

Contemporary Rhetorical Theory [W] Spring 2021

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ENG 350/01
TR 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Virtual Office Hours:
TR 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. or by appointment

Office Hours Zoom Link:
<https://lafayette.zoom.us/j/94566820337>

Course Description

Let's face it, rhetoric has gotten a bad rap. We tend to use the word to describe vacuous, insincere, and even dangerous speech. We accuse our political opponents of espousing "mere rhetoric" to advance narrow partisan interests. We're encouraged to move "beyond the rhetoric" to engage in real debate about important issues. Charismatic leaders are defined by their use of "empty rhetoric" to manipulate supporters through appeals to supposedly baser instincts like emotionality, vanity, hatred, and ignorance. In short, rhetoric is often used synonymously with bullshit – language that has a dubious, even nefarious connection to reality. But is this usage accurate?

This seminar-style course will introduce you to the interdisciplinary commitments of rhetorical theory by focusing on key concepts, questions, theorists, and intellectual traditions. Contemporary rhetorical scholarship has moved beyond considering only linguistic and textual techniques of persuasion to interrogate issues of power, agency, citizenship, embodiment, (post)humanism, and materiality. As such, it is impossible to provide a comprehensive survey of the current state of the field. Rather, in this class, we will limit our attention to issues that have immediate political and cultural importance. Through the rigorous and deliberate reading of theory, we will reckon with crises including, but not limited to, racism, state and vigilante violence, mass death, migrant detention, deliberative democracy, dehumanization, and demagoguery. We will ask what it means to assume a rhetorical stance toward public life, meaning that we will think of rhetoric as both a scholarly discipline and a critical orientation to (inter)acting in the world. To this end, this course's most important objective is to provide you with space to hone a sophisticated approach to reading and writing about complex theory.

For those of you planning to pursue graduate education in the humanities, this course will take up conversations and questions that matter across an array of disciplines. Regardless of your future plans, however, this class will help you think carefully and critically about how discourse and ideology, myth and truth, and power and materiality structure our world. I should note right now, at the outset, that course readings and concepts will be tough to understand – at least at first. Be patient with yourself! Together, we will learn how to identify key premises and claims in academic arguments. We will also learn to synthesize and expand diverse ideas to explain or trouble contemporary events.

Learning Goals & Outcomes

By the time you finish this course, you will be able to:

Goal 1: Explain, compare, synthesize, and apply theoretical concepts important to contemporary rhetorical theory.

Outcome 1: Ten times this semester, you be tasked with writing a focused reading response, or *microtheme*. Microthemes ask you to both distill a reading's central arguments and develop working definitions of key concepts introduced in those readings. As the semester progresses, you will use your microthemes to develop an inventory of critical concepts, which will be used in your long writing assignments.

Outcome 2: You will write a Theoretical Application Paper. Application Papers require you to select a key concept from course readings and develop strategies for operationalizing, or deploying it. Centered around a unique case in point, Application Papers require you to articulate generalized critical features of a concept in ways that allow others to see them at work in your case. This assignment also allows you to test out concepts and cases you might use for your final project.

Goal 2: Conduct original research into emerging foci in rhetorical theory, explaining how concepts extend, challenge, and contribute to an extensive understanding of rhetorical citizenship.

Outcome 1: Working with a partner, you will prepare a presentation on a keyword deemed important to contemporary rhetorical theory. In your presentation, you will explain the keyword's intellectual history, noting productive contributions it makes to the study of symbols and discourse. You will also trace the bibliographic presence of the keyword as it is used in recent scholarly texts.

Outcome 2: Following your keyword presentation, you and your partner will contribute an entry to our courses Keywords Catalog. The catalog is a live wiki that will provide you and your peers with a repository of concepts you may use for your Theoretical Application Paper and Final Projects.

Goal 3: Deploy transferable strategies for producing complex scholarly arguments through academic writing and analysis.

Outcome: In your Final Paper, you will utilize the analysis and critical thinking strategies you practiced in your summative writing assignments. Through researching and analyzing a case of your choosing, you introduce and support an argument for how theoretical concepts operate in the real world as well as point to possible limitations in existing theories.

Goal 4: Evaluate and integrate feedback at both local and global levels.

Outcome: For both short and long writing assignments, you will engage in peer reviews. During peer reviews, you will both receive and provide comments of drafts of written work. Along with peer feedback, you will also be given instructor comments. As you revise your assignment, you will decide what comments to heed and which to discard.

Goal 5: Engage in complex group discussions and present original research clearly, accessibly, and engagingly.

Outcome: All students are expected to consistently participate in class discussions.

Course Materials

All readings for this course will be posted as searchable PDFs to our Moodle site. There are no required books for this class. I do ask, however, that annotate the PDFs as if you were reading on paper.

If you would like to add a book to your personal library, please consult the bibliography below. I have included the Amazon price next to each entry to reference.

2021 Statement

We are living through a rapidly changing global pandemic that has disproportionately affected the most vulnerable and oppressed members of our society. Adding to the existential threat posed by COVID-19, we are also enduring imminent racist political violence perpetrated by domestic terrorists and propped up by tyrannical politicians. I understand that it is impossible to separate the challenges brought on by COVID-19 and emerging fascism from your work in this class. I want to stress that **I see you as a human first** (seriously, I do)! This means that I am aware that you bring with you to class myriad identities beyond that of a student – you might be a friend, sibling, parent, caregiver, child, partner, and/or essential service worker. The already tense dynamics between and among these identities are likely to increase unexpectedly during the course of this academic year. I will try my best to accommodate any unforeseen impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic and/or the contentious political environment might have. All I ask in return is that you maintain open communication with me – I am available to talk via email, Zoom, or on the phone. Just reach out.

You do not need to disclose any personal information, health or otherwise. However, if a situation arises that affects your capacity to attend class, participate in discussions, and/or complete course assignments, please let me know as soon as you can so we can *work together* to develop plans and identify resources that will help you get as much out of class as possible. Again, these are turbulent times; flexibility and communication are more important than ever.

COVID-19

Monitoring your health. What do you do if you become infected?

Until widespread vaccination becomes available, we all have a responsibility to ourselves and our larger communities to monitor our health for signs of COVID-19. With students returning to campus at record numbers, the urgency of proactive public health behavior is more intense than ever.

Along with practicing social distancing, wearing masks in public, frequent hand washing, and temperature checks, I encourage you all to download Pennsylvania's COVID-19 mobile tracking app: [COVID Alert PA](#)

COVID Alert PA is available for free download on Apple's App Store and on Google Play.

What do you do if you become infected?

If you suspect you have COVID-19 and are seeking a Dean's Excuse, please follow these steps:

- ***Students learning remotely/from home:*** Please obtain documentation from a medical provider at home regarding your diagnosis and submit to Bailey Health Center. After review, and if symptoms are significant enough to interfere with remote learning/engagement with classes, Bailey Health Center will submit a Dean's Excuse confirmation to the Office of Advising, who will process the Dean's Excuse.
- ***Students learning on campus:*** First contact Bailey Health Center for consultation and COVID-19 testing. If a positive test result is received, the student must follow the College's protocols for clearance. If symptoms are significant enough to interfere with remote learning/engagement with classes, Bailey Health Center will submit a Dean's Excuse confirmation to the Office of Advising, who will process the Dean's Excuse.

If, through Bailey Health Center's protocols, you are not cleared to attend in-person classes for a period of time, I will be informed of this status through the Office of Advising. You must not return to class until medically cleared to do so. I will also be notified when you are cleared to return to in-person classes.

Please note that Bailey Health Center or the Dean's Office will **not** disclose to me your specific medical information; they will not specify to me if you have to "isolate" due to a positive COVID-19 test, or "quarantine" due to possible exposure. They will only specify if you are "not cleared" or "cleared" to attend in-person classes. Additionally, please email me so that together we can make a plan to help you keep up with the course until you are cleared to return to in-person instruction.

Virtual Classroom Participation Expectations

This course requires you to read broadly and thoroughly. Despite the fact that class will be conducted remotely, please be prepared to create a vibrant learning community. This means that I will expect you to regularly participate in class discussions, either in spoken or written form. We will be meeting synchronously during our regularly scheduled class time. If you live in a time zone that prohibits you from meeting synchronously, please [contact me](#) as soon as possible and so we can make appropriate arrangements.

During our synchronous class meetings, I will run class like a seminar. This means that you should come to each meeting having read the readings and ready to engage in lively, rich, and textually-based discussions. Given the affordance of remote learning, participation will likely happen across a variety of platforms. We will talk face-to-face via Zoom; you will meet with peers in breakout rooms to work in small groups; and we will respond to others' ideas in writing through Moodle discussion boards and via our class's Slack chat.

While we will be communicating across platforms, the basic principles of participation remain the same:

- Arrive to class on time, prepared with specific questions, topics, and quotations you'd like to discuss.
- Be mindful that participation is more than just talking. Active engagement and collaborative knowledge-making requires that we all find ways to actively listen to others, ask open-ended, generative questions, and respond meaningfully to others' comments. Remember, we are all coming to this class with a variety of knowledge bases. For everyone to take something from this course, you will need to learn how to recognize the value of both your own expertise and the expertise of your classmates.

Camera policy: Since learning in this class is primarily facilitated through discussion, my default expectation is that you will keep your cameras on during class. Being able to see each other not only helps ease conversation but also lays the foundation for the community of mutual trust and accountability I hope we can build together. Of course, you are not required to keep your cameras on. I understand that there are many reasons why you might need to keep your camera off. If you have any concerns about keeping your cameras on or need to keep them off on a particular day, please let me know.

Assessments & Assignment Overview

Grades in this class will be determined through my assessment of both your presence and participation in class discussions and your completion of writing assignments. This is a W course, meaning that you will be expected to complete at least 20 pages of cumulative writing by the end of the semester. This writing load will be distributed across short- and long-form writing tasks. Beginning with your microthemes and culminating in your final papers, you will develop over the semester the critical methods and strategies for engaging with key concepts from contemporary rhetoric.

While you will find brief assignment descriptions below, you will be provided with more detailed assignment prompts in class.

Summative & Shorter Writing Assignments

Summative assignments are small, low-stakes assignments that afford you the opportunity to test out ideas, gain practice writing and responding to theory, and, perhaps most importantly, receive early feedback on your

work. While summative assignments will be graded and do factor into your final grades, consider them to be process work that supports your intellectual development.

Microthemes (~250 – 350 words)

At least **10 times** this semester, you will compose a microtheme about the day's reading(s). Microthemes are short, structured, and anonymized reading responses that require you to ask an open-ended discussion question about a text. When crafting your microthemes, please keep the following considerations in mind:

- The primary function of microthemes is to ask questions you want to discuss with your peers, who you should assume are equally as familiar with the text as you are. This means that you should not summarize readings or ask questions that can be easily answered by the text itself. Scholarship and intellectual conversation are communal and dialogic. Your microthemes, therefore, should foster informed discussion rather than launch fact-finding missions.
- Couch your questions in important context from the reading. As you read, note moments of tension in the text, arguments that have a particular resonance with you, or ideas that for some reason stick in your mind. We all read theory differently and therefore we all gain slightly different understandings from a text. You need to explain the context, tension, or problem your question is responding to before you ask it. This will help your peers pry open and interrogate the nuances of your question.
- That being said, try to avoid overly personal, emotion-based reactions to texts. Arguments are moving and have real effects, otherwise we wouldn't be devoting so much time to discussing them. However, questions that are completely rooted in interior experiences are hard to answer and don't often contribute to honest, open discussion since the asker typically wants to express their reactions to the text more than interrogate a specific issue.
- As we progress, begin to identify common perspectives, claims, and methods that arise in texts. Once you do this, you will be able to ask questions that probe the limitations of theoretical conversations. This means you can explore how the commonplaces found in our readings highlight certain things at the expense of others. You should begin asking what might happen if we approached an issue from another perspective and how that perspective might change the way we think about the problems at hand.
- Don't be afraid to take up, refine, or extend a microtheme in your final papers. Essentially, you should think of microthemes as ten drafts of possible research questions. These questions will become even richer through class discussion.
- Finally, your microthemes are due by 10 a.m. on class days. I'm asking you to turn them in ahead of time because I will anonymize and post them to Moodle. You may reveal yourself as a microthemes author, though you do not need to.

Your microthemes will be assessed in accordance with this rubric:

0	1	2	3
Incomplete/ Unacceptable Either not submitted or completely off topic/beyond the scope or purpose of the class.	Needs Improvement Response is largely summary rather than discussion-based and critical. Questions are closed, ungrounded, or overly subjective. Writing is poorly structured and does not suggest sustained revision.	Satisfactory Meets expectations for textual engagement. Writing and questions are adequate and aimed at conversation. More attention, however, could have been paid to teasing out the implications or effects on the argument itself.	Exceptional Well-conceived and well-written. Evidences careful engagement with reading and asks sophisticated questions that capture important nuances.

Keywords Presentation

As I noted in the course description, it is impossible for us to survey contemporary rhetorical theory in its entirety. There are concepts, theorists, and approaches that, while important, will nonetheless have to be left out. To help provide you with a glimpse of what is absent from our course's narrative, you and a peer will select, research, and present on an important keyword in contemporary rhetorical theory.

In late 2018, *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* (RSQ) published [this special issue](#) of essays on important keywords in rhetorical theory to mark its fiftieth anniversary. *RSQ* designated the following keywords as particularly important to the study and practice of rhetoric:

- The Body
- The Digital
- Energy
- Genre
- *Kairos*
- Memory
- Public
- Resistance
- Sound

On the first day of class, you and your partner will select a keyword. Some keywords will speak to and extend class discussion; others will not. Regardless, you will be responsible for both reading the *RSQ* essay on the keyword and conducting further research into its contemporary utility. Presentations should be between 15 – 20 minutes and cover the following:

1. What is the keyword, how is defined in the literature, and why is it significant for the study of rhetoric?
2. What is the historical legacy of the keyword? What does the historical endurance or recent addition of the keyword tell us about contemporary rhetorical theory?
3. What are some shared assumptions about the keyword? What are the affordances of these assumptions? What might get left out?
4. What new directions does the keyword take the study of rhetoric in?
5. Who are important theorists working on the keyword?
6. What are some of the most important pieces of writing on the keyword?
7. Finally, and most importantly, identify a contemporary case study that can be analyzed through your keyword. What does the keyword focus your attention on? What questions would guide your inquiry? What preliminary arguments might you make about the case study based on your analysis?

These presentations will take time, so please coordinate with your peer early. When researching your keyword, begin by reading the *RSQ* essay carefully, paying attention to tensions, extensions, and important arguments. After that, mine the essay's bibliography to begin your research. Next, look to rhetoric's major disciplinary journals (a list will be provided on Moodle). Finally, I strongly encourage you to reach out to one of the library's [Personalize Research Assistants](#). **NOTE:** You will most likely need to use Interlibrary Loan or work with a librarian to access more recent issues of rhetoric journals.

Keywords Catalog

Along with presenting on your keyword, you and your partner will also be responsible for contributing to our class's wiki, informally called the Keywords Catalog (KC). The KC is meant to serve as a common repository for concepts, theories, theorists, annotations, and microthemes. Detailed instructions on how to contribute to the KC will be on the wiki's homepage. The most important thing to remember is that the wiki is a living

document that should change and morph to account for the complexity of the ideas that we're working with. Each entry should contain the following information:

1. **A critical definition of the keyword.** In his path breaking book *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, cultural theorist Raymond Williams articulated the urgency of generating common keyword lists by claim that they were “the record of an inquiry into a *vocabulary*: a shared body of words and meanings in our most general discussions, in English, of the practices and institutions which we group as culture and society.” In this spirit, your critical definition will not only define the concept but also explain its veritable uses by explaining how it has been taken up and critiqued by various critiques. This definition, in other words, will explain what the concept is, how it relates to rhetoric, what paths of inquiry it forges, and what its affordances are for analysts.
2. **An annotated bibliography.** Provide MLA citations and a brief (~200 word) critical summary of at least 3 texts (books, chapters, or journal articles) that specifically take up your keyword. These texts should be recent, meaning that they should be published within the last 10 years. These annotations will be used by your peers as they begin researching topics for their final papers. Therefore, you should provide enough information to give readers a sense of the argument developed in the text.
3. **Author biographies.** Identify and write a brief biography of at least 3 scholars currently working on issues related to your keyword. Be sure to link to their professional/institutional websites.

***All Keywords Catalog entries are due one week after group presentations.

Formative & Longer Writing Assignments

Theoretical Application Paper (~1,000 – 1,250)

One important goal for this class is learning how to transform theories into heuristics for analyzing real-world events. To construct useful heuristics, you will need to become expert in a theory and develop a set of questions that allow you to operationalize it into a coherent framework for analysis. In this short paper, you will select a concept from class readings, identify its intellectual and political commitments, and demonstrate its potential for answering contemporary questions.

To this end, this paper will be organized around a particular case in point, which might function as the foundation for your final paper. After you identify your concept and case, devote your writing to answering the following question: *What specifically about this concept allows me to understand the rhetorical work going on in my case?* Depending on your concept, you might focus on the circulatory effects of certain symbols, the development/deployment of myth, or even how the material conditions surrounding your case affect its rhetorical force. Regardless of focus, your primary goal should be articulating the transformation that occurs as a concept moves from theory into application. Here are some questions to keep in mind as you begin drafting your

1. How is this concept defined in the course readings? In other words, do the authors agree about a single definition of the concept or are there points of disagreement? If so, is there anything to be gained from investigating this conflict?
2. What are critical features of the concept? How would I be able to recognize its presence in a text or artifact? Be sure to be as specific as possible when identifying critical features since both your peers and me need to be able to see the concept at work in your case in point.
3. What does an analysis look like in practice and why does it matter? Taking a sample of your case in point, perform an analysis where you illustrate the concept and its features at work. Along with identifying the concept's features as manifested in your case, end your paper with a tentative thesis about what the value of the concept is for analyzing real-world cases. You might discover that a concept doesn't have as much value as anticipated. This is a valid finding and one that you should write about.

Final Paper (4,000 – 6,000 words)

Your final paper for this class will be a thorough investigation into a topic that engages with rhetorical theories we've talked about this semester. This paper should pick up key course readings and concepts and apply them to an historical or contemporary case that interests you. You may choose to have this paper be an extension of one of the microtheme questions or a more developed version of your Theoretical Application Paper, it may be a synthesis of both of them, or you may choose to explore a new concept altogether. Whichever option you choose, you will need to do significant outside research into both your topic and the theories you plan to deploy in your analysis. See this paper as both an opportunity for you to engage critically with an important cultural conflict as well as a chance to apply seemingly abstract theories to actual cases.

Because this paper is so lengthy and because it will require multiple drafts, you will be working toward your final product through several smaller assignments:

Proposal

(500 – 800 words)

This proposal is a chance for you to narrow in on the research you'd like to conduct throughout the semester. While this assignment will ask you to identify a case and speculate about which theories will allow you to thoroughly analyze that case's rhetorical dimensions, you do not need to have a definitive thesis or argument yet. Use this assignment to articulate the research topic, questions, and relevant concepts you'd like to explore for your final project. While you have some latitude in deciding the shape and direction of your final paper, you will have to argue for why your project is important to issues relating to the public life of conflict. All proposals should answer the following questions:

1. What case or topic are you planning on looking at? Why is this case significant?
2. What is your plan for analysis, meaning what specifically do you want to study and how do you plan on acquiring that information?
3. What theories or concepts might help you conduct a thorough analysis of your topic?
4. What questions do you have about the topic or the project as a whole?
5. What is your tentative work plan for completing this project?

I will meet with each of you individually to discuss your project and carve out a plan for completing it successfully.

Sample analysis (1,200 – 2,000 words)

For this assignment, you will write toward your final paper. Using the concepts and theories forwarded in your proposal, you will illustrate the rhetorical work being accomplished in your case. You will pay precise, delicate attention to the function of language and/or other symbols in your artifact. You may choose to focus on how the artifact enforces or critiques power hierarchies; how the artifact positions actors against one another to surprising ends; how language choice, tone, and register support particular effects on the audience; or how certain rhetorical devices or tropes perform subtle persuasive work. This project will allow you to engage in a sustained reading of an example conflict and receive feedback from me and your peers before beginning your final draft.

Paper Draft (at least 3,500 words)

On **5/11**, you will submit a rough draft of your final paper. This draft should contextualize and justify your analysis, much of which you have already completed. Drafts should be nearly complete, meaning that they contain an introduction, an overview of your case, an articulated argument, a review of the theories you're deploying to support that argument, and a conclusion. You will receive feedback from me and your peers on this draft during the last week of class.

Final Drafts are due by May 27 at 11:59 p.m.

Grade Breakdown

Participation, required assignments, and written work are weighted for grading as follows:

Participation	20%	Point Ranges
Microthemes	10%	A = 93 – 100%
Keywords Presentation	10%	A- = 90 – 92%
Keywords Catalog	10%	B+ = 87 – 89%
Application Paper	15%	B = 83 – 86%
Proposal	5%	B- = 80 – 82%
Sample Analysis	10%	C+ = 77 – 79%
Final Paper	20%	C = 73 – 76%
Draft	5%	C- = 70 – 72%
Final	15%	D+ = 67 – 69%
Total: 100%		D = 65 – 66%
		D- = 63 – 64%
		F = below 63%

Students with grades of D or lower at midterm will have their performance reported to the Academic Progress Committee and their advisers. This is not a punitive measure. It is to ensure that students experiencing academic difficulty are put into contact with the appropriate resources. **Midterm grades are not recorded on transcripts.**

Attendance

Our primary mode of learning will be in-class discussion. For this reason, I take regular attendance. While I expect your presence, I recognize that there may be instances that prevent you from coming to class. **You are allotted two excused absences this semester.** Treat these absences like personal days and use them at your discretion. You do not need to tell me why you are missing class. However, unless otherwise arranged, you will still be expected to turn in whatever work is due the day you miss class. Remember, it is your responsibility to meet with a peer to review the material we covered during your absence. While I am happy to meet with you during office hours to discuss specific content, I ask that you check in with one of your classmates first.

After two absences, your grade will decrease by half a letter grade for every subsequent unexcused absence. If an unexpected emergency or illness arises that causes you to miss more than three classes, please let me know and we will work together to secure a Dean's Note and accommodate your absences.

Deadlines, Extensions, and Incompletes

Unless otherwise arranged, I expect all assignments to be turned in on time on the day they are due. Rough drafts of long and short writing assignments are due by the start of class for peer review. The deadline for submitting final drafts for both short and long writing assignments is 5:00 p.m..

Microthemes are due by 10:00 a.m. on class days so I can read, anonymize, and post them to Moodle.

If you need an extension on a *final* draft, please contact me at least 48 hours in advance so we can establish a new, firm due date. Unless requested because of a major, unforeseen life event, I typically only grant 3-day extensions for final papers. Because rough drafts will be subject to peer review, I do not grant extensions on drafts unless absolutely necessary. I will **not** accept late microthemes.

***For every day that a graded assignment is late, I will deduct 5 points (half a letter grade) from the raw score.

Respectful Participation Statement

This is a course about how rhetoric supports, critiques, and invents power. To this end, we will be reading about how language and other symbols condition robust public discourse. As we will learn well, however, rhetoric is always about power – who has the right to speak, whose voice is heard, whose authority is recognized. For this reason, we must perpetually be aware of the fact that discussions in this class are not neutral and cannot be isolated from other parts of our lives. We will be reading a variety of texts that pertain to complicated and potentially triggering topics like race and racism, violence, illness and death, and immigration. While disagreement and debate are expected and welcomed, hostility and aggression are not.

A central goal for this class is to disrupt status quo power hierarchies and develop a critical repertoire for critiquing the ways that we reproduce oppressive power dynamics in the everyday ways we talk about controversial issues. For this reason, it is crucial that we establish rules of engagement, or discourse norms. For this class to “work,” we need to build a community. To build a community, we need to feel comfortable sharing our opinions, ideas, and perspectives on complicated topics. While we will work together to develop discourse norms, we must always be charitable when interpreting another’s comments.

Inclusivity Statement

Part of creating an inclusive learning environment is reckoning with liberal arts’s historic purpose of training white, elite men in ways of exercising dominance over others, especially BIPOC communities and women. One small way to begin working against this history of violence is actively affirming the validity and value of those identities, ideas, and perspectives traditionally excluded from academic consideration. In the course, we will use language that is anti-racist, gender-inclusive, and non-sexist. We will affirm non-binary gender identification and respect students’ preferred pronouns. If you are accidentally misgendered, please feel comfortable correcting me or your peers.

Accessibility

I strive to foster a learning environment that is accessible and welcoming to all students. If you have a specific accommodation granted by Accessibility Services, please request that I receive your confidential accommodation notice during the first two weeks of the semester, or as soon as possible. Once I receive your accommodation, I will schedule a time to speak with you to construct a plan of action for the semester. If you suspect you might need an accommodation, please make an appointment with [Accessibility Services](#).

Academic Integrity

At its heart, academic integrity refers to honest and good faith engagement with both your own and others’ ideas. The best ideas are made in collaboration and through rigorous engagement with the work of others. However, there is a fine yet critical line between collaboration and plagiarism. At Lafayette, plagiarism and cheating are strictly forbidden. Each assignment requires you to adhere to the college’s community standards for academic integrity, which are elaborated [here](#).

Lafayette defines academic dishonesty as any of the following actions: submitting and claiming ownership of someone else’s work; incorporating, but not citing, someone else’s intellectual product, either in its entirety or in part; buying someone else’s work or encouraging another to do your work for you; reusing your own material from another course without explicit instructor permission; or

collaborating with other students without instruction or permission (Lafayette College Academic Integrity Statement). Students who are found to have violated standards for academic integrity will be referred for sanctioning.

If you are uncertain about how to appropriately engage with outside content, please reach out to me as soon as possible. As your professor, part of my job is guiding you through the dynamic process of academic inquiry. I am always happy to clear up any confusion.

Religious Observation

Students may receive an excused absence for religious observance. I ask that you give me at least one week's notice if you plan on missing class for a religious holy day. Follow [this link](#) for a calendar of many religious events compiled by the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life.

Campus Resources

Lafayette students have access to a variety of on-campus resources. These resources are academic, psychological, and legal. Below, you will find brief descriptions of these resources as well as URLs pointing you toward more information:

Academic Resource Hub provides academic services to enhance student success. It administers various support and enrichment programs as well as housing and Accessibility Services.

Website: <https://hub.lafayette.edu>

Counseling Center provides students with a safe, confidential environment to discuss personal and academic concerns. College is particularly stressful and around 40% of Lafayette students have sought counseling services.

If you are experiencing psychological distress, contact the Counseling Center by phone: (610) 330-5005

In the case of a life-threatening emergency, contact the Office of Public Safety: (610) 330-4444

Website: <https://counselingcenter.lafayette.edu/about-us/>

Bailey Health Center connects students with quality health care and promotes an environment of wellness, where students are treated with compassion and understanding. For serious or life-threatening problems, call x4444 and request an ambulance. Sexual assault counselors are available if needed.

Phone #: (610) 330-5001

Website: <https://healthcenter.lafayette.edu>

Title IX and Mandatory Reporting

Lafayette is committed to rooting out and ending sexual misconduct. Faculty and staff are required both by college policy and by law to report instances of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator. If a report is filed, this does not necessarily mean that the incident will

automatically be moved forward to a disciplinary hearing. When reporting a case, you may request the following: resources, no further action, informal resolution, and/or formal resolution.

Website: <https://sash.lafayette.edu/titleix/>

Course Bibliography

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- Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Book, 2015).
- Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, "Review: Animal: New Directions in the Theorizing of Race and the Posthuman" *Feminist Studies* 39, no. 3 (2013): 669-685.
- Zizi Papacharissi, *After Democracy: Imagining Our Political Future* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021).

Contemporary Rhetorical Theory Course Schedule*

| Spring 2021

*Readings and assignment due dates are subject to change. I will notify you in advance of any changes to this calendar.

Week 1	Topic	Assignments Due	For Homework
02/09	Introductions and Foundations		Read: Syllabus Foss, et al. "An Introduction to Rhetoric." Tompkins, "We Aren't Here to Learn What We Already Know"
02/11			Read: Burke, "Definition of Man," "Terministic Screens," and "The Rhetoric of Hitler's Battle"
Week 2			
02/16	Reference, Presence, Audience, and Rhetorical Situations		Read: Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense" Perelman, "Argumentation, Speaker, and Audience" and "Choice, Presence, and Presentation"
02/18		Note: add/drop & pass/fail deadline is Feb. 19	Read: Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation" Vatz, "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation" [Edbauer] Rice, "Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation to Rhetorical Ecologies"
Week 3			

02/23	Keyword Presentation: <i>Kairos</i>	Read: Arendt, from <i>The Human Condition</i>
02/25		Read: Habermas, selections from <i>The Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere</i> Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy”
Week 4	Normative Discourses of Participation: Vying for and Subverting Inclusion	
03/02		Read: Warner, selections from “Publics and Counterpublics”
03/04	Keyword Presentation: Public	Read: Squires, “Rethinking the Black Public Sphere: An Alternative Vocabulary for Multiple Public Spheres” Larson & McHendry, “The Racial Politics of Imitation in the Nineteenth Century,”
Week 5	Democratic Exclusions and The Multiple Public Sphere	
03/09		Read: Mouffe, selections from <i>The Democratic Paradox</i> Papacharissi, selections from <i>After Democracy: Imagining Our Political Future</i>
03/11	Theoretical Application Paper due on 3/12 by 5 pm	Watch: What is Neoliberalism? Read: Brown, “Undoing Democracy: Neoliberalism’s Remaking of State and Subject”

Week 6 Race, Citizenship, and Border Rhetorics		
03/16	Keyword Presentation: Public	Read: Ore, “Constituting the “Citizen Race”
03/18		Read: Flores, “Constructing Rhetorical Borders: Peons, Illegal Aliens, and Competing Narratives of Immigration,”. Cedillo, “Disabled and Undocumented: In/Visibility at the Borders of Presence, Disclosure, and Nation,” <i>Rhetoric Society Quarterly</i> 50, no. 3 (2020): 203-211.
Week 7 Rhetoric and Disability		
03/23	Keyword Presentation: The Body	Read: Davis, “Constructing Normalcy”
03/25	Prospectus due on 3/26 by 5:00 p.m.	Read: Dolmage, from <i>Disabled Upon Arrival</i>
Week 8		
03/30	No Class: Spring Break (Sorta?)	
04/01		Read: Rose, excerpts from “Biological Citizens” Review: “Everything Travelers Need to Know about Vaccine Passports” Watch: IATA Travel Pass Initiative Complete Mandatory Mirotheme

Week 9 Biopolitics I: Rhetorics of (De)Humanization

04/06	Keyword Presentation: Sound	Read: Solomon, “The rhetoric of dehumanization: An analysis of medical reports of the Tuskegee syphilis project”
04/08		Rowland, “Zoetropes: Turning Fetuses into Humans at the National Memorial for the Unborn”

Week 10 Animacy and Creaturely Rhetorics

04/13		Read: Chen, “Introduction: Animating Animacy” and “Lead’s Racial Matters”
04/15	Keyword Presentation: Genre	Read: Johnson, “The End of the Word, The Future of the Earth: Bioplurality and the Politics of Human Extinction”

Week 11 Constituting (Non)Human Agency

04/20		Work on Sample Analysis <i>Bring draft to class</i>
04/22	Keyword Presentation: The Digital Sample Analysis due on 4/23 by 5:00 p.m.	Read: Bennett, “The Force of Things” and “The Agency of Assemblages”

Week 12 Biopolitics II: Community & Disease in the Age of COVID-19

04/27			Read: Tompkins, “On the Limits and Promise of New Materialist Philosophy”
			Towns, “Black ‘Matter’ Lives”
04/29		Keyword Presentation: Energy	
		Sample Analysis Peer Review due by start of class	
Week 13			
05/04	No class: Sample Analysis Peer Reviews		Read: Ahuja, “Fluid Pandemic: Disease, Surveillance, Prophylactic Mobility, and Privatization of Air space in the Covid-19 Pandemic”
			Bennett, “Everyday life and the management of risky bodies in the COVID-19 era”
05/06			Read: Foucault, excerpts <i>Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison</i>
			Preciado, “Learning from the Virus” LINK
			Kennedy, “On Breath and Blackness: Living and Dying in the Wake of the Virus”
Week 14			
05/11		Keyword Presentation: Memory	
05/13	Writing Day: NO CLASS	Due: Final Paper Rough Draft on 5/14 by 5:00 p.m.	Complete: Final Paper Peer Reviews

Week 15

05/18

LAST DAY OF CLASS!!! 😊

Keyword Presentation: Resistance

**Final Paper Peer Reviews due by start of
class**

Final Papers Due: 05/27 @ 11:59 p.m.