

English 310: Rhetorical Analysis

Term	Summer 2008	Instructor	Scott Graham
Dates	8/19-6/27	Email	grahamss@iastate.edu
Meetings	M-R	Office	447 Ross Hall
Location	27 Ross Hall	Office Hours	M-R 9-11, by Appt

Welcome to English 310. Our work this term will be devoted to learning the fundamentals of rhetorical analysis and criticism. We will learn about and practice using a variety of critical approaches to analyze a wide range of texts (any type of communication including essays, speeches, film, websites, and multimedia). Specifically, we will focus on learning how various textual elements work within their contexts: How do explicit and implied text features attempt to persuade, inform, or delight an audience? How do those text features work together in producing a coherent message? Will that message be effective for the audience and/or context? Success with rhetorical analysis and criticism requires a lot of practice. Therefore, this class you will read and write and think and read and think and write and write some more.

Assignments and Grading

Class Participation: English 310 is a workshop and discussion based class. As such class participation is the single largest factor of your grade (50%). You are expected to attend class and participate in class discussions every day. If you do not contribute to class discussions every day, you cannot receive an A for the course. Several class periods will be held online. Your participation in these classes will also be factored into your participation grade.

Theoretical Reading Facilitation: Each of you will be expected to facilitate the discussion of one of the theoretical readings from the list provided. I will provide a model for this discussion on the second day of class. Essentially, you will be expected to provide a brief summary of the text and then to organize a short discussion around a list of topics or questions you have generated. Though it is not required, I highly recommend you meet with me to discuss your chosen reading before you present to the class.

Midrash Packet: Traditionally, a midrash is a method of Jewish or Islamic scholarship devoted to exploring the meaning of specific passages of the Torah or Koran. In a traditional midrash, a scriptural excerpt is placed in the center of the page and various possible interpretations are

placed in dialogue with one another around the excerpt. For English 310, you will create five midrashim. I will collect these on each Thursday of the term. Rather than explore excerpts from biblical passages and their various interpretations, you will use the midrash format to analyze a selected passage using three different rhetorical approaches. You may select a 1-2 paragraph excerpt from any of the assigned (non-theoretical) readings since you last turned in a midrash, and use any of the discussed analytic approaches. Taken together these midrash will comprise 10% of your course grade.

Synthesis Papers: In order to help you explore our theoretical readings in more detail, you will write four synthesis papers during the course of the term. These papers should reflect on how two or more theoretical readings relate to one another and how they theories presented could be used for rhetorical analysis. Though there is no strict requirement as to the number of readings that must be addressed, stronger papers tend to address 3-4 readings. More than five readings and each text cannot usually be addressed in adequate detail. Though A papers may be shorter or longer 4-5 pages (12 pt, double-spaced, 1 in margins) is a good length guideline. These papers should be argumentative in nature, and will constitute 15% of your course grade. Some possible arguments might include:

- Theory A is better than theory B or C for analyzing a certain type of text.
- Theories A, B, and D when used together provide a useful approach for a type of text.
- Neither theory A nor B would be helpful to analyze a certain type of text.
- A different argument of your own devising.

Major Essays: During English 310 you will complete two major essays that will comprise 25% of your course grade. These papers will function as your midterm and final. They should demonstrate a competent knowledge of a range of theoretical readings to date and your ability to apply those readings in the analysis of a text. These essays will be evaluated on the effectiveness of your arguments, the accuracy of your theoretical application, and your use of appropriate rhetorical language. The specific details of each assignment will be provided in an assignment sheet at a later date.

The Grid: As you've probably noticed, the above assignments involve quite a bit of latitude and choice as what you will write about. Typically you will be able to select which theories to use and which texts to analyze from assignment to assignment. However, in an effort to ensure that your choices represent a comprehensive treatment of English 310's subject matter, they will need to fit into the following grid. English 310 is divided into six major topic areas: neoclassical analysis, discourse communities, genre analysis, new media analysis, feminist analysis, and ideological analysis. In addition to class participation, you have 12 opportunities to demonstrate your facility with these approaches, 4 synthesis papers, 5 midrashim, 2 major essays, and one discussion facilitation. As you make your selections concerning topics, you will need to ensure that you have two pieces of work for each category. At the end of the semester you will need to

hand in a portfolio of all your work with a copy of the grid that identifies into which category each assignment fits.

	NeoClass	Disc Comm	Genre	New Media	Feminist	Ideological
SP1						
SP2						
SP3						
SP4						
MR1						
MR2						
MR3						
MR4						
MR5						
ME1						
ME2						
Disc						

Policies and Procedures

Attendance: As with anything else, rhetorical analysis is a skill that requires practice. It is critical that you attend class on a regular basis to avail yourself of as many opportunities as possible to practice. And since this is a participation-based course attendance is all the more critical. As such I allow only three (3) absences during the course of the semester. You may feel to use these absences for any reason you see fit. I do not differentiate between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. Additional absences will result in a deduction of one letter grade. Five (5) or more absences will result in automatic failure.

Academic Honesty: Any student found engaging in any activity defined by the DSO or university catalog as "academic dishonesty" will receive a failing grade for the assignment and be reported to the university. (It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with these policies.)

Disability Accommodation: If you have a disability that requires special accommodation, please provide me with a copy of the special accommodation request. For more information see the Disability Resources (4-7220).

Selected Theoretical Readings

- *Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric* <<http://honeyl.public.iastate.edu/Rhetoric/rhet1-1.html>>
- *Mendelson, "Rhetorical Glossary" <<http://www.easyrhetor.com/310/Glossary310.doc>>
- Jasinski, "Discourse Communities" <<http://www.easyrhetor.com/310/discoursecomm.pdf>>
- Zappen, "Discourse Community in Scientific and Technical Communication"
<<http://www.easyrhetor.com/310/zappen.pdf>>
- Jasinski, "Genre" <<http://www.easyrhetor.com/310/genre.pdf>>
- Miller, "Genre as Social Action" <<http://www.easyrhetor.com/310/miller-genre.pdf>>
- Miller, "Blogging as Social Action" <http://blog.lib.umn.edu/blogosphere/blogging_as_social_action_a_genre_analysis_of_the_weblog.html>
- Postman, "The Medium is the Metaphor" <<http://www.easyrhetor.com/310/postman.pdf>>
- Kress & Van Leeuwen *The Language of New Media* <<http://www.easyrhetor.com/310/new-media.pdf>>
- *Graham & Whalen, "Mode, Medium, Genre" <<http://www.easyrhetor.com/310/mmgi.pdf>>
- Fetterley, "On The Politics of Literature" <<http://www.easyrhetor.com/310/fetterley-1.pdf>>
- Fetterley, "Four Short Stories" Part 1 <<http://www.easyrhetor.com/310/fetterley-2.pdf>>
- Fetterley, "Four Short Stories" Part 2 <<http://www.easyrhetor.com/310/fetterley-3.pdf>>
- Reiley, "Sexualities and Technologies" <<http://www.easyrhetor.com/310/reiley.pdf>>
- Althusser, "Repressive State Apparatuses" <<http://www.easyrhetor.com/310/althusser.pdf>>
- Young, " "Darwin's Metaphor" <<http://www.easyrhetor.com/310/young.pdf>>

Web Resource Information

Class Wiki: <<http://mlkwiki.pbwiki.com/>>

Password: rhetoric

Class materials: <www.easyrhetor.com/310/RESOURCE-NAME>

User Name: engl310

Password: rhetoric

Week 1: Neoclassical Analysis

M 5/20	Intro to Class Green Day Policies & Procedures	
T 5/21	Neoclassical Rhet.	Aristotle 1354a-1359b (T) King 225
W 5/22		Rhetorical Glossary (T)
R 5/23	Thank You For Smoking	Thank You Script
F 5/24	Online Class	MLKWiki

Week 2: Discourse Communities

M 5/25	Holiday	
T 5/26	Disc. Comms.	Fish (T) More 348 Bradbury 404
W 5/27	Gattica	Shelley 375
R 5/28	Disc. Comm Workshop	Zappen (T) Tropes and Figures (T) Orwell 212 SP Due*
F 5/29	Online Class	MLKWiki

Week 3: Genre Analysis

M 6/2	King: Genre Analysis	Jasinski Genre (T)
T 6/3	Fahrenheit 911	SP Due
W 6/4	BYOT Workshop	Miller Genre (T)
R 6/5	American History X	
F 6/6	Online Class	MLKWiki

Week 4: New Media Analysis

M 6/9	New Media Theory	Kress & Van Leeuwen (T) Postman (T)
T 6/10	New Media Medley	Miller Blogging (T) SP Due
W 6/11	BYOT Workshop	Graham and Whalen (T)
R 6/12	Inconvenient Truth	
F 6/13	Online Class	MLKWiki Major Essay Due

Week 5: Feminist Criticism SP#4

M 6/16	Rose for Emily	Fetterly 1 (T) Rip Van Winkle Rose for Emily SP Due
T 6/17	Workshop	Fetterly 2 (T) Stanton 431 (T) hooks 460 (T)
W 6/18	BYOT Workshop	Faludi, 518 (T) SP Due
R 6/19	BYOT Workshop	Reiley (T)
F 6/20	Online Class	MLKWiki

Week 6: Ideological Analysis

M 6/23	Ideology Theory	Marx 105 (T) Darwin 4 Darwin 20 Young (T)
T 6/24	Political Speeches Workshop	Veblen 132 (T) Arendt 140 (T) SP Due
W 6/25	BYOT Workshop	Althusser (T)
R 6/26	Matrix	Baudrillard (T)
F 6/27		The Grid is Due SP Due