

George Mason University
FOUNDATIONS OF PUBLIC COMMUNICATION
COMM 300-001-70279
Fall 2015

Professor: Dr. James I. Van Zummeren
Office Hours: Monday 6:00 to 7:00 PM and by appointment
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Required Text Book

- Foss, S. K. (2009). Rhetorical criticism: Exploration and practice (4th ed.). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Recommended Reference Books

- Kuypers, J. A. (Ed.). (2009). Rhetorical criticism: Perspectives in action. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Palczewski, C. H., Ice, R., & Fritch, J. (2012). Rhetoric in civic life. State College, PA: Strata Publishing Inc.
- Stoner, M., & Perkins, S. (2005). Making sense of messages: A critical apprenticeship in rhetorical criticism. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Van Zummeren, J. I. (Fall, 2015). Comm-300-001-70279 lecture notes. Fairfax, VA: Blackboard course site, George Mason University.

COURSE PURPOSE

The purpose of the Comm-300 course is to provide students with an understanding of the theories and principles of public communication with emphasis on methods of persuasion, critical analysis, speaker-listener alignments in public setting, and measurements of effective public communication.

COURSE OUTCOMES

- Write several short papers that demonstrate ability to describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate public communication
- During class sessions develop and ask questions about the nature of communication that reflect a developed schema of understanding
- Through research describe and use ideas from significant individuals and theories that form a loose core of critical perspectives on rhetoric and persuasion
- During selected class sessions develop and present individual presentations that show organizational and presentational skills that enhance individual capacity for public

Comment [GG1]: Students are required to write at least 2 assignments.

communication. Self-expression, based on critical assessments of incoming information, is also an important aspect of political and social interaction

- Ability to write and present a semester paper that demonstrates rhetorical criticism writing skills.

I. GRADING POLICIES AND METHOD OF EVALUATION:

1. Assignments are awarded points and not given individual grades of A, B, C, D, F.
 - a. Add the total points accumulated to determine the final "grade."
 - b. Please understand this method before inquiring about a "grade" on an assignment.
 - c. There are no **"extra credit"** projects to earn additional class points.
 - d. Students can redo the draft semester paper if they received a grade lower than 70%, however, the maximum you can earn on this redo is 70%. For example, a student receives a 32% on the Draft paper assignment. The student decides to redo the Draft and does a superior job receiving a maximum of 70%.
 - e. There are no classroom activity makeups. If you are unable to attend a class that has an identified activity, ensure to coordinate absence with myself.
 - f. Knowledge quizzes can be made up during Session 15 if preapproved by professor.
2. If you have a problem with a "grade" or a policy of grading, please detail the problem in writing and arrange for an appointment or E-mail me your concern so we can discuss it. An individual's grade will NOT be discussed during class.
3. 500 point grading scale:

485 - 500 points earns an A+
465 - 484 points earns an A
450 - 464 points earns an A-
435 - 449 points earns a B+
400 - 434 points earns a B
350 - 399 points earns a C
300 - 364 points earns a D
Below 300 points earns an F

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Short Papers (25 points each) 75 points
 - Movie Analysis
 - Credibility Analysis
 - Argumentative Analysis

Comment [GG2]: Students are required to write at least 2 assignments.

Comment [GG3]: Syllabus describes grading criteria for all major writing assignments.

2. Class activities (10 points each)	60 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movie group activity • Credibility group activity • Argumentative group activity • Toulmin Analysis Activity • Generative Activity • Civic Life Activity 	
3. Semester Paper (Draft)	100 points
6. Semester Paper (Final)	50 points
7. Semester Paper (Presentation)	65 points
8. Knowledge Quiz	75 points
9. Final Assignment	75 points
9. Total points	500 points

III. GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

1. Reading the course materials before coming to class is expected, and may require a quiz each class session. This is dependent on class participation and discussion.
2. Class time is devoted to lectures, class discussions, presentations, project time, small group discussions, quizzes, exams, and participation during various communication exercises.
3. You are responsible for materials covered in class whether present or not. Class discussions will include content from reference books stated above. Students will have access to that information via the course Blackboard site.

IV. UNIVERSITY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

1. This class adheres to all published university policies regarding sexual harassment and equal opportunity.
 - a. This class follows all appropriate campus and university regulations.
 - b. The goal is to provide you with a safe, fair, and equitable learning environment.
2. To ensure each student benefits from this learning environment, I will adjust to your specific needs. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.
3. Review the GMU Honor Code in the GMU catalogue to maintain ethical standards.
 - a. Examinations, papers, and other assignments must be your own work, except when there is assigned group course work.
 - b. Plagiarism is representing the work of someone else as your own, or

recycling your work and representing earlier work as new work without consulting with the instructor.

4. Your responsibility is to check the GMU semester course listings for the last day to add/drop a course.

V. CLASS PARTICIPATION

1. Bring textbook, course materials and this syllabus to class.
2. Participation and listening are essential for success in this class.
 - a. Points are based on your success as a participant during discussions, presenting ideas, providing feedback, and in-class activities.
 - b. Participation points, therefore, are earned for participation during in-class activities. There are no makeup in-class activities.

VI. WRITTEN COURSE WORK POLICIES

1. This course satisfies the **Writing-Intensive** requirement for the Communication Department, which means there are three short writing assignments, a semester paper that includes a draft and rewritten final paper, and a final compare and contrast paper that all combine for a minimum of 7,500 words of semester writing.
2. The three short writing assignments are at least 500 words each. The specific requirements for each paper are found in Section VIII (Assignments), and the due dates for each paper are listed in Section IX (Weekly Schedules) of this syllabus.
3. The semester paper is an analytical assessment of a speech artifact using one of the rhetorical criticism methods described in the Foss (2009) book or addressed in class using different noted references. This is a 2,500 word minimum analytical paper that is completed in two phases, draft and final paper. The specific requirements for this paper are found in Section VIII (Assignments), and the due dates for the submission of the draft and final paper is listed in Section IX (Weekly Schedules) of this syllabus.
4. All class written work will be original and typed.
 - a. Spacing: Double spaced, Paragraph format, Font Size: 12, and 1" margins.
 - b. Your work is evaluated in terms of clarity, language, syntax, spelling, punctuation, verb/subject agreement, pronoun/antecedent agreement, etc.
 - c. PROOFREAD your work, and if necessary, visit the Writing Center for additional assistance.
 - d. All written work will use **APA** writing style.
5. For more information on Writing Across the Curriculum requirements see:

Comment [GG4]: Syllabus contains WI statement.

Comment [GG5]: Students are required to write at least 3,500 words.

<http://wac.gmu.edu>, or go to <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/> and get information on writing resources available at GMU. Also go to: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/owlprint/560/> for general instructions and examples. Specific samples of the draft and semester paper format will be provided during the semester.

VII. PRESENTATION POLICIES

1. If an absence is unavoidable, notify me by GMU E-mail
 - a. Provide appropriate documentation
 - b. Session 15 will be used to facilitate semester paper presentations for those students who were excused from scheduled date.

VIII. ASSIGNMENTS: (subject to change)

ALL assignments **are due** during assigned class periods! All late assignments, unless approved by the professor, will be given a 70% **maximum** grade.

1. Critique Writings and Assignments

Comment [GG6]: Syllabus describes grading criteria for all major writing assignments.

a. Movie Analysis

25 points

Choose a movie you have seen and write a 500-word critique. Devote the first paragraph to why you selected the movie, a following paragraph describing the movie, and then a paragraph or two focused on your assessment and critique of the movie. Make judgments about the movie, and be sure and give reasons for your judgments. Note a clear difference between descriptions of an artifact and criticism of the artifact.

b. Credibility Analysis

25 points

You will select two individuals of opposing quality. Identify someone you believe to be credible. Analyzing the elements of credibility, explain why the person is credible to you. Then identify someone you believe to be not credible, again analyzing the elements of credibility to explain why. The individuals should be known public figures that have influence over others, i.e., a political person, clergy, teacher, law enforcement, activist, or business person. Point of activity is for you to examine key people and explain why they are doing good or counterproductive work for society. This is a 500-word writing assignment.

c. Argumentative Analysis

25 points

Pick a significant public argument you have heard recently. Was it a good one or a bad one? What evidence or data was provided? What assumptions did the argument make? How could the argument have been made better? This is a 500-word paper.

2. Class Activities

60 points

a. There are group in-class activities that focus on previous or current session learning objectives. These activities are noted in the weekly schedule of activities.

b. As noted above, participation points in these activities are earned for participation in them. There are no makeup in-class activities.

3. Semester Paper - Rhetorical Criticism of a Speech

As a writing intensive course, you are required to write a draft semester paper and turn it in for grading. After receiving back the graded draft, you are required to make all corrections and modifications, restructure as appropriate and resubmit for final grading. The draft and final submit of the semester paper are **mandatory** for receiving a satisfactory course grade.

a. Draft Semester Paper Sections (APA Style)

100 Points

- (1) Title Page
- (2) Abstract: Approximately 75-100 words summarizing your paper
- (3) Outline
- (4) Main Body: Minimum of 2,500 words of analytical writing
- (5) Reference Page: APA style using at least **5** references
- (6) Speech Artifact

Specifically:

In this paper, you are to criticize a speech using one of the methods discussed in class. Use of the research library or internet is encouraged as well as review of appropriate chapters in Foss (2009), Kuypers (2009), and Stoner & Perkins (2005). Choose any public speech, provided it has a significant message, and that you can prove it to be rhetorical. Listed below are several points to consider in writing this critique:

- 1) Provide an introduction that explains the significance of the message, what method you will use, and why you selected the method through the use of a thesis statement. This statement is your answer to the research question, which you developed to analyze your selected artifact.
- 2) Define and describe the rhetorical situation of the artifact.
- 3) Analyze the message in light of your specific methodology. Develop ideas in some depth. Support your arguments with clear examples from your artifact. Remember to let your artifact guide you in choosing the appropriate way to illuminate its characteristics.

Comment [GG7]: Syllabus describes any specific strategies and conventions necessary for student success for this assignment.

- 4) Provide a conclusion that explains what you achieved in better understanding the artifact through the rhetorical method you used in your paper. This should be more than just concluding remarks, rather, it should answer the “so what” question. That is, what do you gain from doing this kind of criticism; what do you learn about the message, which, in turn, can contribute to further knowledge or social awareness.
- 5) You must provide **AT LEAST FIVE (5)** references used in the paper and cited using proper form in the document and references page. You can use any legitimate and referable source to develop your theoretical position, to give background to the issue, or to comment on the artifact.
- 6) A suggested research site: <http://www.famousquotes.me.uk/speeches/>

b. Final Semester Paper 50 points

(1) Make corrections and adjustments recommended from my review of your draft to include all sections of the draft. I did do a fairly detailed review of your draft, but do not assume that I caught all discrepancies. In other words, make sure to do a thorough scrub of your final version before sending to me.

Comment [GG8]: Syllabus describes that the instructor will provide feedback on writing.

(2) Send via E-mail your final version.

c. Presentation of Final Paper 65 points

(1) Provide a 5 minute summary of paper development and perceived outcome. Specifically, presentation should address the process of rhetorical criticism to include why you selected the speech, the rhetorical method used, and the “so what” to your thinking.

(2) Points will be awarded on timing, clarity, preparedness, and contribution to class objective.

(3) Some form of visual support is required.

4. Knowledge Quiz. 75 points

This quiz addresses material from Foss (2009) and class lecture notes available in course material addressed in course Blackboard site.

5. Final Semester Assignment. 75 points

The final semester assignment is a 1,000 word compare and contrast paper between the rhetorical method you used for the semester paper and an alternative method discussed during the semester.

IX. Weekly Activities: (Always subject to change) (Aug 31-Dec 14)

Aug 31	Session 1	Introduction and Syllabus Overview: “Wise Skepticism: On the Education of a Young Critic” Reading: Dr. James Andrews’ article Assigned: Movie Analysis due Session 2
Sep 7	Holiday	No Class
Sep 14	Session 2	Start the Process (Background & Step One: Describe) Reading: Foss, 2009, Chapter 1 Due: Movie Analysis (Activity)
Sep 21	Session 3	Continue the Process (Analyze, Interpret and Evaluate) Reading: Foss, 2009, Chapter 1 Assigned: Credibility Analysis due Session 4
Sep 28	Session 4	Writing the Analysis Reading: Foss, 2009, Ch 2 Due: Credibility Analysis (Activity) Assigned: Argumentative Analysis due Session 5
Oct 5	Session 5	Neo-Aristotelian Method Reading: Foss, 2009, Ch 3 Due: Argumentative Analysis (Activity)
Oct 13 (Tuesday Class)	Session 6	Narrative Method Reading: Foss, 2009, Ch 9
Oct 19	Session 7	Toulmin Method (Activity) & Paper Abstract Reference: Stoner & Perkins, 2005, Ch 10 Van Zummeren, Fall 2015, Lecture notes, S-7
Oct 26	Session 8	Generative Method (Activity) & Paper Outline Reading: Foss, 2009, Ch 11
Nov 2	Session 9	Rhetoric in Civic Life (Activity) Reference: Palczewski, C. H., etal: (2012) Van Zummeren, Fall 2015, Lecture notes S-9
Nov 9	Session 10	Knowledge Quiz & Paper Research and Development Assigned: Draft paper
Nov 16	Session 11	Submit Draft Papers and start paper presentations Due: Draft Paper (E-Mailed before start of class)

Comment [GG9]: Syllabus indicates multiple class sessions that address different writing strategies.

Nov 23	Session 12	Continue paper presentations Assigned: Final Paper due next week
Nov 30	Session 13	Prepare for Compare and Contrast paper Due: Final Papers E-mailed prior to start of class
Dec 7	Session 14	Discussion of compare and contrast papers in class. Due: Compare and contrast papers
Dec 14	Session 15	Attendance is only for those students owing assignments.

Comment [GG10]: Syllabus indicates required draft deadline and revision deadline, with sufficient time for thoughtful faculty feedback and for student revision.