COURSE DESCRIPTION

Around 350 BCE in Athens, Aristotle identified rhetoric as “the faculty of discovering in any given case the available means of persuasion.” In 1950 in the U.S., shortly after the end of WWII, philosopher Kenneth Burke defined rhetoric as “the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents.” And though Aristotle and Burke wrote in extremely different political and social contexts, these two thinkers both argued that rhetoric, the study and the practice of effective discourse, was central to how their peers lived, governed, organized, and influenced the future. This semester in English 305, we’ll investigate what rhetoric is, where you find it in the world around you, and what makes it so powerful.

Our studies will focus on three dimensions of rhetoric:
1. Rhetorical theory, where you’ll grapple with the complexities of concepts such as audience, exigence, identification, public sphere, and narrative, which scholars have formulated to make sense of how rhetoric works;
2. Rhetorical practice, where you’ll learn by doing and by noticing what you do when you use rhetoric in your everyday life; and
3. Rhetorical criticism, where you’ll analyze through close reading the way arguments function in spoken, written, and visual texts.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course students should be able to:

✓ identify and use major rhetorical terms and concepts.
✓ understand and apply a variety of rhetorical theories to specific cases.
✓ analyze texts and contexts to support arguments about rhetorical motives and effects.
✓ produce arguments showing awareness of available means of persuasion.
✓ speak in genres appropriate to the discipline of the primary subject matter of this course.

Because this course is designated Speaking Intensive, and because the quality of our in-class discussion is crucial to your learning, several assignments are designed to ensure your attentive reading of assigned texts, and we will spend time early in the semester laying ground rules for effective participation. To create a classroom that functions as an intellectual community—as a space where we share ideas, listen to each other, take positions, articulate reasons, and challenge each other to reconsider and revise our original positions—we’ll all have to work together.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Richard Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*.

+ Articles and essays available on Blackboard. **All readings must be printed** and brought to class. Instead of spending $30-$50 on textbooks for this course, you are required to add sufficient funds to your printing account to print all required readings.
+ Sturdy notebook for your Reading Responses and your in-class writing.
TEACHING METHODS

To enable you to achieve these objectives, this course will make frequent use of discussion, in-class writing, and small-group activities designed to engage you deeply in thinking through the terms of rhetoric. Lectures will be brief and infrequent; for the majority of each class you will be expected to ask questions, pose answers, consider alternatives, and otherwise engage actively with course materials and with one another.

In a successful course, the professor and students take on complementary responsibilities.

My responsibilities:
- to prepare for each class meeting by posing engaging questions and interpretations of the texts under discussion, and to aid your learning by bringing in additional resources and information.
- to foster a respectful and intellectual climate for discussion.
- to listen closely to your questions and insights.
- to respond thoughtfully and critically to your writing and speaking.
- to construct activities and assignments that challenge you to develop your critical reading, writing, and speaking skills.

Your responsibilities:
- to prepare for each class meeting by reading the assigned texts thoughtfully.
- to articulate your own questions and interpretations to enrich class discussions.
- to listen closely and respectfully to your peers’ questions and insights.
- to be awake, engaged, and focused on class activities from 12:30 to 1:45 each meeting.
- to complete in-class and out-of-class activities thoughtfully and completely to ensure you are taking advantage of every opportunity to improve as a thinker, speaker, and writer.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Because this class carries a SI marker, you will speak—a lot—during most class meetings, will complete frequent informal activities out-of-class, and will complete multiple assignments demanding analysis, argumentation, research, and oral communication skills. All assignments must be completed to earn credit for the course. Informal work will be evaluated according to how fully, thoughtfully, and productively you engage in class discussions and activities. Formal assignments will be evaluated according to assignment-specific rubrics; you should use these rubrics as you prepare your writing, share it with your classmates, receive feedback, and revise.

Grades will be assigned to major activities as follows:

- Reading Response Notebook (20 pts.)
- Rhetorical Term Presentation (15 pts.)
- Autobiographical Argument (20 pts.)
- Collective Rhetoric Research Paper and Presentation (25 pts.)
- Active Engagement (20 pts.)

Final letter grades will be determined by the following scale:

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92.5-100pts.</td>
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ASSIGNMENTS

In addition to out-of-class and informal assignments, the following formal assignments are required:

Reading Response Notebook (20 entries, 20pts.)
Everyone will be asked to keep a notebook in which you respond in writing to most of the readings on the syllabus. This activity is meant to ensure your thoughtful preparation for class discussion, to help you participate verbally by sharing your writings during discussion, and to ensure your thoughtful engagement with dense, challenging readings. Consequently, your responses must be written before class discussions or shortly after—not in a flurry just before turning in your notebook for credit.

Each Reading Response entry should be roughly one to two single-spaced, handwritten notebook pages (though if your handwriting is very large, you might have to write more pages to sufficiently address the questions below). Ten entries must be completed by midterm, and 20 total are required for the semester. You don’t have to write about every text; you can skip a text or two, but not many more, in order to write 20 entries for the entire semester.

Each of your reading response entries must answer at least THREE of these questions:
1. How would you summarize the main points of this reading?
2. What one or two sentences would you consider the most important?
3. What are the key concepts in this reading, and how would you explain them?
4. What bothers you most in this reading?
5. What seems useful to you in this reading?
6. In what ways does this reading support, contradict, or otherwise connect to other readings?
7. What questions does this reading prompt you to ask?

I will collect Reading Response notebooks in groups periodically throughout the semester—usually without warning, so you need to bring your notebook to every class meeting. Each Reading Response entry must be dated, and I consider it a breach of academic honesty to misrepresent the date on which you’ve composed these entries. Some of your entries can be written shortly after a class meeting if our in-class discussions have helped you make better sense of a challenging text, but it is not acceptable to write your entries weeks after a discussion or to misrepresent the date you’re writing in your notebook.

Rhetorical Term Presentation (3-5 minutes; 15pts.)
This assignment asks you to choose a rhetorical term from a list I’ll provide, to find an example of this term in action somewhere in the world around you, and to share that example with your classmates in order to help them make sense of the term you’ve chosen. You might find your term in use in a debate over the dinner table, in a segment on The Daily Show, or in the pages of The Carolinian. You’ll sign up in advance for a particular term and a particular day for sharing your presentation; your goal will be to help your classmates gain greater understanding of an unfamiliar term through your informal oral presentation. Using classroom technology (like the document camera or PC projector) to present your example is optional, not required. After delivering your presentation, you’ll turn in any script and/or notes you used to prepare.

Autobiographical Argument (3-5 minutes; 20pts.)
After analyzing how autobiographical narratives function in a range of arguments in Unit 2, you will each present an argument of your own that makes effective use of self-representation in some way. You must devise a rhetorical situation in which your argument might be effective; that is, you must decide what audience, purpose, exigence, and constraints will shape your 3-5 minute presentation, and you must craft your argument according to those parameters. Your peers in the class will take on the audience role you
define for them and will participate in evaluating your persuasiveness in your chosen context. After
delivering your presentation, you will turn in all your notes, scripts, and drafts, as well as the rhetorical
situation you have devised to guide your argument.

**Collective Rhetoric Paper and Presentation**
(5-7 pages + 5-7 minutes; 25pts.)
As we examine civil rights rhetoric in Unit 3, you will each research the rhetorical strategies employed by any
rhetorical collective, historical or contemporary, of your choice. You’ll undertake research (ethnographic,
library-based, web-based, historical, archival, etc.) to gather information about your chosen collective,
including its aims, audiences, actions, and the rhetorical strategies it employed to enact change, and will
assemble this research into two forms: a 5-7 page paper that analyzes their strategies using the rhetorical
vocabulary you’ve developed over the semester, and a 5-7 minute presentation to your classmates that shares
your most interesting insights.

**Active Engagement in All Class Activities**
(20pts.)
Your engagement, attention, and participation in all class activities—including individual, small group, and
large group writing exercises and discussions, as well as activities requiring you to do out-of-class reading or
research—are required. Your daily in-class writing should be kept in your Reading Response notebook, so I
can review your in-class work periodically. Absences, inattentiveness, lack of engagement, disrespectful
classroom behavior, and distracted or halfhearted participation will all prevent a student from earning full
credit for engagement.

**ATTENDANCE**
All students are permitted two absences without penalty. For these two absences, no explanation is required,
and indeed, I prefer not to hear explanations because my assumption when you are absent is that you have
good reasons for being so. All absences beyond the second will result in deductions from your final
participation grade. Furthermore, in-class writing cannot be made up, and assignments are still due, even if
you are absent, so you should arrange for a classmate to turn in required assignments in your absence. You
should also contact a classmate to learn what we covered and what you should complete before the next
class; though I will happily discuss the course with you during my office hours, I will not respond to emails
that ask me “What did we do in class?” I encourage you to jot down the phone number of a nearby student
right this moment so you can contact that person for information if you miss a class meeting.

Any enrolled student who is absent for the first two class meetings or who misses three classes before January
22 will be dropped from the course. Any student missing eight or more classes for any reason will be dropped
from the course; prior to the Course Withdrawal deadline, this will result in a grade of “W” for the course;
after that deadline, this will result in a grade of “WF” for the course.

Exceptions/Addenda to this attendance policy: Absences for required religious observances and for
participation in required varsity athletic events are generally excused. If you participate in a varsity athletic
program, or if religious observances might cause you to be absent at some point during the semester, speak
with me at least two weeks in advance of the absence so we can work out a plan for your participation.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**
Each student is required to abide by the Academic Integrity Policy on all work throughout the course.
Plagiarism is a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy. Violations of academic integrity are serious academic
offenses that will not be tolerated in this class. I expect every student to review the guidelines and list of
violations at [http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu](http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu) and to abide by the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy. As you
will see, violations include but are not limited to plagiarism.
A person commits plagiarism when he or she represents someone else's words or ideas as his or her own. In writing your papers, you must take care to avoid plagiarizing the words or ideas of others. When you use sources such as books, web pages, articles, or primary documents in your writing, you must identify them to your reader. If you quote a source directly, you must put the borrowed material in quotation marks and include a proper citation. If you take an idea from another source but put it in your own words (i.e. paraphrase it), you must still give proper credit to the source. Please use MLA style documentation to document any sources used in written work, unless I have asked you to use another documentation style. Be scrupulous about documenting, quoting, and citing your sources even in first drafts. A draft that has been read by your instructor or classmates has not been ‘checked’ and given the okay; it is always your responsibility to make sure you understand and have successfully followed rules of citation and documentation in all your writing.

All suspected violations of the academic integrity policy will be reported to the Dean of Students, and proven violations will result in serious repercussions. In my classes, a single violation of academic integrity is grounds for failure of the entire course. Repeated offenses can cause you to be expelled from the University. You can avoid these consequences by 1. never deliberately misleading your instructors or being dishonest in your writing, and 2. asking for clarification about any rules or standards for source-use that you do not understand. If you are ever unsure about how to cite a source or whether an act would be considered plagiarism, please ask me about it before you turn in your work.

ACCOMMODATIONS
If you are registered with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (formerly the Office of Disability Services), I welcome you to talk with me about approved academic accommodations as early in the semester as possible. If you are not registered with OARS but believe you would benefit from their services, please contact that office through their website at http://ods.uncg.edu/ or by phone at 336-334-5440.

DISRUPTIONS AND DISTRACTIONS
I expect all participants in this class to engage thoughtfully and respectfully with each other, and I will intervene and, if necessary, remove from class any student who persists in disrespectful or disruptive behavior. I ask that you silence and stow your technological gadgets for the entirety of the class meeting, that you actively listen and maintain respectful conversation even when others’ opinions differ strongly from your own, and that you refrain from any use of derogatory or abusive language.

POLICY ON LATE WORK AND EXTENSIONS
Your assignments should always be posted to Blackboard and printed and brought to class by the beginning of class on the due date. Generally, because you’ll be delivering your assignments orally in this class, you must be present to receive credit for your work, and make-up presentations or extensions on assignments will not be granted, though you’re welcome to discuss your situation with me if you anticipate needing accommodations for some reason.

Informal, in-class writing cannot be made up; this writing generally serves its purpose during that class period. If you will be absent on a day when a workshop is scheduled, you should try to make arrangements with classmates, on your own, to both receive and provide feedback outside of class in order to receive credit for the workshop. There’s no guarantee your classmates will be able to accommodate you.
For all formal spoken and written assignments, I require an electronic and a printed copy to provide some flexibility: if you have turned in either your printed copy or your electronic copy before the deadline, your assignment won’t be considered late, though I’ll also expect you to turn in both versions as soon as possible (for instance, by posting the electronic copy when you’re next at your computer, or by bringing the printed copy to our next class meeting). If you must turn in an assignment late, expect to lose 1 point for each day it is late. Thus, an assignment due at 12:30pm on Tuesday will lose 1 point if it is turned in any time between that deadline and 12:30pm Wednesday, and another point every 24 hours afterward.

**Office Hours**

I am available for drop-in appointments during my office hours each week: Tuesday afternoons from 3:30 to 4:30 and Wednesday afternoons from 2:00 to 3:00. You can also schedule a particular time to meet with me during these office hours through Starfish, in Blackboard. I’m also happy to make additional appointments outside of office hours; please talk to me to schedule an appointment if you cannot meet during office hours. **Extra Credit Opportunity:** To encourage you to visit my office hours, I’ll award an entire percentage point to anyone who stops by my office before the end of January to introduce yourself and say hello.

**Blackboard**

You will use Blackboard extensively during this course to talk to your groupmates, to sign up for conferences with me, to print copies of handouts, and to get feedback on your writing. I will use Blackboard to contact you and to post course announcements and reading assignments. For these reasons, check the course page frequently—in particular, the day before each class period.

**Resources**

1. **Your peers** in this class are a crucial resource. Take advantage of your classmates’ varied experience and expertise, and listen attentively to their writing and to their responses to your writing. You can learn a great deal from others’ strengths, struggles, and different approaches to similar writing tasks.

2. As a writer and instructor with a great deal of experience reading and responding to student writing, I will be an important resource for you this term. I spend several hours a week in my office specifically to talk to you all about your work, your concerns, and your ideas. Please take advantage of my **office hours**, and email me to set up an appointment if you cannot come see me during office hours.

3. The **University Speaking Center** is an excellent resource providing free, one-on-one instruction with trained speaking consultants who offer feedback and guidance on a range of speaking skills. Consult the Speaking Center’s website at [http://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/](http://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/) to find more information, and call 256-1346 or stop by the Speaking Center at MHRA 3211 in order to schedule an appointment, especially if you feel that anxiety about speaking is preventing you from participating fully in this class.

4. The **University Writing Center** is another excellent resource whose services you should use while you’re at UNCG. The Writing Center provides free, individual writing conferences with trained writing tutors. Visit [http://www.uncg.edu/eng/writingcenter/](http://www.uncg.edu/eng/writingcenter/) for more information; call 334-3125 or stop by the Writing Center at MHRA 3211 to schedule an appointment. Tutors will not proofread drafts, but they will help you formulate and organize your ideas and strengthen your arguments, at any stage of the writing process.