



MODERN RHETORICAL STUDIES

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: Study of theories, practices and questions raised after the “rhetorical turn” of the 20th century.

COURSE OVERVIEW:

Ethics comes from *ethos*, a word meaning habits or customs. If our habits were already hard-wired into our biology, then we would have no need to talk or tell stories about difficult ethical decisions. As it happens, however, humans differ in our understanding of our ethical relationships and obligations. This difference is where rhetoric and ethics meet. The interplay of ethics and rhetoric—of persuasion and morality, of contingency and certainty—will be the primary focus of the 4200 course.

Over the course of this semester, we will keep coming back to two big, overarching questions. How has the study and practice of rhetoric changed in relationship to ethics over the 20th century? How do our rhetorical theories and practices affect our ethics—both in how we think about ethics and how we live out our ethics in practice? To address these questions, we will begin the course by discussing the foundations of ethics and rhetoric in works by Aristotle, Kant, Mill, and Nietzsche. We will look at the differences in the ethical paradigms of these writers, and we will then carry these differences into our readings of important rhetorical texts from the “modern” period of the early 20th century. Our reading of “modern” rhetorical studies will be filtered through the recent works of two contemporary rhetoricians: Scot Barnett and Jeff Pruchnic. Barnett and Pruchnic helpfully review several other important writers in contemporary rhetoric and offer two very different accounts of ethical action in the 21st century.

We will conclude the course by working on a whole-class team project aimed at applying what we have learned to an exigent “real-life” situation. Our final weeks will involve teamwork, class discussion, and extensive planning and preparation for the final product we produce together.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES AND EXPECTATIONS:

This course has a demanding reading load centered on texts of rhetorical theory and practice. Students will be expected to read each text carefully and to come to class prepared to discuss the texts analytically and critically. I will introduce most of the texts and themes through direct instruction during class. Most of our class time, however, will be spent discussing the course readings and our responses to them. Sometimes we will also engage in collaborative or individual assignments or activities during class. When we talk as a class, I encourage you to move beyond simply talking about what parts of the texts that you “like.” Work hard to think about how the texts support and contradict one another. Bring experiences and ideas from your own life into the discussion where appropriate. Look for ways that class readings and discussions are relevant in the world around you. Pay attention to what your classmates say and build off of their ideas when you can. Encourage and support, and learn from each other—this is the path of rhetorical studies.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Media: Please make sure that you have access to a computer with word processing and audio/video editing software (i.e. Audacity, Garageband, etc.), as well as a Flash Drive to transfer documents.
Books: Please have the following texts in hand during the class periods they are assigned.)

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (suggested edition: ISBN 9780486400969)
- Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (suggested edition: ISBN 9781107401068)
- Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (suggested edition: ISBN 9780804788984)
- Barnett, *Rhetorical Realism* (selections provided; ISBN 9781138648210)
- Pruchnic, *Rhetoric and Ethics in the Cybernetic Age* (selections provided; ISBN 9780415840347)

RHETORIC/ETHICS

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS (subject to modification)
 Note: Please have all assigned texts read by the date they are assigned. Read thoroughly and carefully, and plan to read each assigned text at least twice. All readings come from required texts unless otherwise indicated.

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Wk	Topic	Date	Mondays	Date	Wednesdays
1		16-Jan	MLK Day, no class	20-Jan	Intro to Rhetoric and Ethics?
2	Why Rhetoric and Ethics?	23-Jan	Pruchnic , "Rhetoric and Ethics in the Cybernetic Age" (Intro only; PDF on Blackboard)	25-Jan	Why Rhetoric and Ethics? Discuss Pruchnic
3	Virtue Ethics and Rhetoric	30-Jan	Aristotle , From <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>	1-Feb	Discuss Aristotle
4	Deontological Ethics and Rhetoric	6-Feb	Kant , from <i>Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals</i> Note: please come to office hours to talk with me if you are having difficulty in class by this date	8-Feb	Discuss Kant
5	Utilitarian Ethics and Rhetoric	13-Feb	Mill , from <i>Utilitarianism and other Essays</i>	15-Feb	Discuss Mill
6	Postmodern Ethics and Rhetoric	20-Feb	Nietzsche , "On the Genealogy of Morality" (CP) Unit 1 Review Discuss Case Study 2	22-Feb	Discuss Nietzsche
7	Postmodern Ethics and Rhetoric	27-Feb	Project 1 Team Planning	29-Feb	Project 1 Team Planning Exam 1 Review
8		6-Mar	PROJECT 1 TEAM PRESENTATIONS	8-Mar	EXAM 1
SB		13-Mar	Spring Break	15-Mar	Spring Break
9	Rhetoric/Ethics of Otherness	20-Mar	Barnett , <i>Rhetorical Realism Rhetoric, Ethics, and the Ontology of Things</i> (PDF on Blackboard)	22-Mar	Discuss Barnett
10	Rhetoric/Ethics of Otherness	26-Mar	Pruchnic , <i>Rhetoric and Ethics in the Cybernetic Age</i> (PDF on Blackboard)	29-Mar	Discuss Pruchnic
11	Contemporary Rhetoric/Ethics	3-Apr	Discuss Pruchnic and Barnett Project 2 Planning	5-Apr	Discuss Pruchnic and Barnett Project 2 Planning
12	Rhetoric/Ethics in Practice	10-Apr	EXAM 2	12-Apr	Project 2 Planning Due: Project 2 Preliminary Report
13	Rhetoric/Ethics in Practice	17-Apr	Project 2 In-Class Work	19-Apr	Project 2 In-Class Work Due: Project 2 Weekly Check-In
14	Rhetoric/Ethics in Practice	24-Apr	Project 2 In-Class Work	26-Apr	Project 2 In-Class Work Due: Project 2 Weekly Check-In
15		1-May	PROJECT 2 PRESENTATIONS Due: Project 2 Role Assignment	3-May	PROJECT 2 PRESENTATIONS
F			FINAL EXAM: Monday, May 8, 1:30-3:30 pm, FINAL REFLECTION DUE		

COURSE POLICIES:

ABSENCE: You have five free absences. Upon missing six classes, you will be dropped from the course. Coming late to class or not participating in class may result in you being counted as absent.

IN-CLASS WORK: Quizzes and in-class assignments will often take place at the beginning of class and cannot be made-up if missed. Frequent tardiness or disruptions will affect your quiz/assignment grades.

DISRUPTIONS: Excessive disruptions of our class time—including talking, sleeping, texting, cell phone usage, and doing work for other classes—hurt the class atmosphere and will hurt your grade should you engage in them. Please respect the class environment by giving your classmates and me your full attention at all appropriate times.

Assignment Policy

All written work needs to be typed and submitted online to our Blackboard site, with a paper copy brought to class. For all essays, include your name and the page number on the top right of each page (i.e. : Heard 1). Please also include a date and the course number (ENGL 4200). Use a text font for all essays (Times Roman or Garamond for example) at 12 points, with all one-inch (1") margins, and double-spacing. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated by the assignment prompt.

ODA Policy

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

The UNT Policy Manual defines plagiarism as: "(a) the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement and (b) the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the

selling of term papers or other academic

materials." (18.1.11). I expect your writing in this course to be original and every use of someone else's work in your writing to be marked clearly.

The consequences for plagiarism both at UNT and in this course are severe, and may include automatic failure and in some cases dismissal from the university. Don't risk it—come and talk to me about any questionable material before turning in your assignment. I am happy to help you decide how to cite materials that might otherwise be counted as plagiarism.

Rubrics and Scoring Systems

For the purposes of this course, "A" WORK will constitute a final score of 90-100% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is impressively sophisticated and illuminating: inventive, balanced, justified, effective, mature, and expertly-situated in time and context
 "B" WORK will constitute a final score of 80-89.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is thorough and systematic: skilled, revealing, developed, perceptive, but not unusually or surprisingly original
 Survey Keyword: Colorado
 "C" WORK will constitute a final score of 70-79.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is acceptable but limited: coherent, significant, and perhaps even insightful in places, but ultimately insufficient in organization, articulation, perception, and/or effectiveness
 "D" WORK will constitute a final score of 60-69.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is incomplete and severely lacking: incoherent, limited, uncritical, immature, undeveloped, and overall not reflective of the performance expected of UNT undergraduates
 "F" WORK will constitute a final score of 0-59.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is unacceptable.

Campus carry and weapons

Pursuant to Texas Senate Bill 11 and the UNT Campus Carry Policy, persons with a current legally valid Concealed Carry License may carry a concealed legal handgun on or about their person in this class. All class members should read the UNT Campus Carry Policy carefully. All legal provisions associated with concealed carry on campus must be followed without fail at all times. One such provision is that any handgun must be concealed, meaning that it cannot be "openly noticeable to the ordinary observation of a reasonable person." (UNT Campus Carry Policy). If a handgun is visible, or if any other legal requirement is violated at any moment, the person who witnesses the violation should leave the classroom and call 911 immediately. Please be aware that law enforcement officers are prepared to respond to any violations of these

GRADING BREAKDOWN
 Quizzes: 15%
 In-Class Work and Discussions: 20%
 Exam 1: 20%
 Exam 2: 15%
 Project 1: 10%
 Project 2: 15%
 Final Reflection: 5%

legal requirements for Campus Carry. No other weapons of any kind are permitted in the classroom.

Dropping the Course or withdrawing

Apr. 4: The last day to drop this course with either a W or WF

Apr. 21: The last day to withdraw from the course or receive a WF for nonattendance

Consult the UNT Registrar "Registration Guide" for full details:

<http://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-registration-guide>

BLACKBOARD AND EMAIL

Our course will have a Blackboard site. Please check this site and your university email regularly for messages. Note that if you do not use your UNT email address, you need to have your UNT email forwarded to the address that you prefer. All emails that you send me should identify you clearly as a student in this class in the subject heading (i.e. "ENGL 4200– Student Name"). Remember that when you write an email to a professor, you should assume a professional tone and present yourself well. I want to hear from you, but please communicate as clearly and professionally as possible.

ASSIGNMENTS:

PROJECTS

Project 1--Explaining Ethics: the first project of the semester will require your team to research and explain one of the four main ethical theorists we study this semester. You will use a relevant, contemporary media platform to create an appealing and informative explanation of the theorists' main concepts, terms, and legacy. As a whole, your project will aim at creating the most interesting, most easily understandable explanation of the theorist you have been assigned for an audience of your peers (upper division university students). Assessment of your presentation will be broken down into an overall grade (20%) and an individual grade for each team member (80%, based on criteria explained below).

2--Ethics Package: the final project will be a class effort to "wrap up" an informed rhetorical and ethical perspective on a specific topic for an audience of stakeholders in university Humanities departments (i.e. the Department of English). As a class, we will develop a specific set of artifacts/texts that will help students, teachers, and administrators in Humanities departments understand and evaluate the rhetorical/ethical complexities of the topic. This semester, our topic will be *what humanities students need to know in order to be prepared for postgraduate careers*

and education. We will investigate this problem together, and our goal will be to use our knowledge of rhetoric and ethics to create a "package" of relevant technologies and media that

present a compelling take on this problem for one or more audiences. As a whole, Project 2 will require

- extensive research using class readings and discussions
- audience-focused case studies and examples
- well-crafted, thoughtful, and carefully-edited argument
- carefully chosen visual, audio, and sensory components
- sophisticated use of podcasts and other contemporary media forms

Specific content and individual role assignments will be determined in class discussions beginning in Week 8. However, the Ethics Package will be developed in multiple stages that will require a class-wide team effort to research, develop, plan, produce, and evaluate. Specific tasks include:

- Preliminary Report and Weekly Check-In
- Role Assignment

FINAL REFLECTION (5%): The final assignment for the course is to write a reflective piece (or record or video it) that "pitches" what you have learned this semester in terms that highlight your own skills, knowledge, abilities, and understanding. Think of this assignment as an exercise aimed at future employers: how can you use your experiences this semester to advocate for yourself using the skills that you have developed?

EXAMS 1 AND 2: Our two unit exams will serve as objective measures of your learning in the course. Both of the unit exams will focus on terms, ideas, and questions drawn from our class discussions and readings. Value: 40% overall

TIPS FOR READING:

The following guidelines will help you read carefully and prepare for discussion

READING:

- Browse the work. Look at the title. Note any chapter titles, subtitles, headings, etc.
- Read the author's intro and conclusion.
- Read the entire work once, then again for comprehension. Note how the text works.

PREPARING FOR DISCUSSION

- Identify what is most important to the writer.
- Briefly explain how the writer is responding to what she or he finds important.
- Find the 5-6 most important key terms in the text.
- Note the authors / works the writer uses most often.
- Write out the 3 most important questions that you draw out of the reading yourself.
- Articulate tentative answers to the questions in the previous step. Respond with reference to the writer's ideas,