

COM 463: TOPICS IN COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS THE RHETORIC OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Bethel University, Department of Communication Studies, January 2020

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Office Hours: typically before class, but often much more than that. Email or stop by for an appointment.

Course Description: Special and/or advanced studies in rhetorical analysis with the topic announced prior to registration. Possible topics include rhetoric of religion, crisis communication, and presidential rhetoric. May be repeated if a different topic is emphasized.

Study of advanced approaches to rhetorical criticism. Focuses on further elaboration of persuasion and an understanding of social movements from a communication perspective. Theories applied to contemporary and historical communication artifacts. The role of social media in movements also explored.

SO WHY SHOULD YOU CARE? SO WHAT WILL WE BE DOING? WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO THIS JANUARY?

AKA THE COURSE OBJECTIVES...

1. You'll learn different approaches in the field of rhetorical studies and to learn how to choose which approaches are appropriate for a given critical text.
2. You'll learn to argue effectively for why a particular text should be considered a critical text, and thus, worthy of analysis.
3. You'll learn how to write a rhetorical analysis that synthesizes a variety of critical perspectives and places the critical text appropriately.
4. You'll support claims about a movement by using effective arguments.

And my hope is that we'll accomplish those objectives by having fun, respecting each other, and learning together.

The course is divided into five basic parts:

1. Introduction to rhetorical criticism. For students who have taken COM 230L or COM 361, this should be mainly review. For those who have not, then this will serve as a basic introduction to the field of rhetorical criticism. Additionally, the introduction will demonstrate where social movements fit within rhetorical theory (as opposed to just being studied in sociology)
2. Defining what is and what isn't a social movement, as well as looking at pre-emergent social movements.
3. Learning about resistance strategies both by and against social movements.
4. Applying social movement theory to a variety of contemporary situations.
5. Demonstrating effective written and oral communication through the completion of a significant paper.

In the end, I believe you'll find that social movement theory, particularly in a computer-mediated communication age, is more relevant than ever before.

COURSE READINGS:

There will be one book along with a variety of journal articles.

Stewart, Charles J., Craig Allen Smith, and Robert E. Denton, Jr. *Persuasion and Social Movements*. 6th ed. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2012.

This book is available either in printed form or in e-book form.

Journal Articles and Conference Papers: Some of these will be the source of individual presentations; some we will read together, and some may prove to be helpful references for your particular study. I'll explain each of the articles during the first week, and you'll choose (based on your interests and schedule) which article you'll present.

Chavéz, Karma R. "Counter-Public Enclaves and Understanding the Function of Rhetoric in Social Movement Coalition-Building." *Communication Quarterly* 59.1 (2011): 1-18.

Coughlin, Elizabeth Myette, and Charles Edward Coughlin. "Convention In Petticoats: The Seneca Falls Declaration of Woman's Rights." *Today's Speech* 21.4 (1973): 17-23.

DeLuca, Kevin M., Sean Lawson and Ye Sun. "Occupy Wall Street on the Public Screens of Social Media: The Many Framings of the Birth of a Protest Movement." *Communication, Culture & Critique* 5 (2012): 483-509.

Elbein, Saul. "The Youth Group that Launched a Movement at Standing Rock." *New York Times Magazine*, 31 January 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/31/magazine/the-youth-group-that-launched-a-movement-at-standing-rock.html>

Endres, Danielle and Samantha Senda-Cook. "Location Matters: The Rhetoric of Place in Protest." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97.3 (2011): 257-82.

Foust, Christina R. and Jenni Marie Simon. "Memories of Movement in a Postfeminist Context: Conservative Fusion in the Rhetoric of Tammy Bruce and "Dr. Laura" Schlessinger." *Western Journal of Communication* 79.1 (2015): 1-21.

Gatchet, Amanda Davis, and Dana L. Cloud. "David, Goliath, and The Black Panthers: The Paradox of the Oppressed Militant in the Rhetoric of Self-Defense." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 37.1 (2013): 5-25.

Griffin, Charles J. G. "Movement As Motive": Self-Definition and Social Advocacy in Social Movement Autobiographies." *Western Journal of Communication* 64.2 (2000): 148-164.

Griffin, Leland M. "The Rhetoric of Historical Movements." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 38.2 (April 1952): 184-189.

Haas, Stephen M., Meghan E. Irr, Nancy A. Jennings, and Lisa M. Wagner. "Communicating Thin: A Grounded Model of Online Negative Enabling Support Groups in the Pro-Anorexia Movement." *New Media and Society* 13 (2010): 40-57.

Hahner, Leslie. "The New Modesty Movement and the Limits of Rhetorical Agency." Presented at the National Communication Association, San Diego, California, 2008.

Harlow, Summer. "Social Media and Social Movements: Facebook and an Online Guatemalan Justice Movement That Moved Offline." *New Media & Society* 14.2 (2012): 225-243.

Huntington, Heidi E. "Pepper Spray Cop and the American Dream: Using Synecdoche and Metaphor to Unlock Internet Memes' Visual Political Rhetoric." *Communication Studies* 67.1 (2016): 77-93.

- Kang, Jiyeon. "A Volatile Public: The 2009 Whole Foods Boycott on Facebook." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 56.4 (2012): 562-577.
- Kim, Tae-Sik. "Defining the Occupy Movement: Visual Analysis of Facebook Profile Images Posted by Local Occupy Movement Groups." *Visual Communication Quarterly* 22 (2015): 174-186.
- Lewis, Tiffany. "Mapping Social Movements and Leveraging the U.S. West: The Rhetoric of the Woman Suffrage Map." *Women's Studies in Communication* 42.4 (2019): 490-510.
- Lim, Merlyna. "Clicks, Cabs, And Coffee Houses: Social Media and Oppositional Movements in Egypt, 2004-2011." *Journal of Communication* 62.2 (2012): 231-248.
- Mann, Benjamin W. "Rhetoric of Online Disability Activism: #CripTheVote and Civic Participation." *Communication Culture & Critique* 11 (2018): 604-621.
- Mehltretter, Sara Ann. "Dorothy Day, the Catholic Workers, and Moderation in Religious Protest During the Vietnam War." *Journal of Communication and Religion* 32 (2009): 1-32.
- Milner, R. M. "To Write Love Through the Indie Imaginary: The Narrative Argument of a Mediated Movement." *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 26.3 (2012): 423-435.
- Peeples, Jennifer Ann. "Downwind: Articulation and Appropriation of Social Movement Discourse." *Southern Communication Journal* 76.3 (2011): 248-63.
- Rodgers, Ronald R. "The Social Gospel and the News." *Journalism and Communication Monographs* 13.2 (2011): 69-134. (Note: Pages are 5.5 x 8.5")
- Stewart, Neal. "Resistance to Social Movements: The Potential of Inoculation to Aid Oppositions." Presented at the National Communication Association, Chicago, 2007.
- Vitta, Jenna. "For the 'Aina: An Ideographic Interpretation of Hawaiian Sovereignty Rhetoric." Presented at the National Communication Association, Chicago, 2007.
- Wideman, Stephanie. "An American Carnival: The Tea Party and Sarah Palin." *The Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta* 96 (2011): 11-20.
- Woolard, Chad. "The National Family Farm Coalition: A Look at Rhetorical and Social Movement Theory." Presented at the National Communication Association, Chicago, 2007.

The readings can be thought of in terms of both theory and application. The Stewart, Smith and Denton book provides a theoretical framework for considering social movements; the articles provide application.

Accessibility: Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (ORS). Students are responsible to contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services. Once ORS determines if accommodations are to be made, they will notify the student and the instructor via email. Students choosing to use the disability-related accommodations must contact the instructor no later than five business days before the accommodation is needed. The instructor will provide accommodations (in conversation with ORS as needed), but the student is required to initiate the process for each accommodation. Please note - their office and name has changed since last year: New name: Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS). New email: accessibility-services@bethel.edu. New office location: CC426



A banner from 1856 (public domain image)

My Expectations: So that you're aware of my expectations:

1. *I expect that you will come to class ready to discuss the readings assigned for that day. I will not simply repeat what the readings mention; rather, class time offers the ability to apply and extend your readings. Thus, I encourage you to read the chapters before class starts! I reserve the right to offer unannounced longer exams should I find that this isn't the case, and to modify the grading scale accordingly. Simply put, this is an upper-level seminar in the department, and I treat it as such. I won't always ask you easy discussion questions... I want to hear how you think!*
2. *I expect that you will participate in class. Since my courses tend to use discussion and other participatory formats, the class succeeds to the extent that you are willing to participate. This also means that you allow others to participate.*
3. *I believe that each person has something to contribute to the class. I look forward to what you'll be able to contribute! I'm not only interested in what you say, but why you believe what you say. You'll find that "Why?" is one of my favorite questions. I'm interested in hearing your thinking behind your answer.*
4. *I am in full agreement with the Department of Communication Studies and the Bethel University policy of academic honesty. I fully expect that you will support this policy as well.*
5. *Many of you are either in, or have had advanced courses in the department, and none of you are first year college students. I expect, for example, that your assignments will show correct grammar and attention to documentation detail (i.e., proper citation style, whether it be MLA, Turabian, etc.). Please note the Department of Communication Studies policy: if there are excessive grammatical or stylistic errors, I reserve the right to return the assignment ungraded. Put another way: I expect good things from you!*

DEPARTMENTAL OBJECTIVES:

COM 463 meets the following objectives in the Rhetorical and Public Influence Emphasis:

1. Articulate the historical development of rhetoric as a discipline of study.
2. Identify key features of persuasion.
3. Identify essential elements of a rhetorical text.
4. Identify perspectives used to evaluate rhetorical texts.
5. Identify, explain, and analyze major theoretical approaches within the field of rhetorical studies.
6. Evaluate and interpret communication events, texts, and contexts.

GRADING SCALE:

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| Reading Questions/Class Discussion | 20% |
| Article Presentation | 20% |
| Final Presentation and Paper | 60% |

WHAT ARE MY STANDARDS FOR EACH LETTER GRADE?

- To me, an "A" denotes superior work. "A" papers show a very high degree of insight, and significantly surpass the expectations of the assignment or the test. "A" papers or tests are clear, easy to follow, and show an outstanding mastery of the subject.
A "B" denotes good work. It shows that the student has gone simply beyond fulfilling the requirements of the assignment by showing an above-average understanding of the material.
- A "C" denotes average work. It shows that the student has fulfilled all of the requirements of an assignment. A "C" denotes a basic understanding of the material, but is not as clearly stated or written compared to a "B" paper.
- A "D" grade means that the assignment is seriously deficient in one or more required areas, or does not show a basic understanding of the material.
- Hopefully, you won't find out what an "F" grade means! An "F" indicates little or no mastery of the material, and will also be given for any assignments that show academic dishonesty.

READING QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS:

Here's how I'd like to handle reading questions this J-term: each day on the primary reading, I'd like you to bring in (on a sheet of paper, it doesn't have to be typed, just as long as I can read it) 2 observations or questions about the reading. You can do more than two if you'd like. :)

The observations can be things that struck you about the reading, something you strongly agree with or disagree with, or simply something that made you go, "hmm." Or, if there's something you have a question about, feel free to ask away. When I use these kinds of questions, part of my goal is to make sure that we address those during the class period.

You bring them in at the beginning of the class, and we'll talk about them. Simple as that.

ARTICLE PRESENTATION

You'll present on one of the articles mentioned in the syllabus (if you want to present on a different article, I'm open to discussion. You'll want to convince why your article is appropriate.) Email me a 1-2 page handout the class day before you present. The handout should summarize the key points you found in the article, as well as drawing some conclusions about how the article relates to larger issues within the field of rhetorical criticism. For example, the article might point out about a controversy between different authors, or it might suggest an extension of a social movement approach to particular rhetorical situations.

The reason that I want the handout before you present is so that I can help you by noting strengths and weaknesses of your outline before you actually present, and also help by making copies before the actual presentation. You should figure each presentation should be somewhere between 10-15 minutes, and we'll have a question and answer time that will follow.

TWO - YES TWO - PRESENTATIONS OF YOUR RESEARCH...

The first presentation will be pretty laid-back...it's the formative presentation. You'll simply chat about your proposed topic and what you know to that point.

The second presentation will be 10-15 minutes, and it's your final presentation. The presentation will be about your paper, in which you'll explore and identify your own thoughts about a particular social movement. This presentation will be accompanied by an approximately 15-page paper. More details will be given about the paper as we go. Basically, you'll work on the paper in the following stages.

Stage 1: Justification of text/artifact – What do you want to study? Why is it significant/important/worth studying? Have others looked at this particular text/artifact before? If so, how are you looking at this text/artifact in a different way?

Stage 2: What are the different areas you need to know about before you conduct an analysis? (i.e., Literature Review)

Stage 3: Decision about rhetorical approach - What theory will you use? Why is it appropriate? What will you focus on in terms of the theory itself?

Note – in this class, we will all examine social movements; so the broader area is defined (where it normally wouldn't be); your role is to pick an approach within the realm of social movements.

Stage 4: Analysis - This is where you'll do the actual analysis – applying your approach to the text/artifact that you're interested in.

Stage 5: Implications - This is where you answer the question, "So what?" Now that you've done this analysis, what do we learn from it? Where should you (we) build upon the analysis you've done?

Note well: You'll turn in parts of the paper that will be critiqued by me, as well as a draft that will be seen by one of your colleagues. The expectation is that the paper would be of sufficient quality to submit to a regional conference.

Also note: Some of the stage papers are designed so that you can work on them while I am looking at other stages – stage 3, for example, can be worked on as I review stage 2; etc.

Here's what I would like to do with the papers this J-term...I'd like to try a little bit of a different approach. Rather than try to have all the papers coming in at the same time, here's what I'd like to try:

As you finish each stage of the paper, let me know. I'll look at the paper at that time. A good way to think of each stage is this: about every three days, you'll want to complete one part of the paper. If you do it a little earlier, so much the better. If you do it a little bit later one time, but can catch up a little bit later, that works too. We all have a bit easier periods and a bit crazier periods during any given semester.

I also want to try something a little bit different too...instead of drop boxes or emailing back and forth, here's what we can do... on Moodle, each of you will have your own thread. You will post your papers in progress there. When you've hit a point that you'd like me (or someone else...at one point, I'll have you look at someone else's paper) to look at the paper, then I'll go look at the thread. I'll admit, I'm still a little old-school...I'll probably either print out your paper or mark it up on my iPad. I'm not a fan of suggestions for papers just because it's easy to click "yes" on what I suggest without looking at why I suggest them... and because I don't always have access to the internet.

GRADING CONCERNS:

If at any time you have a concern about a grade, please let me know. I'll gladly take another look at your assignment and offer additional comments and feedback, as well as to re-examine the grade I've given. If you're still not satisfied, we do have a grade appeals policy; details about that policy are outlined in the student handbook.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Readings will be the readings we discuss – a further breakdown of the readings will be discussed in class. SSD = Stewart, Smith and Denton (the book). This is subject to change based on our progress – if we want to linger on subjects, we can; if we find other subjects that are of interest, those can be included as well. We'll adjust appropriately. Any additional readings will be announced in class.

We'll all read the Stewart, Smith and Denton book (Listed as SSD below). Some of the readings that are on pages 2-3 are listed here...that's because those are the days that we'll present on those readings. Not everyone will read those readings. So some days, you'll have a reading, and some days you won't. If you don't have a reading (or aren't doing a presentation), I'd encourage you to at least skim the reading that someone will be presenting on...it'll make our discussions better!

Given the myriad issues affecting our country and our world, and, recognizing, as the Greek philosopher Heraclitus once said, "change is the only constant in life," I feel the need more than ever to provide space for those discussions, should national or world events require us to consider particular social movements as they're changing and being created.

| DATES | CLASS TOPICS | READINGS |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Day 1, January 6 | Introduction to class Introduction to rhetorical criticism Introduction to social movements | |
| Day 2, January 7 | Introduction to Social Movements (continued); Social movements as communication | SSD chapter 1, chapter 2 |
| Day 3, January 8 | Social movements as persuasion | L. Griffin (all class read) SSD chapter 3 |
| Day 4, January 9 | Stages of social movements <i>By here, you really should know what you'd like to do for your final paper.</i> | SSD chapter 4 |
| Day 5, January 10 | Leadership in social movements and organization of social movements | SSD chapter 5, chapter 7; Woolard |
| Day 6, January 13 | Computer mediated communication and social movements | Harlow, Kang, Lim, Wagner, DeLuca, Huntington, Kim, Mann |
| Day 7, January 14 | Computer mediated communication (continued), justifying divisiveness | SSD Chapter 12 |
| Day 8, January 15 | Application: Gender and autobiography | C. Griffin, Coughlin, Hahner, Lewis |
| Day 9, January 16 | Language choices and narrative approaches | SSD chapter 6, chapter 8, chapter 9; Milner; Chavez; Peeples |
| Day 10, January 17 (shortened class) | Opposition and conspiracy | SSD chapter 10, chapter 11; Gatchet & Cloud; Wideman |
| January 20 | <i>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - No Class</i> | |
| Day 11, January 21 | Religious social movements | Mehrlretter; Rodgers |
| Day 12, January 22 | Other elements of social movements: place and time (Application example: Standing rock) | Vitta, Endres & Senda-Cook; Elbein, |
| Day 13, January 23 | Resistance and social movements | SSD chapter 14; N. Stewart |
| Day 14, January 24 | Course wrapup, future of social movement theory | |
| Days 15, 16: January 27, 28 | Presentations | |
| Final Exam | <i>Final Papers due January 28 by 4:30 p.m.</i> | |