

**COM 100 RHETORIC & SOCIETY**  
**University of Alabama Fall 2003**

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**TTh 2-3:15**  
**Phifer Hall 216**

**Dr. Janis L. Edwards**  
**Associate Professor, Communication Studies**  
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**Office Hours: T Th 12:30-1:45, Th 3:30-4**  
**And by appointment**

“Education is not the filling of a pail,  
but the lighting of a fire.”  
---Wm. Butler Yeats

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

COM 100 provides an introduction to the subject of rhetoric within the sphere of communication studies and a humanistic perspective. The goals of the course are:

- To develop an initial understanding of the definition and components of rhetoric as practiced in contemporary American society.
- To provide a view of selected rhetorical activities that have shaped American culture in the past.
- To demonstrate the function of rhetoric in affecting cultural norms and social realities in contemporary life.
- To foster a “critical attitude” towards rhetoric that will help students become more observant participants in rhetorical activities.

**REQUIRED READING**

Two books are required reading for this course:

1. Jodi R. Cohen. *Communication Criticism: Developing Your Critical Powers*. Thousand Oaks, Ca.: SAGE Publications, 1998.
2. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Students will receive information by Week 3 on additional required readings for the class. Reading assignments for class include actual speeches from history. These will either be

published in a course packet or they may be found on a website listed under “Additional Resources.”

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

There are several websites that will help you locate speeches or other rhetorical texts for review, research, and study:

[www.americanrhetoric.com](http://www.americanrhetoric.com)  
[www.pbs.org/great](http://www.pbs.org/great) speeches  
[www.cagle.com](http://www.cagle.com)  
[www.ucomics.com](http://www.ucomics.com)

Many important speeches in the nation are published in a bi-weekly periodical called *Vital Speeches of the Day*. It is available in Gorgas Library.

### **TEACHING ASSISTANT**

The teaching assistant for this class is Ms. Alina Haliliuc. She will be attending class, and also has office hours on Fridays from 1-3 pm in Reese Phifer Hall 204. The phone number for the graduate assistant office is 348-8079.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

I expect you to attend class regularly, as scheduled. Although I will not call roll after the first day of class, there will be other methods used to chart attendance. Poor attendance is likely to have a direct or indirect negative impact on your grade.

Attendance means more than a semi-warm body in the room. It means paying attention and contributing to a positive class environment by resisting behaviors that disturb other students and the professor. Large lecture classes are easily disrupted by coming late and leaving early, talking, eating, sleeping, or playing with personal technological devices. Persistent disturbances such as these may prompt me to ask you to leave class at any time. *Please turn off your cell phones during class*. If you are unable to comply with these policies, don't bother taking COM 100.

To request disability accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (348-4285). After initial arrangements are made with that office, contact your professor.

### **CLASS MEETINGS**

Class meetings will consist of lecture, audio-visual material, guest speakers, and discussion. I will be presenting my viewpoints and arguments on some topics for your consideration, and together we will explore texts and issues. The assigned reading is meant to enhance and supplement lectures, not substitute for them.

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

The major assignments for the course, in addition to completing assigned reading, include 3 exams (two midterms and a final exam) and two required writing assignments.

**Exams:** All exams will be multiple choice. They will test for basic knowledge and understanding of course material, whether readings or class presentations. Please be prepared on exam day by bringing one or more ready-to-write number 2 pencils. Each exam is worth 100 points. The final exam is comprehensive.

**Papers (Writing Option):** Students will be presented with 5 options for writing assignments. You are required to complete 2 of these options---your choice. Each writing assignment is worth 75 points. I will distribute written directions for each option. Assignments turned in after the end of class on the date due will be LATE and will receive a 10-point grade deduction. Assignments turned in more than one week past the due date are unacceptable.

Please refer to the **Tip Sheet for Writing Papers** included with this syllabus for general directions.

The five writing options are:

1. Aristotle's proofs DUE 9/11
2. metaphors in political cartoons DUE 9/25
3. rhetorical biography DUE 10/16
4. social movements in history DUE 10/22
5. the rhetorical construction of gender DUE 11/18

***Please note that no writing options may be submitted after November 18, as I will be unavailable to grade them.***

**Daily Questions** Not quite daily, but frequently, I will ask you to write on a question in class. These responses are to be turned in for credit/no credit. I will also be tracking attendance with these writing assignments. Please be sure to bring 8 ½ x 11 notebook paper of some type to each class for these writing assignments.

**Extra credit** Students who feel they need an extra credit option will be allowed to submit one additional writing option paper for up to 50 points of extra credit. There may also be an extra credit oral option at the end of the term, if time allows. I do not extend extra credit options on an individual basis.

## **GRADING**

EXAMS: 2 midterms and one final, 100 pts each.....300 points  
PAPERS: 2 required writing options, 75 points each.....150 points  
ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION (daily questions).....50 points

500 points total

EXTRA CREDIT AVAILABLE 50 points (possibly 75)

461-500+ points = A

451-460 points = A-

441-450 points = B+

411-440 points = B

401-410 points = B-

391-400 points = C+

361-390 points = C

351-360 points = C-

301-350 points = D

fewer than 300 points = F

## COURSE POLICIES

### *Students*

You are expected to attend class, complete assigned reading, listen actively, and complete assignments in a timely manner. Anyone who fails to complete two or more of the major assignments, and who misses more than 15 classes will be considered a non-participant and will receive a grade no higher than a “D.”

You are also expected to contribute to a positive class environment by refraining from irrelevant talking, noise, eating, and other forms of inattention, or random coming & going during class.

### *Instructor*

The graduate assistant and I are happy to help you with any questions you might have about the course. I encourage you to talk with us if you have any questions about the course work, assignments, or grading. Any questions about individual grades or progress in the course must be discussed in the instructor office rather than in class. If you are unable to see me during office hours, I am happy to set up an appointment of mutual convenience, or you can email me. I will respond to emails each day I am in the office (so you should get a reply within 3 or 4 days at the most). My guiding principle is fairness and expanded learning opportunities that benefit the class members as a whole. I am here to help, but you also need to be proactive in satisfactorily completing the course.

### *Missed Work*

Keep track of exam and assignment dates. Missed work is a serious matter, and make-ups are not automatic. Writing assignments are unacceptable if they are more than one week late. (and late within a week will result in a grade reduction). ***No writing options may be submitted after Nov. 18; that is the last date they will be accepted, either for full credit or for extra credit—NO EXCEPTION!*** Make-ups on midterm exams are ***only*** allowed in the most serious of circumstances. The make-up dates for both midterms will be held Friday afternoon between 1-3 within 2 weeks of the scheduled exam date—NO EXCEPTIONS! Make-up exams may include essay or short answer questions. ***THERE***

**WILL BE NO MAKE-UP OPTION ON THE FINAL EXAM.** Please see me as soon as possible, and well in advance of the final, if you have a problem with the final exam date. The final exam schedule is published in advance to allow you time to plan family trips, work schedules, etc. accordingly.

No allowance can be made for missed or unsubmitted “daily questions.”

### ***Submission of Written Work***

All written work completed outside of class (writing options) must be typed in a conventional typeface. Handwritten work is unacceptable. **STAPLE multiple pages together. No cover pages. No report covers!** Papers that do not conform to these requirements will be returned ungraded or receive a 10-point deduction—**no exceptions!**

### ***Plagiarism***

Plagiarism is contrary to university policy and undermines the ethical integrity of your education, as well as civilization as we know it. The submission of another’s work as your own, or the quoting paraphrasing or other adoption of another’s ideas is plagiarism. Students caught plagiarizing will receive an F for the pertinent assignment and risk failure in the course. Document your sources **ALWAYS**. Students are expected to submit work based on their original thinking and (cited) research.

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## **SCHEDULE OF READING ASSIGNMENTS**

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The following are dates by which you should have completed the readings from textbooks.

WEEK 2,	8/28	Cohen, Chap 1-2
WEEK 3	9/2	Cohen, Chap 10,16
WEEK 4	9/9	Cohen, Chap 5, <i>Metaphors</i> Chap 1-4
WEEK 5	9/16	<i>Metaphors</i> , Chap 5-9, 16,18
WEEK 6	9/23	<i>Metaphors</i> , Chap 24, 29, 30
		Cohen Chap 8
WEEK 6	9/25	Cohen, Chap 13, 15
WEEK 11	10/28	Cohen, Chap 7

Other reading assignments (of speech texts) on websites will be announced in class. Other reading assignments compiled in packet form will be announced within a few weeks.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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*The following provides a general plan for the course. Deviations may be necessary.*

**WEEK 1** 8/21 .....Orientation

### ***PART ONE – RHETORIC AND ITS DIMENSIONS***

**WEEK 2** 8/26/28.....Defining rhetoric (Aristotle)

**WEEK 3** 9/2.....Defining rhetoric (Aristotle, etc)  
9/4.....Defining rhetoric (genres)

**WEEK 4** 9/9.....Language and/as Rhetoric  
9/11..... Metaphor ***Writing Option #1 is Due***

**WEEK 5** 9/16, 9/18.....Metaphor, Myth, and Narrative

**WEEK 6** 9/23.....***MIDTERM EXAM #1***  
9/25.....Speaker and Audience  
***Writing Option #2 is due***

### ***PART TWO – RHETORIC AND THE CULTURAL MOMENT: Spotlight on the Sixties***

**WEEK 7** 9/30.....The Rhetorical Situation of the 1960's  
10/2.....JFK, Space, and the Frontier Myth

**WEEK 8** 10/7/9.....Rhetoric and Social Movements

**WEEK 9** 10/14..... Rhetoric and Social Movements  
10/16.....Guest speaker: Prof. David Roskos-Ewoldsen  
***Writing Option # 3 is due***

**WEEK 10** 10/21.....Guest speaker: Prof. Kathleen Kendall, University  
of Maryland  
10/22.....Rhetoric and Politics  
***Writing Option #4 is due***

***PART THREE – VISUAL RHETORIC: FORM, POLICY, AND CULTURE***

**WEEK 11** 10/28.....***MIDTERM EXAM #2***  
10/30.....Documentary photography and public policy

**WEEK 12** 11/4/6.....Public Memorializing, War, and Peace  
(The Viet Nam Veterans Memorial)

***PART FOUR – RHETORIC AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES***

**WEEK 13** 11/11/13.....Spotlight on Gender

**WEEK 14** 11/ 18/20.....Spotlight on Gender  
*Writing Option #5 is due Tuesday*

**WEEK 15** 11/25.....Guest speaker: Prof. Valerie Pahlmer-Meta  
11/27.....Thanksgiving **HAPPY HOLIDAY**

**WEEK 16** 12/2.....TBA  
12/4.....exam review

**FINAL EXAM**      **FRIDAY, DEC. 12, 8:30-10:30 am**  
Reese Phifer 216 classroom