Rhetoric is the use of symbolic action by human beings to share ideas, enabling them to work together or make decisions about matters of common concern and to construct social reality. As such, rhetoric studies examines public advocacy and social expression by exploring influential speeches, Internet posts, popular culture, media representations, written documents, revolutionary movements, and the many other ways society engages in persuasive arguments and social discourse. Courses focus on political, environmental, social, activist, identity politics, and cultural argument while providing a solid grounding in the theory, practice, and criticism of contemporary communication. Students ultimately utilize this rhetorical understanding in studying the kinds of communication in which they have interest. In the process, they learn what makes rhetoric effective as well as how it affects their and others’ lives.

**Distribution:** Courses completed in rhetoric apply to the humanities distribution area, with the following exceptions:
- Fine arts: 110 and 255
- Cultural pluralism or humanities: 250 and 270
- Activity credit/no distribution: 121, 221, and 222

**Learning Goals:** Upon graduation, a student will be able to:

- **Describe the discipline of rhetoric and its central questions.**
  - Explain the origins of rhetorical studies
  - Summarize the broad nature of the field of rhetoric
  - Analyze the importance of rhetorical expertise for civic engagement
  - Examine contemporary debates within the field of rhetorical studies
  - Distinguish the field of rhetorical studies from related areas of study
  - Identify intellectual specialization(s) in the discipline of rhetoric

- **Employ rhetorical theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts.**
  - Explain, synthesize, apply, and critique rhetorical studies theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts

- **Engage in rhetorical inquiry.**
  - Evaluate and apply scholarship in rhetorical studies
  - Formulate questions appropriate for rhetorical studies scholarship
  - Engage in scholarship within rhetorical studies using the research traditions of the discipline
  - Differentiate between various approaches to rhetoric
  - Contribute to scholarly conversations appropriate to the purpose of inquiry
  - Develop a theoretical fluency and agility to be used in applying rhetorical lenses to public, literary, and civic discourses

- **Create messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context.**
  - Locate and understand information relevant to communicative goals, audiences, purposes, and contexts
  - Select creative and appropriate modalities and technologies to accomplish communicative goals
  - Adapt rhetoric to the diverse needs of individuals, groups, and contexts
  - Present messages in multiple communication modalities and contexts
  - Adjust messages while in the processing of communicating
  - Critically reflect on one’s own messages before, during, and after rhetorical exchanges and communicative events

- **Critically analyze messages.**
  - Identify meaning(s) embedded in messages
  - Analyze characteristics of mediated and non-mediated rhetoric
  - Recognize the influence of rhetoric
  - Engage in active listening
  - Enact mindful responses to discourse

- **Demonstrate the ability to accomplish communicative goals.**
  - Identify contexts, situations, and barriers that impede rhetorical self-efficacy
  - Perform verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors that illustrate self-efficacy
  - Articulate personal beliefs about abilities to accomplish rhetorical and communicative goals
  - Evaluate personal communication and self-created discourse’s strengths and weaknesses

- **Apply ethical rhetorical principles and practices.**
  - Identify ethical perspectives
  - Explain the relevance of various ethical perspectives
- Articulate the ethical dimensions of discourse
- Evaluate ethics in relation to discourse and rhetorical situations

**Utilize rhetoric to embrace difference**
- Articulate the connection between discourse and culture
- Recognize and appreciate individual and cultural difference
- Respect diverse perspectives and the ways they influence public discourse
- Articulate one’s own perspective and how it affects public discourse

**Influence Public Discourse.**
- Explain the importance of rhetoric in civic life
- Identify challenges facing communities and analyze the role of rhetoric in explicating and confronting those challenges
- Evaluate rhetoric at local, national, and global levels
- Advocate, empower, and utilize rhetorical perspectives to draw conclusions about discourse and civic life

The Rhetoric Studies major: A student who enters Whitman without any prior college-level coursework in rhetoric studies will complete 34 credits to fulfill the requirements for this major, including 230, 330, 387, 487, and 491 or 498, with up to 8 credits of 200 level or higher courses outside the department relevant to the student’s rhetorical studies that are pre-approved by the student’s major adviser. Students are welcome to concentrate their studies in areas such as political rhetoric, social justice rhetoric, legal rhetoric, discourse and rhetoric theory, or any area in which they have rhetorical interest.

I. All majors will complete 230 by the end of fall junior year and 330 by the end of spring senior year.
II. Junior and Senior Seminars: All majors will complete the 387 course in the spring semester of their junior year and the 487 course in the fall semester of their senior year.
III. Senior Thesis: All majors will complete either the 491 or 498 course and orally defend a thesis as part of the 491 or 498 course during the fall semester of their senior year.
IV. Students may not count more than 4 credits of Rhetoric Studies 121, 221, or 222 toward the major.
V. Department policy does not allow a P-D-F grade option for courses within the major.

The Rhetoric Studies minor: A minimum of 20 credits including: Rhetoric Studies 230 and at least four credits of 300-level or higher coursework. Up to four credits of 200 level coursework or higher outside of the department, fitting to the student’s rhetorical studies and approved by the student’s minor adviser, may count toward the minor. Students may not count more than four credits of Rhetoric 121, 221, or 222 toward the minor. Department policy does not allow a P-D-F grade option for courses within the minor.

**100-103 Special Topics in Rhetoric Studies**

**1-4 credits**

Courses in special topics areas within rhetorical studies. Any current offerings follow.

**110 Fundamentals of Public Address**
Fall, Spring
Staff
4 credits

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 Argumentation and Debate**
Not offered 2017-18
4 credits

This course is an introduction to debate and argumentation. Argumentation is a fundamental process and skill in the field of Rhetoric as well as an indispensable part of who we are, why we change, and how we interact with each other. We will start there and move forward through the concept of argumentation, a move that requires practice and implementation in the form of actual debates. This course builds on critical thinking skills and adds a number of tools to the study of argumentation and debate. The critical thinking learning outcomes include the ability to create arguments and to evaluate the arguments of others. Assignments include: presenting an article about a theoretical premise in argumentation, working through the construction of a resolution with a fair division of ground, and participating in at least three in-class debates—one as the advocate, one as the critic, and one as the adjudicator. Participation in an intercollegiate debate tournament or the
on-campus debate tournament will be an available option for students in this course, but will not be required. May not be taken P-D-F.

200-203 Special Topics in Rhetoric Studies
1-4 credits
Courses in special topics areas within rhetorical studies. Any current offerings follow.

200 ST: Visions of the Apocalypse in Film & Media
Fall Campbell 4 credits
In recent decades, narratives about the end of world have become ubiquitous. These stories and images provide a way for artists and audiences to project and reflect a wide range of scenarios—including treatments of such topics as ecological collapse, pandemic, nuclear war, religious rapture, dystopia, and the revolt of intelligent machines. This course encourages students to explore common tropes, fantasies, images, and tones in film and other media as they coalesce around “the end of the world as we know it.” From there we will connect these issues to intersections with political, social, environmental, and philosophical problems. The class combines lectures, discussion, presentations, and writing assignments. Required weekly screenings. May be elected as Film and Media Studies 250. Distribution area: humanities.

221 Intercollegiate Parliamentary Debate and Speaking Events
Not offered 2017-18 2 credits
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. Students may not jointly register for Rhetoric Studies 121, 221, 222. Rhetoric Studies 121 is not a prerequisite. May not be taken P-D-F.

222 Intercollegiate Policy Debate*
Not offered 2017-18 2 credits
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 Studies 121, 221, 222. *Topics change yearly. Rhetoric Studies 121 is not a prerequisite. May not be taken P-D-F.

230 Introduction to Rhetoric and Public Culture
Fall, Spring Fall: Hayes; Spring: Bost 4 credits
An introduction to the Rhetoric Department, this course examines the role of communication in our contemporary society. We address three core areas: political and legal rhetoric, rhetorics of social justice, and contemporary rhetorical theory. Students evaluate public discourse such as political speeches (from across world regions), print and digital media (e.g., news, documentaries, web campaigns), and institutional advocacy (e.g., propaganda, legal arguments, and policy deliberations). Course requirements include class discussion, an oral presentation, and two short writing assignments. Throughout, students develop two key proficiencies: how to better interpret the diverse communication that surrounds them, and how to become effective and reflective advocates for change in the world.

250 Rhetoric, Gender and Sexuality
Fall Bost 4 credits
This class examines the ways that rhetorical practices and theories rooted in gender and sexuality can and do create, reinforce, adjust and sometimes overcome sex and gender based bias in society. The nature of this bias is addressed as a rhetorical construct that continues to serve as a basis for social, political, and economic conditions of existence for many. In the class, we will critique communication in the media, daily discourse, the law, politics, and in personal experiences. The goal of this examination is to increase awareness of difference and bias in communication based on gender and sexuality, to challenge theoretical assumptions about what constitutes inequity, to analyze the rhetorical practices that constitute gender
and sexuality, and to offer new perspectives from which to view gender-based rhetorical practices. May be taken for credit towards the Gender Studies major.

255 The Rhetoric of Social Protest  
Not offered 2017-18  
4 credits
This class explores the rhetorical grounds of social interaction with an emphasis on the role of communication in social change. The course introduces students to the primary theoretical tools that rhetorical studies uses to examine social protest and change. Theories are illustrated through examination of a set of case studies (e.g., civil rights campaigns, environmental politics, grass-roots social movements, and digitally networked global communities). By studying the phenomenon of social protest and change, we examine how collective identification is created and how groups are motivated to act in concert, particularly in contexts where communication alone may be insufficient to alleviate injustice.

260 Visual Rhetoric  
Spring  
Staff  
4 credits
Visual images saturate our world and have a profound impact on our experience of politics and public life. This course explores the rhetorical role of visual images in American public culture, focusing on the ways in which images function persuasively, construct our understanding of political, social, and cultural discourse, and help constitute particular fields of symbolic action. Students will develop tools for analyzing the rhetorical aspects of historical and contemporary images and artifacts, including photographs, prints, advertisements, public spaces, and memorials. Through extended analyses of specific visual rhetorical practices, students will focus on the ways in which the realm of the visual participates in a number of rhetorical actions including memorialization, governance, confrontation, and commodification. May be taken for credit toward the Film and Media Studies major.

270 Rhetoric, Incarceration, and Civic Engagement  
Fall  
Hayes  
4 credits
This course will focus on the links between civic engagement, rhetoric, citizenship, and incarcerated populations. Specifically, hosting almost all of its credit hours within the Washington State Penitentiary, the course will begin with an overview of how incarcerated populations come to be understood as citizens within society, drawing from the work of Michelle Alexander. Additionally, students will generate a topic of local, state, or national importance each semester and will research and prepare a public forum on the topic with students from the Washington State Penitentiary. Assignments include short reflection papers, visits to the Penitentiary for research and presentation workshops with incarcerated students, and a public presentation. Course may be taken twice for credit. Note: Almost all course meetings will occur at the Washington State Penitentiary. Students must follow all rules and guidelines of the Penitentiary on these visits. All students in the course must submit to, and pass, a criminal background check in order to participate in the course. All semester, this course’s meeting time will be 5:00-8:15pm. May be repeated for a maximum of eight credits. Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

300-303 Special Topics in Rhetoric Studies  
1-4 credits
Courses in special topics areas within rhetorical studies. Any current offerings follow.

321 Changing the Subject: Judith Butler and Philosophy  
Not offered 2017-18  
4 credits
This course will examine the writings of contemporary philosopher and queer theorist Judith Butler in response to seminal texts from the European philosophical tradition. These texts will include selections from Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the “Second Essay” from Nietzsche’s *Genealogy of Morals,* Kant’s “What is Enlightenment?” as well as Foucault’s reply to that essay, and Levinas’ “Peace and Proximity.” The seminar will focus on, first, the close reading of the primary source philosophical texts, placing those texts into dialogue with Butler’s critical interpretation of them. Thematically, it will engage such themes as the constitution of the subject, critique, and the relationship to the Other; methodologically, it will explore Butler’s deconstructive and rhetorical style of reading, using it as an exemplar for the theoretical appropriation of traditional philosophical texts. Bi-weekly seminar presentation papers will be required, as well a final presentation and researched paper. The seminar is writing intensive, and emphasizes structured peer feedback. May be elected as Philosophy 321. Prerequisite: Philosophy 201, Rhetoric 230, or consent of instructor.
330 The Roots of Rhetoric: Origins of Rhetorical Studies
Spring
Bost
4 credits
Debates over questions of truth versus belief and how to balance emotion, logic, and credibility have found themselves as the center of rhetoric and politics for decades. The very question, “What is rhetoric?,” prompts consternation and confusion, dialogue and dissent. Who were the ancient rhetoricians and how did they define the way they used words and argument? What relationships, both positive and negative, did rhetoric forge with philosophy, poetry, historiography, politics and the law? Was rhetoric a skill that could be taught to everyone? This course will begin by investigating the origins of rhetoric in Ancient Greece and follow its transformation in fifth- and fourth-century Athens through close study of the texts of Gorgias, Plato, Aristotle, among others. Throughout the semester, we will focus on how authors delineated the effects of rhetorical acts as well as on how rhetoric transformed perceptions, interpretations, and actions, crafting the earliest notions of rhetorical studies. Course to include a final paper as well as class discussion and participation. Recommended prerequisite: Rhetoric Studies 230. May be elected as Classics 371.

341 The Rhetoric of Hip Hop
Not offered 2017-18
4 credits
This course critically explores the impact and influence of hip-hop music and culture on American popular culture, political and social activism, and the global marketplace. The course is designed to introduce students to the history, analysis, and criticism of the messages disseminated through hip-hop culture, its various genres, business models, lyrics, and videos. We will examine the political and artistic foundations of hip-hop as rhetorical modes of communication and the issues presented by the cultural phenomenon including its relationship to issues of race, violence, and gender. We will look at the musical, visual, lyrical, and aesthetic manifestations of hip-hop over the past thirty-five years and their impact on socio-political culture, gender, and race. We will also look at specific cultural aesthetics, discourses, and practices that have given rise to hip-hop’s various rhetorical forms. In short, we will ask: what are the discursive boundaries, limits, and possibilities of something we can call “hip-hop”? In doing so, we hope to gain a better understanding of hip-hop as artistic expression and the discursive impact that this phenomenon has had on a generation. Course requirements will include class discussion, a final paper with an oral presentation, and weekly blog posts and/or discussion prompts. May be elected as Sociology 341.

342 The Rhetoric of the 47%: The Social, Political, and Rhetorical Materialism of Class
Not offered 2017-18
4 credits
During the 2012 presidential campaign, Governor Mitt Romney was infamously captured on video arguing that 47 percent of the American people are dependent upon government, pay no income tax, and as a result, were not citizens he “should worry about.” This course will examine Romney’s assertion of the 47%, alongside an understanding of rhetorical materialism, or the ways that rhetoric functions “as a palpable and undeniable social and political force.” We will discuss political rhetoric of class, poverty, income inequality, and the material forces that divide socio-economic populations in the United States. In doing so, we will strive to ask: How does an understanding of rhetoric as material illuminate questions of political and social change, particularly in cases of those who are least advantaged? In what ways does discourse work to shape understandings of class and economic value? Course requirements will include class discussion, a final paper, and weekly blog posts and/or discussion prompts. May be elected as Politics 342.

350 Political Campaign Rhetoric
Not offered 2017-18
4 credits
This course focuses on communication used in political campaigns, particularly the Presidential and to a lesser degree Senate and House races as well as ballot initiatives in the current election year. The course examines the recent history of campaigns, the importance of character and public policy, advertisements, speeches, media coverage, debates, new technologies, demographics, and after the election, implications of the results. May be elected as Politics 352.

353 The Rhetoric of African American Civil Rights: From the Courts to the Streets
Fall
Hayes
4 credits
The struggle around civil rights for black U.S. Americans has utilized legal spaces to fight for justice yet has also required a turn to more resistive spaces of protest in order to demand social circumstances not infected with systemic racism. In this course, the discourse of legal, social, and ethical precedents involving African American civil rights will be explored. Issues such as housing, voting rights, marriage rights, and voting rights will be analyzed throughout the history of U.S. struggles around anti-racism. May be taken for credit toward the Race and Ethnic Studies major.
360 The Rhetoric of Social Protest: Exploring the Arab Spring
Not offered 2017-18 4 credits
This course uses a number of moments of social protest throughout the Middle East to introduce students to theories and the
practice of mass persuasion, propaganda, public advocacy, and social activism. Theories are illustrated through examination
of a set of case studies (e.g., Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, and more). By studying the rhetoric(s) of social protest in the context
of the Middle East moment now commonly referred to as the “Arab Spring,” this course examines how collective
identification is created, and how groups are motivated to act in concert, particularly in contexts where protest is geared to
alleviate injustice in a global context. May be elected as Sociology 344. May be taken for credit toward the Race and Ethnic
Studies major.

365 Rhetoric and Violence
Not offered 2017-18 4 credits
Rhetoric’s relationship to violence and subjectivity has been highly contested throughout history. From the inception of
Athenian democracy in the 5th century BCE (which was both highly egalitarian but also excluded a majority of subjects
from the privileges of citizenship), the limits of participation within nonviolent political and social processes have remained
prominent topics of controversy. This course will explore the relationship between the subject, power, violence, and
discourse. Some central questions will include: What is the relationship between rhetoric and violence? When might we call
rhetoric violent? When might we think of violence as rhetorical? What is the role of discourse in constituting power
and/or violent subjects? In what ways have violence and rhetoric been defined throughout history so as to constitute
specific understandings of both topics as well as their role in social change and political participation? The course will
explore these questions through both theoretical exploration and investigation of case studies around issues of violence and
rhetoric. Assignments will include a number of short response papers, seminar based discussion, and an oral presentation.

380 Rhetorical Bodies
Not offered 2017-18 4 credits
This course examines the rhetorical construction of bodies as well as the ways in which bodies are often used rhetorically.
In order to carry out this examination, we will apply a variety of critical rhetorical lenses to written and visual texts. We
will be particularly concerned with the intersections of social factors such as gender, race, class, sexuality, and disability
and the ways in which these intersections are written on our bodies. We will read texts by classical and contemporary
theorists and authors, such as Hippocrates, Quintilian, Judith Butler, Kenneth Burke, Patricia Hill Collins, Debra Hawhee,
and Robert McCruer. This course will be writing intensive. May be elected as English 377.

387 Introduction to Rhetorical Criticism
Spring Bost 4 credits
By approaching issues central to the study of rhetoric including criticism, text, context/history, identity, and audience, this
course introduces students to the methodology and theory of rhetorical criticism. Using a variety of texts from speeches,
court opinions, film, written and spoken word, political debate, advertisements, and more, students will analyze texts using
a variety of rhetorical methods from classical to contemporary theory. The goal of the course is to prepare students to
integrate rhetorical criticism and theory effectively and become a critic of discourse, write cogent rhetorical criticism, and
to participate in larger intellectual and social communities in the conversation about rhetoric’s effects on everyday lives.

401, 402 Independent Study
Fall, Spring Staff 1-4 credits
Individually directed studies in rhetoric culminating in a presentation, paper, or other creation as arranged between the
student and professor. Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

403-406 Special Topics in Rhetoric Studies
1-4 credits
Courses in special topics areas within rhetorical studies. Any current offerings follow.
487 Advanced Rhetorical Criticism and Theory
Fall Bost 4 credits
Advancing student understanding of rhetorical theory, particularly in examining contemporary and post-modern theories of rhetoric and their application to student theses, this course focuses on an advanced analysis of rhetoric. Students will deepen their knowledge of rhetorical criticism and theory by interrogating texts using a variety of critical methods and lenses. Students also give presentations utilizing these advanced perspectives. The goal of the course is to prepare students to perform effective rhetorical criticism, to integrate theory effectively in analyzing rhetoric, and to apply various rhetorical theories to students’ senior thesis projects leading to the writing of cogent and well-organized theses.
Prerequisites: Rhetoric Studies 230 and 387; open to other students by consent of instructor.

491 Thesis
Fall Hayes 4 credits
Research and writing of the senior thesis. Open only to and required of senior majors.

498 Honors Thesis
Fall Hayes 4 credits
Research and writing of the senior honors thesis. Open only to and required of senior majors. Prerequisite: Admission to honors candidacy. Students wishing to be considered for honors must apply to the department during the spring semester of their junior year.