

# English 831 | Rhetorical Traditions

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Summer I, 2017

**Course Info:** English 831, Section 011, #30597

**Class Meeting Time:** M,T,W,R 10:45-1:15

**Class Location:** HSS Bldg., Room 113

**Professor:** Dr. Matt Vetter

**Office Location:** HSS 50600

**Office Hours:** Monday, Wednesday: 1:30-3:30

**Email:** [mvetter@iup.edu](mailto: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, we will take a comparative approach that examines rhetoric in ancient cultures beyond the Greek tradition. Our historical method will not assume a linear progression of rhetorical history, and we will not attempt to undertake a comprehensive historical survey. Rather, we will employ what Krista Ratcliffe terms “historical eavesdropping” to explore the ways in which contemporary notions of writing and rhetoric are haunted by ancient/classical traditions. By exploring contemporary theories, practices, and applications, furthermore, 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. 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
- 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
- Understand and practice secondary, theoretical research
- Prepare and give a class lesson, and lead discussion on, a particular rhetorical theory
- Became familiar with contemporary rhetorical theories

## Course Materials

1 subject notebook for taking notes during class sessions; Laptop or tablet for in-class digital work; Google Account for Digital Commonplace Book assignment and other in-class activities.

## Required Course Texts

*Please purchase print copies of the following titles.*

Borchers, Timothy. *Rhetorical Theory: An Introduction*. Waveland, 2011.

Kennedy, George A. *Comparative Rhetoric: An Historical and Cross-Cultural Introduction*. Oxford U P, 1997.

Ratcliffe, Krista. *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness*. Southern Illinois U P, 2005.

Schell, Eileen E., and K. J. Rawson, eds. *Rhetorica in Motion: Feminist Rhetorical Methods and Methodologies*. U of Pittsburgh P, 2010.

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

## 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. Finally, I will also ask you to develop at least one discussion question for every commonplace book entry, to be addressed in our in-class discussions. In this way, we will attempt to bridge your reflections and notes from the commonplace books and our in-class discussions and interactions.

**Rhetorical Theory Lesson:** For this assignment, you will prepare and present a brief, 20-30 minute lesson on some aspect of rhetoric or rhetorical theory. You might, for instance, provide an overview on sophistic rhetoric; explore rhetoric in the middle ages; or help define and explain critical rhetoric, among other possibilities. Your lesson should draw primarily from Timothy Borchers'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.

**Final Research Project:** A theoretical, researched argument in which you explore a rhetorical tradition, theory, or concept that intersects with our course material – either our main course texts and/or the many rhetorical theory lessons you all have contributed. (You may choose, for instance, to build off the work you have done in your rhetorical theory lesson.) You should use this project as an opportunity to do meaningful and significant work that intersects or informs your own scholarly interests or goals. When imagining your project, please target a specific journal or conference related to rhetoric, rhetoric and composition, or language. Conference projects should include a proposal (following conference-specific guidelines), presentation (.ppt or some other slideshow document) and 2,500-3,000 word manuscript. Journal article projects should include a brief cover letter to the editor of the targeted journal and a manuscript in line with the journal's recommended guidelines for length (typically 5,000-7,500 words). See additional details in the full assignment, attached to this syllabus.

## 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 D2L often for announcements concerning reading and writing assignments. You may email me at [mvetter@iup.edu](mailto: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/social-equity/policies/title-ix/>

## **Contract Grading\***

At this point in your educational career, you are quickly transitioning from student to professional, and as such, my goal in this class is to provide opportunities for you to be independent, take risks, and explore the course content. I also want to facilitate an inquiry-driven, egalitarian classroom community. Given this framework, we use "Contract Grading" in this course.

The contract is simple: everyone in this course begins with an A, and maintains that grade as long as *all of the course requirements are met*. The terms of the contract are as follows: high quality, Ph.D. level writing and thinking on all projects; on time submissions of work and drafts; consistent, on-time class attendance; and regular contributions to the classroom community. This is not to say your work needs to be perfect, rather, I want you to make a substantive effort on drafts and projects in this class. Show me that you are thinking and working through these issues like a professional.

If I feel you are not meeting the standards and expectations of the course and are doing sub-par work, you are "breaking the contract." I will assess your work informally in the course using a "check" system. Check indicates that you are meeting minimum standards (e.g. B work). Check plus indicates that you are exceeding standards (e.g. A work). Check minus indicates that you are not meeting standards (and more than one check minus indicates that you are breaking the contract). If you are breaking the contract, I will discuss my concerns with you, and I will use an alternative grading system, as described below:

- Contributions to Class Discussion (10%)

- Digital Commonplace Book (20%)
- Rhetorical Theory Lesson (20%)
- Final Research Project (50%)

\*I would like to credit Drs. Dana Driscoll and Curtis Porter for the language of this grading contract.

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

Date	Topic/Activity	Readings/Assignments due
<b>Week 1</b>		
5/31	Introduction and Icebreakers; Syllabus Review & Major Assignments Review; Defining Rhetoric; RTL Sign-ups	<b>Read:</b> Syllabus; Ch. 1 in Borchers, "Defining Rhetoric and Rhetorical Theory"
6/1	Online Module: Introduction to Comparative Rhetoric; Rhetoric in Societies without Writing	<b>Read:</b> Part I in Kennedy, <i>Comparative Rhetoric</i> <b>Due:</b> Commonplace book entry; Discussion board post
<b>Week 2</b>		
6/5	Rhetoric in Ancient Literate Societies; Critiques of Comparative Rhetoric; Rhetorical Theory Lesson	<b>Read:</b> Part II in Kennedy, <i>Comparative Rhetoric</i> ; Mao, "Reflective Encounters: Illustrating Comparative Rhetoric" (PDF) <b>Due:</b> Commonplace Book Entry
6/6	Characteristics of Classical Rhetoric; 2 Rhetorical Theory Lessons	<b>Read:</b> Ch. 2 in Borchers, "Rhetoric as Persuasion" <b>Due:</b> Commonplace Book Entry
6/7	Classical Rhetoric, Continued; Rhetorical Theory Lesson	<b>Read:</b> Selections from Plato's <i>Phaedrus</i> (PDF); Selections from <i>Aspasia</i> (PDF) <b>Due:</b> Commonplace Book Entry
6/8	Classical Rhetoric, Continued; Rhetorical Theory Lesson	<b>Read:</b> Selections from Plato's <i>Gorgias</i> (PDF)
<b>Week 3</b>		
6/12	Classical Rhetoric, Continued; Rhetorical Theory Lesson	<b>Read:</b> Selections from Aristotle's <i>Rhetoric</i> (PDF) <b>Due:</b> Commonplace Book Entry
6/13	Rhetorical Listening; Cultural Rhetoric; Identity; Rhetorical Theory Lesson; Review Final Research Project assignment	<b>Read:</b> Ratcliffe, Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2 of <i>Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness</i> <b>Due:</b> Commonplace Book Entry
6/14	Rhetorical Listening, Continued; Rhetorical Theory Lesson;	<b>Read:</b> Ratcliffe, Chapters 3-5 of <i>Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness</i> <b>Due:</b> Commonplace Book Entry
6/15	Contemporary Applications of Feminist Rhetorical Theory; Rhetorical Theory Lesson; Proposal Workshop	<b>Read:</b> Schell and Rawson, <i>Rhetorica in Motion: Feminist Rhetorical Methods and Methodologies</i> , Part I <b>Due:</b> Commonplace Book Entry, Final Project Proposal

<b>Week 4</b>		
6/19	Feminist Theory Continued; Rhetorical Theory Lesson;	<b>Read:</b> Schell and Rawson, <i>Rhetorica in Motion: Feminist Rhetorical Methods and Methodologies</i> , Part II <b>Due:</b> Commonplace Book Entry
6/20	Individual Conferences (Optional)	Individual Conferences (Optional)
6/21	Research Project Peer Review	<b>Due:</b> Research Project Draft
6/22	Research Projects due; Brief Presentations and Party	<b>Due:</b> Research Projects

### Rhetorical Theory Lessons: Approved Topics

(You may also propose an alternate topic for approval)

Sophistic/Second Sophistic Rhetoric	Rhetoric, Media, & Technology
Rhetoric in the Middle Ages	Visual Rhetoric
Dramatism/Dramatistic Theory	Postmodern Rhetoric
Critical Rhetoric	Cultural Rhetorical Studies
Gendered Rhetorical Theories	Identity Rhetorics
Afrocentric Rhetorical Theories	Materialist/Object-Oriented Rhetoric
Chinese Theories of Rhetoric	Sonic Rhetorics
Native American Rhetoric	Social Justice Rhetorics
Rhetorics of Place	Rhetorics of Place / Spatial Theory

## Major Course Assignment: Researched Argument

A researched argument in which you explore a rhetorical tradition, theory, or concept that intersects with our course material – either our main course texts and/or the many rhetorical theory lessons you all have contributed. You should use this project as an opportunity to do meaningful and significant work that intersects or informs your own scholarly interests or goals. Accordingly, this assignment is broadly defined, but you might consider the following research roles:

1. Critically analyzing the “dominant” rhetorical tradition and its implications for pedagogy or culture
2. Comparing rhetorical traditions across cultures
3. Envisioning a new method/historiography for comparative rhetoric (or perhaps expanding an existing method through application)
4. Engaging and exploring a rhetorical tradition or theory that has been neglected by the discipline and considering its implications for composition pedagogy
5. Reimagining or revising approaches to understanding and teaching the “tradition” or “history” of rhetoric
6. Applying a particular theoretical approach or method for rhetorical criticism to a text, technology, situation, etc.

Your project should demonstrate the following:

- engagement and understanding of our course materials and major topics
- a significant research component
- organized, purposeful writing that demonstrates comprehensive synthesis and analysis of your subject
- careful consideration and representation of disciplinary conversations of your topic
- an original and well-supported argument
- appropriateness in terms of genre, research, and stylistic conventions for the intended venue (conference or journal)

When imagining your project, please target a specific journal or conference related to rhetoric, rhetoric and composition, or language, and then craft a proposal and final project that engages with that specific venue.

**Formal Expectations:** The length and format of your project should match the expectations of the particular venue you are targeting. Conference projects should include a proposal (following conference-specific guidelines), presentation (.ppt or some other slideshow document) and 2,500-3,000 word manuscript. Journal article projects should include a brief cover letter to the editor of the targeted journal and a manuscript in line with the journal's recommended guidelines for length (typically 5,000-7,500 words).

### Journals

*Present Tense*

*Enculturation: A Journal of Rhetoric, Writing, and Culture*

*Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*

*RhetNet*

*Rhetoric Review*

*Rhetorica*

*Rhetoric Society Quarterly*

Note that journals dedicated to Rhetoric and Composition also publish work devoted to rhetoric. See a full list of Rhet/Comp journals at <http://wpacouncil.org/rcjournals>.

### Conferences

American Society for the

History of Rhetoric

Rhetoric Society of America

Feminisms and Rhetorics

Thomas R. Watson

Conference on Rhetoric

Modern Language

Association

Conference on College

Composition and

Communication

Computers and Writing

### Proposal Guidelines

You will write a proposal to help guide your research and to give us an opportunity to talk one-on-one about your project. Your project proposal should include the following elements, and should be a minimum of 1000 words in length (not counting the Annotated Bibliography section, which should include at least 5 sources).

- Description of the project, its significance, and the central research question(s)
- Brief summary of the relevant literature, and the relationship of your proposed research to that literature. What is the current conversation, and how does your question fit into that conversation?
- Summary of the conceptual or theoretical framework or research methodology
- Description of the genre you plan to produce and the venue it will be published in (i.e. conference or journal)

- Preliminary Annotated Bibliography of sources. Your annotations may be informal and for your own use.