RHETORICS OF CONSTITUTING COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL CONTROVERSY – Spring, 2012

Communication 872
Wednesdays, 3:30 - 6:10 p.m., Merrill 244

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Office Hours: M & W 2:15-3:00 p.m.             Office Phone: (414) 229-6396
and other times by appt.     Main Office Phone: (414) 229-4261
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Course Overview

“Community” and “controversy” are held in peculiar regard by our society. We often value and seek out community and disdain and avoid controversy. Our culture frequently assumes that community and controversy are antithetical, that is, that community and controversy work antagonistically to dispel each other. If there is community, then controversy threatens to dissolve it. By the same token, if there is a controversy, we often hear claims that it will be resolved once we find common ground. These maxims are helpful, but perhaps not wholly accurate. We might instead suggest reasons to see community and controversy as mutually and complexly entwined, symbiotic rather than opposing forces. In this view, the greatest test of community is not how it operates during times of harmony, but how it emerges in and engages controversy and subsequently is redefined. Conversely, controversy can be examined for its ability to promote and redefine, not just challenge and destroy community.

Our primary lens for critically viewing the phenomena of community and controversy will be rhetoric, which draws our attention to how communities and controversies are defined, contested, advocated, and made sensible to people via symbolic arrangements. As part of our endeavors, we will develop and practice with rhetorical tools for analyzing communities and controversies, ultimately using these tools in our own investigations and analyses of a community/controversy phenomenon. By the end of the semester, we should be able to discuss eloquently the stakes of and options for community and controversy in our contemporary society, with each student evidencing his or her claims in a specific case project developed over the course of the semester.

This course contributes to the 15-credit Rhetorical Leadership Graduate Certificate (stand-alone credential) or Concentration (part of a graduate degree). For details, please talk to Kathryn Olson or go to http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/rhetlead/

Required Readings

All readings listed on the syllabus are required. The readings are available on Electronic Reserve from the Golda Meir Library and on the Content area of our D2L. Full citations are provided for readings so that you may locate them otherwise, if you prefer.
Course Standards and Policies

1. In a graduate seminar, full preparation and weekly participation are not only expected, but required. Attendance, including being ready on time and staying through the entire class period, is necessary but not at all sufficient to participation. It is assumed that you will not miss more than one week of class and that only for a pressing reason (like attending a conference or being ill).

Asking questions of information or rhetorical questions or being able to summarize aspects of the reading are also necessary but not sufficient to participation. You must regularly take and defend—with good reasons and appropriate evidence—sustained, well-reasoned positions with respect to, but other than, those which are in the readings to test the ideas, assumptions, implications of, and alternatives to the positions presented by those authors and other class participants. Thoughtful, detailed interaction with the readings and other students’ papers and comments is expected.

It is assumed that you will have robust class participation during any week in which you have a position or response paper as you and the others who wrote that week have spent the most time and attention on the readings. Your paper weeks’ class participation, though, should not be limited to what you argued in your paper; you should have become intimately familiar with all of that week’s readings as you prepared and so should be well equipped to discuss other aspects of the material as well.

2. I am committed to having a supportive instructional climate. Achieving such a climate means that all class participants
   - attack arguments, not people
   - speak on their own behalf and do not presume to speak for others, present or absent
   - are responsible for the evidence and reasons they use to uphold claims, especially generalizations
   - support equality of access to learning opportunities in the course
   - show respect for differences based on religion, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, physical challenges, and learning styles
   - realize that sometimes class participants ultimately will disagree for legitimate reasons
   - have all cell phones, pagers, iPods, text message devices, etc. silenced whenever you are in the classroom

Your continued enrollment in this course assumes that you agree to treat all class participants and support staff with respect.

3. Assignments must be submitted as **Word documents** to the D2L Dropbox or Discussion area and/or to Turnitin (whatever is specified for the particular assignment) by the specified time on the due date to count for credit. Avoid using symbols in titling your files as they may not open on my end of D2L. Papers must be accurate in spelling and grammar and precisely consistent with one of the three major citation styles (i.e., APA, Chicago, MLA); please note that the citations in the syllabus are NOT in any one of these styles. Please proofread carefully before submitting. Papers must be typed, double-spaced. See the “Top Eleven Tips for Writing Argumentative Papers” on our D2L site and Jordan, Olson, and Goldzwig (assigned for Feb. 15) on standards for good rhetorical criticism.
4. Academic dishonesty is strictly prohibited. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: turning in as your own any individual graded work that you did not produce entirely on your own; looking at another's work during, or otherwise cheating on, an exam or quiz; turning in an assignment for which you have received or will receive credit in another course; failure to document references completely and properly (including appropriate use of quotation marks, presenting full citations, etc.). Any student who uses, without proper acknowledgment, all or part of another's work as if it was his or her own or who allows others to use his or her work as if it was their own will face severe penalties (e.g., grade reduction; course failure; being reported for college disciplinary action).

5. If religious observances will prevent you from completing assigned work on a scheduled date, you are responsible to discuss this with me WITHIN THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF CLASS to make appropriate arrangements.

6. If you have a FINAL EXAM CONFLICT because you are taking another class in the 3:30-6:10 time slot on Mondays or Fridays, please discuss it with me BY THE SECOND CLASS.

7. If you will need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements in this course, please contact me as soon as possible and take the following steps. First, if you have not done so already, you should contact the Student Accessibility Center (SAC) and arrange to meet with a SAC counselor who will help you determine whether your condition qualifies you for accommodations and to complete a VISA form describing the approved accommodations. Second, you should inform your instructor of your need for accommodation and provide the instructor with a copy of the completed VISA form. You are expected to complete these steps within the first three weeks of class or as soon as possible after learning of the need for accommodation, unless legitimate circumstances prevent you from doing so. If you have any questions about this process, please contact a SAC counselor.

8. Information on departmental and university policies on topics including accommodations for students called up for active military duty, drop procedures, retaking courses, incompletes, sexual harassment, safety, grade appeal procedures, graduate degree requirements, and certificate requirements are available at http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf, in UWM's current Graduate Bulletin, on the UWM, Department, and RL websites, and at the Communication Department's main office (Johnston 210).

9. Bad weather? Call 414-229-4444 to see if UWM has canceled classes.

Grading Scale

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Instructor reserves the right to adjust final grades one increment either way.
Assignment Weightings

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<td>Position Paper</td>
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<td>Response Paper (2 at 125 points)</td>
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<td>Weekly Participation (see Course Standard 1)</td>
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<td>Peer Review of a Final Paper Draft</td>
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<td>Project Proposal and 1:1 Meeting with Professor</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Project Final Paper and Presentation</td>
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Grading Criteria

- Demonstrated attempts to understand and apply a range of course material
- Demonstrated ability to unite theory and practice
- Use and citation of appropriate evidence and quality of research
- Clarity of expression and ability to develop and support an idea persuasively
- Degree of thoughtfulness and originality shown
- Completeness and insightfulness of the argument
- Fulfilment of assignment instruction
- Ability to defend your arguments orally

Assignment Descriptions

Position Paper and Response Papers (See samples of each paper type on our D2L site)

A position paper is a 4-6 page paper that takes an original position on some significant aspect of the readings assigned for that week. Initially, the paper should fairly and fully summarize the aspect of the reading with which it takes issue (perhaps 1-2 pages). Then the paper should clearly state, develop, and support a position with respect to that aspect, including explicitly explaining and illustrating the importance of the issue and the stakes of deciding whether to side with the position paper. Please remember that these readings are assigned NOT because they offer all the answers but because they raise interesting questions or problems concerning rhetorics of constituting community and social controversy; so, you should do something other than just endorse, reinforce, or further illustrate what they have already said. Please also remember that your position paper does not need to reject the readings wholesale; indeed sometimes you might decide they do not go far enough in the direction they start or that there are necessary, but unexamined implications of a reading’s position.

Position papers must be posted on the D2L Discussion Board before noon on the Friday before they are due to be presented. Two classmates will develop and present Response Papers to each Position Paper. A final version of your Position Paper, with any modifications prompted by these responses and the class discussion, is due to the D2L Dropbox before noon on the Friday of the week they are presented in class for grading. It is imperative that you meet the initial submission deadline because two of your classmates cannot begin writing their graded
papers for that week until yours is posted. You have a rewrite window after the class, and they do not. Furthermore, all classmates need time to read these papers, and they have planned around the announced timetable. Because of these relationships, a position paper posted after the noon deadline will be penalized 20% of the assignment value (i.e., 50 points) for each 12-hour period or portion thereof that passes after the deadline until the paper is posted or 0 points is reached.

Parameters for rewritten position papers. Your rewritten paper should take into account the feedback that you received during class discussion and the written feedback the instructor provided on your initial submission. You may take a substantially different position on the readings, if you are no longer convinced of the position you originally argued and do not see trying to gerrymander a qualification as the best way to go. The rewrite may retrench and strengthen your original position or may take a substantially different position on the readings you addressed or may be on a totally different aspect of the day's readings (if you are willing to go with a first-run paper on a new issue). Any rewrite must, however, still be something original to you (not just a reprisal or comment on something we did/discussed/concluded during that class), and every rewrite must be systematically argued to support a central thesis, so it should not be a collection of small unrelated observations on various things.

A response paper is a 3-4 page paper that responds to a position paper. It is NOT just a shorter parallel position paper on the same readings; instead your job is to analyze and respond to the position paper’s argument with respect to those readings. The response paper must have a clearly stated thesis that responds to the position paper; that argument should be carefully developed and supported, and the implications and stakes of its thesis explicitly explained. Response papers must be posted on the D2L Discussion Board before noon on the Tuesday before they are due to be presented so all class members can read and reflect on them before our class discussion. There are no rewrite possibilities for this assignment.

All class participants must read and be ready to discuss in class the week’s position and response papers; they will form an important basis of discussion, but they do not substitute for you developing your own positions and comments on the readings and their issues.

Semester Project

Oral Proposal and Justification of Project

You will have an early, ungraded (though mandatory) opportunity to orally present and justify your project to the class and receive feedback. The presentation should essentially cover all the issues called for in the written project proposal that is described next; please read that description carefully and organize your short (about 3-minute) oral presentation to cover all the issues it raises. The more developed your proposal is at this stage, the more help we can be to you.

Project Proposal (See sample proposals and matching papers on our D2L site)

In this short (3-page) paper, you will propose a general thesis (NOT just a topic area) for your semester project and justify that thesis’s relationship and importance to issues of constituting communities and social controversy. The paper should identify and justify any “text” that will be
the basis of your analysis; do not choose a text to which you will not have constant access throughout the semester. It is not expect that you will have done a great deal of research yet, but you nevertheless must be able to indicate why the project is worth your and your readers’ time; the project is not only for self-enlightenment or to prove that you are smart but must also engage and provide illumination that others will find significant and that will make them smarter with respect to how rhetoric works in constituting communities and social controversy. So, don’t go with a whim, but interrogate what your project can and should do and why and then develop the best case. A face-to-face meeting with the professor must be scheduled for soon after the proposal is submitted and no later than Wednesday, April 18 (sooner is better). Of course, I would also be happy to meet with you earlier in the semester to discuss your ideas, but this one meeting is required.

By noon on Wednesday, April 25, you must submit a draft of your finished paper (i.e., all references, notes, evidence, and conclusion in place) to Turnitin. The papers will be redistributed so that everyone has a peer reviewer. The peer reviewers will submit their reviews by noon on Wed., May 2 via Turnitin.

**Project Final Paper and Presentation (See sample paper on our D2L site)**

The final project (20-25 pages, exclusive of notes and references) should approach a problem of constituting communities and/or social controversy from a rhetorical perspective. It should analyze a particular case in a way that advances our understanding of rhetoric’s role in constituting communities and social controversy more generally; in other words, we definitely will learn more about your case, but we must also learn something that stems from that analysis that is portable to other cases and that helps answer a more general puzzle related to our seminar’s theme and readings. The final paper should present a clear thesis and its importance beyond this case, introduce any text and justify its selection, situate the thesis and text theoretically and contextually, offer a thorough and directed rhetorical analysis of the significant aspects of the text, facilitate the readers’ understanding of your argument and its stakes, and point to some future possibilities for better understanding rhetorics of constituting communities and social controversy in light of this analysis. How you accomplish these goals is up to you, but the assigned readings offer a range of strong examples from various perspectives. See “Top Eleven Tips” and the Jordan, Olson, and Goldzwig essay (assigned for Feb. 15) for general guidelines on good rhetorical arguments. Good sample final papers and their project proposals are on our D2L site.

During the final class period, each student will present a 10-minute rehearsed, polished oral version of the essay’s argument, and then defend it. The idea is to provide the audience with a clear sense of your argument, its significance and implications, and how you proved it using key aspects of selected support, not to share all the details. Your written paper, presentation, and refinements and defense of your position at the presentation all are considered in your grade.

**Peer Review of Final Paper Draft**

Offering constructive feedback to help others do their best work is an important part of scholarship. Each student will do a thorough peer review of another student’s draft of the final paper with the intent of helping the original author best meet the requirements for and potential of
the project. Reviewers will be assigned on the afternoon of Wednesday, April 25 via Turnitin; peer reviews are due to Turnitin by noon on Wednesday, May 2.
Course Schedule

All students must access from D2L, read, and bring to class the week’s position and response papers as well as the assigned readings; students’ position and response papers will form an important basis of discussion, but they do not substitute for you developing your own analysis of and position on the readings.

Jan. 25  Developing a Rhetorical Perspective (Identification/Division & Confrontation)


“Pray the Devil Back to Hell” (we’ll watch this video during class)

Feb. 1  Developing a Rhetorical Perspective (Second and Third Personae)

Entire Syllabus

Sample Position and Response Papers on D2L Content Area under “Basic Course Information”


Feb. 8 Developing a Rhetorical Perspective (Leader Problems, Strategies, & Style)

**Be prepared to select position paper and response slots during class**


Richard Lanham, “A Brief Glossary of Rhetorical Terms”

Discussion Text: Martin Luther King, Jr., “I Have a Dream”

Feb. 15 Developing a Rhetorical Perspective (Payoffs of a Rhetorical Perspective)

**Due by noon today to Dropbox: Self-Analysis of Class Participation to Date.**

Review Course Standard 1 and reflect on your class participation to date. Write a one-page essay in which you propose the grade you honestly deserve for class participation thus far and defend your proposed grade with evidence from the classroom. If you have trouble finding enough evidence to make a case for a good grade, acknowledge that and use your essay to describe instead the specific steps you will take to improve. I will look at these essays and consider their persuasiveness and your follow-through in assessing your participation grade. We may repeat this exercise later in the semester, if that seems appropriate.


“Top Eleven Tips for Writing a Focused Argumentative Essay”


Sample Final Papers and Sample Project Proposals on D2L Content Area under “Basic Course Information”

Feb. 22 **Developing a Rhetorical Perspective (Constitutive Rhetoric & Competing Narratives)**


Feb. 29 **Developing a Rhetorical Perspective (Unexpected Functions of Speaking and Anti-Rhetorical Styles)**

**Orally Propose and Justify a Case Study for Your Final Project at Class**


Discussion Text: Stokely Carmichael, "Stokely Carmichael Explains Black Power to a Black Audience in Detroit"
Mar. 7  Rhetorical Dynamics of Controversy: Confrontation’s Roles and Expressions


Two Position Papers:

Paper Respondent 1:

Paper Respondent 2:

Mar. 14  Rhetorically Performing Objections - I


Two Position Papers:

Paper Respondent 1:

Paper Respondent 2:

Mar. 21  Spring Break – No Class
Mar. 28  **Rhetorically Performing Objections - II**


Two Position Papers:

Paper Respondent 1:

Paper Respondent 2:

Apr. 4  **Consummating, Deconstructing, and Reconstructing Identity through Rhetoric**

**Project Proposal Paper Due to D2L Dropbox by noon today; Schedule a Face-to-Face Meeting with the Professor soon (and no later than April 18)**


Two Position Papers:

Paper Respondent 1:

Paper Respondent 2:

Apr. 11  **Rhetorically Promoting Community in Controversy through Democratic Dissent, Ingenium, and Poetic Rhetoric**


Two Position Papers:

Paper Respondent 1:

Paper Respondent 2:

Apr. 18 Promoting Controversial Change as an Extension of Community


Two Position Papers:

Paper Respondent 1:

Paper Respondent 2:

Apr. 25 Constituting and Re-constituting Community

**Full draft of Final Paper due to Turnitin by 3:30 today. Peer reviewers assigned.


James Jasinski, “(Re)constituting Community through Narrative Argument:


Two Position Paper(s):

Paper Respondent 1:

Paper Respondent 2:

**May 2**

**Evolving Rhetorical Patterns in Social Controversies**

**Peer Reviews due to Dropbox by 3:30 today.**


*Depending on the number of students, we may need to do a few final paper presentations this week*

**May 9**

**Final Paper Presentations**

**All final papers presented are due to Turnitin by noon, Monday, May 14**  (Depending on the number of students, we may need to do a few final paper presentations the week before this session)

**May 18**

**Final Exam Period (no face-to-face meeting)**