

## COMM 5302: Seminar in Rhetorical Criticism

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**IMPORTANT NOTE: I ask that any email correspondence from you be from your uttyler email address, not your personal or other email. Thanks. Likewise, emails to you will be sent to your uttyler email address.**

### Seminar Description

Rhetorical principles, procedures, and methods of systematically analyzing persuasive discourse in various media.

### Course Description and Learning Objectives

This seminar serves as an introduction to research methods used to analyze messages, events, and artifacts from rhetorical perspectives. Students will become familiar with:

- The goals of rhetorical criticism
- A variety of critical approaches
- The philosophical underpinnings of various critical approaches
- The nature and function of a variety of messages
- The process of planning and implementing a research project from a rhetorical perspective
- Scholarly journals in which rhetorical criticisms are published
- Taken together, the above objectives satisfy two student learning outcomes of the Department's graduate program:
  1. Communication Assessment (SLO 3 of the graduate program)
    - Evaluate the communication rules, norms, listening skills, and rhetorical strategies used by people.
  2. Research (Qualitative) (SLO 4 of the graduate program)
    - Conduct original qualitative research in communication.

### Required Reading

Jim A. Kuypers, ed. (2016). *Rhetorical Criticism: Perspectives in Action*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Other assigned readings can be found in Ebsco Host (Communication and Mass Media Complete), on Blackboard, or on reserve in the library.

## Grading

Reports on Critical Methods	10
“Backgrounder”	10
Application of Method	20
Term Paper	30
Final Exam	20
Participation	10
Total	100

For each graded assignment, students will receive an A, B, C, D, or F. Each of these letter grades corresponds with a number value: an A carries a numeric value of 4, a B is worth 3, C is worth 2, D is worth 1, and F is worth 0. To calculate your grade, multiply 4, 3, 2, 1, or 0 that corresponds with your letter grade by the percentage value (above) of a given exercise. For example, if you receive a B for the “Final Exam,” you would multiply 3—which corresponds with a B—by 20% and you would get a .60 for that assignment. At the end of the semester, to calculate your final grade, you would add each of the scores and divide by 100. Final grades will be awarded as follows:

### Numeric Value of Grades:

A = 4
B = 3
C = 2
D = 1
F = 0

If your grade falls between two numbers (e.g., between a 3 and a 2), you will receive the grade corresponding with the lower number (in this case, a C, corresponding with 2) since technically you will not have achieved a B (a 3.0)

\*The category of “Participation” reflects the fact that active engagement in class proceedings is expected not only in graded assignments but in preparations and discussions. It refers to class presentations, such as chapter reports, discussion in class, and attendance. Failure to participate actively in class proceedings could result in failing the class, even if the student’s score were passing on all graded assignments.

### Seminar Policies and Procedures

**Attendance:** Students are permitted to miss 3 class hours throughout the semester without any consequence to their semester grade (An evening session consists of 3 class hours). Beyond 3 hours, except under the most extenuating circumstance at the instructor’s discretion, the student’s seminar grade will be affected. Students must notify the instructor prior to the absence. Proof for excused absences must be documented within two weeks of the absence and must clearly state that the emergency required that the student miss the course on the date and at the time of the absence.

**Course Format:** This course consists of lectures, class discussions, group activities, and individual presentations. One comprehensive exam will be given.

**Course Assignments:** (Expectations of particular assignments will be provided at the announcement of each respective assignment).

**Missing Class:** If you miss class, it is YOUR responsibility—not mine—to catch up on what you have missed. The same requirements of those who attended class apply to those who missed class. More than 3 absences shall be considered excessive and will be reflected in the Miscellaneous grade.

**Regarding Late Work: I DO NOT ACCEPT UNEXCUSED LATE WORK.** Since one of the primary objectives expressed in the University's mission statement is that students "will act with honesty and integrity," I will enforce rigorous standards of honesty and personal responsibility. Work is considered late if work is not presented on the date assigned. Unexcused work receives a "O." Any exceptions to this policy—which would be very rare!—would be at my discretion; in this case, the student:

- must submit to me a written petition requesting that his/her absence be excused
- must show official documentation verifying the basis for absence
- must be prepared to present the missed work at the very first opportunity I make available after the student's return
- must provide appropriate documentation that his/her failure to complete the assignment on the assigned date was unavoidable
- may be penalized for failure to present work as assigned.

If you know in advance that you will not be able to be present on a particular date on which work has been assigned, please let me know. I will try to schedule your assignment accordingly.

**Use of Cell Phone or Other Electronic Devices:** Any use of cell telephones, pagers, and all other electronic devices during class time is forbidden. It is the students' responsibility to make sure that their telephones or pagers do not ring, vibrate, or otherwise create the possibility of a class disruption. **A student whose telephone rings, vibrates, or otherwise creates a distraction during class, will be counted as absent for that class period. A student using any electronic device during testing without prior approval shall be subject to the policy on academic integrity.**

**Laptops:** The use of laptops in class for any purpose other than taking notes (e.g., instant-messaging, emailing, surfing the Internet, playing Solitaire) is strictly forbidden. Students caught engaging in any forbidden laptop activity shall be counted as absent that day.

**Audio/Video Recording** of class lectures is prohibited without prior approval. However, on occasion the instructor may arrange recording for instructional purposes.

**Oral and Written Work:** Assignments may have an oral and/or written components. Especially since this is a communication class, grading of oral and written work will consider quality and thoroughness of analysis, style, adherence to format, and proper mechanics (grammar, spelling, organization, clarity, cohesiveness). All work submitted to me should be typed and double-spaced. All work should be stapled (Please! NO PLASTIC REPORT COVERS WITH SPINES, NO DOG EARS, NO

FOLDED CORNERS, AND NO PAPER CLIPS! PLEASE STAPLE PAGES!) The quality of both your written and oral work will figure into your grade for the assignment.

**Reading Assignments:** When I lecture on course readings, I will ordinarily highlight portions—not the entirety—of the chapters assigned in your readings. However, you are responsible for the entire contents of all chapters and may be tested on any portions of those readings.

**“Outside” Participation:** Because much of what this course teaches is learned in personal reflection and application, some activities or preparation for in-class activities take place outside of class.

**University Policies:**

- A. **Course Withdrawal:** The last date to withdraw from classes without penalty is **September 12, 2016**. The last date to withdraw from one or more classes is **October 31, 2016**.
- B. **Final Exam** will take place during the week of Dec. 12-17 (precise day and time to be announced).
- C. **Note regarding student absence due to religious observance:** Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor by the second class meeting of such absences.
- D. **Academic Honesty Policy:**  
Students will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Anyone caught cheating will earn a “0” for that assignment and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action. Plagiarism (the use of written and oral words or ideas of another person, including another student, without the expressed acknowledgment of the speaker’s or writer’s indebtedness to that person) will not be tolerated. This includes the use of papers or other materials previously submitted to instructors in other classes, as well as video and audio recordings. Students caught plagiarizing will fail this class and be subject to academic and disciplinary action.
- E. **Grade Replacement:** If you are repeating this course for a grade replacement, you must file an "intent to receive grade forgiveness form" with the registrar by the census date (see schedule of classes for the date) for this semester. Failure to file an "intent to use grade forgiveness" will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. A student will receive grade forgiveness (grade replacement) for only two (graduate student) course repeats during his/her career at UT Tyler.  
<https://www.uttyler.edu/registrar/files/Grade-Replacement-Contract-Fall-2016.pdf>.
- F. **Social Security Statement:** It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number.
- G. **The U-T Tyler Writing Center** provides professional writing tutoring for all students in all disciplines. If you wish to use the Writing Center, you should plan for a minimum of two hour-long tutorials per assignment: the first to provide an initial consultation and drafting plan, and the second to follow up. Be prepared to take an active role in your learning, as you will be asked to discuss your work during your tutorial. While Writing Center tutors are happy to provide

constructive criticism and teach effective writing techniques, under no circumstances will they fix, repair, or operate on your paper. Location: BUS 202. Appointments: 903-565-5995.

**H. ADA Policy:**

Under Federal and state laws, students with documented disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations to ensure the student has an equal opportunity to perform in class. If you have a disability, including a learning disability, for which you request disability support services/accommodation(s), please contact Ida MacDonald in the Disability Support Services office to make appropriate arrangements. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting disability support services/accommodation(s) must provide appropriate documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Support Services counselor. For more information, call or visit the Student Services Center located in the University Center, Room 282. The telephone number is 903-566-7079 (TDD 565-5579)." Additional information is available at the following UT Tyler Web address:

<http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices>