

ENGL 4553: Rhetorical Theory & Criticism

Spring 2020 | Midwestern State University | Dr. Coenen

Days	Time	Room
TR	12:30-01:50 PM	Dill 328

“You cannot afford to think of being here to receive an education: you will do much better to think of being here to claim one. One of the dictionary definitions of the verb “to claim” is: to take as the rightful owner; to assert in the face of possible contradiction. “To receive” is to come into possession of: to act as receptacle or container for; to accept as authoritative or true. The difference is that between acting and being acted-upon”

--Adrienne Rich

Contact

Professor: Dr. Hillary Coenen
Email: hillary.coenen@msutexas.edu
Phone: 940-397-4058
Office: BW 203
Office Hours: MTW 10-11 AM; M 2-3 PM;
R 11-12:30 PM & by appointment
Email is the best way to contact me.

Course Goals

- Acquire a basic understanding of traditional and contemporary rhetorical theory, criticism, and its applications;
- Acquire a deeper understanding of feminist rhetoric, including primary and secondary sources, theories, and methodologies;
- Hone research skills and demonstrate ability to follow the MLA style guide;
- Gain experience in applying rhetorical theory in a relevant, original project and presenting research to peers.
- Additional information about course objectives can be found here:
msutexas.edu/academics/libarts/english/index.php

Course Materials

Required Text:

- **THR** - Herrick, James A. *The Theory and History of Rhetoric*, 6th ed. (5th ed. may be substituted). Routledge, 2018

Recommended Texts:

- **AM** – Ritchie, Joy, & Kate Ronald, eds. *Available Means: An Anthology of Women's Rhetoric(s)*. U Pittsburgh, 2001.
- **BLF** - Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 4th ed. Aunt Lute, 2012. (Any edition will do).
- **TBC** - Moraga, Cherríe, & Gloria Anzaldúa, eds. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color*. SUNY Press, 2015.

Other Resources:

- Access to D2L/Brightspace to receive messages and news and submit assignments.
- A Gmail account (Your MSUTexas account will work) that you will use to access additional readings and collaborate with classmates.
- Regular computer and internet access

Course Overview

This class provides a brief overview of the history of rhetoric and its theories and quickly moves into the development of feminist rhetorical theory in particular. Exploring the diverse range of contemporary applications of critical rhetorical theory enables an understanding of the necessity of observing and learning from the rhetorical practices of those who occupy marginalized identities.

Major Assignments

Grade Item	Pts/1000	Due	Submit
Discussion Lead & Preparation	150	Sign up	In class
Reading Response (50 pts x 4)	200	Periodic	In class
CHOICE Proposal	150	3/12	D2L
CHOICE Project	250	5/7	D2L
Final - CHOICE Presentation	100	Periodic	D2L/In class
Participation Log	150	3/10 & 5/7	In class

Grade Scheme

Letter	Numerical
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	0-59

Grade Formula

Total Points Earned/1000
= Course Grade

Grade Policy

According to MSU's Undergraduate Catalogue, "letter grades have the following significance:

- A indicates excellent work
- B indicates good work
- C indicates satisfactory work
- D indicates passing work
- F indicates failing work" (73).

Consequently, essays that meet the basic requirements earn a C, not an A or B. If you wish to earn As and Bs, you will have to work harder to produce better than satisfactory, or average, writing. A grade of C or better is required by the university to receive credit for this course.

Midterm Grades

In order to help students keep track of their progress toward course objectives, I will provide a Midterm Progress Report through each student's WebWorld account. I will submit a grade for all students, not just those in danger of failing the course. Midterm grades will not be reported on the students' transcript; nor will they be calculated in the cumulative GPA. They simply give you an idea of where you stand at the midpoint of the semester. Students earning a C or below at the midway point should make an appointment with me and visit the Writing Center.

Course Practices

Submission Format and Policy

All formal assignments are to be typed and formatted – and outside sources documented – according to MLA style. Some minor assignments will be submitted as a hard copy in class. All formal papers must be uploaded into the D2L Dropbox folder.

Note: You may not submit a paper for a grade in this class that already has been (or will be) submitted for a grade in another course, unless you obtain the explicit written permission of me and the other instructor involved in advance.

Late Assignments

Late assignments, defined as work not submitted by the start of class on the designated due date, will be accepted, but will lose 10% of the final grade. Additionally, no late work will be accepted more than 48 hours after the original deadline. If you are unable to come to class on the day an assignment is due, you should upload it into the D2L Dropbox folder on time to avoid late paper deductions. If you have difficulty submitting or are unsure if your submission was successful, email me with your work attached.

Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's thoughts, words, ideas, or lines of argument in your own work without appropriate documentation (a parenthetical citation at the end and a listing on the Works Cited page) – whether you use that material in a quote, paraphrase, or summary. All formal papers will run through the Turnitin for an originality report. At the very least, plagiarism will result in an F on the assignment; at worst, the consequence will be an F in the course. Offenders will be reported to the Chair of the Department of English, Humanities, and Philosophy and/or the Director of Student Conduct.

Assessment and Revision

I will provide written or oral feedback on drafts prior to submission as needed, and I will inquire about your writing progress regularly. If you request the opportunity to revise, you should meet with me to make a revision plan. You may revise and resubmit any coursework within 3 weeks of receiving a grade and prior to finals week for additional feedback. Grade revisions will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

Conferences

You should schedule two conferences with me during the semester prior to the last week of class. You may use these meetings for any course-related discussion, but your CHOICE project and discussion leading session will be especially useful topics.

Contacting Your Instructor

Email is the best way to contact me. In the body of your email, indicate the course and section number you're in. Please allow at least 24 hours for a response during the week and 48 hours over the weekend. If you need a response more urgently, please indicate that your question is "Urgent" in the subject of your email.

D2L

Our class has an active D2L site to which I will post the syllabus, grades, timeline updates, assignment sheets, PowerPoints, and other course materials. There you will submit formal assignments, and I will also make announcements over D2L, so please check it daily, especially before our class meets.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

It is important that you attend class and be on time. If you have a total of more than two (2) weeks' worth (TR: 4 class sessions; MWF: 6 class sessions) of absences excused or not, the missed instruction and opportunities will make it difficult for you to pass the class. Please don't feel you have to explain or justify absences to me; I respect your privacy, but you must accept the consequences. If you need to miss multiple sessions for personal reasons, you should alert the Dean of Students office and provide them with the necessary information so that they can verify the situation for all of your instructors.

If you miss class, you miss any writing assignment or group work done during that period, and you miss any announcements regarding future assignments. Notify me via email in advance if you will not be able to make class. As stated above, if you miss class on a due date for an assignment, upload the assignment to the Dropbox or it will lose points. Aside from failing to submit assignments on time, you will not incur penalties for missing sessions beyond the missed instruction and opportunities to contribute. Consider it your responsibility to be here, prepared for class in order to succeed and maximize your learning.

Accessibility & Technology

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Support Services in Room 168 of the Clark Student Center, 940-397-4140.

In addition to complying with the ADA, I want to ensure that this course is accessible as possible to all students. If you have problems accessing campus sites or learning materials (physical or digital), please talk with me about how we might improve that. I will often refer to uses of technology that I have not covered during class, and I am happy to provide one-on-one or workshop based support for students who are unfamiliar with those platforms or programs.

Campus Carry Statement

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to MSU Texas's Campus Carry page (<https://msutexas.edu/campus-carry/>).

Writing Proficiency Requirement

All students seeking a Bachelor's degree from Midwestern State University must satisfy a writing proficiency requirement once they have 1) completed 6 hours of Communication Core and 2) earned 60 hours. Students may meet this requirement by passing either the Writing Proficiency Exam or English 2113. If you have any questions about the exam, visit the Writing Proficiency Office website (<https://msutexas.edu/academics/wpr/>) or call 397-4131.

Writing Center

Begin projects early and take advantage of the MSU Writing Center, located off the 2nd floor atrium of Prothro-Yeager. Tutoring is available Monday through Thursday from 9am to 4pm. You can also use the satellite location in Clark's Commuter Lounge, Sunday & Thursday from 6pm to 9pm. Writing tutors will not edit your papers for you, but they will provide support and feedback at every stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to drafting, revising to proofreading.

Course Community

Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

As a professor who conducts social justice research and community advocacy, my commitment to equity, inclusion, and accessibility in this classroom and on this campus begins with acknowledging the ways that our institutions (academic and otherwise) have excluded, neglected, and marginalized many community members based on race, religion, gender expression, sexual orientation, immigration status, national origin, language, ethnicity, sex, ability status, socioeconomic status, age, body type, and other aspects of identity, and continues with seeking to understand and resist those failures.

Because our community members and we have diverse bodies, experiences, and needs, and because language helps shape our world, as a community, we must reject language that denigrates others based on any identity category. We should seek to critique and counteract both individual and structural oppression to create a safer, more just community. This means educating ourselves about systems of oppression and marginalization, fostering conversation and community learning around those topics, developing professional and academic practices that respond to the needs of historically marginalized communities and individuals, and holding ourselves accountable to the ongoing process of learning and becoming more equitable, inclusive, and accessible.

Learning with Generosity

This course encourages the discussion and consideration of topics that may be uncomfortable. We can work through discomfort, and this class should be a brave space for learning and exploration. I will provide content warnings as needed, and if you have a need for warnings before particular kinds of content, please let me know.

We will demonstrate respect and consideration of perspectives that differ from our own. Realize that there is much you don't know about your colleagues, and our choice of words in discussing social, political, and economic issues matters a great deal. As a group, we should acknowledge that, while ignorance is not an excuse for cruelty or dismissiveness, we all make mistakes as we learn, so we should be willing to forgive & learn from these situations.

Courtesy and Hospitality

The college classroom should be a vibrant environment that fosters creativity, discussion, and intellectual growth. You have the freedom to create the kind of intellectual community you desire. Included here are behaviors that I believe will help foster a generative community:

- *Pay attention.* This means when the instructor or classmates are addressing the class you are (1) not talking, (2) not using electronic devices for unrelated tasks, and (3) not sleeping. If emergencies or mitigating circumstances mean that you may need to do one of these things, please be considerate by quietly excusing yourself.
- *Be respectful.* You are expected to be respectful to your instructor, your classmates, and yourself. If you witness behavior that is less than respectful, you are welcome to hold the community accountable by calling us in.
- *Be prepared & responsible.* Know what is happening in class by checking the schedule and your emails. Bring materials and assignments to class when needed. Submit work on time, and communicate with me in mitigating circumstances.
- *Participate.* Since you are working to become an expert in your field, the class and our scholarly community stand to benefit and learn from your contributions. Practice now.
- *Communicate.* Come by or call me during office hours if you have issues with course material or want feedback on your writing. You can also email me.

Participation Log

This class works better, is more fun, and passes more quickly when everyone participates. Simply coming to class and being prepared is not participation. You will keep track of your own participation in a Participation Log, attached to the back of the syllabus. (You can also find a digital version on D2L.) When you contribute in a meaningful way to the course community, you will record it in your log with the date, the form of contribution, and a summary. The three required categories are described below:

Meaningful Contributions (MC)	MCs can take many forms [Abbreviations in ()]: comments (C) or questions(?) in class, relevant social media posts with the hashtag #Coenen1143 (#), excellent group work in or outside of class (GW), volunteering to read aloud or report group work (V).
Writing Conferences (WC)	At least 3 WCs with me, the writing center, or a classmate should be recorded in your log and documented well in your own notes. You can meet with me during designated conference times or office hours, visit the writing center and ensure that they document your visit, or document an exchange with a classmate.
Homework & Tasks (HT)	Tasks will be indicated when they are assigned and may include homework, brainstorming, or discussion board posts as needed.

Participation Log Rubric

Criteria	Complete (5)	Adequate (3)	Incomplete (0-1)
MC	10+ MCs are recorded & summarized	At least 7 MCs are recorded & summarized or all 10 are recorded but adequately not summarized.	Few to no MCs are adequately summarized.
WC	3+ WCs are recorded and summarized	WCs are recorded but not adequately summarized, or only 2 are summarized.	0-1 WCs are adequately summarized.
HT	All or most HTs are recorded & marked as complete	Some HTs are recorded & marked complete.	Few to no HTs are marked complete.

