

English 491 / 591 - Rhetoric and Ethics
Fall 2013
CRN: 13061 / 16914
MWF 11:00-11:50 / 246 Gerlinger

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Beginning with Plato's arguments against the sophists, rhetoric as the art of persuasion has been criticized in ethical terms, since words have the power to induce belief without necessary knowledge of truth. Such critiques continue into our time, as in the idea that ours is an "argument culture" in which persuasion becomes a matter of winning at the expense of silencing the opposition, reasoning is seen as a form of violence, or beliefs are sold to people by manipulative or non-rational means. We will read several philosophical and theological theories of rhetoric which seek to replace the agonistic aspects of public argumentation by emphasizing instead a renewed sense of reason, or dialogue, or inquiry, or democratic free play of ideas, or negotiated belief.

Texts:

Available in the bookstore:

Deborah Tannen, *The Argument Culture*
Plato, *Gorgias*
Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
Martin Buber. *I and Thou*

Other required readings as listed on the course schedule made available on Blackboard, or handed out in class.

Requirements:

Portfolio of 8 weekly reading responses and reflection	20%
Two formal essays	60%
Attendance, preparation, participation	20%

Note: This course can be used to satisfy a requirement for the Minor or Certificate in *Writing, Speaking, and Critical Reasoning* open to undergraduate students in all majors. For more information go to: <http://english.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/minors/minor-certificate-in-writing-public-speaking-and-critical-reasoning>

Note on 591: Graduate students enrolled in ENG 591 will do the reading and attend class discussions as indicated on the schedule. However, additional readings tailored to students' interests, additional discussions, and a seminar paper will replace other written work.

Policies:

Attendance is mandatory. Unexcused absences or disruptive classroom behavior will affect your final grade.

During class meetings, I will mark you absent for the day if you use electronics, including phones, notepads, and laptops, without consulting with me first about your need to do so. Do not leave the classroom to answer or use cell phones, etc. Please turn them off.

Reading responses: One or two paragraphs of cogent, informal writing in which you reflect on the reading you are doing for this class. These must be written before class. This writing may include your reactions, thoughts, speculations, observations, connections or comparisons, or questions directly related to the readings or to concepts discussed in class. Reading responses will be handed in on the days marked by asterisks on the schedule. They will be returned the following week ungraded, but with brief comments. **Keep your returned responses in a file as they are returned to you:** The entire portfolio of reading responses is due in class on December 4 along with a brief retrospective reflection, and will be graded collectively and returned during final exam week.

Formal Essays: 5-6 pages of well-argued, formal prose in response to an assigned question, or approved topic.

Writing counts. English classes are writing intensive; you are expected to write at your best and use writing assignments to demonstrate and improve your writing skills. Your writing will be assessed both on the quality of the content and the quality of the writing itself.

The writing you do for this class will be a direct response to the readings and discussions and will not require you to read secondary sources. Consulting outside sources can be helpful in understanding references or in providing historical context. If you use outside sources of any kind in your writing, directly or indirectly, you must document those sources appropriately.

All work you do for credit in this class must be exclusively your own work and done exclusively for this class. Plagiarism or academic dishonesty of any kind will result in a failing grade in the course and a report to the Officer of Student Conduct. Your continued enrollment in this class signifies that you are familiar with the provisions of the code of student conduct, which are published at:

<http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx>

Schedule of readings and assignments *Reading responses due*

If changes are made to this schedule for any reason, they will be announced in class and via Blackboard.)

M 9/30 – introduction

W 10/2 – read Tannen, *The Argument Culture*

F 10/4 – Tannen continued

M 10/7 – read Lakoff and Johnson, from *Metaphors We Live By* (on Bb)

W 10/9 – read Crosswhite, from *The Rhetoric of Reason* (on Bb)

F 10/11 – read Lakoff/Johnson, Crosswhite, continued

M 10/14 - read Plato, *Gorgias*

W 10/16 – Plato, continued

F 10/18 – no class: read Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, Bk. I

M 10/21 – read Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, Bk. I

W 10/23 – read Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

F 10/25 – Aristotle, continued

M 10/28 — read Dewey, from *Human Nature and Conduct* (on Bb) –**Essay #1 Due**

W 10/30 – Dewey, continued

F 11/1 – read Weaver, from *The Ethics of Rhetoric* (on Bb)

M 11/4 – Weaver continued

W 11/6 – read Toulmin, from *Return to Reason* (on Bb)

F 11/8 – read Booth, from *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric* (on Bb)

M 11/11 – Booth coninued

W 11/13 – read Ong, from *Fighting for Life*, Gilbert, “The Good Fight,” and Pendergast, “The Fighting Style” (on Bb)

F 11/15 – read Roberts-Miller, from *Deliberate Conflict* (on Bb)

M 11/18 – – read van Eemeren and Groodesdorst from *A Systematic Theory of Argumentation* (on Bb) and Gage from *The Shape of Reason* (on Bb)

W 11/20 – read from Allen, *Talking to Strangers* (on Bb)

F 11/22 – read from Peterson and Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues* (on Bb)

M 11/25 – read Buber, *I and Thou* – **Essay #2 Due**

W 11/27 – Buber continued

F 11/29 – **NO CLASS**

M 12/2– synthesis

W 12/4 – **Reading Response Portfolios and Reflection Due**

F 12/6 – wrap up

No final exam.