ENGLISH 776: Seminar in Modern Rhetorical Theory
Mondays, 3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m., Tawes 3132

Instructor: Dr. Scott Wible
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Office: 1220C Tawes Hall
Office Hours: Mondays, 2:30pm — 3:30pm
NOTE: I am also available Tuesdays through Fridays for meetings, whether face-to-face or video/audio conferences via Skype, Google Hangout, Adobe Connect, or phone. Please email me to schedule a meeting time.

As rhetoric scholar Jeffrey Walker declared in 2003, “Without its teaching tradition, rhetoric is not rhetoric but just another kind of philosophy or literacy criticism.” Rhetorical theory, in other words, is most valuable insofar as it informs rhetorical practice, and this attention to the practice of rhetoric raises questions about how best to teach it. Since Walker made his claim, a growing number of rhetoric scholars have called for reviving rhetorical education and reasserting its central role in the discipline of rhetorical studies and in institutions of higher education. In this course we will consider the reasons for the increasing frequency and intensity of these calls, and we will explore the visions for rhetorical education crafted by various scholars from rhetoric, composition, and communication studies. As we do so, we will trace the various historical and cultural roots of rhetorical education; analyze the spaces where rhetorical education takes place, who it serves, and how it serves them; examine key definitional debates (What is rhetorical education? How does it differ from literacy and civics education?); and discuss critical methodological questions that frame both the study and design of contemporary rhetorical education. Of course, given the relationship between rhetorical theory and rhetorical practice, you will not only listen to what scholars have to say about contemporary rhetorical education but also join these conversations yourselves. You will carry out a semester-long research project in which you take up a question about rhetorical education that scholars are debating right now and present an analysis or investigation that contributes to that scholarly conversation. Through your participation in this course, then, you will both deepen your understanding about the connections between rhetorical theory, rhetorical practice, and rhetorical education, and you will become an engaged participant in present-day scholarly debates about the place of rhetorical education in contemporary society.

Required Books

Social Justice Statement
The University of Maryland is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.
Accessibility Statement
The University of Maryland is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the university’s programs or services, contact the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) as soon as possible. To receive any academic accommodation, you must be appropriately registered with DSS. The DSS works with students confidentially and does not disclose any disability-related information without their permission. For further information about services for students with disabilities, please contact the DSS.

Office of Disability Support Services
0106 Shoemaker Building
301-314-7682
dissup@umd.edu
http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/

I assume that all of us learn in different ways, and that the organization of any course will accommodate each student differently. Please talk to me as soon as you can about your individual learning needs and how this course can best accommodate them. For example, you may prefer to process information visually and find it difficult to absorb some of the oral discussion during our seminar time; we could assign a different student each week to take detailed notes on Google Drive during the class discussions so that you can read along, process, and participate more fully in our conversation. If you do not have a documented disability, remember that other support services, including the Learning Assistance Services Center (http://www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS/), are available to all students.

Academic Integrity
The University of Maryland defines academic integrity as the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity; respect other students’ dignity, rights, and property; and help to create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. For university procedures that I intend to follow when addressing academic dishonesty cases, please consult the University of Maryland’s Student Honor Council webpage: <http://www.shc.umd.edu/SHC/Default.aspx>.

Code of Academic Integrity and the Honor Pledge
The University of Maryland is one of a small number of universities with a student-administered “Code of Academic Integrity and Honor Pledge” <http://www.orientation.umd.edu/VirtualFolder/academicintegrity.pdf>. The code prohibits you from cheating, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without permission of both instructors, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures.
OVERVIEW OF COURSE PROJECTS
1. Online discussion board contributions, posted twice weekly. (20%)
2. Exploratory Essay, due Tuesday, September 6 (5%)
3. Annotated Bibliography, due Friday, October 14 (15%)
4. Overview of Research-Based Project, due Friday, October 28 (20%)
5. Semester-Long Research-Based Project; draft due Friday, December 2; final due Friday, December 16 (40%)

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE PROJECTS

Discussion Board Posts
The aim of these online discussions will be to deepen our thinking about definitions, theories, and methods of rhetorical education. Each week, you will compose two entries for our online class discussion board in Canvas.

(1) By Monday at 12pm, a 250-word post (approximately one double-spaced page) about one or more of the week’s reading. Post your commentary to the discussion thread that I have created for that particular week on our course Canvas page. Your writing can either begin a new line of discussion about the readings or respond to another person’s statement.

(2) By Wednesday at 9pm, a 125-word response to one of your classmate's posts or to in-class discussion from our meeting earlier in the week.

Exploratory Essay, due Tuesday, September 6
In this short essay (5-6 double-spaced pages), explore a course-related issue. You may want to write about a particular theoretical concept, research site, curricular design, or pedagogical approach, or you may want to write about a methodological problem that interests you. While it is still very early in the semester, now would be a good time to begin thinking about your final project, so you may choose to generate and begin investigating a research question concerning rhetorical education. The idea here is for you to take up a specific issue concerning rhetorical education and begin to push your analysis further than we might be able to in class discussion or in course readings.

Annotated Bibliography, due Friday, October 14
Your annotated bibliography will help you prepare to write your overview and your research project. To complete your annotated bibliography, you will research and write about 12 sources that will help you both to learn more about your research topic and to support your arguments about it. In each annotation you should (1) cite the text of your choice in perfect MLA format; (2) briefly explain the larger research conversation to which the text contributes; (3) paraphrase the research question that the text tries to answer; and (4) briefly summarize how the author answers the research question.

Also, at the beginning of your annotated bibliography, compose one paragraph that states your research question for the topic, presents any necessary context for that research question, and briefly describes how you plan to work toward answering that research question (e.g., what types of research methods you’re going to pursue, what kinds of research materials you’ll consult, and what type of final project you’re likely to create).
Overview of Research-Based Project, due Friday, October 28

Map out an overview of your ongoing research-based assignment (although length is negotiable, I’m thinking that 8 to 10 double-spaced pages should be enough.) The purpose of this assignment is to lead you into the thick of your topic and force you to get organized and focused. By this time in the term, though, you’re probably already feeling somewhat knowledgeable if not opinionated about your topic. Broken into full sections, each with a heading, this overview should include:

1. Conception and Definition: Tell me how you’re conceiving of and defining your topic and your terms. What is your project? What is your purpose?

2. Significance: Discuss the significance of your topic. Why are you writing about this topic? Why is it a worthy topic for investigation for this course?

3. Connection: Tell me how this topic relates to your intellectual, gendered, academic, literate, cultural, professional, or maybe your emotional development.

4. Conversation: Discuss the way you are entering the on-going intellectual (and perhaps emotional) conversations surrounding this topic. Here’s where you talk about the leading spokespeople/researchers on this topic. What are their opinions? What are the main currents of thought with regard to your topic? In what ways are you joining into the scholarly, literary, cultural, or professional conversation?

5. Methodology and Rationale: How are you conducting your research? library research? web research? interviews? ethnographic research? personal experience? archives? What reasons do you have for choosing the people, person, medium, ideas, or sites in your research paper? In other words, how are you approaching this topic and why did you choose what you chose?

6. Plan of Work: What’s your time line for the work you have left to do?

7. Updated Bibliography. NO annotations on this working bibliography.

Please note: This assignment will help you become more fluent in and will strongly inform your research-based final project. You will not, however, be able to paste large passages of this assignment into your final project. If you’re not already working collaboratively, you may want to work in a small group to help one another achieve this assignment.
Research-Based Project. Draft due Friday, December 2; Final due Friday, December 16

In your research project (approximately 16-20 pages), you will ask and answer a critical question that relates to our course readings and discussions. Your project should include an introduction to the topic at hand, a well-defined argument concerning this topic, and supporting ideas that reinforce the claim(s) you have made. Your paper will be long enough to merit sub/headings, so I’ve provided some provisional ones for you:

Title

Introduction (You may want to keep this heading, as is.)
Here’s where you provide an overview, maybe a very brief discursive look at the scholarship already in conversation/circulation. Eventually come to your critical question.

Background of the Problem or Critical Question. (You may want to keep this heading—or change it to something which works better for your essay.)
In this section you provide the history or background of your problem/critical question. It’s a nice place for you to show off, once again, your reading and your knowledge. You’ll move rather quickly into the

Response to the Problem or to the Critical Question. (Again, experiment with this heading.)
And I mean “response” loosely. You’ll move from the background of the problem to your so-called response or solution, which will feature your thesis statement. The Background/Response facets of your essay might end up being one section rather than two.

Body of the Text (This section will be the biggest part of your research essay. You will need to think of appropriate headings and subheadings for this section.)
In this section, you’ll want to introduce the sections/features of your argument, the basic assertions you are making that support your overall thesis statement. For each major assertion/development, you’ll probably want a separate subheading. See any journal essay, and you’ll see how this is done.

Conclusion
It can be hard to get away from or to close down your research. So an often-successful way to do this is to think about your conclusion in three sections (which rarely merit separate subheadings):
(1) the conclusions you can draw (clear cut, obvious) from your research;
(2) the inferences you can draw (neither so clear cut or obvious, but given your knowledge of the subject, you feel pretty confident drawing them); and
(3) the implications of your research in terms of further research, theoretical application, pedagogical, curriculum, and so on. In other words, think of conclusions, inferences, and implications in this section.

Bibliography
Begins on a new page in perfect MLA style. NO annotations on this final bibliography.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1, August 29: The History of Rhetoric as a Teaching Tradition
Glascott, Brenda. “Constricting Keywords: Rhetoric and Literacy in Our History Writing.” Literacy in Composition Studies 1.1 (2013): 18-25.

Writing due:
Monday, August 29: Discussion board post.
Wednesday, August 31: Discussion board response.

Week 2, September 5. No class in observance of Labor Day.

Writing due:
Tuesday, September 6: Exploratory Essay

Week 3, September 12: Cultural-Historical Roots of Rhetorical Education
Cicero, De Oratore, Book I, http://pages.pomona.edu/~cmc24747/sources/cic_web/de_or_1.htm

Writing due:
Monday, September 12: Discussion board post.
Wednesday, September 14: Discussion board response.

Week 4, September 19: Theorizing Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Education

Writing due:
Monday, September 19: Discussion board post.
Wednesday, September 21: Discussion board response.
Week 5, September 26: Relationships between Democracy, Citizenship, and Rhetorical Education
Fraser, Nancy. “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy.” *Social Text* 25/26 (1990): 56-80.

Writing due:
Monday, September 26: Discussion board post.
Wednesday, September 28: Discussion board response.

Week 6, October 3: Kenneth Burke’s Rhetorical and Pedagogical Theories

Writing due:
Monday, October 3: Discussion board post.
Wednesday, October 5: Discussion board response.

Week 7, October 10: The New Rhetoric and Feminist Approaches to Rhetorical Education

Writing due:
Monday, October 10: Discussion board post.
Wednesday, October 12: Discussion board response.
Friday, October 14: Annotated bibliography.
Week 8, October 17: Challenging Traditional Conceptions of Rhetorical Performance

Writing due:
- Monday, October 17: Discussion board post.
- Wednesday, October 19: Discussion board response.

Week 9, October 24: Rhetorical Education in Non-Academic Spaces
Alexander, Jonathan and Susan Jarratt. “Rhetorical Education and Student Activism.” College English 76.6 (2014): 525-44.

Writing due:
- Monday, October 24: Discussion board post.
- Wednesday, October 26: Discussion board response.
- Friday, October 28: Overview of Research-Based Project.

Week 10, October 31: No class meeting. Mandatory individual conferences about semester-long research projects will be scheduled throughout the week. More details TBA.

Week 11, November 7: Rhetorical Education for Professional, Civic, and Literary Performance

Writing due:
- Monday, November 7. Discussion board post.
- Wednesday, November 9. Discussion board response.
Week 12, November 14: Rhetorical Education in Translingual and Transnational Contexts


Guerra, Juan C. “Cultivating a Rhetorical Sensibility in the Translingual Writing Classroom.” *College English* 78.3 (2016): 228-33.

**Writing due:**
- Monday, November 14: Discussion board post.
- Wednesday, November 16: Discussion board response.

**NOTE:** Kate Vieira will deliver a public lecture on campus on the morning of Wednesday, November 16 (time and location TBA). If your schedule allows, please plan to attend.

Week 13, November 21: How Digital Technologies Shape Rhetorical Education


**Writing due:**
- Monday, November 21: Discussion board post.
- Wednesday, November 23: Discussion board response.

Week 14, November 28: Rhetorical Education in the Speech Communications Tradition


**Writing due:**
- Monday, November 28: Discussion board post.
- Wednesday, November 30: Discussion board response.
- Friday, December 2: Draft of Research-Based Project.
Week 15, December 5: Rhetorical Education in the STEM Disciplines


**Writing due:**
- Monday, December 5: Discussion board post.
- Wednesday, December 7: Discussion board response.

Week 16, December 12


**Writing due:**
- Monday, December 12: Discussion board post.
- Wednesday, December 14: Discussion board response.
- Friday, December 16: Final Research-Based Project.