

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

Fall: Hanson

Spring: 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 Fundamentals of Debating

1, 1

Hanson

Introduction to and participation in debate without a heavy commitment throughout the semester. Students are expected to attend classes covering and engaging key debate skills for the first six to eight weeks of the semester, and then participate in 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 and a speaking event 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 parliamentary debate and a speaking event, practice each week with staff, and assist in the management of tournaments that Whitman hosts. Students must compete at two tournaments during the semester in parliamentary debate and in one speaking event when offered. 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

x, 4 **Hanson**

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 requirements for the gender studies minor and major.

250 Persuasion, Agitation, and Social Movements

4; not offered 2008-09

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.

303 German Film and the Frankfurt School

x, 4 **Tobin**

In this course, we will review the masterpieces of German-language cinema, beginning with such expressionist works of art as Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, Murnau's *Nosferatu*, Lang's *Metropolis*, and Sagan's *Mädchen in Uniform*. We will also study Nazi film, particularly Leni Riefenstahl's work. Among the postwar directors that we study will be Fassbinder, Herzog, and Wenders. Queer German filmmakers such as Praunheim and Treut will receive special attention. The course will conclude with recent critical and popular successes such as *Run Lola Run* and *The Lives of Others*. As a critical lens, we will rely heavily on psychoanalytic and Frankfurt School criticism, focusing on writings by Sigmund Freud, Walter Benjamin, Siegfried Kracauer, and Theodor Adorno. In addition to class meetings, a weekly video screening of approximately two hours is required. All discussion in English. Students taking the course for German credit will be expected to watch the films without subtitles and complete written assignments in German; students taking the course for credit in world literature or rhetoric and film studies will generally watch films with subtitles and write in English. May be elected as German or World Literature 303.

340 Background of African American Protest Rhetoric

x, 4 **Withycombe**

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 17th 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 through a wide range of cases that made their way to the U.S. 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
4; not offered 2008-09

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 policymaking 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, x **Hanson**

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

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. “Mean Streets and Raging Bulls”: The Silver Age of Cinema

x, 4 **Sickels**

In tracing film history from the demise of the studio system in the late 1960s to its rebirth in the early 1980s, students in this course will study the all too brief era known as the American cinema’s “silver age,” during which maverick film school directors made deeply personal and remarkably influential films. Texts will likely include works by Coppola, DePalma, Friedkin, Altman, Allen, Polanski, Bogdanovich, Kubrick, Malick, and Scorsese. Lectures, discussions, a big research paper, an oral presentation, and a required weekly film screening.

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.

371 Rhetoric in Early Western Culture
4; not offered 2008-09

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.

380 ST: A History of American Public Address

x, 4 **Withycombe**

Students examine the creation, reception, and impact of American public discourse from the colonial period to the present, focusing on the process of public advocacy as it occurs in significant political and social movements and during important public controversies. Examination of public arguments will allow students to better understand the strategic choices available, the limitations and constraints that face advocates, and the nature of critical responses that resulted. Students will better understand the role of public discourse in American history and the relationship between rhetori-

cal practice and public culture.

401, 402 Independent Study

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

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 Withycombe

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, Withycombe

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, Withycombe

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