CMM 205-101: The Rhetorical World (CT)

Writing Intensive Fall 2016

Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00 – 12:15

261 Smith Hall

Course Instructor Susan Gilpin, Ph.D. Old Main 230 (Honors College) 696-6405 gilpin2@marshall.edu **Office Hours** M 10:30 – 12:00 W 1:30 – 3:00

additional times by appointment

Required Texts and Materials

- 1. Brummett, Barry. 2014. Rhetoric in Popular Culture, 4e. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- 2. I will distribute additional readings electronically through the semester. Occasionally, you will be responsible for printing out these supplemental readings as assigned.
- 3. You will be keeping a journal over the semester that I will collect three times. Purchase a composition book (hard or flex cover, 80 sheets, about 10" x 8") for this purpose. No spiral-bound notebooks, please. Bring your journal to class with you each day.

Course Description, Credits, and Prerequisites

An introduction to the study of rhetoric as a cultural force in influencing human behavior and societies and as a critical approach to interpreting cultural artifacts. 3 hours.

Course Philosophy and Themes

This course will teach you to notice and critically analyze the rhetorical dimensions of many cultural artifacts in your everyday life. In addition, this course will introduce you to the field of semiotics, the interpretation of cultural signs. We will operate on the assumption that the artifacts of popular culture function as persuasive messages and are sites of culturally contested meaning. We will look at ways these messages may be communicated and interpreted from various cultural and theoretical perspectives and at the implications of these interpretations for members of a culture. Our work will begin with the study of rhetorical and semiotic theories that can inform our investigation. Then, we will explore a variety of critical analytic methods. Finally, we will look beyond our classroom to critically analyze rhetorical and semiotic aspects of popular culture artifacts from particular cultural perspectives.

Desired Learner Outcomes/Objectives, Practice, and Assessment

Course student learning outcomes. In this course, students will do the following:	How students will practice each outcome in this course	How student achievement of each outcome will be assessed in this course
define rhetoric, semiotics, and	In-class discussion, informal	Journal entries, critical
their related components	writing	analysis paper
articulate key developments in the rhetorical tradition and in contemporary semiotics	In-class discussion, informal writing	Journal entries
Appraise the strengths and limitations of major rhetorical critical perspectives	In-class discussion, informal writing, practice analyses	Journal entries, critical analysis paper
Identify the rhetorical dimensions of popular cultural artifacts and interpret them through a variety of theoretical lenses	In-class discussion, informal writing, practice analyses	Journal entries, critical analysis paper
Articulate the persuasive power of a culture's artifacts in shaping the lives of that culture's members	Small group work, informal writing, class discussion	Journal entries, critical analysis paper, reflection paper
Analyze closely one popular cultural artifact from a particular perspective using appropriate terms, concepts, and theories	In-class discussion, draft essay, peer review, writing conference	Critical analysis paper
Assess the cultural meaning and significance of a chosen popular cultural artifact	Small group work, peer review, writing conference	Critical analysis paper
Writing Intensive Goals		
Enhance writing skills and strategies	In-class exercises, revision	Exam brief essays and critical analysis paper
Enhance critical thinking skills	Informal and formal writing	Journal entries and critical
through various forms of writing	assignments	analysis paper
Engage actively with course subject matter through various forms of writing	Informal and formal writing assignments	Journal entries and critical analysis paper

You will demonstrate your achievement of course objectives via ten journal entries, an analytic paper project, and a reflective essay. Your attendance and participation in class activities and discussions can influence borderline grades. These requirements will carry the following weight in determining your final grade:

Journal (3 reviews, 15% each)		45%
Critical Analysis Paper		
Conference	10%	
Working draft	10%	
Final draft	<u>20%</u>	40%
Self-analytic Reflection I	Paper (Final Exam)	<u>15%</u>
		100%

You will receive additional details about each assignment, including guidelines for preparing the assignment and an explanation of how it will be evaluated, well in advance of its due date.

The final grade you earn for the course will reflect your semester percentage of 100 points on the following scale: 90 - 100 = A, 80 - 89 = B, 70 - 79 = C, 55 - 69 = D, 0 - 54 = F. For example, if you earn an 80% on a journal review, you will have earned 80% of 15, or 12 points toward your final grade.

Course Policies

- 1. Attendance. Students who miss more than four classes for other than university-sponsored/excused reasons or religious holidays may earn no higher than a C in the course. You must be present when I circulate the attendance sheet and stay for the entire class period in order to be counted present for that class meeting.
- 2. *Preparation, participation, punctuality*. This is not a lecture course. In order to meet the objectives of the course, you will need to attend each class having completed the assigned reading and writing and having prepared yourself to be an informed participant in class discussions and in-class activities.
- 3. *Academic dishonesty*. We will follow the policies fully described on pages 71-73 in the *Marshall University Undergraduate Catalog 2015 2016* (available online at < http://www.marshall.edu/catalog/files/UG_15-16_published_rev.pdf >). During the semester we will talk more specifically about the implications of this policy for particular assignments.
- 4. Accommodation for Students with Disabilities and Student Athletes. Please examine the syllabus carefully to identify the class activities for which you will require special accommodation and schedule a meeting with me about this early in the semester. I will work with you to develop a plan to accommodate your needs and help you meet course requirements.
- 5. *Make-up exams and presentations*. Make-up exams and presentations will be available only for documented medical emergencies and university-excused absences. Please schedule optional activities around exam and presentation dates. If you have an unavoidable conflict, please let me know as far in advance as possible so that we can arrange an appropriate accommodation. Make-up exams may differ significantly from the exams given in class.
- 6. *Due dates*. The components of the out-of-class written assignments are due **in hard copy** on or before their scheduled dates. Please retain an electronic copy of your paper until I have commented on your hard copy and returned it to you with your grade.
- 7. *Missed classes*. When you are absent, it is your responsibility to **find out from a classmate** what notes, handouts, assignments, or other course material you missed. Most handout materials will be available on our course web page. Depending upon the nature of the assignment, you might not be able to make up informal, in-class writing and activities for credit.

- 8. *Office hours*. I will keep the office hours posted at the beginning of this syllabus, and I welcome your visits during those times. I am available to meet with you at other times by appointment only.
- 9. Class communication. From time to time, I will send course updates, links to additional readings, and other information via the class e-mail list as maintained by the Marshall University Registrar. Please check your Marshall e-mail account frequently or arrange to have your MU e-mail forwarded to the account you do read regularly. I attempt to respond to student e-mail within 48 hours.

Course Management Information			
Classmates I can consult for help: Name	E-mail	Phone	
Grades Earned:			
Journal Review 2 (15%)		Critical Analysis Paper Draft (10%) Critical Analysis Paper Final (20%)	
Journal Review 3 (15%) Critical Analysis Paper		Reflection Paper (15%) Absences (Dates)	
Conference (10%)		(see Course Policy 1)	

Course Schedule

(subject to change as the semester progresses)

Week	Date	Focus	How to Prepare	Due
1	8/23	Course introduction		Data Sheets
	8/25	Definitions and Power	Read Ch. 1, pp. 3-19. Be prepared to describe an example of a rhetorical text.	Journal 1 : p. 6, Ex. 1.1, #4
2	8/30	Challenges to the Rhetorical Tradition	Read Ch. 1, pp. 19-40. Online Practice: Chapter quiz and e-flashcards. Think about questions 2 and 3, p. 40.	
	9/1	Signs	Read Ch. 2, pp. 41-50.	Journal 2 : p. 43, Ex. 2.1
3	9/6	Artifacts	Read Ch. 2, pp. 50-57.	Journal 3 : p. 57, Ex. 2.3
	9/8	Culture I	Read Ch. 2, pp. 57-71.	
4	9/13	Culture II	Read Ch. 2, pp. 71-77.	Journal 4: p. 75, Ex. 2.9 JOURNAL REVIEW 1
	9/15	Practicing Concepts	Review Chapters 1 and 2	
5	9/20	Rhetorical Methods	Read Ch. 3, pp. 79-97.	Journal 5 : p. 85, Ex. 3.2
	9/22	Practical Application NO CLASS MEETING	Attend President Gilbert's investiture at 10:30 a.m. in the John Marshall Circle. Bring your journal to take notes for writing your journal assignment on 9/29.	
6	9/27	Summary and Review	. Read Ch. 3, pp. 97-123.	
	9/29	Texts in Context	Catch up/schedule adjustment day. Catch up on your reading. Look at Ex. 3.14 on pp. 115-116 and try your hand at completing the chart	Journal 6: Using Ch. 3 as a guide, try a critical analysis of your observations from the investiture ceremony.
7	10/4	INTERVENTION – Understanding, part I	Read Ch. 4, pp. 157-169.	

Week	Date	Focus	How to Prepare	Due
	10/6	INTERVENTION – Understanding, Part II	Read Ch. 4, pp. 169-188.	Journal 7: Use a culture-centered, Marxist, or feminist approach to discuss the artifact we agree upon in class. JOURNAL REVIEW 2
8	10/11	Groundhog Day, part I	Read Ch. 8, pp. 263-274.	
	10/13	Groundhog Day, part II	Read Analytic Essay Assignment on pp. 10-12 in out syllabus. Bring your planner.	Sign up for a paper conference and presentation date.
9	10/18	Writing a Critical Essay	Catch up day for reading and writing	what extent do your reactions to <i>Groundhog Day</i> depend on your gender? What does your answer suggest about how the reader approaches criticism, and what the critic must do to anticipate the reader?
	10/20	UNDERSTANDING – Intervention, Part I	Read Ch. 5, pp. 189-211.	
10	10/25	UNDERSTANDING – Intervention, Part II	Read Ch. 5, pp. 211-226.	

Week	Date	Focus	How to Prepare	Due
	10/27	Application Practice	Prepare to participate in a group in-class analysis project by completing assigned reading to date.	Journal 9: Ch. 4 discusses the gaze as a way in which patriarchy is perpetuated or refused. Ch. 5 discusses visual communication. Study Fig. 3.27 on p. 150. What are the rhetorical consequences of the way the gaze works here?
11	11/1	Application Example	Read Ch. 6, pp. 229-250.	
	11/3	Application Practice	Assigned readings in Race Relations folder on MUOnline.	
12	11/8	Class cancelled for paper conferences	Journal 10 prompt: What cultural artifact will you analyze in your paper, and what critical perspective(s) will you adopt? Why is this the best approach for your artifact? How might your own cultural perspective influence your analysis?	Journal 10 – Bring to your conference
	11/10	Class Cancelled for paper conferences		Journal 10 – Bring to your conference
13	11/15	Crash, Part I	Prepare essay drafts for 11/29 and bring your questions to class.	Journal 11 – What is the greatest challenge you face in completing your critical analysis paper, and how might you successfully overcome it? What questions do you still have about your cultural artifact?

Week	Date	Focus	How to Prepare	Due
	11/17	Crash, Part II	Prepare essay drafts for 11/29	JOURNAL
			and bring your questions to class.	REVIEW 3
14	11/22			
	and		Thanksgiving	
	11/24		Holiday	
15	11/29	Peer Feedback		Bring two hard copies of your draft Critical Analysis Paper to class
	12/1	Paper Panel	Critical Analysis Paper Panel	
		Presentations I	Presentations	
16	12/6	Paper Panel	Critical Analysis Paper Panel	
		Presentations II	Presentations	
	12/8	Last Class Day Paper Panel Presentations III	Critical Analysis Paper Panel Presentations	All critical analysis papers due electronically in e-portfolio and in hard copy today
17	Exam Day 12/15	Semester Reflection	Hard copy in my Honors College office mailbox (Old Main 230) or in my Smith Hall mailbox (SH 257) by the end of exam time (12:15 p.m.). Retain an electronic copy of your paper until you receive your grade.	Reflection Paper

Journal Entry Guidelines and Evaluation

How can I tell what I think till I see what I say?
--attributed to English novelist E. M. Forster (1879-1970)

Journal writing is a valuable exercise for discovering and sharpening one's thinking, and it is one of my favorite assignments. I am looking forward to learning more about our rhetorical world and its cultural artifacts by reading about your engagement with it. Following are guidelines for your journal writing and the plan for evaluating your work.

Guidelines

- Handwrite your journal entries in a composition book dedicated to this purpose. Since I will be keeping your journal for a few days when I pick it up for evaluation, do not use the composition book for other classes.
- Write on the front side of the page only.
- Please write on the days assigned on the Course Schedule to the prompts are listed there.
- Between journal assignment days, feel free to use the journal for other writing related to the course. For example, use your journal to take notes during President Gilbert's investiture, sketch out some ideas for your critical analysis paper, make notes of questions you have with the reading, or jot down ideas from class discussion that you want to remember.
- Regarding length, keep in mind that it's the quality of your thinking and writing that instructs, not the number of words. I fully anticipate that some of your entries of will be lengthier than others. Write thoughtfully and clearly, but don't be driven by a word or page count. Please consider that others will be reading what you write, and write legibly.
- Bring your journal to class every day.
- Journal entries must be completed by class time as scheduled. We sometimes will use journal entries as the basis of a class activity. For instance, you may be asked to read and respond to those of your classmates from time to time through the semester.
- I will collect your journal and evaluate your journal entries three times during the semester on the days noted on the Course Schedule.

Evaluation

On the Journal Review dates, I will be reading your three or four most recent entries. I will evaluate them as a set and assign a score of 0-15, for a possible total score of 45, or 45% of your final grade. I will post your scores on MUOnline.

To earn evaluations in the 12- to 15-point range on each set of entries, you will need to demonstrate timeliness, critical thinking, cultural sensitivity, originality, insight, and an appropriate understanding of the related reading. The idea here is to connect, reflect, analyze, apply, or otherwise demonstrate whatever intellectual activity the prompt suggests. Instead of just a topic to write about, consider the prompt as a heuristic, or a tool for thinking with. The best prompt responses contain insights that probably would not have occurred to the writer except for the writer's engagement with the prompt.

Please ask questions in class or come to see me if you are uncertain how to approach this assignment. I'm happy to help your journal writing add value to your experience of the course.

Critical Analysis Essay Assignment

Overview

In this paper, you have the opportunity to apply the theories and concepts from Brummett to analyze an artifact of popular culture that especially interests you. Keep in mind Brummett's definition of *artifact* as "an action, event, or object perceived as a unified whole, having widely shared meanings, and manifesting group identifications to us" (2014, 50) and of *popular culture* as "those systems or artifacts that most people share and that most people know about . . . that are part of the everyday experience of most people" (2014, 60-61). You may analyze anything that meets both of those definitions.

Guidelines

Your paper should make an argument for an interpretation of your artifact from **one** critical perspective (think Brummett, Chapters 4 and 5). As this is an introductory course, I do not expect you to become expert in a critical approach or in other critical work that already may have been written about your artifact. It is fine to draw on our class texts alone to lay the foundation for your analysis. Brummett Chapters 6-10 are excellent models, and you will do well to read the introductory paragraphs in each of these chapters.

If you want to look at other sources, that's fine, but it's not a requirement. If you do, however, and if you use any of them, be sure to cite appropriately in MLA, APA, or Chicago style – your choice. In the end, though, I do not want you to produce a rehash of someone else's scholarship. I want you to draw on your semester's learning to experience for yourself the excitement of this kind of work.

Brummett reminds us that "criticism is *not* meant to be a cut-and-dried, lockstep procedure. . . . In fact, the best critical studies will be those in which the critical machinery is not too obvious. You should use the concepts and categories that a theory or method offers, but you should not feel that you cannot bend those rules. You want your reader to learn about your subject matter and the insights that you bring to that subject. . . . The real payoff of criticism is insight into what texts mean. Critical methods should serve that end" (2014, 229). With that in mind, consider the following as potential steps for developing your paper:

- 1. Choose a text that genuinely interests you and that meets the criteria for *artifact* and *popular culture* above.
- 2. Consider the continua we studied in Chapter 3 and decide what boundaries you will set for your analysis.
- 3. Try different interpretative approaches and decide which one(s) most intrigue you or yield the most surprising insights.
- 4. Conduct the analysis by examining the artifact from the critical approach(es) or perspective(s) you've chosen. Ask questions of the artifact that are relevant to the concerns of your approach(es).
- 5. Begin drafting your analytic essay.
- 6. Your essay should include these sections:
 - Introduction introduce your artifact, its context, why it's worth writing and reading about, and what you've discovered the artifact means or what question your analysis answers (thesis statement or organizing principle)
 - Method briefly describe the critical approach(es) you used to conduct your analysis

- Analysis (Report of your findings) describe the insights into meaning that each critical approach you use produces
- Conclusion Answer questions such as these: what do the findings suggest to you? What (hidden?) social problems did you discover? How do you evaluate the artifact? What social intervention does your analysis suggest is necessary? (pp. 120-121).

General Requirements

- Give your paper a creative title that orients your reader to your subject. Center the title at the beginning of your essay. Do not use quotation marks, italics, or underlining in your title unless your title includes the name of a work that requires them.
- No cover sheets or folders, please. Put your name and course in the upper right corner of the first page. Staple your paper in the upper left corner no folded corners or paper clips.
- Essay Length: about 1250 1500 words
- Formatting: 12 pt. Times New Roman font, double spaced, 1.25" margins all around. Please number pages after the first.
- Submission: in hard copy. Please save an electronic copy of your paper until after you have received your grade.

Schedule

Thursday, October 13: Paper assignment presented and discussed in class. Sign up for a paper conference and presentation day.

The week of November 7: Your Journal 10 entry will be a paper proposal (see the syllabus Week 12 for details). Be prepared to share that during your paper conference with Dr. Gilpin. Attendance at the conference with your Journal Entry 10 is worth 10% of your final grade

Tuesday, November 15: Your journal entry should pose problems or questions you have about your paper. What do you suspect is happening in your artifact? What are you having trouble with? Be prepared to share your thoughts during our class time.

Tuesday, November 29: Draft workshop. Bring **two hard copies** of the draft of your paper to class. You will work in peer response groups, then give one copy to a classmate and one to me for feedback. Submitting a complete draft is worth 10% of your final grade.

December 1, 6, and 8: Paper presentations. You will take about ten minutes to present your project and your findings to our class. *All final drafts are due in class on December 8*.

Evaluation

Your paper will receive a letter grade that is worth 20% of your final grade. I will use the holistic grading rubric that follows on page 13, and there will be no scaled or curved grading. If you know from past experience that you have trouble getting started with your writing, I encourage you to consult the Marshall University Writing Center right away. I am glad to help you develop your paper during our conference week once your paper is underway. As long as someone else is not writing your paper for you, it is fine to talk over your work and consult with others who can help you shape your thoughts and clarify your writing. Expert writers do this regularly.

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Remember that there is no single correct way to complete this assignment, but there certainly are better and worse ways to approach and execute it. We will be talking about these strategies during the next few weeks in class. Please take advantage of the journal entries, drafting, peer response, and conferencing opportunities ahead to produce in stages a paper that merits a high evaluation.

Analytic Essay Evaluation Guidelines

(an adaptation of an online instrument from the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning at Harvard University http://bokcenter.harvard.edu)

The A Paper (18-20 points)

The A paper has all of the qualities of the top B paper and distinguishes itself by being more than competent – it is lively, well-paced, and exceptionally interesting. All evidence supports the writer's claim exactly. The reader has a clear impression of the writer's voice and intellect. These papers stand out individually within their class of papers. The ideas in A papers linger with their readers.

The B Paper (16-17 points)

The B paper presents a worthwhile and interesting argument, which is supported by sound evidence presented in a neat and orderly way. The reader is certain of what the author wants to say. Some sentences may be awkward, but they all are clear. Paragraphs are organized around one main idea. Rarely will the reader have to reread a paragraph to understand the author's intent. The B paper has only a few problems with mechanics, grammar, and spelling.

The C Paper (14-15 points)

The C paper has an argument, but it is vague, uninteresting, or obvious. It does not reflect much intellectual effort by its author. Instead of a grounded judgment, the C paper may express a personal opinion that is not well defended by the evidence that follows. Or, a C paper may have an intriguing argument that is inadequately supported. The C paper often has mechanical faults and errors in grammar and spelling.

The D or F Paper (8-13 points)

The unsatisfactory paper either has no argument or else it has one that is strikingly vague, broad, or uninteresting. There is little indication that the author understands the material he or she is presenting. Paragraphs do not hold together; ideas do not develop from sentence to sentence. The paper may repeat the same ideas or insights again and again, perhaps in somewhat different language. The D or F paper is filled with mechanical problems and errors in grammar and spelling.

Final Exam: Reflection Essay

For your final exam, you will write a reflection paper based on your experience of this course over the semester. The "essential nature" of the reflection paper, according to John Bean, is "the exploration of the connections between course material and a person's individual life or psyche" (2011, p. 117).

To earn maximum credit for this assignment, observe the following guidelines and requirements as you prepare your paper.

Guidelines

- 1. Carefully read and think about these prompts and write in response to them. You are free to address addition questions or ideas these prompts raise for you.
 - Recall the beginning of the semester and reflect upon your understanding of *the rhetorical and the persuasive aspects of popular culture*. What did you think this course would be about? Provide one or more examples that typify your thinking at this time.
 - What were the most surprising or interesting aspects of rhetoric, persuasion, and popular culture that you studied this semester? How do you expect this knowledge might influence your thinking once the semester has ended?
 - What are *the most useful insights about the rhetorical world* that you've gained this semester? How do you anticipate applying this understanding?
 - You are in some ways a different person as a consequence of the semester you have spent in this course (think about what you've read, the class sessions and discussions, the people you have met, and so on). As Edmond Locard wrote, "Every contact leaves a trace." Reflect on the traces this course has left and what that might mean.
 - What advice would you give a friend who is planning on taking this course next year?
- 2. If you have written reflection papers in other courses, you know that to do this well and to profit from the experience, you must spend time thinking seriously about your subject and writing more than one draft of your paper. Off-the-top-of-your-head papers will not reflect the depth of thought necessary to earn a top score. You will discover what you most want to say as you work through successive drafts.
- 3. Write for yourself, not for me. Please don't embarrass us both by attempting to flatter me or appeal for a better grade. If what you write doesn't ring true for you and your experience of the course, then you are wasting our time. This paper is an opportunity for you to make this course count for something after the semester has ended.
- 4. Please don't extensively quote or paraphrase our textbooks. Write about your *engagement* with our textbooks and class activities rather than recite what we already have read together.

Requirements

- 1. Aim for about 4-5 pages of text. You may write more if you wish I am looking forward to reading your papers. It is unlikely that a paper of 3 pages or less will have adequately engaged the five writing prompts (bullet points in *Guideline* 1).
- 2. Include an effective introduction and conclusion to your reflection.
- 3. Put your name and course in the top right corner of your paper. A title page is not necessary.
- 4. Give your paper a title that reflects what emerged as an overall theme for your writing.
- 5. Use Times New Roman 12-point font and 1.25" margins all around. Double space your text.
- 6. Number your pages after the first.
- 7. Fasten pages with a staple in the upper left-hand corner.
- 8. Papers are due by the end of the posted exam period for our section: Thursday, Dec. 15, 12:15 p.m. Early submissions are welcomed and encouraged.
- 9. To receive credit for this paper, it must be uploaded into GEAR by 4:00 p.m. December 15. You will receive a separate set of instructions for preparing your electronic paper for upload and completing the upload process. I cannot record a score for your paper until you have uploaded and tagged it in GEAR.
- 10. Leave the hard copy of your essay in one of two places:
- In my mailbox in the reception area of the Communication Studies main office, SH 257
- In my mailbox in the reception area of the Honors College, OM 230
- 11. Please keep an electronic copy of your paper until after you have received your final grade.

Evaluation

This final reflection paper is worth 10% of your final grade, or 10 points out of 100. Papers that treat the questions superficially and have numerous errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar will earn 5.5-7.5 points. More thoughtful, polished papers will earn 8-10 points. You can enhance your final grade and "cement in" your most important learning from our semester together by giving this assignment careful, reflective thought and preparation. I look forward to sharing in your reflection and learning from your account of the semester.

Bean, J. E. (2011). Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking and Active Learning in the Classroom. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

[&]quot;Edmond Locard." http://aboutforensics.co.us/edmond-locard/