

# ENGL 206: Everyday Rhetorics — Media, Materials, Environments Autumn 2018

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Class Location: CDH 115  
Class Times: Mon/Wed 10:30am-12:20pm  
Office Hours: Wed 1:30-3:30pm or by appointment

## Course Overview

We are constantly surrounded by varied and conflicting messages — from Tweets to advertisements, clickbait to the 24-hour news cycle. All of these different messages employ rhetoric: the art/skill/craft of effective communication. This course examines the complexly interwoven rhetorics at play in the media we consume, the materials we encounter, and the environments we inhabit in order to become more conscientious and ethical participants in our everyday lives. We begin with a general foundation in rhetoric and rhetorical theory—what it is, why it matters, and why we should study it— that stresses how *multiple* rhetorics shape, circulate, and get practiced in everyday life. We then examine media rhetorics, focusing on internet culture, social media, and advertising, in order to trace how different values, ethics, and beliefs are represented, circulated, and negotiated in our everyday encounters with media. Next, we shift to material rhetorics to explore how everyday materials (things, stuff) have a life and presence all their own: how they act on/with us, how they communicate to us, and how, ultimately, they are not neutral (that is, immune from the representation, circulation, and negotiation of values, ethics, and beliefs). Finally, we turn to environmental rhetorics to consider how the spaces we inhabit and move through, much like the materials we engage, shape our everyday rhetorical experiences.

To *contextualize* the above theories of rhetoric surrounding media, materials, and environments, you'll be doing a quarter-long inquiry into one of the communities to which you belong. This can be an ethnic or cultural community, a religious community, a geographic community, a social community, an intellectual community, an activity-based community, etc.— the key is that your participation in and belonging to this community informs a core piece of your identity. *Starting in week 2, you'll be completing a series of weekly discussion posts on Canvas that will have you identifying, analyzing, and reflecting on the rhetorics of your chosen community. For your final project, you'll be creating a zine that purposefully engages the media, material, and environmental rhetorics of that community.* Taken together, your quarter-long inquiry, centered around community, identity, and self/world dynamics, leaves space for you to apply course content to your own diverse lives, coming to better understand how you're personally and socially affected by the everyday rhetorics surrounding you.

## Required Materials

1. James A. Herrick's *The History and Theory of Rhetoric: An Introduction*, **6th edition** [Book]
2. Internet access for UW email [or email forwarding], Canvas, and various web-based materials
3. PDF reader

## Assignments and Assessment

### *Weekly Canvas Discussion/Response Posts (20%)*

Throughout this class, you'll be completing a series of *ten* guided discussion board posts that will help you contextualize and utilize our course content, connecting our readings to actual experiences from your daily lives. You'll be completing *six discussion posts* where you identify, analyze, and reflect on the rhetorics of a community that informs a core piece of your identity and *four response posts* where you respond to your classmates' analytical work. I will be grading these posts for completion, and while I won't be responding to every post, be aware that I may draw upon your insights for in-class discussions and activities.

### *Zine (40%)*

Instead of a final paper, this class has a final project. You'll be creating a zine either *for* or *about* the community you are focusing on for your weekly discussion posts. What's a zine? Don't worry — we'll talk about that later, I promise! For now, know that it's an *independently* created and published booklet or magazine that usually focuses on a specialized or unconventional subject.

### *Zine Proposal (20%)*

Since a zine is a printed, material object with no clear or universal template, it's crucial that you have a plan of some kind to help you get started and guide your choices throughout. At the end of week 5, you'll be submitting a proposal that answers a series of questions about your intentions for your zine. This assignment is designed to help you brainstorm and plan, meaning it's ok if your focus or goals change between the proposal and final submission — that's part of the process!

### *Participation (20%)*

This course is a collaborative enterprise. You are expected to speak up in discussions, raise questions, join in small group activities, and generally make your engagement with the material known. *At the end of each class session, you will hand in a brief note (a couple of sentences or a paragraph at most) with a thought, comment, or question pertaining to that day's class or readings.* These will contribute to your participation grade, but are not intended take the place of active contribution to class discussions. Finally, while it's only human to miss a deadline occasionally (it happens, it's ok, don't beat yourself up about it!), *habitually* missing deadlines will negatively affect your participation grade (not just the assignment grade).

## Discussion Groups

Your first "assignment" is actually a brief introductory survey that lets me know a little bit more about you (your interests, your skills, your goals for this class, etc.). Based on your responses to that survey, I will be placing you in quarter-long discussion groups for both in-class small group discussions and activities as well as your four response posts on Canvas. If you're absent for any reason, your discussion group peers should be your first go-to for finding out what you missed. Once you've talked to your peers, I will be more than happy to answer any remaining questions or concerns.

## Late and Incomplete Work

**All assignments are due by the time and date and in the format specified (if applicable),** and I will not accept any assignments submitted in any other way unless I give approval in advance. All weekly discussion posts and your zine proposal should be submitted through Canvas, and you will lose 10% per day for a late submission; if over a week late, you will receive a maximum grade of 30% on that assignment. If you are having trouble and may be unable to turn things in on time, speak with me *before* the assignment is due (this does not mean the day of, or even the day before!) and we'll figure out a fair solution from there. Zines are due Monday, December 10th @ 8:30am (our scheduled final). This due date is NOT negotiable — you are submitting *physical* copies of your zine at this time, so late submissions will not be accepted. If you cannot attend the final, it is your responsibility to make alternate arrangements with me for submission prior to the 10th.

## Expectations

### *Preparation:*

Please come prepared to participate by bringing the following to each class: that day's readings, a notebook or electronic device (for note taking), and any additional materials I've specified ahead of time. *I will assume that everyone has done the assigned reading before class begins.* If you do not keep up with the reading, you will see that reflected in your participation grade. You can keep up with the course schedule by referring to the course calendar. *The course calendar is subject to change*, so check your email or Canvas for updates.

### *Discussion:*

Because the exchange of ideas is so important to this class, it is necessary for everyone to be respectful of one another. We will be encountering social, cultural, and political topics that may be uncomfortable for some. The goal of these discussions is *not* to make everyone think alike; in fact, criticism and dissent are highly encouraged. With that said, if you disagree with what someone is saying or a position that is being articulated in discussion, *please do so respectfully*. I promise this is one of the more important and useful skills you can acquire in the university classroom. I reserve the right to dismiss any student who behaves in an inappropriate or threatening manner. Acts of violence (both physical and verbal) *will not* be tolerated.

### *Technology:*

Please set your technology to silent before class begins, as auditory disruptions can be rather distracting. If you use a phone, tablet, or computer to take notes during class, I ask that you *actually* use it for classwork. While I understand the temptation to check notifications or text or do other work, we have *less than 4 hours a week together in person* to digest, talk about, and think/work through some complicated and difficult material. I ask you stay focused and engaged during our time together out of respect for not only your classmates and myself, but also out of respect for the investment you are making in yourself here at UW. Much like missing deadlines, *habitually* using technology for reasons unrelated to what we're doing in class at the time will negatively affect your participation grade.

### *Communication:*

I do my best to post materials on Canvas as far in advance as possible. If I make any changes to the course structure (calendar, assignments, etc.), I strive to discuss it in class first. On the *rare* occurrence I

make a change after we meet, I will send out a message through Canvas explaining the changes. So, it's crucial that you check your UW email and Canvas accounts often. When you email me, which I invite you to do whenever you have any questions/concerns/etc., I strive to get back to you within 24-48 hours. Please be aware that I rarely check my email in the evening or over the weekend, so don't wait until the last minute to contact me.

## Policies and Resources

### *Class Cancellation*

In the *highly* unlikely event that I would have to cancel class, I will let you know by 8:00am the day of class. However, if I am ill or have an emergency, it is most likely that you would simply have a substitute that day. If for some reason (also highly unlikely) that I am not present when class begins, please wait for twenty minutes (10:50 am) before leaving.

### *Academic Integrity*

Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own. In your writing for this class, you are encouraged to refer to other people's thoughts and writing—as long as you cite them. As a matter of policy, any student found to have plagiarized any piece of writing in this class will be immediately reported to the College of Arts and Sciences for review.

### *Accommodations*

If you need accommodation of any sort, please let me know so that I can work with the UW Disability Resources for Students Office (DRS) to provide what you require. This syllabus is available in large print, as are other class materials. More information about accommodation may be found at <http://www.washington.edu/students/drs/>.

### *Classroom Support Services*

Need a laptop or video equipment for a class? CSS allows students to borrow equipment for free! To reserve equipment, please visit their website 24 hours in advance: <http://www.css.washington.edu/STFEquipment> They are located in the basement of Kane Hall.

### *Counseling Center*

UW Counseling Center workshops include a wide range of issues including study skills, thinking about coming out, international students and culture shock, and much more. Check out available resources and workshops at: <http://depts.washington.edu/counsels/>

### *Q Center*

The University of Washington Q Center builds and facilitates queer (gay, lesbian, bisexual, two-spirit, trans, intersex, questioning, same-gender-loving, allies) academic and social community through education, advocacy, and support services to achieve a socially-just campus in which all people are valued. For more information, visit <http://depts.washington.edu/qcenter/>.

### *FIUTS (The Foundation for International Understanding through Students)*

FIUTS is an independent non-profit organization which provides cross-cultural leadership and social programming for UW's international and globally minded domestic students. FIUTS is local connections

and global community! FIUTS also offers a free international lunch on the last Wednesday of every month. Consult FIUTS' web site for a detailed calendar of events and links to many resources <http://www.fiuts.washington.edu>.

### *Writing Resources*

There are two particularly fantastic writing resources for you here on campus at UW. Both are free of charge, and I would very strongly encourage you to take advantage of these resources. The Odegaard Writing and Research Center allows you to schedule 45-minute tutoring sessions in which to talk about your writing or specific writing assignments for any class. You may book these on-line at: <http://depts.washington.edu/owrc/> (and I would suggest booking early, as they tend to fill up quickly!) The CLUE Writing Center is located in Mary Gates Hall, and offers late-night drop-in tutoring. You can get all the details here: [http://depts.washington.edu/clue/dropintutor\\_writing.php](http://depts.washington.edu/clue/dropintutor_writing.php).

### *Campus Safety*

Preventing violence is everyone's responsibility. If you're concerned, tell someone.

- Always call 911 if you or others may be in danger.
- Call 206-685-SAFE (7233) to report non-urgent threats of violence and for referrals to UW counseling and/or safety resources. TTY or VP callers, please call through your preferred relay service.
- Don't walk alone. Campus safety guards can walk with you on campus after dark. Call Husky NightWalk 206-685-WALK (9255).
- Stay connected in an emergency with UW Alert. Register your mobile number to receive instant notification of campus emergencies via text and voice messaging. Sign up online at [www.washington.edu/alert](http://www.washington.edu/alert).

For more information visit the SafeCampus website at [www.washington.edu/safecampus](http://www.washington.edu/safecampus).

# Course Calendar and Unit Breakdown

(Subject to Change)

*Readings* are to be completed **by class time** on the days listed (we'll be using those materials in class that day). *Assignments* are **due by 11:59pm** on the days listed (unless otherwise noted).

## Introductions

Week 1: Initial perspectives on and understandings of rhetoric.

### Assignments:

Sept 28<sup>th</sup> — Introductory Survey

## Unit 1: What is Rhetoric, Anyway?

Weeks 2-3: Traditional and contemporary understandings of rhetoric. Rhetoric and daily life — power, representation, identification, ideology.

### Readings:

Oct 1<sup>st</sup> — Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, episode 1 [Canvas, YouTube link]; Herrick, *History and Theory of Rhetoric*, Ch 1

Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> — Herrick, *History and Theory of Rhetoric*, Ch 2

Oct 8<sup>th</sup> — Herrick, *History and Theory of Rhetoric*, Ch 4 & 5 (Ch 3 optional)

Oct 10<sup>th</sup> — Herrick, *History and Theory of Rhetoric*, Ch 10 & 11

### Assignments:

Oct 5<sup>th</sup> — Discussion Post 1: What is Rhetoric?

Oct 12<sup>th</sup> — Discussion Post 2: Rhetorical Self-Portrait

## Unit 2: Media Rhetorics

Weeks 4-6: How media communicates, (re)presents, and negotiates ideologies through advertising, internet culture, and social media.

### Readings:

Oct 15<sup>th</sup> — McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, Intro, Ch 1, 2, & 6 [Canvas, PDF]

Oct 17<sup>th</sup> — Barnard College Zine Library Webpages: Definition, Genres [Canvas, links]; Holdaway, "A Student's Guide on What a Zine Is and Tips on How to Make One" [Canvas, PDF]

Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> — Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, episode 4 [Canvas, YouTube link]; McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, Ch 23 [Canvas, PDF]; various advertisements (TBD) [Canvas, links]

Oct 24<sup>th</sup> — Readings on internet and/or meme culture (TBD) [Canvas]

Oct 29<sup>th</sup> — Last Week Tonight: Facebook [Canvas, YouTube link], additional reading on social media (TBD) [Canvas]

### Assignments:

Oct 19<sup>th</sup> — Response Post 1: Rhetorical Self-Portrait

Oct 26<sup>th</sup> — Discussion Post 3: Rhetorical Analysis of Media Object

Oct 28<sup>th</sup> — Zine Proposal

Nov 2<sup>nd</sup> — Response Post 2: Rhetorical Analysis of Media Object

### Unit 3: Material Rhetorics

Weeks 6-8: How materials act on/with/alongside us to communicate, (re)present, and negotiate ideologies through technology, clothing, and food.

#### Readings:

Oct 31<sup>st</sup> — Barnett, Boyle, Cooper, & Muckelbauer, *Rhetoric, Through Everyday Things*, Intro [Canvas, PDF]; Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, Preface [Canvas, PDF]

Nov 5<sup>th</sup> — Vertesi, “Seeing like a Rover: Visualization, embodiment, and interaction on the Mars Exploration Rover Mission” [Canvas, PDF]

Nov 7<sup>th</sup> — McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, Ch 12 [Canvas, PDF]

Nov 14<sup>th</sup> — Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, Ch 3 [Canvas, PDF]

#### Assignments:

Nov 9<sup>th</sup> — Discussion Post 4: Material Narrative

Nov 16<sup>th</sup> — Response Post 3: Material Narrative

### Unit 4: Spatial & Environmental Rhetorics

Weeks 9-11: How environments enable and constrain various bodies and identities in order to communicate, (re)present, and negotiate ideologies on college campuses and in urban settings.

#### Readings:

Nov 19<sup>th</sup> — Rickert, *Ambient Rhetoric*, Intro [Canvas, PDF]; Additional reading (TBD) [Canvas]

Nov 26<sup>th</sup> — Readings on spatial rhetorics of college campuses (TBD) [Canvas]

Nov 28<sup>th</sup> — Edbauer, “Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation to Rhetorical Ecologies” [Canvas, PDF]

Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> — Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, Ch 8 [Canvas, PDF]

#### Assignments:

Nov 26<sup>th</sup> — Discussion Post 5: Sensory and Kinesthetic Experience of Space

Nov 30<sup>th</sup> — Response Post 4: Sensory and Kinesthetic Experience of Space

Dec 7<sup>th</sup> — Discussion Post 6: Navigating Everyday Rhetorics: Public Selves

### **ZINEFEST! [aka - your final]: Monday, Dec 10th 8:30-10:20 am**

Please arrive promptly with your finished zines. This is an opportunity to share zines with each other, ask questions about process or goals, and celebrate the work you did this quarter. **I will collect your zines at the end of this period for grading.** If you would like your zine *returned* to you, provide me with a self-addressed stamped envelope at this time and I will mail your zine back to you!