

ENGL 4553: Rhetorical Theory & Criticism

Spring 2024 | Midwestern State University | Dr. Coenen

Days	Time	Place
M/W	2 - 3:20 PM	PY 205

Contact

Professor: Dr. Hillary Coenen | **Email:** hillary.coenen@msutexas.edu

Phone: 940-397-4058 | **Office:** BW 203

Office Hours: Mon & Wed 10:30 AM-Noon | Tues & Thurs 1-2 PM | By Appointment

Email is the best way to contact me.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

- **HTR** - Herrick. *The History & Theory of Rhetoric*, 6th Ed. Routledge, 2018.
- **RC** - Foss. *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration & Practice*, 5th ed. Waveland, 2018.

Optional Texts:

- **AM** – Ritchie & Ronald, eds. *Available Means: An Anthology of Women's Rhetoric(s)*. 2001.

Other Resources:

- Access to D2L/Brightspace to receive info and submit assignments
 - Access to your MSUTexas Gmail account to collaborate & access digital materials
 - Regular computer and internet access
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Course Goals

- Acquire 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 methods and skills and follow the MLA style guide;
 - Gain experience in applying rhetorical theory in a relevant, original project and presenting research to peers.
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Course Overview

This class will overview the history of rhetoric, introduce a range of theories and methodologies in rhetorical studies, and apply concepts and methods from contemporary rhetorical studies. We'll explore the diverse range of contemporary applications of critical rhetorical theories, to understand the significance of observing and learning from the rhetorical practices and philosophies of a variety of communities and identities.

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

Grades & Policies

Major Tasks	Points	Description
Discussion Leader	150 DLs	Lead a discussion on a selected reading that you sign up for
Rhetorical Analysis	100 x 2 RAs	Discussion board posts sharing a rhetorical analysis of artifacts of your choice
CHOICE Proposal	150	A proposal for the CHOICE Project you plan to complete
CHOICE Project Portfolio	250	The culmination of your research on a rhetorical studies topic in the genre you choose (unit plan, research essay, podcast, website, workshop, etc.)
CHOICE Presentation	150	A presentation on your CHOICE Project for the class
Weekly eJournal	100+	Throughout the semester, use your eJournal to document your writing process and log your ungraded work for the class in order to earn credit.
Total	X/1000	

Weekly eJournal

The weekly eJournal enables you to earn course credit for ungraded work. Each week, record the work you do related to the class & indicate what you learned or the progress you made. This will also be a space where you can collect in class writing and homework.

Revision

You may revise and resubmit any work within 2 weeks of receiving feedback (prior to finals week) for new assessment. Grade revisions are negotiated on a case-by-case basis, and must be preceded by a revision plan drafted with the help of the instructor.

Grade Scheme

Letter	Numerical
A	895-100
B	795-894
C	695-794
D	595-694
F	0-594

Use of AI or Writing Technologies

The use of AI is highly discouraged in this class. Turnitin does have an AI detector, but it is not 100% accurate, and thus leaves room for “reasonable doubt.” Therefore, if you do use AI at any stage in the writing process, you must state in the reflection section of your submission how you used it (in detail). If an originality checker indicates that your response is more than 30% AI-generated, I will investigate further, and if your response and other evidence indicates that the work you submitted is not more than 70% original, you will not receive full credit for the assignment. **Note that there is no uniform policy on AI use at MSU. Make efforts to understand the policy for each course you are taking.**

Late Assignments

Deadlines are staggered in this class so that assignments build upon one another, which means that assignments should be completed according to the schedule to ensure your success. If you anticipate you may have difficulty meeting a deadline, request an extension at least 24 hours in advance. Late assignments, defined as work not submitted to the designated site within 2 hours of the deadline, may be accepted for credit if you consult with me within two business days of the deadline, at the discretion of the instructor. 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 another’s thoughts, words, ideas, or lines of argument (including text written by a generation system or artificial intelligence tool) 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. 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 the Dean of Students. Students have the right to appeal an alleged incident of Academic Dishonesty. More information about this policy and appeal procedure can be found on page 55 of the *Student Handbook* https://msutexas.edu/student-life/_assets/files/handbook.pdf

University Resources & Policies

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.

Writing Center & Tutoring

Tutoring and Academic Support Programs (TASP) provides free drop-in tutoring for MSU students. Located on the first floor of Moffett Library, writing tutors are available most weekdays. You don't need an appointment to use these services. 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. See <https://msutexas.edu/academics/tasp/on-campus.php> for more info.

Access to Microsoft 365

All students can download Microsoft Office 365 free of charge using their MSU Texas student email address. To acquire Office 365, visit <https://msutexas.edu/distance/student-resources.php>.

University Computer Labs

The University provides four open computer labs that provide Microsoft Office and internet access.

Location	Hours
Clark Student Center	24 hours (Mon-Sun)
Dillard 146	Mon-Thurs 6 AM – 7 PM
Moffett Library	Mon-Thurs 8AM – 10PM; Fri. 8AM-5PM; Sat 10AM-6PM; Sun 2PM-10PM
Legacy Hall	24 hours (Mon-Sun)

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/>).

Course Policies & Practices

Attendance Policy

Punctual, engaged attendance is crucial to your success in this class and in college. More than two weeks' worth of unresolved absences (MW/TR: 4 classes) will be grounds for the instructor to drop you from the course. Any absences are likely to affect your performance in the course, and it's your responsibility to be present and prepared for class to maximize your learning. If you must miss class for any reason, you may resolve absences by communicating with your instructor. If you must miss multiple sessions for personal/health reasons, alert the Dean of Students office and provide information so they can verify for instructors.

Unresolved Absence: An absence about which you did not communicate to the instructor prior to or within two days of its occurrence.

Resolved Absence: To resolve your absence, communicate with me via email prior to or within two business days of the absence and explain what you will do to stay on track.

Campus Closure & Weather Policy

In cases of campus closures, the instructor will post a news item on D2L by 8 AM the day of the closure to indicate if a Zoom session will be available or if another make-up task or activity will be required.

Contacting Me & GroupMe

All emails you send for academic purposes should be revised and edited, including a greeting, body paragraph(s), and closing, to meet professional expectations for emails. For courses, you should indicate your name and the course you're enrolled in. Allow 2 business days for a response to your email. You may also use our class GroupMe to ask questions and share resources among classmates.

D2L & Google Drive

We will use D2L to access most course materials including the syllabus, textbook, announcements, schedule updates, assignment sheets, slideshows, your feedback and grades, and other materials. You will also submit formal assignments and discussion board posts on D2L. Check D2L daily, especially before our class meets. Google Drive will also be used as a collaborative space and to store class resources.

Learning with Equity & Generosity

As a class community, we have diverse bodies, experiences, and needs. Our differences are strengths, we should strive to learn from them. For a safe, productive learning environment, we must ardently reject language, attitudes, and behaviors that denigrate others based on identity. In this learning space, hate speech, harassment, discrimination, & violence are not tolerated.

Ensuring access and equity for all requires more than rejecting discrimination. It begins with acknowledging how our institutions (academic and otherwise) have oppressed, excluded, and marginalized people based on race, religion, sexual orientation, sex and gender expression, immigration status, language background, ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic status, age, body type, and other aspects of identity. The work continues with seeking to understand and resist those failures by educating ourselves about oppression, fostering conversation and learning about those topics, developing practices that respond to the needs of historically marginalized communities, and holding our communities accountable for becoming more equitable and accessible.

This course encourages discussion and consideration of uncomfortable topics. We work through discomfort and create a brave space for learning and exploration by showing respect for others and consideration of different perspectives. There is a lot we don't know about each other, and our word choice in discussing social & political issues matters a great deal. Ignorance is not an excuse for cruelty or dismissiveness, but we all make mistakes as we learn, so we should be willing to forgive & learn from these situations.

On Language Assessment

You might expect to learn "proper grammar" in this class, but linguists argue that every language and dialect has a distinctive grammar and no one grammar is inherently better or more correct. American universities rely on "Standard (American) Academic English" (SAE) to determine "college readiness," but this ["standard" is a false one rooted in intentional gatekeeping and discrimination](#) based on race, class, and citizenship status. In this class, your professor will assume that SAE is a false and flawed standard. Your language practices are relevant. You will not be chastised for using grammars other than SAE in discussion. We will discuss clarity, conciseness, and common language expectations in various professional environments, and you will be given feedback based on those expectations; these goals are more practical and inclusive than striving for an arbitrary and false notion of correctness. (See also [CCCC's 2020 Demand for Black Linguistic Justice](#).)

Ensuring a Learning Environment

Expectations and norms for this class will be collaboratively determined by you and your classmates with the input and guidance of your instructor in order to develop an inclusive and equitable learning environment for everyone. We'll begin with the four core (CARE) principles below, and together we'll discuss how these translate to behaviors and actions that will promote learning and growth.

Principles	Students will...	Professor will...
<i>Communicative</i>		
<i>Accountable</i>		
<i>Respectful</i>		
<i>Engaged</i>		