

# Rhetoric/ENG 1143 Introduction to Critical Reading and Academic Writing

Founders Classical Academy/Midwestern State University

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*“The essence of Rhetoric...is not a set of techniques to impress (oratory, eloquence), nor a means of manipulating the will and emotions of others (sophistry, advertising), but rather a **way of liberating the freedom of others by showing them the truth in a form they can understand.**”*

~Stratford Caldecott (2012)

## Course Description

The liberal arts have been described as “a golden thread that comes from the Greeks ... a thread that weaves its way through the history of our civilization. These arts were intended for the cultivation of **freedom** and the **raising of our humanity to its highest possible level,**” thus Rhetoric, third of the verbal Trivium arts, concerns how “we communicate what we know to others within a moral community of **free persons**” (Caldecott). Aristotle defined rhetoric as the ability to see what is possibly persuasive in every given case (Rhet. I.2), that is, utilizing persuasion through the character of the speaker (*êthos*), through the emotions of the hearer (*pathos*), or through the argument itself (*logos*).

By way of introducing students to the art of rhetoric, this course begins with our own experience as consumers of information, examining how producers of information—the contemporary media and powerful stakeholders—deploy rhetorical strategies in news narratives. Next, students employ the rhetorical triangle and basic components of storytelling to compose personal narratives and to develop and deliver effective messaging. Because historically-significant speeches and documents best show how successful speakers have traditionally crafted messages for targeted audiences, students must scrutinize select masterpieces from the history for their use of rhetorical devices and strategies. Then, taking the present moment as its point of departure, the course journeys back through major historical periods to trace how the tradition of Western Rhetoric manifests itself in the weightiest moments of humanity’s freedom struggle, for these moments most exemplify the power of rhetoric. Finally, they will deepen their mastery of rhetoric as art by conducting research on a serious issue, by producing an academic essay (a.k.a. synthesis paper) arguing their stance, and lastly by writing and publicly presenting their own speech.

## ENG 1143 Course Goals (Dual Credit students):

- Apply key rhetorical concepts through analyzing and composing a variety of texts
- Engage in a writing process that includes invention, drafting, collaboration, and revision
- Use reading and composing for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating in various rhetorical contexts
- Use strategies—such as interpretation, synthesis, response, critique, and design to compose texts that integrate the writer’s ideas with those from appropriate sources
- Use sources ethically and in contextually-appropriate ways and follow a designated style guide
- Demonstrate proficient use of linguistic structures, including grammar, usage, and mechanics (G.U.M.), through practice in composing and revising

## Required Class Materials

- **Rhetoric Handouts** (provided)
- A dedicated **binder** with dividers for handouts
- College-ruled loose leaf paper; index cards

## Grading

### **Classwork (Honors 20% Dual Credit 10%)**

The term classwork applies to any assigned work, whether that assignment is done during class time or for homework. The classwork grade reflects the *process* of rhetorical analysis, that is, an individual student's satisfactory completion of assignments, particularly the thorough annotation and examination of texts. Additionally, students need to demonstrate retention of cumulative instruction while analyzing each subsequent work.

### **Participation (Honors 20% Dual Credit 10%)**

Participation refers to the active engagement of each student in discussing and analyzing the texts being studied in class wide discussion as well as group work. It also refers to the quality of notes taken during discussions. Students collaborate in designated groups to extend what they have achieved in their independent work. By building consensus through discussion, they not only deepen their understanding of rhetorical principles, but they also develop higher-level thinking, oral communication, self-management, and leadership skills. Participation is especially important during the essay-writing process when students give and receive critical feedback. Students who do not honor the privilege of collaborative work will lose this prerogative and hence lose the opportunity for earning the participation grade.

### **Quizzes (Honors 20% Dual Credit 5%)**

Course content—rhetorical terms, texts, lectures, discussions—will be quizzed periodically. Most quizzes will be announced, some may be spontaneous. A good rule of thumb is: “if we covered it, we may see it on a quiz.”

### **Essays (Honors 40% Dual Credit 80%)**

All written work will be held to high standards of diction and syntax. For each historical speech or document, students will analyze how the writer's language choices contribute to his or her purpose and intended meaning for the text. In addition to these regular rhetorical analyses, students will research a topic and compose a formal argumentative essay formatted in MLA Style. Students will be required to possess and use a library card to take out books. Class time will be devoted to understanding how to use secondary sources, and to planning, drafting, and revising this essay. Students will be held accountable for incorporating critical feedback. Successful student essays will demonstrate mastery of Invention, Organization, and Style. The presentation of the formal essay as a speech will also constitute part of the grade.

A note on plagiarism: *Black's Law Dictionary* defines plagiarism as “the act or instance of copying or stealing another's words or ideas and attributing them as one's own.” Plagiarism is taken very seriously by Founders Classical Academy, and any instance of plagiarism discovered in a submitted work (even a first offense) will result in disciplinary action and a failing grade. Consult the school handbook for more information about the school's plagiarism policy.

An additional note on using AI: The possibilities afforded by Artificial Intelligence are endlessly

fascinating. While the ease of generating any writing assignment through AI is undeniably tempting, any student suspected of using AI to complete assignments will receive a failing grade and be subject to disciplinary action.

**ENG 1143 Grading Policy:** This class will not use the plus/minus grading system for final grades. The following numerical equivalents for final grades are used:

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

### **Late Work and Absences**

Students are expected to complete and turn in assignments in good order and on time. Late work is not accepted for daily assignments; if a student does not have his homework when due, he receives a zero. Other assignments will be penalized 20% for each day late and will only be accepted on the next two school days.

Regarding valid absences, students will be allowed one extra day for each day missed to turn in work that was assigned while absent (for example, if a student is absent two days, the relevant work will be due two days after he or she returns). If absent, it is always the student's responsibility to get notes and assignments from fellow classmates.

### **Quality of Work**

All assignments (classwork, homework, assessments, and papers) must be written neatly and legibly. Unless students have accommodations specifically related to handwritten assignments, any work submitted which is **genuinely illegible** may be marked down. Ripped, torn, or scribbled-on paper will not be accepted. Paper torn out of a spiral notebook is not acceptable. Lined notebook paper/loose-leaf paper is required for all upper school assignments unless specifically directed by the teacher.

# Schedule

The following represents the tentative schedule for the course. The instructor reserves the right to modify the schedule and readings as needed throughout the semester.

Each unit will have corresponding writing and speaking assignments, notably rhetorical analysis essays and “podium time”—brief but frequent class presentations. These assignments are scaffolded to include all four components of the grading system: classwork, participation, assessment, and essay writing.

## **Unit 1: Information Production and Consumption**

Weeks 1 – 2 (M Aug 14 – F Aug 25):

Introduction; Steve Job’s Commencement Address to Stanford University; Selections from Marshall McLuhan’s *Understanding Media: The Extension of Man*; Bari Weiss’s Letter of Resignation; Silence Dogood No. 8; Selections on political pamphlet writing from Bernard Bailyn’s *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*

## **Unit 2: Terror Attacks on Freedom**

Week 3 (M Aug 28 – F Sept 1):

President George W. Bush’s State of the Union Address to a Joint Session of Congress

## **Unit 3: Rhetoric and The Fragility of Freedom**

Weeks 4 – 5 (T Sept 5 – F Sept 15):

Vaclav Havel’s “Power of the Powerless”; Solzhenitsyn’s “Live Not by Lies”; President Ronald Reagan’s “Address to Members of the British Parliament”; William Faulkner’s “Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech”; Winston Churchill’s “Their Finest Hour” and/or “We Shall Fight on the Beaches”

## **Unit 4: The Freedom Struggle**

Weeks 6 – 9 (M Sept 18– F Oct 13):

Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail” and “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop”; Sojourner Truth’s “Ain’t I a Woman?”; Frederick Douglass’s “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”

## **Unit 5: Rhetoric of the Republic**

Weeks 10 – 12 (M Oct 16 – F Nov 3):

President Abraham Lincoln’s “On the Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions”; Lincoln’s “Second Inaugural” and/or “The Gettysburg Address”; Patrick Henry’s “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death” (imitation of speech required); *The Declaration of Independence*

## **Unit 6: Practicing the Art of Rhetoric**

Weeks 13 – 17 (M Nov 6 – F Dec 15):

**Synthesis Paper (see details below) FINAL DRAFT DUE Friday 12/1/2023:**

Brainstorming Research Topic; Evaluating Sources; The Art of Research and Taking Notes on Sources; Outlining; Revision, Peer Review, and Presentation Practice; Presentations.

## **ENG 1143 SYNTHESIS PAPER and RUBRIC (dual credit students):**

This semester, we have considered complex issues surrounding media literacy. We discussed the reliability of online information, the impact of social media use on mental health, the connection between social media and activism, and the prevalence of online scams. Use those conversations and readings to help you consider possible topics for further investigation. Additionally, Chapters 8-12 in *The Writers Loop* focus on research strategies. These chapters introduce how to best evaluate, summarize, and integrate sources. Use these chapters of your text to help with managing your sources for this assignment.

For the Synthesis Paper, you will bring together ideas and data from multiple sources to inform your audience about a topic related to our course theme of media literacy. The synthesis paper will require you to 1) look for connections among the ideas presented in six sources of your choosing; 2) develop a thesis statement and topic sentences which make an informative claim in response to a research question; and 3) synthesize information from your sources to support and explain your main points. Your two goals will be to effectively and accurately synthesize the source material to inform your audience and to ethically integrate and document source information.

### **As you approach this assignment, follow these steps:**

- Brainstorm possible topics and develop to a research question.
- Use online search engines and the library data bases to locate at least six different sources related to your research question. At least one source should be a peer reviewed, academic journal article.
- Read and annotate those sources.
- As you read, look for connections between the sources. Consider these questions:
  - *Where do they agree?*
  - *Where do they disagree?*
  - *Do they cite the same experts?*
  - *Which sources make the strongest arguments? What limitations do you find?*
- Summarize and evaluate each source to create a Synthesis Matrix (more about this in a separate assignment sheet).
- Formulate a thesis. Remember you will make an *informative claim about your sources* rather than offer a persuasive claim about the topic.
- Begin drafting the body of your paper.
- Attend an instructor conference (10/30-10/31).
- Submit Synthesis Matrix (11/3).
- Submit a draft for peer review (11/10).
- Complete reviews of peers' drafts (11/13).
- Make revisions in response to peer and instructor feedback.
- Submit your final draft (12/1).

**Be sure to include the following:**

- A thoughtful **introduction** that begins with a hook and transitions to a **thesis statement** that offers an informative claim about the sources. See examples below:

*Although experts do not always agree upon how to address and treat social media addiction, they largely agree that social media use can lead to addictive behaviors.*

- At least four **body paragraphs** that contain **topic sentences** and concrete **supporting details** from the sources.

o Be sure to provide context (background information) for your topic.

o Do not just summarize each source.

o Begin each body paragraph with a topic sentence and use information from multiple sources and your own discussion to explain that point. o Each topic sentence will identify an overarching point of agreement (or disagreement) within your larger claim.

- An appropriate **conclusion** that reinforces your claim and leaves the reader thinking about the implications of this issue.

**Format:** You will turn in both a rough draft and a final draft for this assignment. Your paper should be five pages long, formatted using MLA guidelines, typed using MSWord or Google Docs, and saved as a Word Doc or PDF (please do not save as a Pages doc or html). **First, you will share your draft on Google Docs for peer review before class 11/10.** We will complete the peer review workshop together and I will also review your drafts. Based on the feedback you receive, make revisions, and **print final copy to be delivered at beginning of class period December 1.**

CRITERION*	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. EXCELLENT 2. GOOD 3. SATISFACTORY 4. WEAK 5. FAILING					
<b>Context of and Purpose for Writing (Communication Skills)</b> Does the essay demonstrate an understanding of the assignment’s rhetorical concepts (purpose, audience, genre, context)?					
<b>Content Development (Critical Thinking Skills)</b> Does the essay present a critically considered topic? Does the essay develop a comprehensive synthesis of information? Does the essay present varying viewpoints? Does the essay provide a logical conclusion?					
<b>Genre and Disciplinary Conventions (Communication Skills)</b> Does the essay assert a position in a thesis statement placed at the end of the introduction? Does the essay provide body paragraphs that begin with a topic sentence, focus on one idea, and include several examples and details? Does the essay successfully execute stylistic choices?					
<b>Sources and Evidence (Personal Responsibility Skills)</b> Rhetoric Syllabus 2					

Does the essay follow MLA guidelines for in-text citations and the Works Cited page? Does the essay use sources in ethical and contextually appropriate ways?					
<b><i>Control of Syntax and Mechanics (Communication Skills)</i></b> Does the essay use a variety of sentence types and precise language? Does the essay contain few grammatical or mechanical errors?					
<b><i>Comments:</i></b>					

### Synthesis Paper Checklist

#### Header

- Last name
- Page number
- Upper right-hand corner of every page

Double-spaced (no extra space between heading and title)

#### Heading

- Student Name
- Instructor Name
- Course Title
- Date
- At left margin on first page only

#### Title

- Centered on first page only

#### Hook

- Grabs the reader's attention at the beginning of intro

#### Thesis Statement

- Last sentence of the intro

- Makes an informative claim about the source information

#### Main Idea/Topic sentence (for each body paragraph)

- Each body paragraph begins with a topic sentence
- Illustrates the paragraph's main idea
- Offers one reason in support of the thesis

#### Evidence (for each body paragraph)

- Concrete evidence from sources (quote, summary, paraphrase)

#### Analysis/Discussion (for each body paragraph)

- Original, thoughtful discussion about the evidence and how the sources connect (agree or disagree)

#### Signal Phrases

- Source information is introduced with a phrase to provide context: A recent *New York Times* article suggests,

#### In-text Citations

- Each quote, summary, or paraphrase includes a citation in parenthesis
- Citation includes the author's last name and page number – no comma, no p./pp./pg. (Smith 131).

#### Thoughtful Conclusion

- Leaves the reader with something to consider

#### Works Cited Page

- Lists all sources cited within the paper (at least 4 sources)
- Sources are listed in alphabetical order according to the first word of the entry (usually the author's last name)
- All publication information is listed in the correct order
- Review textbook appendix A.2, OWL Purdue, or library database for assistance

#### Sentence Sense

- Proofread for fragments, comma splices, and run-ons
- Avoid sentences that begin with *There are* or *It is*



- Use clear and concise sentences
- Use strong verbs

Agreement

- Proofread for pronoun agreement (number and gender) and case
- Proofread for subject/verb agreement (singular subjects take singular forms of the verb/plural subjects take plural forms of the verb)

Polish

- Proofread for capitalization, spelling, and word choice errors

**Synthesis Matrix**

Name:

Research Question:

	Source 1:	Source 2:	Source 3:	Source 4:	Source 5:	Source 6:
Main Idea A						
Main Idea B						
Main Idea C						
Main Idea D						
Conflicting Ideas/Add'l Notes						

**Syllabus Agreement**  
**Rhetoric/Introduction to Critical Reading and Academic Writing**  
**Fall 2023**  
**Dr. O'Connor**

This syllabus agreement is due no later than Thursday, August 10, 2023 (or the day following your first full day of attendance) for a grade.

I have read this syllabus and understand the expectations for this class, including the plagiarism, AI, and late work policies.

Student Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Electronic communication preference: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_ .com

*Optional:* If you plan on supervising your student's access to and use of AI on all available electronic devices, please initial here:

\_\_\_\_\_