

Rhetoric and Film Studies

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Traditionally, the discipline of rhetoric focused on the effectiveness of the spoken or written word as it is driven by the rhetorical situation (audience, purpose, and context). Over the last several decades, persuasive media have expanded well beyond the conventional spoken and written message. The increasing pervasiveness of film, video, TV, and the Internet in world culture has expanded the mission of rhetorical studies. To reflect these advances in technology and understanding, we focus on the uses of language and image to characterize social reality, to debate and confront controversies, and to aid in the transformation of social institutions. Accordingly, the department of rhetoric and film studies is a multidisciplinary program that enriches understanding of the complexity of contemporary communication by providing a solid grounding in the theory, history, production, interpretation, and criticism of a wide variety of written, oral, visual, and filmic texts.

Most rhetoric and film studies courses (except 110, 121, 221, 222, 165, 250, and 360) satisfy humanities distribution requirements. Rhetoric and Film Studies 110, 165, 250 and 360 meet fine arts distribution requirements. Rhetoric and Film Studies 240 and 340 count toward the alternative voices distribution requirement. Rhetoric and Film Studies 121, 221, and 222 do not count as distribution requirements and may not be taken P-D-F.

The Rhetoric and Film Studies major:

A minimum of 34 credits in rhetoric and film studies, including 160; one of either 365, 366, 367 or 368; one of either 240, 250, 340, 350, 351, 352, 371, 379, or 380; 487; and either 491 or 498.

Students may substitute up to eight of the elective credits with approved rhetoric and film courses (e.g., transfer credits, and/or credits from other Whitman departments). Students may not count more than four credits of 121,

221, or 222 toward the major. Department policy does not allow a P-D-F grade option for courses within the major.

Senior assessment: All departmental majors will write a substantial thesis during fall semester and will defend that thesis during a one-hour oral examination.

The Rhetoric and Film Studies minor:

A minimum of 20 credits in rhetoric and film studies including one of either 365, 366, 367 or 368; and one of either 240, 250, 340, 350, 351, 352, 371, 379 or 380. Students may substitute up to four of the elective credits with approved rhetoric and film courses (e.g., transfer credits, and/or credits from other Whitman departments). Students may not count more than four credits of 121, 221, or 222 toward the minor. Department policy does not allow a P-D-F grade option for courses within the minor.

110 Fundamentals of Public Address

4, 4

Hanson, Withycombe

Speech is one of our primary means of communication. This course provides training in the fundamentals of effective speaking including the preparation, presentation and evaluation of a variety of types of communication. Preparation emphasizes the use of clear organization, cogent arguments, and strong and interesting supporting material. Presentation focuses on the use of vocal variety, distinct articulation, presence, gestures, and effective use of oral language. Evaluation encourages students to critique public address, learning to think and express what could make a presentation more effective. Oral presentations and several papers required.

121 Dramatic Interpretation, Speech, and Debate Practicum

1, 1

Hanson

Participation in dramatic interpretation, speaking events, or debate without a heavy commitment throughout the semester. Students are expected to attend a course overview, practice twice a week with staff for the first six weeks of the semester, participate in the team practicum, and then one intercollegiate or on-campus tournament. Students may not jointly register for Rhetoric 121, 221, 222. May not be taken P-D-F.

160 Introduction to Film Studies

4, x

Sickels

This course introduces the historical and theoretical fundamentals of film studies. Representative films will be drawn from a variety of different eras, genres, and countries. Lectures, discussions, tests, and weekly film

screenings.

165 Introduction to Filmmaking

4, x

Sickels

This course introduces the fundamentals of the visual language and narrative structures of film. Students will collaboratively make their own short films. Extensive lab time required. *Prerequisites:* successful completion of Rhetoric and Film Studies 160 and consent of instructor. Priority given to Rhetoric and Film Studies majors.

221 Intercollegiate Parliamentary Debate and Speaking Events

2, 2

Hanson

Participation in parliamentary debate, interpretation events, and/or speaking events throughout the semester. Students are expected to attend a preparation session the week before school begins (exceptions on a case-by-case basis only). Students are expected to attend meetings, prepare for two events, practice each week with staff, and assist in the management of tournaments that Whitman hosts. Students must compete in a minimum of two events (two speaking or interpretation events, or parliamentary debate and one speaking or interpretation events) at a minimum of two tournaments during the semester. Rhetoric 121 is not a prerequisite. May not be taken P-D-F.

222 Intercollegiate Policy Debate*

2, 2

Hanson

Participation in policy debate throughout the semester. Students are expected to attend a preparation session the week before school begins (exceptions on a case-by-case basis only). Students are expected to attend meetings, prepare research assignments, engage in practice drills and debates, and assist in the management of tournaments that Whitman hosts. Students must compete in debate at a minimum of two tournaments during the semester. Students may not jointly register for Rhetoric 121, 221, 222. *Topics change yearly. Rhetoric 121 is not a prerequisite. May not be taken P-D-F.

240 Rhetorical Explorations: Race, Class and Gender

4; not offered 2007-08

This course seeks to examine the ways in which race, class, and gender based rhetorical practices can and do create, reinforce, adjust and sometimes overcome inequality in society. The nature of this inequality is addressed as a rhetorical construct that continues to serve as a basis for often heated discussion in society. Those in the class critique communication in the media, daily discourse, the law, politics, and in their own experiences. The goal of this examination is to increase awareness of inequity in communication, to challenge theoretical assumptions about what constitutes inequity, and to offer new perspectives from which to view race, class, and gender based rhetorical practices. This course may count toward the require-

ments for the gender studies minor and major.

250 Persuasion, Agitation, and Social Movements

4, x

Withycombe

Theory, preparation, and practice in the art of public persuasion. The study of logic and reasoning, the psychology of persuasion, the ethics of persuasion, the structure of arguments, and persuasion in social movements. Students are expected to observe, evaluate, and construct logical persuasive arguments in both formal and informal settings.

340 Background of African American Protest Rhetoric

4; not offered 2007-08

Students examine the conflicting strategies of assimilation, separation, and revolution, and the rhetoric of the civil rights movement used to promote and attack these strategies. Various stages of the social movement will be examined, with a primary focus on the nature of public argument about blacks in America beginning with the arrival of the first Africans in the early seventeenth century and ending with the era of vigorous African American protest in about 1965. May be elected as Politics 349.

350 Freedom of Speech and the First Amendment

4, x

Withycombe

Arguments over the "appropriate boundaries" of freedom of speech are among the most interesting and hotly debated issues addressed by the legal system. In this course, the evolution of current legal standards on freedom of speech will be traced from the earliest statements on free speech in ancient Athens, through British Common Law to Colonial America, and finally to a wide range of cases that made their way to the United States Supreme Court. Issues such as privacy, obscenity, "fighting words," and commercial speech will be discussed, along with considerable discussion dealing with special issues of free speech such as free speech and fair trials, prior restraint, and free speech in prisons, schools, the military, and the marketplace. May be elected as Politics 379.

351 Argument in the Law and Politics

x, 4

Hanson

This course emphasizes the study and practice of argument in the law and politics and involves three critical aspects. First, students engage in and evaluate legal argument in important court cases. Second, students participate in and evaluate political campaign and public policy-making argument. Third, students are exposed to argumentation theory as a way of interpreting the arguments they construct and evaluate. The goal of the course is to enhance the understanding and appreciation of the use of argument. May be elected as Politics 380.

352 Political Campaign Rhetoric

4; not offered 2007-08

This course focuses on communication used in

political campaigns, particularly in the current election year. The course will examine advertisements, speeches, media coverage, and debates. Class discussions will center on such issues as: 1) How passive or active is the public in campaigns? 2) What makes an effective and beneficial political advertisement? 3) What is the importance of character versus issues in campaigns? 4) What is a good campaign strategy? 5) How do campaigns target or alienate differing groups? May be elected as Politics 352.

360 Advanced Film

x, 4

Sickels

In this intensive workshop course students will be expected to write, storyboard, direct, shoot, and edit an original film of their own creation. Extensive lab time required. *Prerequisites*: successful completion of Rhetoric and Film Studies 160, 165, and/or consent of instructor. Priority given to Rhetoric and Film Studies majors.

365 Special Topics: Studies in Film Genre

4; not offered 2007-08

Students will study the cultural influences on the intersection between the pursuit of artistic achievement and commercial rewards as illustrated by the evolution of a specific genre—e.g. musicals, westerns, noir, horror, combat, screwballs, weepies, etc. Lectures, discussions, tests, papers and weekly film screenings. May be repeated for credit. Film genre offerings follow.

366 Special Topics: Major Figures in Film

4

An intensive study of a major figure (or figures) in film, ranging from directors, screenwriters, cinematographers, and actors. Lectures, discussions, tests, papers, and weekly film screenings. May be repeated for credit. Major figures offerings follow.

366 ST: Major Figures in Film: "The Genius of the System" The Golden Age of Cinema

x, 4

Sickels

In tracing film history from its late nineteenth century beginnings to the 1950s, students in this course will study the era known as the American cinema's "golden age," during which the Hollywood Studio System dictated virtually all aspects of filmmaking. Texts will likely include works by Ford, Hitchcock, Curtiz, Hawks, Capra, Sturges, and others. Lectures, discussions, tests, papers and weekly film screenings.

368 Special Topics: World Cinema

4

National cinemas not generally considered in other courses offered by the department. The specific materials will vary from semester to semester and may cover subjects from early times to contemporary developments in world cinema. Lectures, discussions, tests, papers and weekly film screenings. May be repeated for credit. World cinema offerings follow.

368A ST: Media and Culture in Latino/Latin America

x, 4

Galindo

This course focuses on the increasing presence of Latinos and Latin Americans in the media as a way to explore debates on culture and politics. Topics for class discussion include: media bias, uses of language, representation, marketing and buying power, and political clout. Media to be studied in class ranges from film, TV and radio to print and digital journalism. Students will be evaluated through papers, presentations, and participation. A collective class project will study the current representation of Latino and Latin American cultures in the U.S. media. Taught in English. May be elected as WLit 382 or Spanish 471. Distribution area: humanities or alternative voices.

368B ST: Introduction to French Cinema

x, 4

Hurlburt

An introduction to the major authors and movements of French cinema from the 1930's to the present day. We will study works by film authors such as Renoir, Carné, Tati, Godard, Truffaut, Varda, Kassovitz and Serreau. In addition to required screenings, students will read a broad selection of critical texts introducing the technical, theoretical, cultural, political and economic forces that have shaped the French film industry from the advent of sound through to the present day. Movies will be shown in French with English subtitles. This course will be taught in two sections, one in English and one in French (French 448); the two sections will be combined in English once a week. Distribution area: humanities.

371 Rhetoric in Early Western Culture

x, 4

Withycombe

Focuses on the principal rhetorical developments that occurred during several of the great periods of Western thought, beginning with the classical conflict between the Sophists and Platonists in Greece, to the emphasis on the liberally educated person in the Roman Empire, the rhetoric of the church in the Middle Ages, and concluding with the study of logic and argument during the Scottish Enlightenment. May be elected as Classics 371.

379, 380 Special Topics in Rhetoric and Film Studies

4, 4

Intensive studies in special topics not generally considered in other courses offered by the department. The specific materials will vary from semester to semester and may cover subjects from ancient to contemporary times. The current offerings follow.

379A ST: Introduction to Television Studies

4, 4

Corey

This course begins with an exploration of television history and important technological and social developments. In mapping out the televisual landscape, this course then introduces students to a range of tele-

vision cultures and genres. Through genres such as news, sitcom, drama, soap opera, science fiction, and reality-based television, students will explore narrative structures and practices of looking. This course also introduces critical approaches to the debates surrounding the cultural and political implications of television viewing. These debates include audience, effects, and representation as well as technology and surveillance. Students will also learn to apply a variety of theoretical and methodological frameworks in order to analyze television in text and practice.

379B ST: Introduction to Popular Culture

4, 4 **Corey**

This course traces the study of popular culture in the U.S. Beginning with the advent of mass culture, students will explore cultural studies between the World Wars, the evolution of postwar consumerism, and then focus on the global culture in which we participate today. Students will examine various artifacts of popular culture including advertisements, comics, clothing, toys & games, and other relevant texts from print, film, and television media. Students will study the development of popular culture by applying different methods and theories such as Mass Culture, Frankfurt School, Social Semiotics, and Postmodern approaches.

380A ST: Gender in Popular Music and Dance

4, x **Corey**

From ballet, big bands and belly dance to pop, punk, and points in between, this course explores issues of gender in popular music and dance. Students will learn to apply critical methods in order to understand how gender is constructed and strategically used in these cultural forms. In analyzing concepts of femininity and masculinity, students will examine how music and dance reflect, create, and contest our understandings of gender and sexuality. From a critical standpoint, this kind of analysis focuses on the tension between the creative potentials for expression and issues of representation and commodification.

380B ST: Rhetorical Study of Kenneth Burke

x, 4 **Withycombe**

Examines the works of Kenneth Burke, one of the leading thinkers on rhetoric in the twentieth century. Examines Burke's work from contemporary and post-modern perspectives.

380C ST: Body, Gender, Culture

x, 4 **Corey**

The human body has received a great deal of attention in recent academic, political, and popular debates. While there is no consensus on the "meaning" of the body, it is clearly the central figure in the contest over issues such as sexuality, identity, and even technology. The construction and function of masculinities and femininities frames the exploration of a variety of theoretical, philosophical, and practical approaches to the body. Students will probe the

body's fundamental significance in the construction, experience, and understanding of gender, culture, and social relationships. Along with these concepts, students will explore issues of economy, technology, body modification, and transgender issues, as well as the body in movement contexts such as the gym and sport.

401, 402 Independent Study

1-3, 1-3 **Withycombe, Hanson, and Sickels**

Studies of rhetorical and filmic issues including directed readings and/or approved projects. The student is expected to submit a written proposal to the instructor prior to registration for the study. *Prerequisite:* consent of instructor.

487 Rhetoric and Film Criticism

4, x **Hanson**

Students evaluate diverse forms of communication such as speeches, film, writing, and advertisements using a variety of critical perspectives including NeoAristotlean, author, audience, genre, narrative, cultural, dramatic, ideological, gender, semiotics, hyperrealism, power relations, and deconstructionism. Through a series of papers culminating in a lengthy paper, usually the student's thesis, students engage in scholarly writing that utilizes these critical perspectives. The goal is for students to become more articulate in expressing the significant ways in which communication influences people. *Open only to* and required of junior or senior Rhetoric and Film Studies majors.

491 Thesis in Rhetoric and Film Studies

2, x **Sickels**

Research and writing of the senior thesis. *Open only to, and required of, senior majors.*

498 Honors Thesis in Rhetoric and Film Studies

2, x **Sickels**

Research and writing of the senior honors thesis. *Open only to, and required of, senior majors. Prerequisite:* admission to honors candidacy.