push of a button. It also provides Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate emergency information quickly via push notifications, email, and text messages.

All students automatically receive email and text messages via their myCT accounts. Downloading SafeZone allows access to push notifications and enables you to connect directly for help through the app.

You can download SafeZone from the app store and use your myCT credentials to log in. If you would like more information, you can visit the [SafeZone](http://www.safezoneapp.com) website [www.safezoneapp.com].

To register SafeZone on your phone, please follow these 3 easy steps:

1. Download the SafeZone App from your phone store using the link below:
 - o [iPhone/iPad](https://apps.apple.com/app/safezone/id533054756): [https://apps.apple.com/app/safezone/id533054756]
 - o [Android Phone / Tablet](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.criticalarc.safezoneapp)
[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.criticalarc.safezoneapp]
2. Launch the app and enter your myCT email address (e.g. {name}@tamuct.edu)
3. Complete your profile and accept the terms of service

Online Proctored Testing: A&M–Central Texas uses Proctorio for online identity verification and proctored testing. This service is provided at no direct cost to students. If the course requires identity verification or proctored testing, the technology requirements are: Any computer meeting the minimum computing requirements, plus web camera, speaker, and microphone (or headset). Proctorio also requires the Chrome web browser with their custom plug in.

Other Technology Support: For log-in problems, students should contact Help Desk Central, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu
Phone: (254) 519-5466
[Web Chat](http://hdc.tamu.edu): [http://hdc.tamu.edu]

Please let the support technician know you are an A&M–Central Texas student.

Drop Policy: If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete the [Drop Request](#) Dynamic Form through Warrior Web.

[https://federation.ngwebsolutions.com/sp/startSSO.ping?PartnerIdpId=https://eis-prod.ec.tamuct.edu:443/samlssso&SpSessionAuthnAdapterId=tamuctDF&TargetResource=https%3a%2f%2fdynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com%2fSubmit%2fStart%2f53b8369e-0502-4f36-be43-f02a4202f612].

Faculty cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the Academic Calendar for which the form must be completed. Once you submit the completed 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 Accommodations: At Texas A&M University–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 Warrior Center for Student Success, Equity 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 Office of Access and Inclusion, WH-212; or call (254) 501-5836. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information, please visit our [Access & Inclusion](https://tamuct.instructure.com/courses/717) Canvas page (log-in required) [https://tamuct.instructure.com/courses/717]

Important information for Pregnant and/or Parenting Students: Texas A&M University–Central Texas supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and related guidance from US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. Students should seek out assistance as early in the pregnancy as possible. For more information, please visit the [Student Affairs](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/index.html) web page: <https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/index.html>. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these [requirements and guidelines](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf) online, please visit the website: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf>.

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and gender—including pregnancy, parenting, and all related conditions. A&M-Central Texas is able to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to pregnant and parenting students. All pregnant and parenting students should contact the Associate Dean in the Division of Student Affairs at (254) 501-5909 to seek out assistance. Students may also contact the University's Title IX Coordinator.

A Note about Sexual Violence at A&M-Central Texas: Sexual violence is a serious safety, social justice, and public health issue. The university offers support for anyone struggling with these issues. University faculty are mandated reporters, so if someone discloses that they were sexually assaulted (or a victim of Domestic/Dating Violence or Stalking) while a student at TAMUCT, faculty members are required to inform the Title IX Office. If you want to discuss any of these issues confidentially, you can do so through Student Counseling (254-501-5955) located on the second floor of Warrior Hall (207L).

Sexual violence can occur on our campus because predators often feel emboldened, and victims often feel silenced or shamed. It is incumbent on ALL of us to find ways to actively create environments that tell predators we don't agree with their behaviors and tell survivors we will support them. Your actions matter. Don't be a bystander; be an agent of change. For additional

information on campus policy and resources visit the [Title IX webpage](https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/compliance/titleix.php):
<https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/compliance/titleix.php>.



Artifact Collection: To ensure the learning outcomes are met in the B.A. in English program, there is a program-wide artifact collection process. To that end, artifacts from ENGL 4311: History of Rhetoric 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. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu.

Syllabus Change Policy: Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the grading scheme, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

ENGL 4311: History of Rhetoric

Major Projects

“Let Me, Let Me Update (Your Rhetorical Theory)! Reimagining Classical Rhetoric in the Modern World” (3-4 pages double-spaced)

While they were legends in their own time, and they were well ahead of the curve on rhetorical thought, many of the theories and concepts developed by the great minds of classical rhetoric are not entirely perfect. Time passes, knowledge increases and shifts epistemological vantage points, cultures change, etc. What was once innovative and fresh may have grown slightly less insightful over time. Every once in a while, a key theory and/or concept in rhetoric needs to be updated!

Reflecting on the rhetors, theories, and concepts you have engaged with during this first unit, which rhetorical theories and concepts stood out to you as problematic and in need of an update? Or were you a fan of a particular theory or concept but believed that it needs to be expounded upon considering different cultural contexts, media, current views, etc.? Your first step will be to identify a theory or concept that you believe is lacking in some critical way. Remember, this does not necessarily have to be an exercise in “hatin”—you can address a rhetor, theory, and/or concept that you are fond of yet you consider needs to be envisioned through a new lens. The possibilities are endless!

Next, you will want to do some research on how other scholars have analyzed and interpreted this rhetor, theory, and/or concept over the years. How has this classic rhetorical work been interpreted? What issues have arisen in the scholarly debate? Who have been some of the key scholars in the discussion? You do not have to be exhaustive with your research, but you should have a thorough understanding in regard to how this rhetor, theory, and/or concept has evolved over time.



After you have done your research, you will want to compose your argument for the update. First and foremost, you will want to assume an audience similar to yourself—someone just becoming interested in rhetoric. As a result, you will want to make sure to depict the rhetor’s work, to explicate the theory, etc. so that your audience has an in-depth awareness of this classical rhetor, theory, and/or concept. Once you have established this baseline knowledge for your audience, you will want to present your critique of the rhetor, theory, and/or concept. Why is the work of this rhetor problematic in a modern context? What aspects of the theory are

still quite apt today? Which aspects of the theory seem to cause issues? Why are these issues arising? Remember to engage with the scholarship to demonstrate the conversation around this rhetor, theory, and/or concept.

And, lastly, you will want to offer your update of the theory. How should scholars re-envision this rhetorical theory? What new ideas, concepts, modifications, etc. will make this particular rhetorical theory more apt for modern times? What did the original rhetor and/or rhetorical theory miss? Why is your update an improvement? Make sure that you make a clear and compelling argument for how your update re-envisions—and enhances—the rhetorical theory with which you are engaging.

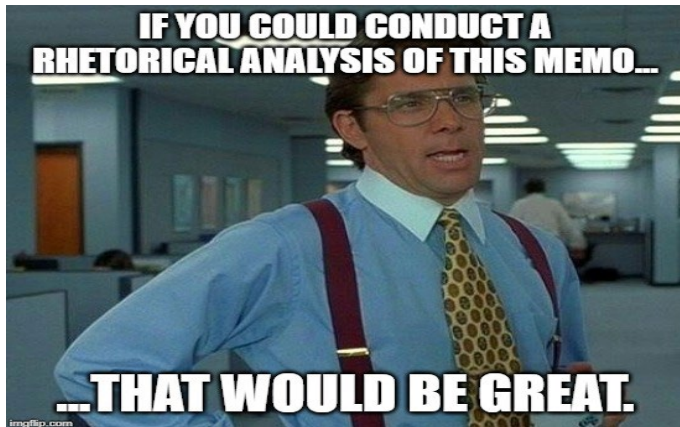
Your “Let Me, Let Me Update (Your Rhetorical Theory)! Reimagining Classical Rhetoric in the Modern World” project should be three to four pages double-spaced and include at least two outside sources (beyond the original rhetorical text and/or the textbook). Your update should be in MLA format and include a works cited page.

Assessment for this project will be predicated on how well you explicate the particular rhetorical theory for your audience, the strength of the critique you offer of the rhetorical theory, the manner in which you credibly engage the scholarship surrounding this rhetorical theory, the validity of your argument for the particular update you believe needs to be made, and the overall polished nature of your finished product (e.g. grammar, proofreading, MLA style, etc.). When I am done reading your “Let Me, Let Me Update (Your Rhetorical Theory)! Reimagining Classical Rhetoric in the Modern World” project, I will ask myself: *Does this suggested update of a classical rhetorical theory demonstrate a keen awareness of the rhetorical theory being examined as well as provide a valid update to the theory to address modern circumstances?*

**“Rhetoric—It’s Everywhere! A Rhetorical Analysis of a Seemingly Trivial Text”
(3-4 pages double-spaced)**

Rhetoric, unfortunately, tends to get a bad—and exceedingly narrow—rap. People disparage politicians for engaging in “rhetoric” rather than substantive policy debate (as if the two are somehow separate). Rhetoric is viewed as disingenuous. It belongs only to the realm of persuasion. However, this class is smarter—you realize that rhetoric is everywhere around you!

For this project, you are going to perform a rhetorical analysis of a text that is, at face value, inherently mundane—mostly devoid of persuasion or substance (e.g. business memos, government forms, written instructions, textbook chapters, etc.). You, though, are going to dig deeper. Look closely at the text. How does it employ language? Where, and for whom, is it produced? What meaning is the audience supposed to derive from it? Although it might seem inane, what values does it possibly convey to its audience? Take time to thoroughly inspect the text—there is probably more there than meets the eye!



Once you have thoroughly examined your text, you will want to begin composing your analysis. The best place to begin is probably the rhetorical situation for the text. What is the exigence for the text? Who is the audience? Are there constraints? Assume an audience interested in rhetoric but not necessarily familiar with the text under discussion. (Unless, of course, your text is so ubiquitous that everyone would know it.) Make sure you provide sufficient background for your analysis.

After establishing the background, you will next wish to discuss the various facets of the text that you believe are the most rhetorical. This can range from the language employed to the design of the text to the manner in which it circulates. At this juncture, you will want to draw upon the rhetorical theories and concepts we have learned in class in order to inform your analysis. Provide examples from the text and demonstrate how they align with various rhetorical theories. Make a convincing argument for how this text is operating rhetorically.

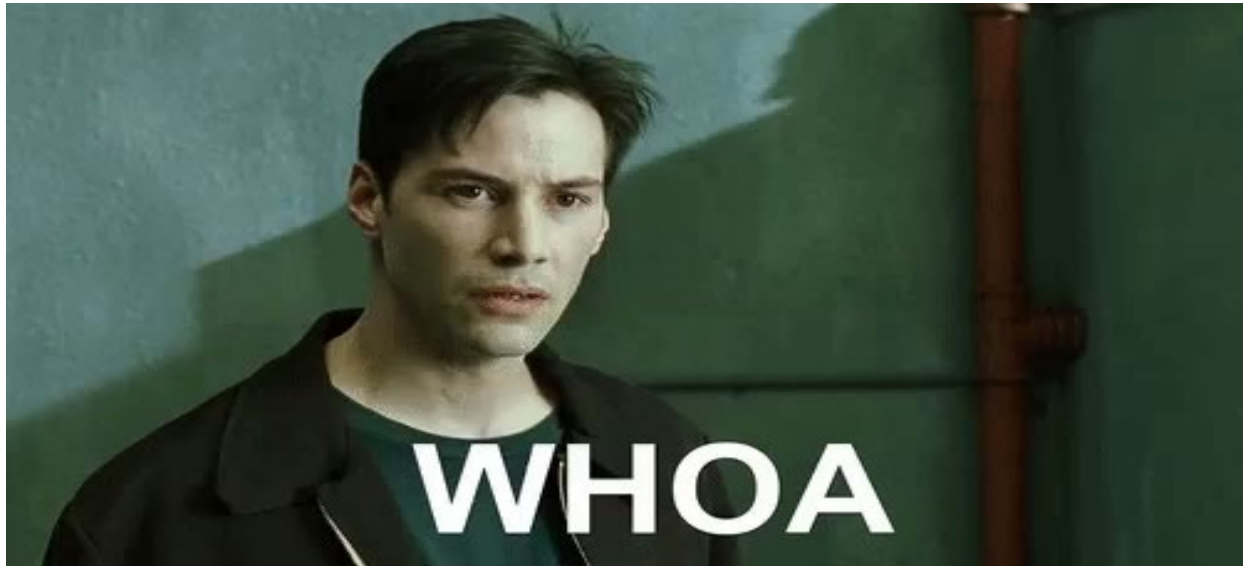
Finally, you will want to make an overall argument as to why this text should be considered rhetorical. Why is this text operating in a rhetorical fashion? Make sure to convincingly persuade your audience that they should view this text in a newer, more rhetorical light.

Your “Rhetoric—It’s Everywhere! A Rhetorical Analysis of a Seemingly Trivial Text” project should be three to four pages double-spaced and include at least two of the rhetorical theories we have covered in class so far. You may include outside sources if you wish; however, they are not required. Please place your rhetorical analysis in MLA format and include a works cited page.

When I assess your “Rhetoric—It’s Everywhere! A Rhetorical Analysis of a Seemingly Trivial Text” project, I will primarily be focusing on the manner in which you adequately depict the rhetorical situation for the text, the strength of your analysis of the various facets of the text, the aptness with which you apply various rhetorical theories to the text, the overall effectiveness of your argument for this text being rhetorical, and the overall polished nature of your finished product (e.g. grammar, proofreading, MLA style, etc.). In the end, the main question that will drive my assessment will be: *How convincingly does this rhetorical analysis argue that this seemingly innocuous text carries rhetorical value and influences its readers?*

**“Enter the Matrix! How Rhetoric Frames Reality”
(7-8 pages double-spaced)**

At this juncture in the semester, hopefully you have finally seen the truth—rhetoric has a profound influence on how we perceive and interpret reality! (Perhaps it even constructs reality?) As a result, the conversations that surround us, the knowledge we create, the values we hold dear, the beliefs we cherish, etc. are strongly affected by the rhetoric we consume and create. If you examine almost any issue that is of consequence in politics, philosophy, religion, etc., you will invariably see the influence of rhetoric in framing the manner in which that particular issue is viewed, thought about, and interpreted.



For your final project, you are going to examine the rhetoric surrounding a particular issue and analyze how rhetoric frames the reality surrounding this particular issue. Your first step, somewhat obviously, will be to pick a particular issue to explore. Try to pick an issue that is particularly fascinating for you but that you are not entirely biased about. If you are rather biased, you may tend to miss the manner in which rhetoric influences the issue; in essence, you can view yourself as “outside” the rhetoric.

Once you have picked your issue, you will want to research it some with a particular focus on finding artifacts that can aid you in articulating the rhetoric surrounding the issue. Explore how the issue has evolved over time. Look for prominent artifacts (e.g. speeches, written texts, videos, performances, etc.) that have influenced thought around the issue. See if you cannot discern any trends in how the issue has been, and currently is, perceived.

As you gain a clearer sense of where you are going with this project, you can begin to compose your essay. First and foremost, you will want to provide background and context for the particular issue you are exploring. Do not assume that your audience is immensely familiar with this issue; rather, take time to acquaint your audience with the issue. Then, you will want to present your main argument for how rhetoric has framed the reality surrounding this issue (unless you intend to delay your thesis for rhetorical purposes).

Afterward, you will want to begin analyzing your artifacts, placing them in conversation with the various rhetorical theories we have engaged with throughout the semester. Delve deeply into the artifacts and analyze the language and symbols present in them. What do these artifacts tell us about the rhetoric surrounding the issue? Which rhetorical theories seem most apt to describe the phenomena witnessed in these artifacts? How should we interpret these artifacts in relation to the rhetoric surrounding the issue? Why are they important in framing the reality surrounding the issue? Etc. Closely examine the manner in which these artifacts frame the reality of this issue.

Lastly, you will want to conclude by either reaffirming your thesis and offering new insights or—if you took a different approach—by presenting an intriguing and engaging argument as to what these artifacts show us about the rhetoric surrounding the issue. Make sure to move beyond the artifacts to present a more comprehensive picture of how rhetoric works epistemologically and ideologically as well as persuasively in regard to this issue.

Your “Enter the Matrix! How Rhetoric Frames Reality” project should be seven to eight pages double-spaced. You need to engage with at least three rhetorical theories from the class, two of which need to be from unit three. For citation and formatting purposes, you should employ either APA or MLA format and include a references or works cited page.

The emphasis of my assessment for your “Enter the Matrix! How Rhetoric Frames Reality” project will be in regard to the manner in which you explicate the background and context of the issue, the suitability of the artifacts you examine and their connections to the issue, the quality of your analysis of the artifacts in relation to the rhetorical theories you have chosen, the overall persuasiveness of your argument in regard to how rhetoric frames reality for this issue, and the polished nature of your final project (e.g. grammar, spelling, proper APA or MLA citation and formatting, etc.). After I am finished with your “Enter the Matrix! How Rhetoric Frames Reality” project, the main question I will ask myself is: *How impressive is this text in exploring the rhetoric surrounding this particular issue and in analyzing the manner in which rhetoric frames the reality surrounding the issue, influencing the thoughts, perceptions, and interpretations of those involved?*