

Texas A&M University – Texarkana

**ENG 590: Seminar in Rhetoric**

Course Syllabus

**Instructor: Dr. Joseph Burzynski**

**Meeting Time:** M, 6-8:45

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**Phone Number:** 903-223-3038

**Office Hours:** M, 3-5; T-R, 12-1, and by appointment

**Location:** TBD!

**Office:** UC 212

**COURSE NUMBER:** ENG 590.001

**CREDITS:** 3 SCH

**COURSE TITLE:** Seminar in Rhetoric

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines one or more theoretical or historical movements in, philosophical approaches to, and/or applications of rhetoric. Course may be repeated when topics vary.

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

Bizzell and Herzberg's The Rhetorical Tradition, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.

Ritchie and Ronald's Available Means.

**E-MAIL ACCOUNT:**

Upon application to Texas A&M University-Texarkana, an individual will be assigned an A&M-Texarkana e-mail account. This e-mail account will be used to deliver official university correspondence. Each individual is responsible for information sent and received via the university e-mail account and is expected to check the official A&M-Texarkana e-mail account on a frequent and consistent basis. Faculty and students are required to utilize the university e-mail account when communicating about coursework.

**STUDENT LEARNER OUTCOMES:**

Upon successful completion of ENG 590, students will be able to

1. Demonstrate comprehension of and critical reflection to the theory, history, philosophy, and/or applications of rhetoric presented in the course as evidenced by discussion contributions and submitted work.
2. Synthesize course content with individual research conducted in an area of the student's interest as evidenced by submitted written and oral work.
3. Apply the conventions of standard American English in all written work submitted in this course.

**METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

Methods of instruction in this course seek to develop students' familiarity with relevant theoretical, historical, or philosophical movements or approaches in designated areas or

applications of rhetoric. To that end, the course instruction includes lecture, discussion, and research and production activities.

### **COURSE DELIVERY METHOD**

Face-to-face

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR ASSESSMENT**

Students in this class will be expected to complete the following requirements for assessment:

- a. Regular attendance and participation at all class meetings;
- b. Completion and timely submission of activities, homework, papers, and presentations as listed below (Methods of Evaluation).

### **METHODS OF EVALUATION:**

To pass this course, students *must complete major assignments* as listed below, including the final project. *Please note:* I do not use Blackboard for grading. We don't have many grades in this class, so you'll be able to follow on your own. Or, when in doubt, ask me.

#### **Reading Notes/Questions: 20% (divided equally among 13 weeks)**

Think of this as a 'commonplace book,' a book into which notable extracts from other works are copied for personal use.

Each week, I'd like for you to submit condensed and revised reading notes and questions on the assigned readings. **No more than** one page per reading is ideal. (If you can't fit notes for three readings on two pages, you aren't condensing enough.) I'm thinking that these notes should function the way notes for MA exams function: as a place where you distill the reading to its essence (to your mind), capture direct quotes you want to think with and remember, and ask questions of the text, as well as make connections to other texts, to your own research, and to your teaching or academic goals. You may take notes to help you through the text, but I only want you to turn in the distilled version of your notes.

This is a credit/no credit thing. If you submit according to my guidelines, you get credit. If not, you don't.

#### **Discussion and Wiki: 15% (divided equally among 13 weeks)**

Each week we will give over part of our class to

- 1) Discussion! Rather than assigning individuals to lead weekly discussions, I hope that we will all participate in weekly arguments, debates, definitions, questions, elaboration, restatement, and stylistic play.
- 2) Collaboration! We will work together on a common document listing our rhetorical figures, movements, definitions, and any other interesting and relevant information.

This is a credit/no credit thing. If you are in class to participate, you get credit. If not, you don't.

#### **Journal Report: 10%**

You will select a scholarly journal in the field of composition and rhetoric and present an oral report of no more than 20 minutes in which you analyze the contents, assumptions, biases, and

quality of that journal. In short, research the journal. You'll likely need to look at several issues. How old is it? Does it have a connection to a professional organization? What is the background of the folks who are on the editorial board? Does it have a mission statement? What topics are covered in the articles you've browsed? You may not know what the articles mean, but help us understand the journal's content. **Your goal is to introduce us (your audience) to a journal we've never likely read, but will likely need to be familiar with for future reference.**

Your presentation must be accompanied by

- 1) a short handout (and *may* be accompanied by an electronic presentation) that will help the rest of us understand the key points you wish to make. If you get it to me ahead of class, I can make copies for you.
- 2) a sample article from the journal delivered to your classmates electronically **one week** prior to your presentation. You may email the class through Blackboard, or you may give the article to me, and I'll send it along. Select an article that seems representative of the journal's mission. Your article will provide us context for your discussion. Again, I can make copies for the class.
- 3) For a list of journals, see Appendix A at the end of the syllabus.

### **Book Review: 25%**

As you may have noticed, I like my classes to produce work that has use beyond our seminar room. To that end, you will select a book and write a review. In fact, to make this 'more real,' I'll encourage you to consider submitting a review to one of the journals we've looked at (or another, as appropriate). Consider this project as a springboard to your final research paper, so you may choose a book that will help you think about future directions. (I'm proud to say that 100% of my previous graduate students have published their review. Of course, that's only one student, but the math is accurate, no?)

We'll discuss general book review conventions, but we'll also ground this particular assignment in whatever specific journal audience you're targeting. Usually, this is roughly 10 pages, but if you elect to submit to a journal, I'll concede to their specifications (*but that means you'll need to actually submit for their review!*).

### **Research Paper and Presentation: 30%**

This will be a conference length research paper and presentation. Usually, this is roughly 10 pages for a 20 minute professional conference style presentation.

I am open to any of your suggestions for a major project. I especially want your work in this seminar to connect to your ongoing research, exams, and career plans. I can, however, suggest several particular kinds of work:

- A study of particular rhetorical strategy used over particular historical periods or across this history
- A paper that demonstrates how your study of rhetoric connects to your teaching of writing
- A study of a rhetoric who has not been recovered to your satisfaction
- A comparative reading of women and men within the rhetorical context of their historical era

- An exploration of the historical context of your ongoing research
- An exploration of the uses of rhetoric history for literary research
- A rhetorical analysis of your major research subject.

We will talk about possible topics and methods as a class, and I expect you to work out this paper topic with me as we go along. We will work on a proposal for this project, and I'm committed to the drafting and editing process as well.

### **GRADING SCALE**

(90-100%) = A

(80-89%) = B

(70-79%) = C

(60-69%) = D

(0-59%) = F

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **STUDENT PARTICIPATION**

Because this is a graduate seminar, students are expected to attend class and participate enthusiastically *every week*. Participation means interaction with other students and the instructor not just presence in class. Class comments will reflect reading and honest consideration of the viewpoints of the other students. Students are expected to deal with one another and the instructor in a professional, courteous manner. Completion of weekly assigned readings and corresponding reflections will ensure lively and diverse discussion throughout the semester.

### **LATE WORK**

Generally, I do not accept work after the end of the class period for which that work is due nor do I permit students to make up late work. If you cannot meet an assignment deadline, it is in your best interest to contact me prior to the deadline to discuss any options you may have.

### **CONTACTING ME**

I hold office hours throughout the week, some of which are included in this syllabus and others which may be in addition to them. Visit my office to check out the entire range of my posted office hours. If these hours are not amenable to you, please contact me via email to make an appointment. Many questions can be answered via email and I'm rather timely in my responses, so email is the best option for getting into contact with me right away.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Academic honesty is expected of students enrolled in this course. Cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, falsification of research data, plagiarism, and undocumented use of materials from any source constitute academic dishonesty **will be grounds for a grade of "F" in the course** and/or disciplinary actions. For additional information, see the university catalog.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS – DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**

Students with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations through the A&M-Texarkana Disability Services Office by calling 903-223-3062.

**DROP POLICY**

To drop this course after the census date, a student must complete a [Drop/Withdrawal Request Form](#), located on the University Registrar’s webpage or obtained in the Registrar’s Office. The student must submit the signed and completed form to the instructor of each course indicated on the form to be dropped for his/her signature. The signature is not an “approval” to drop, but rather confirmation that the student has discussed the drop/withdrawal with the faculty member. The form must be submitted to the Registrar’s office for processing in person, email [Registrar@tamut.edu](mailto:Registrar@tamut.edu), mail (7101 University Ave., Texarkana, TX 75503) or fax (903-223-3140).

Drop/withdraw forms missing any of the required information will not be accepted by the Registrar’s Office for processing. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that the form is completed properly before submission. If a student stops participating in class (attending and submitting assignments) but does not complete and submit the drop/withdrawal form, a final grade based on work completed as outlined in the syllabus will be assigned.

Drop/Withdraw deadlines for the Fall 2017 semester		
Session	Drop without a grade	Last day drop/withdraw
Full Term (16 week)	September 13	November 17

**Calendar (Note: I reserve the right to adjust as needed.)**

August 28:

- Introduction to class; overview of rhetoric; discussion of goals, hopes, and assumptions
- Read from *Understanding Rhetoric* and *The Digital Writer*; modeling commonplace notes and wiki work.
- How do you read as a graduate student?
- Before we leave: Journal Review date selection.

**September 4: Labor Day, no classes**

September 11:

- *RT*: General Introduction (1-17); Introduction to Classical Rhetoric (19-43); Isocrates (72-74); Plato (87-137)
- *AM*: Introduction (xv-xxx); Diotima (9-15)

*Reminder #1*: Each week you will be turning in your condensed Reading Notes at the end of class.

*Reminder #2*: In both *RT* and *AM*, you may find introductions to each figure that I have not listed. You may find that they aid your understanding of each figure and add to your notes.

September 18:

- RT: Aristotle (169-241)
- AM: Aspasia (1-8)
- Journal Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

September 25:

- RT: Cicero (339-343); Quintilian (359-428)
- AM: Hortensia (16-19)
- Journal Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

October 2:

- RT: Introduction to Medieval Rhetoric (429-449); Augustine (450-485); *The Principles of Letter Writing* (492-502)
- AM: Heloise (20-24); Catherine of Sienna (29-31); Christine de Pizan (32-42)
- Journal Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

October 9:

- RT: Introduction to Renaissance Rhetoric (553-580); Erasmus (581-596); Ramus (674-697)
- AM: Jane Anger (50-59); Margaret Fell (66-70)
- Journal Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

October 16: I'm away at the AASHE conference in San Antonio. Catch up! Take a breath!

- **Book Reviews due by Friday, October 20**

October 23:

- RT: Introduction to Enlightenment Rhetoric (789-813); Campbell (898-946)
- AM: Wollestonecraft (92-105)
- Journal Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

October 30:

- RT: Blair (947-979); Introduction to 19<sup>th</sup> Century Rhetoric (981-999); Bain and Hill (1141-1151)
- AM: Stewart (109-113); Grimke (119-124); Cooper (163-170); Truth (143-146); Buck (211-217)
- Journal Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

November 6:

- Due: 250 word abstract/proposal outlining your initial final project thinking. While this is informal, I'd suggest you outline a motivating research question—not a thesis—and one or two sources (scholarly, obviously!) that will help point you in a productive research direction. Remember, this is meant to be similar to the conference proposal and presentation process, so we'll review open conferences to see if you'd be interested in submitting. (Attending, of course, is optional!)
- RT: Introduction to Modern and Postmodernist Rhetoric (1181-1206); Richards (1281-1294); Burke (1295-1339)
- AM: Woolf (241-246); Hurston (247-251); Dworkin (330-339)

November 13:

- *RT*: Bahktin (928-944); Toulmin (1410-1428)
- *AM*: Hamer (262-266); Rich (267-282)

November 20:

- *RT*: Booth (1491-1519); Cixous (1520-1536); Fish (1605-1628)
- *AM*: Morrison (416-423); Williams (409-415); Pratt (424-434)

November 27:

- Bring a working draft of your final projects: Five pages minimum, including a working Works Cited list.
- In-class: Complete our Wiki/Collaborative reading notes, print/save, and review!

December 4: Presentations! (Note: I avoid incompletes at all costs. Translation: Expect to get your work done during this semester.)

## Appendix A: Journals in Composition and Rhetoric

Note: I haven't read or visited all of these recently, so if you run into anything dead or inactive, please let me know!

College Composition and Communication  
College English  
CompPile (compile.org—doesn't count as a journal, but it's a useful link to a wealth of comp/rhet material)  
Composition Forum (online)  
Composition Studies  
Computers and Composition  
Dialogue: A Journal for Writing Specialists  
Enculturation (online)  
English Education  
English Journal (High School oriented)  
Journal of Advanced Composition  
Journal of Basic Writing (College level developmental/basic writing)  
Journal of Business and Technical Communication  
Journal of Teaching Writing  
Journal of Technical Writing and Communication  
Journal of Writing Assessment  
Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy (online)  
Language Arts (Elementary Education)  
Open Words: Access and English Studies  
Pedagogy  
Philosophy and Rhetoric  
Pre/Text  
Quarterly Journal of Speech  
Research in the Teaching of English  
Rhetorica  
Rhetoric Review  
Rhetoric Society Quarterly  
Teaching English in the Two Year College  
Technical Communication Quarterly  
The Technical Writing Teacher  
Voices in the Middle (Middle School)  
Writing Center Journal  
Writing Lab Newsletter  
Writing on the Edge  
Writing Program Administration  
Written Communication



## Appendix B: Why we're here (or Why I want us to be here)

This seminar hopes to provide foundational knowledge of the field of rhetorical studies. Rhetoric has a long and rich tradition that began well over two thousand years ago, and contemporary teachers operate out of this tradition whether they know it or not. Indeed, rhetoric has gone in and out of favor through the centuries, depending on the prevailing mood of the time. In important ways, the history of rhetoric travels parallel to the notion of what it means to be an educated citizen. Recall that education has not historically been about ability; it has all too often been a question of who has access to the means of education. To study rhetoric is to consider those bodies who could be educated or considered citizens and those who could not.

We will explore the history of rhetorical theory and practice from classical Greece and Rome, through the Renaissance and the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, into modern or 'new' rhetoric and finally toward postmodern rhetoric and the influence of cultural studies. But we will not simply study history for its own sake. I want us to move continually back and forth between the rhetorical tradition and current theory and practice to identify certain beliefs about writing, reading (and writers and readers) that drive our own teaching and have their roots somewhere in history.

This course will be structured as a chronological history of Western rhetoric, but we will not only cover the received (capital T) tradition. Of course, we will begin with the sophists, then move to Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, but in our run from the classical tradition to the postmodern era, we will simultaneously read Hortensia, Anna Julia Cooper, Virginia Woolf, to name just a few of the women rhetors in this course. In other words, we will examine the history of women's rhetorics alongside and in relation to the canonical history. Moreover, I want this class to become a site for questioning the history and the heritage that we will be studying. I hope we can use this history to examine, critique, and improve the current contexts in which we work, read, write, and teach. Theories of rhetoric, of speakers, writers, and readers, are intimately connected to our lives as literate/literary people in complicated cultural contexts, and I hope we will discover and describe other ways of conceiving of the parts and the aims of rhetoric. I am also quite sure we will not be able to resist applying what we're learning to current rhetorical performances.

I hope we find (or at least glimpse) that illusive balance between breadth and depth in this seminar. This course should provide you with an overview of the big ideas in the field and the ways in which those ideas have arisen, gone underground, reappeared in other contexts and other forms. I hope that we will come away from this exploration with clearer ideas about why we approach teaching, writing, and reading in the ways we do; another goal is to make firmer plans for your own work and decisions about your place in the English discipline.