

## DRAFT

CMS 390P: Rhetorical Criticism (07125) Fall 2007  
Tuesdays 3:30-6:30, CMA 3.130  
Professor Dana Cloud  
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This course surveys a range of critical approaches to public discourse in the rhetorical tradition, beginning with the literary criticism of oratory and proceeding through neo-Aristotelian criticism, close textual analysis, ideology criticism, Burkean criticism, cultural and narrative criticism, feminist criticism, Marxist criticism, queer criticism, and the criticism of “non-traditional” public artifacts like images, museums, and memorials. We will engage a series of debates in the field including the controversy in the 1970s over the political stance of the critic, the controversy between modernist and postmodernist modes of critical engagement, and the recent discussions regarding how rhetoricians should engage imagistic texts.

Primarily, however, this is a course in critical writing. Theoretical perspectives offer shifting lenses through which to ask questions about public discourse, but this course requires answers to such questions in the form of nuanced, thoughtful, and faithful attention to the rhetorical artifacts under consideration. You should approach each reading with the aim of discovering what questions a critic working from this perspective would ask of the texts surrounding her and what methods or means the perspective offers the critic in the process of discovery. This is not to say that criticism should be segregated from theory. The best rhetorical theories are those substantiated through critical experience, and theories in turn shape the ways in which we look at the world. In this course, your writing should start with the text, not the theory. You should become so closely familiar with the text(s) at hand that your engagement will suggest appropriate theoretical lenses. The questions driving your writing should be about the rhetorical acts themselves.

Criticism has been and remains at the heart of modern rhetorical studies. At its best, it becomes a rhetorical intervention itself that circulates and comments upon the worlds of politics and culture.

### Required Texts:

Roderick P. Hart and Suzanne Daughton, *Modern Rhetorical Criticism* 3e (Allyn & Bacon, 2004).

Carl Burgchardt, *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism* (Strata, 2005).

Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* (Wisconsin, 1978).

Additional course packet at Jenn’s copies and on Blackboard.

### Requirements:

- regular, careful reading and participation in discussion including assigned presentations and debates (20%)
- two short critical papers from different perspectives on the same artifacts (20% each)
- final seminar paper, an extended piece of criticism crafted of clear, precise, artful, organized, edited, proofread, and question-driven prose (40%)

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Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

September 4	Course Introduction: Why Do Criticism? Hart Chapters 1-2 *Jasinski, *McKerrow & St. John	
September 11	A History of Criticism The Rhetorical Act <b>Text selected for papers 1-2</b>	Hart 2-5, Black CB: Wichelns, Wrage, Black (Rhetorical Criticism)
September 18	Language as Rhetorical Action Hart 7-8 and Close Textual Analysis	CB: Leff & Mohrmann *Exchange between Campbell and Hill
September 25	Ideolog(y)ical Criticism and the Critical Turn <b>Guest Speaker:</b> <b>Philip Wander, Loyola Marymount University</b>	CB: Black (Persona), *Wander "Turn" and "Persona" *Cloud "Null Persona" [suggested: *Wander & Jenkins, *Reponses to Wander, *Corcoran, *McGee "Philippic"]
October 2	Form and Genre	Hart 6 CB: section VII
October 9	Myth, Narrative, and Culture <b>Critical Paper 1 due</b>	Hart 11 CB: Fisher, Lewis *Taylor
October 16	Burkean Criticism	Hart 12, *Solomon CB: Burke, Ott & Aoki
October 23	Feminist Criticism <b>Research question due for final paper</b>	Hart 13, *Shugart CB: Campbell, Zaeske *Campbell "Consciousness"
October 30	Queering Criticism <b>Guest Speaker: Charles E. Morris, Boston College</b>	*Morris tba, *Sloop, *Cloud, "ER"
November 6	Understanding Rhetorical Agency <b>Guest Speaker: Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, University of Minnesota</b>	*Campbell "Agency" *Biesecker, *Campbell "Biesecker"
November 13	Race, Rhetoric, and Criticism <b>Critical Paper 2 due</b>	*Wilson, *Flores & Moon *Crenshaw
November 20	Marxist and Postmodern Criticism <b>Bibliography, thesis and outline due</b>	Hart 14, *Cloud "Afghan" *Ono & Sloop, *McGee "Fragments" *Blair et al.
November 27	No Class	
Dec. 4	Criticism and the Image <b>Guest Speaker: Cara Finnegan, University of Illinois</b> <b>Seminar paper draft due (optional)</b>	*Lucaites & Hariman *Finnegan tba

**Seminar Papers are due December 14 by 5 p.m. Please submit papers electronically. I am not inclined to grant requests for incompletes.**