



# **INTRODUCTION TO RHETORIC**

## **ENGLISH 305: RHETORICAL POWER (Fall 2014)**

Instructor: Lavinia Hirsu

Email: [l\\_hirsu@uncg.edu](mailto:l_hirsu@uncg.edu)

Office: 3106 MHRA Building

Office Hours: Tues, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Wed, 12:30-1:30 p.m.



## Course Description

*Kenneth Burke defines humans as “symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal(s).” According to his definition, rhetoric is a fundamental trait of human nature. However, not all scholars and philosophers think that rhetoric is available to all humans. Some believe that it is a skill or an art that can be taught; others have found the power of rhetoric in the tools and technologies we use, or even in the things that surround us and persuade us to act in a certain way. Regardless of its definition, rhetoric helps people build the world around them. In our writing-intensive course, we will explore the role of rhetoric, its tools and practices, and the power it has on humans and their actions.*

---

## Course Objectives

Based on the two dimensions of this course (rhetorical theory and rhetorical practice), at the end of the semester you will be able to:

- understand the general nature, purpose, and methods of rhetorical studies;
- identify and use major rhetorical terms and concepts;
- understand and apply a variety of rhetorical theories in specific cases;
- write and compose artifacts in different genres and contexts, appropriate to the subject matter of the course;
- compose and revise your writing and other artifacts with rhetorical intent and awareness.

## Required Materials

To accomplish successfully this course, you will need the following:

- an active account in Canvas that will enable you to follow the schedule, assignments, activities, discussion boards, and other tasks related to the course;



- readings posted on Canvas. Please print out or bring a digital version of the articles and essays discussed in class. If you follow the texts online, make sure you have access to your questions and notes regarding the readings.

## Class Environment

Our class is a learning community where everyone plays a vital role. As part of this environment, you should act as an active member: prepare for each class meeting; bring your own questions, thoughts, and examples to enhance class discussion; listen with care and respect for your peers' questions and insights; participate both in in-class and online activities; complete all the tasks and assignments in order to grow as a thinker and composer.

## Instructor's Support

I encourage you to consider my office hours as an extension of the classroom. I will hold office hours each week during which I will offer one-on-one instruction to anyone interested. Please email me in advance to set up an appointment and to inform me about the issues you are interested in discussing. For questions and concerns outside of class or after office hours, feel free to send me a brief email at [l\\_hirsu@uncg.edu](mailto:l_hirsu@uncg.edu), but do not expect an immediate response, especially after 8:00 p.m. For important matters, such as extended conversations about your drafts and/or grades, please set up a writing conference.



## Assignments and Evaluation

To accomplish the course goals, throughout the semester you will complete the following assignments and activities:

Assignments	Point Value
Wiki Responses	200
Short Exercises and Quizzes	150
Concepts in Action	200
Analysis of a Rhetorical Situation	150
Human Stakes Project:	300
Issue Proposal	50
Curating a Rhetorical Ecology (Creative Component)	100
Peer Review Memo	25
Project Analysis	125
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,000</b>

### *Wiki Responses* (500-1,000 words)

The readings for this course represent the main resource of learning and practice. In response to each text, you will create a post on Canvas where you can share your thoughts, questions, and challenges.

### *Short Exercises and Quizzes*

Throughout the semester, you will complete a series of in-class and online exercises. These are opportunities to enhance your learning rather than to test your skills.

### *Concepts in Action* (creative component and a 1,000-1,500-word rationale)

For this project, you will create an infographic based on the key concepts introduced in one of our readings. Then, you will provide a written rationale, explaining how the infographic helps your audience better grasp the concepts.

### *Analysis of a Rhetorical Situation* (1,250-1,500 words)

The rhetorical situation of a text communicated and created in any mode or genre is as important as the structure and content of that text. To explore these rhetorical aspects, you will conduct an analysis of an artifact of your choice (e.g., text, image, video, audio, multimodal object).

### *Human Stakes Project* (multi-staged group project)

For this final project, your group will identify a public issue that needs rhetorical representability in order to make its human stakes visible, heard, and rhetorically compelling. This project involves a creative component, research, and application of rhetorical concepts and theories accumulated throughout the semester.

You will have to complete and submit all major assignments in order to receive a grade for the course. When submitting these assignments, make sure that your final version reflects and incorporates feedback received on drafts from myself, your peers, or any other consultants who may have helped you in the draft stage.

**Note:** For more information on any of the projects listed here, please visit our Canvas site.

## Attendance

This class calls for your presence! To turn it into a fun learning environment, we need everyone to come prepared, ready to participate in class activities regularly and on time. A maximum of two absences are accepted, with no grade penalty attached to them. I understand that these absences may be due to special circumstances, and you do not have to provide a rationale for missing class. However, beyond two absences, your final grade will be dropped by a third of a letter grade (e.g., from B to B-) for each new absence. Please inform me in advance of special circumstances such as religious holidays, military duty, and extended



hospitalization, for which there will be no penalties. It is your responsibility to catch up on course activities that take place while you are absent; therefore, after you miss a class, contact a classmate asking what we did that day.

## Drafts and Peer Feedback

Drafts and peer feedback are important components of the writing process. Throughout the semester, you will give and receive peer comments, which means that (1) you will post your draft in time so others can respond to it, and (2) you will be ready to provide thoughtful feedback. If your draft is not posted in the right location on the day when it is due, the assignment will be considered late and will be penalized with a third of a letter grade (e.g., from B to B-). Failure to provide substantive feedback will result in the same grade deduction.

## Important Resources

Besides working with your peers and myself to strengthen your writing, you can also benefit from the help of consultants in The Writing Center. **The Writing Center** practices a collaborative approach to sessions, where students and consultants engage in one-on-one conversations about writing. They have both online and face-to-face sessions that you can schedule to work on your projects, for free. To make an appointment, you can call 334-3125 or visit the website: <http://www.uncg.edu/eng/writing-center/philosophy.php>

If you have concerns about your speaking skills or want to boost your in-class participation, **the Speaking Center** is here to help. To schedule free one-on-one support sessions, please contact the Speaking Center at 256-1346, or visit their website at <http://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/default.php>

## Digital Support

Since we will be using Canvas, you won't have to worry about printing your assignments on paper. However, this also means that you have the responsibility to check Canvas regularly. If you are unable to use the platform for personal or technical reasons, please contact me immediately and bring a print copy of your work to class when it is due. In the first few weeks, I strongly encourage you to become familiar with Canvas: interact with the site, visit its pages and folders, and read through the tutorials listed under Modules/Canvas FAQs. If you do not have personal access to a computer, keep in mind that there are several computer stations available across campus. For more information, visit <http://its.uncg.edu/Labs/About/>

**The Digital Media Commons (DMC)** is located on the lower level of the Jackson Library. This is the space where you can create and refine your digital projects, including digital images, video, audio, presentations, web pages, and media resources citations. For more information, visit <http://library.uncg.edu/spaces/dmc/>

In partnership with DMC, **the Digital ACT Studio (DACTS)** offers you the opportunity to work on any stage of your digital project in the form of individual or group consultations. You can make appointments from 30 minutes up to an hour. Walk-ins are also welcomed. For appointments, please visit <http://digitalactstudio.uncg.edu/contact.php>

Laptops, cell phones, and other digital tools are permitted in this course as long as they do not disrupt other peers or the flow of discussion. I understand that these devices can actually enhance our in-class learning experience. However, because this is a course that counts on your constant engagement, you should be prepared to answer and contribute to class conversations at any time.



## Accessibility

UNCG seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Please let me know if you are working with this office, and I will make the appropriate accommodations. Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) in 215 Elliott University Center, 334-5440, or at [oars.uncg.edu](http://oars.uncg.edu).

## Academic Integrity

As member of a writing community, you need to acknowledge and cite the sources that help you write, think, and engage in different forms of intellectual activity. Given the multimodal nature of the projects in this course, we will discuss ethical and effective means of citing your sources. If you have any questions regarding the use of a source in your writing, discuss this with me before you turn in your work. To read more about academic integrity and plagiarism, visit the Academic Integrity website at <http://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/> It is your responsibility to make sure you understand and follow the rules of citation and appropriate documentation in all your writing.

---

## Tips for a Successful Semester

*The key to a successful semester is in your hand. To get the most out of your learning experience this semester, (1) keep up with the readings and assignments, (2) be an engaged participant in class and on Canvas, and (3) seek help whenever you need it. We have plenty of resources (myself included) that can help you accomplish your goals. Own your success!*

## DAILY SCHEDULE

Since our schedule may change throughout the semester, please check regularly the updates posted on Canvas. Some readings will be available online via the active links posted on our class site.

<b>Week 1</b>	Mon, 08/18	Rhetoric and the Question of the Human: Course Introduction Canvas; DACTS. Multimedia: <i>Thank You for Smoking</i> (video)
	Wed, 08/20	Booth: "How Many 'Rhetorics'?" <b>Individual Statements (DUE)</b>
<b>Week 2</b>	Mon, 08/25	Plato: <i>Phaedrus</i> (selections)
	Wed, 08/27	Plato (cont.), Aristotle: <i>Rhetoric</i> , Book 1.1-3
<b>Week 3</b>	Mon, 09/01	<b>Labor Day (No classes)</b>
	Wed, 09/03	Aristotle (cont.); Review: Plato and Aristotle.
<b>Week 4</b>	Mon, 09/08	Quintilian: <i>Institutes of Oratory</i> (selections) Concepts in Action (Assigned)
	Wed, 09/10	Practice: Civic Rhetoric
<b>Week 5</b>	Mon, 09/15	Burke: "Definition of Man" and "Traditional Principles of Rhetoric"
	Wed, 09/17	Practice: Burke: "The Five Key Terms of Dramatism"
<b>Week 6</b>	Mon, 09/22	Stephen Toulmin: <i>The Uses of Argument</i> (selections)
	Wed, 09/24	Practice: Argument Analysis and Figures of Speech
<b>Week 7</b>	Mon, 09/29	Digital Workshop (in DMC)
	Wed, 10/01	Kress - "Gains and Losses"
<b>Week 8</b>	Mon, 10/06	Peer Review
	Wed, 10/08	Bitzer: "The Rhetorical Situation" Analysis of a Rhetorical Situation (Assigned) <b>Concepts in Action: Tap Essay and Reflection (DUE 10/12)</b>

<b>Week 9</b>	Mon, 10/13	<b>Fall Break (No classes)</b>
	Wed, 10/15	Vatz: "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation"
<b>Week 10</b>	Mon, 10/20	Practice: Analyzing Rhetorical Situations
	Wed, 10/22	Peer Review Workshop
<b>Week 11</b>	Mon, 10/27	Ida B. Wells: "Lynch Law in All Its Phases" Final Project: <i>Human Stakes Project</i> (Assigned) <b>Analysis of a Rhetorical Situation (DUE)</b>
	Wed, 10/29	Royster - "To Call a Thing by Its True Name: Rhetoric of Ida B. Wells"; Practice: Feminist Rhetoric
<b>Week 12</b>	Mon, 11/03	Brooke: "Ecology" <b>Issue Proposal (DUE)</b>
	Wed, 11/05	Practice: Digital Rhetoric and New Canons Digital Studio Workshop (Graham 202)
<b>Week 13</b>	Mon, 11/10	Delicath and DeLuca: "Image Events"
	Wed, 11/12	Project Development Workshop (Graham 202)
<b>Week 14</b>	Mon, 11/17	Azoulay: "Emergency Claims" Practice: Visual Rhetoric
	Wed, 11/19	Work Showcase and Peer Review
<b>Week 15</b>	Mon, 11/24	Project Analysis Workshop (Graham 202) <b>Peer Review Memo (DUE)</b>
	Wed, 11/26	<b>Thanksgiving Break (No classes)</b>
<b>Week 16</b>	Mon, 12/01	Course Wrap-up <b>Final Project Analysis and the Creative Component (DUE)</b>