English 831  |  Rhetorical Traditions
Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Spring 2017

Course Info: English 831, Section 001, #22773
Class Meeting Time & Location: M 2:30-5 in HSS 210
Professor: Dr. Matt Vetter
Office Location: HSS 50600
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday: 1-2:30pm; Tuesday, 1-3pm
Email: mvetter@iup.edu; Phone: 724-357-4935

Course Introduction
English 831: Rhetorical Traditions serves as a multicultural introduction to rhetoric, rhetorical theory, and rhetorical history. Rhetoric has been predominantly and historically identified as a Western (Greco-Roman) domain, one in which male voices figure/d prominently. This course seeks to challenge and disrupt such identification, through a re-visioning of rhetoric as it is practiced and understood by voices outside dominant discourses. To that end, while we will read some classical texts by figures such as Plato and Aristotle, we will take a comparative approach that examines rhetoric in ancient cultures beyond the Greek tradition. Furthermore, by exploring contemporary theories, practices, and applications, we will work to validate traditionally marginalized voices and identities. We will pay special attention to the ways in which feminist rhetorical practices allow us to rethink rhetoric, and the ways in which digital technologies are shaping new methods of rhetoric and communication. Finally, throughout the course we will ground our study of rhetoric in its application to the teaching of writing.

IUP Course Catalogue Description
Studies how rhetorical traditions influence the teaching of composition. Examines how cultural factors such as history, politics, ideology, gender, race, and ethnicity affect the composing process. Encourages students to think of composition as an open, multicultural event of imagination and social innovation.

Course Goals
- Identify, understand, and apply rhetorical histories to the practice and teaching of writing
- Understand the significance of and need for a multicultural and feminist approach to rhetoric and rhetorical history
- Be introduced to contemporary theories and practices of digital rhetoric
- Make connections between rhetorical theory and composition
- Conduct meaningful research on a rhetorical tradition, theory, or concept and compose an original argument about its implications for composition pedagogy
- Prepare and give a class lesson, and lead discussion on, a particular rhetorical theory
- Use digital tools to enhance communication and learning

Required Course Texts
Please purchase print copies of the following titles.

Additional readings (articles and book chapters) will be made available as scanned PDFs.

**Supporting Course Texts** (available in Vetter’s office)
*Do not buy these texts. They will be available in my office for individual projects.*

**Course Materials**
1 subject notebook for taking notes during class sessions
Digital tools: Google, Wikipedia, and Slack accounts
*Recommended*: Laptop or tablet for in-class digital work

**Grade Distribution**
Digital Commonplace Book – 15%
Rhetorical Theory Lesson – 15%
Wikipedia Edit – 20%
Researched Argument Proposal – 10%
Researched Argument – 40%

**Course Work**
**Digital Commonplace Book**: You will keep a digital commonplace book using Google docs to record and write out observations, responses, and useful notes and quotes from our weekly reading assignments. I may ask you to do a more focused writing occasionally, but for the most part, this assignment should be motivated by your own reading engagement and interest. Find a passage or a quote that is particularly compelling? Copy it into your commonplace book, with a short annotation about how it shapes your thinking about a topic. Be sure to include identifying information about the source.

**Rhetorical Theory Lesson**: For this assignment, you will prepare and present a brief, 15-20 minute lesson on some aspect of rhetoric or rhetorical theory. You might, for instance, provide an overview on
the five canons of rhetoric; summarize some of the main tenets of classical (Greco-Roman) rhetoric; or help define and explain critical rhetoric, among other possibilities. Your lesson should draw primarily from Timothy Borcher’s *Rhetorical Theory: An Introduction*, which we will share as a class, although other resources are certainly welcome as well. Thinking of this as an opportunity to teach your classmates about a particular aspect of rhetoric or rhetorical theory. To help present your lesson, you should prepare a handout and short activity for discussion or other class engagement.

**Wikipedia Edit:** We’ll work in small groups of 3 or 4 to update Wikipedia articles on subjects relating to rhetoric. A central goal for this project will be to address how the encyclopedia presents rhetoric within a primarily Western/male tradition, and to make edits which complicate this representation by adding content from alternate traditions. To prepare for this assignment, we will learn about Wikipedia conventions and policies, spend time reading from the encyclopedia, and practice writing in a neutral style appropriate to the genre. Each group will also write a brief (2-3pp.) reflective essay on the project.

**Researched Argument:** A traditional researched argument in which you explore a rhetorical tradition, theory, or concept – and apply it to the contemporary teaching of writing. I want to encourage everyone to examine an aspect of rhetoric outside the dominant, Greco-Roman tradition. We will discuss formal requirements related to length, genre, and research in class.

**Researched Argument Proposal:** A detailed proposal for the above project.

**Course Policies**

**Atmosphere:** I ask that everyone in our class practice civility, kindness, and collegiality. Let’s build a community that values constructive critique and mutual support of each other’s work, educational and cultural background, and individuality.

**Participation:** I expect a high level of participation in a graduate-level course. You should come prepared to every class session, having completed all assigned readings and writing assignments due for that session. Commonplace book assignments should be completed before every session. You should be ready to contribute through active listening and discussion.

**Attendance:** Attendance and punctuality are required in this course. I strongly recommend that you attend every session, but you may miss one class with no grade reduction. Health related issues or other documented excused will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Absences after the first one will result in a 5% reduction to your final course grade.

**Late Work:** I will only accept late work if we have talked and come to some agreement. If something is going on that is going to hinder you from finishing a project, please talk to me **before** the project is due.

**Communication:** I use e-mail to communicate important information about the class. You are responsible for checking your school account regularly. You should also check Slack often for announcements concerning reading and writing assignments. You may email me at mvetter@iup.edu. I will do my best to respond within 24 hours.

**Ethics:** I define plagiarism as deliberate cheating, whether by claiming another’s ideas or work as your own (fraud) or making up or falsifying information (fabrication) will result in a course grade of F and a report to Community Standards. You are at all times responsible for handling sources ethically by
acknowledging the author and source of directly borrowed ideas and language in your writing.

**Accessibility:** The Office of Advising and Testing, in Pratt Hall, room 216, offers evaluation and support for students with disabilities. Please let me know as soon as possible if you need an accommodation in order to work successfully in this class. This classroom strives for full accessibility, and it is not necessary for you to have an official accommodation letter from Disability Services in order to request changes to the classroom that will better serve your needs as a student, although you are encouraged to explore the possible supports they can offer if you are a student with a disability. Both able bodied students and students with disabilities are encouraged to suggest any improvements to the learning environment.

**Electronic Devices:** Laptops, smart phones, and tablets are encouraged in my classroom, and should be used to reference assigned readings, our blogs or other course activities.

**Writing Center:** Trained graduate tutors in the IUP Writing Center can help you at any stage in the writing process, from developing a topic to drafting and revising. They can help you to document sources, understand your professor's feedback, and more. The Writing Center has three locations: For walk-in tutoring (no appointments), visit Room 218 in Eicher Hall, or visit the Satellite Writing Center in the Library, first floor. You can also make an appointment for an online tutoring session (at least 24 hours in advance). The Writing Center’s website contains a link for making appointments for online sessions, or call 724-357-3029.

**IUP Sexual Violence Policy:** Indiana University of Pennsylvania is committed to maintaining a learning and work environment that is free from sexual harassment and sexual violence. Acts of sexual harassment or sexual violence, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking, seriously undermine the atmosphere of trust and respect that is essential to a university community. Moreover, sexual harassment and sexual violence are legally prohibited and will not be tolerated. To report a complaint of sexual harassment or sexual violence, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking, against a student and discuss options, contact a Campus Security Authority coordinator; the Office of Student Conduct, 307 Pratt Hall, at 724-357-1264; or the Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator. If the student does not want to proceed with a student conduct complaint or police report, the Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator will still investigate to determine what occurred and take appropriate steps to resolve the situation, mindful of the University's obligation to provide a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students.

**Title IX:** In order to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and guidance from the Office for Civil Rights, the University requires faculty members to report incidents of sexual violence shared by students to the University's Title IX Coordinator. The only exceptions to the faculty member's reporting obligation are when incidents of sexual violence are communicated by a student during a classroom discussion, in a writing assignment for a class, or as part of a University-approved research project. Faculty members are obligated to report sexual violence or any other abuse of a student who was, or is, a child (a person under 18 years of age) when the abuse allegedly occurred to the Department of Human Services (1-800-932-0313) and University Police (724-357-2141). Information regarding the reporting of sexual violence and the resources that are available to victims of sexual violence is set forth at: [http://www.iup.edu/socialequity/policies/title-ix/](http://www.iup.edu/socialequity/policies/title-ix/)

**Course Schedule** *Subject to change according to class needs*

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<th>Readings/Assignments due</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/23</td>
<td>Introduction and Icebreakers; Syllabus Review; Rhetorical Narratives (in-class writing); Google and Slack Sign-ups</td>
<td>Read: Syllabus</td>
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<td>1/30</td>
<td>Classical Rhetoric – Review and discuss Bizzell and Herzberg; Plato and Aspasia; Rhetorical Theory Lessons 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Read: Bizzell and Herzberg’s “Classical Rhetoric: Introduction”; Selections from <em>Phaedrus</em> and <em>Gorgias</em> dialogues; Selections from Aspasia Due: Commonplace Book Entry</td>
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<td>2/6</td>
<td>Classical Rhetoric – Continued Rhetorical Theory Lessons 3 &amp; 4; Pedagogy Applications</td>
<td>Selections from Aristotle’s <em>Rhetoric</em>; Selections from Cicero; Fleming, “Rhetoric and Argumentation” Due: Commonplace Book Entry</td>
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<td>2/13</td>
<td>Introduction to Comparative Rhetoric; Rhetoric in Societies without Writing; Rhetorical Theory Lessons 5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>Read: Part I in Kennedy, <em>Comparative Rhetoric</em>; Mao, “Reflective Encounters: Illustrating Comparative Rhetoric” Due: Commonplace Book Entry</td>
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<td>2/20</td>
<td>Rhetoric in Ancient Literate Societies; Global Rhetorics; Rhetorical Theory Lesson 7 &amp; 8</td>
<td>Read: Part II in Kennedy, <em>Comparative Rhetoric</em>; Hesford, “Global Turns and Cautions in Rhetoric and Composition Studies”; Baca, “Rethinking Composition, 500 Years Later” Due: Commonplace Book Entry</td>
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<td>2/27</td>
<td>Rhetorical Listening; Cultural Rhetorics; Identity</td>
<td>Read: Ratcliffe, <em>Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness</em> Due: Commonplace Book Entry</td>
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<td>3/6</td>
<td>Contemporary Applications of Feminist Theory in Composition and Rhetoric; Rhetorical Theory Lesson 11&amp; 12; Introduce Researched Argument Assignment</td>
<td>Read: Schell and Rawson, <em>Rhetorica in Motion: Feminist Rhetorical Methods and Methodologies</em>, Part I Due: Commonplace Book Entry</td>
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<td>3/13</td>
<td>Spring Break – No Class</td>
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<td>3/20</td>
<td>Feminist Theory Continued; Rhetorical Theory Lessons 13 &amp; 14</td>
<td>Read: Schell and Rawson, <em>Rhetorica in Motion: Feminist Rhetorical Methods and Methodologies</em>, Part II Due: Commonplace Book Entry</td>
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<td>3/27</td>
<td>Multicultural Traditions and the Teaching of Composition; Pedagogy Applications; Rhetorical Theory Lesson 15; Introduce Wikipedia Project;</td>
<td>Read: Horner, Lu, and Matsuda, <em>Cross-Language Relations in Composition</em>, Part I Due: Commonplace Book Entry</td>
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<td>4/10</td>
<td>Digital Rhetoric;</td>
<td>Read: Selections from Eyman, “Digital</td>
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<td>4/17</td>
<td>Who’s Missing? Class Collaboratively Selects Reading; Bizzell and Jarratt;</td>
<td><strong>Due:</strong> Commonplace Book Entry; Training Module “Evaluating Articles and Sources”</td>
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<td>Rhetorical Theory Lesson: Wikipedia Training Review;</td>
<td><strong>Read:</strong> Bizzell and Jarratt, “Rhetorical Traditions, Pluralized Cannons, Relevant History, and other Disputed Terms”</td>
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<td>4/24</td>
<td>Wikipedia Editing; In-class Draft Workshop &amp; Peer Review of Research Projects</td>
<td><strong>Due:</strong> Research Project Draft: Wikipedia Training Module “Peer Review”</td>
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<td>5/1</td>
<td>Research Projects due; Brief Presentations and Party</td>
<td><strong>Due:</strong> Researched Project; Final Wikipedia Edits &amp; Reflective Essay</td>
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**Rhetorical Theory Lessons: Approved Topics**
(You may also propose an alternate topic for approval)

- The 5 Canons of Rhetoric
- Sophistic/Second Sophistic Rhetoric
- Rhetoric in the Middle Ages
- Dramatism/Dramatistic Theory
- Critical Rhetoric
- Gendered Rhetorical Theories
- Afrocentric Rhetorical Theories
- Chinese Theories of Rhetoric
- Native American Rhetoric

- Rhetoric, Media, & Technology
- Visual Rhetoric
- Postmodern Rhetoric
- Cultural Rhetorical Studies
- Identity Rhetorics
- Materialist/Object-Oriented Rhetoric
- Sonic Rhetorics
- Social Justice Rhetorics
- Rhetorics of Place / Spatial Theory
- Medical/Health Rhetorics