**English 720: Rhetorical Theory | Spring 2016**

**Dr. Genesea Carter**

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**Face-to-Face Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:00-1:00pm**

**Virtual Office Hours: Friday 12:00-1:00pm**

“Rhetoric is the art of speaking or writing to the public—and not always a friendly or familiar public.  Rhetoric is the art of persuading others that our course of action is a correct course of action.  The art is in knowing our audience, in shaping our voice, audible or written, so that our audience clearly understands our message and is persuaded—maybe not always persuaded to act, but at least persuaded to acknowledge that another point of view is possible.”

– Online Writing Lab, California State University, Sacramento

“Rhetoric is basically the strategic use of communication to accomplish purposes with target audiences.  It can be used for ethical and unethical purposes, but ought to be used for good ends and to enhance truthful and honest messages.”

 – Edu\*Rhetor Blog

“Rhetorical argument is not blaming someone. Today it is commonly used in a most pejorative way; making rhetoric sound like little more than name-calling and childish arguing. What we want to do with good rhetorical reasoning is to win over an audience—which can be any onlookers, television viewers, an electorate or each other.”

– Mike Putnam, Department of Communication, The University of

 Texas, Arlington

**Course Description**

Rhetorical Theory will provide students with a survey of the history and theories of rhetoric from the Classical period to contemporary time, emphasizing the applications of rhetoric to the written and visual communication typically practiced by technical communicators.

The MSTPC program advocates the Society for Technical Communication’s [“Ethical Principles for Technical Communicators”](http://archive.stc.org/about/ethical-principles-for-technical-communicators.asp) and works to incorporate these principles into coursework discussions and practice.

**Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to achieve the following objectives:

* Program Objective #2: Select and apply theoretical concepts and principles to the interpretation of technical and professional communication phenomenon.
* Program Objective #3: Evaluate relevant scholarship as a means of informing inquiry in technical and professional communication.
* Program Objective #4: Select, design and conduct research, using proper methods and methodology, making sound recommendations and drawing logical conclusions.
* Program Objective #5: Compose texts, designs and other deliverables, demonstrating ethical, rhetorical, and user-centered strategies.
* Program Objective #9: Plan a documentation schedule and monitor project progress against that schedule.
* Program Objective #10: Evaluate and execute team-building and interpersonal communication strategies.

**Course Outline**

1. History of Rhetoric
2. Rhetoric, Technical, and Professional Communication
3. Real-World Applications

**Primary Course Text**

Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg’s *The Rhetorical Tradition*.

Additional readings are on Learn.

Craig Smith’s *Rhetoric and Human Consciousness* is a supplementary book to use on

your own accord.

**Assignments**

***Participation/Attendance 30%***

Participation will be determined by completeness, thoroughness, and thoughtfulness of discussion thread and blog postings. Students will be graded on a 0, 5, or 10 point scale. This course is designed to emphasize interaction of and collaboration between students, thus failure to complete assignments on time will adversely affect your overall course grade. Missing more than two weeks of class time (two discussion thread posts) will prevent you from passing the course. ­­­

***Reading Responses 40%***

Students will write four, two-page reading responses based on the readings for that week. Superior reading responses will draw connections between texts and technical and professional communication.

***Research Project and Reflection Memo 35%***

Students will apply rhetorical theory to a final project of their choosing. Students will be required to incorporate scholarship in rhetoric, writing, and technical communication.

**Grading Scale**

A 95+ B 84-86.9% C 74-76.9% D 64-66.9%

A- 90-94.9% B- 80-83.9% C- 70-73.9% D- 60-63.9%

B+ 87-89.9% C+ 77-79.9% D+ 67-69.9% F -59.9%

**Course Policies**

**Professionalism**

This shouldn’t be a problem, but: I expect all online and face-to-face discourse to be conveyed professionally and with courtesy, whether between classmates or with me. Always employ the rhetorical situation (purpose, audience, and genre) when communicating your frustration or annoyances. That is, be clear with your purpose, remember your audience, and choose the right genre. How others perceive you will be, generally, up to you.

Discussion thread postings that are off-topic, rambling, misogynistic, sexist, racist, politically charged, etc., will be graded as a zero. I like NPR’s online discussion policies: “But this is not the place for advertising, promotion, recruitment, campaigning, lobbying, soliciting, or proselytizing” and “rambling is the kiss of death.” We’re here to learn. Using the thread for your own agenda will get in the way of that.

**Email Policy**

Specific questions related to your work may be emailed to me at carterg@uwstout.edu. Allow up to 48 hours for a response during the term, as I teach four classes a semester with nearly one hundred students on my roster.

Given the nature of this course, I expect all emails to be written in a professional manner. Your email should

* Include an appropriate and specific subject line
* Address me by name in an opening salutation
* Provide a message free of grammatical or spelling errors
* Format your email with multiple paragraphs, even if it’s a short message
* Close with an appropriate closing (“Thank you,” “Best,” “Sincerely,” etc.) and your name

**Late Work**

All professionals must contend with deadlines. Therefore, I do not accept late work unless we make an arrangement beforehand. If you have an extenuating circumstance, you must contact me in advance.

**Technology Policy**

Because this is an online course, you must have access to the internet and your computer must be in good working order. You should **immediately**telephone Ask5000 (715-232-5000) if you have the following problems:

* Unable to access D2L in any way (uploading to Dropbox, login, seeing discussion threads, etc.)
* Unable to access the textbook
* Unable to open files or web links

**Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism**

According to the Dean of Students, “UWS 14.03 defines academic misconduct as follows: Academic Misconduct Subject to Disciplinary Action: Academic misconduct is an act in which a student:

* Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
* Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
* Forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
* Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
* Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance; or
* Assists other students in any of these acts.”

Most common form of academic misconduct within the writing classroom is plagiarism, both unintentional and intentional. This includes, but is not limited to, purchasing papers, submitting assignment(s) written (either partially or wholly) by others, and copying other people’s ideas, quoted words, or phrases as your own. Academic misconduct is explained in full [here](http://www.uwstout.edu/services/dean/facultystaff/dishonesty.cfm).

*Investigation and Sanctions*

If I have evidence of your plagiarism, or if I suspect you have plagiarized, I will contact you to set up a meeting. Consequences for academic misconduct range from an oral reprimand to university disciplinary probation or expulsion. In most cases, if you have plagiarized a document, you will receive a zero for that assignment, and I will report you to the Dean of Students.

**Accommodations**

UW-Stout strives for an inclusive learning environment. If you anticipate or experience any barriers related to the format or requirements of this course please communicate with me so that we can discuss ways to ensure full access. If you determine that additional disability-related accommodations are necessary please contact the Disability Services office (206 Bowman Hall, 232-2995, <http://www.uwstout.edu/disability>).