ENGL 315-D01: Political Rhetoric and Policy Making

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Th @ 9:55

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Course Description

In this course, we will look at how rhetoric has historically shaped and continues to shape political discourse. We will consider such aspects of rhetoric broadly: speech, textual documents, performance, and technology. Questions of discussion will include the following: what constitutes an argument and how does our current political context impact what counts as argumentation?; how do language and current tools and technologies shape the way that citizens are constructed?; how are civic processes enacted in real-world settings?; and how do citizens engage in tactical citizenship? Students will leave this course with a better understanding of how to participate in public policy processes, read policy genres, and enact rhetorical strategies in political and civic discussions. Note that this class has a sustainable communities partnership component.

Course Goals

By the end of the semester, you will have gained experience in

Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course.

Acquiring skills in working with others as a member of a team.

Texts

We will read pdfs available on Canvas.

Writing in the Disciplines

In Writing in the Disciplines (WID) courses, students learn the genres and conventions of writing in their major fields of study and the rationales behind them. The writing process is supported at critical stages of development and includes instructor feedback on drafts.

While not necessarily limited to simply an English major's field of study, in this WID course, you will be introduced to genres such as public meetings and city policies.

Sustainable Community Partnership

As part of this course, we will be partnering with the MetCouncil to help construct a blueprint of approaches for suburban communities to integrate planning for climate resiliency into future iterations of their comprehensive plans.

Assignments

Discussion/Responses (10%)

I have redone this course about five times since September of 2020. It seems like every month there is another event that has me rethinking how to focus this class. In the end, I think that to make this class work, we all need to contribute to the course. I feel the most comfortable contributing research and theory on civic and political engagement but it would be great if you could bring in your own knowledge of current and recent real-world events to help us make sense of the readings. Thus, every week of the first half of the semester, about a third to a half of the class will create discussion post responses which will serve as a way to make sense of this week's readings. Therefore, there will not be many opportunities to respond to posts this semester. This means that each post is worth a very high percentage of the total grade, so don't miss any. Some of these posts will have prompts but most are suggested and many are open for you to connect the readings to something that you find interesting. *It is everyone's responsibility to read through these before class starts, so as a poster, be **early** with your posts.*

Activities (20%)

For the first half of the semester, you will also submit activities every week that will ask you to apply the readings that we covered in class readings the previous week. Frequently these will involve some research or outside work. Sometimes these activities will be individual, other times in pairs or trios. These activities will stand in as our Tuesday class meetings, and should roughly take about that equivalent amount of time to complete. You can expect about 7-8 activities. As with the Discussion/Responses, each one carries a huge weight so be sure that you complete all of them. These may be individual or collaborative. If there's time we will discuss these in class.

Rhetorical Terms Definitions (5%)

As mentioned above, this semester, we will read a lot of rhetorical theory. In order to better help you craft a final paper, I would like us to develop a running list of different rhetorical concepts and terms for the first half of the semester's readings. You will be assigned a week where you will input into a spreadsheet information on one key rhetorical concept or term. This information will include data such as where the term might appear, is it a new term that the author is putting forth or is it an old term that the writer is expanding on, what do you think the term means, etc. There may be more than one student assigned for one week (you do not need to work together, but you should at least coordinate so that you don't do the same concept or term). My hope is to give folks enough material so that you can work on a final paper quickly. Some weeks we will discuss these, other weeks we will not have time, but this running list should be more of a resource for the class than any kind of presentation. Clarification: By rhetorical terms, I mean theoretical concepts, not words stemming from Greek terminology. So, Actor Network Theory or Rhetorical Situation work better than epistemology or phronesis.

On that note, we will encounter quite a few of these (logos, telos, ontology, techne), so be sure to look them up when necessary.

Paper Proposal (10%)

Based on our readings and activities this semester, you will draft a final paper in class that touches on a concept, theme, or topic on political rhetoric and policy making that you would like to expand on beyond your post or activity. Before you draft the paper, however, you will submit a proposal in which you detail your plans for this project. I will approve and provide guidance on these proposals before you begin drafting.

FactSheet/Blueprint Document for the MetCouncil (25%)

In partnership with the Metropolitan Council, you will

- Examine selected comprehensive plans of cities (focusing on suburban communities) who have included sections on planning for climate resiliency (or related topics).
- Compare and synthesize different approaches and policies for planning for climate resiliency (or related topics) in those plans.
- Based on analysis of plans and application of policy writing concepts from class, create a blueprint/guide of approaches for suburban communities to integrate planning for climate resiliency (or related topics) into future iterations of their comprehensive plans.

Eric Wojchik will speak with you on about the Metropolitan Council's needs on March 25 and April 8. *Please note that there may be other sub-assignments due as part of this document such as drafts or other low stakes activities that I cannot anticipate. Please submit them even if they seemingly do not "count" for points. Even though there may not be a tidy space in Canvas to include them, your final grade will be impacted if you do not submit these.*

Final Paper (30%)

You will submit your final paper sometime during Finals week. Length will be determined at the midpoint of the semester once we have a better sense of the MetCouncil project.

Scores and Grades

Every assignment requires different writing tasks which will be laid out in individual assignment sheets. In general, you can assume that the following descriptions relate to a particular score range that you receive.

A+ (95-100); A- (90-94); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76) C- (70-72); D+ (67-69); D (63-66); D- (60-62); F (Below 60)

70 to 79 (C- to C+)—You did what the assignment asked of you. Work in this range tends to need some revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style, verbal and visual, is straightforward but unremarkable.

80 to 89 (B- to B+)—You did what the assignment asked of you at a high quality level. Work in this range needs little revision, is complete in content, is organized well, and shows attention to style and visual design.

90-100 (A- to A)—You did what the assignment asked for at a high quality level, *and your work shows originality and creativity*. Work in this range shows all the qualities listed above for a B; but it also demonstrates that you took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content, solving a problem, or developing a verbal or visual style.

Try to avoid the following score ranges. See me if you have any questions.

60-69 (D to D+)—You did what the assignment asked for at a low quality level. Work in this range tends to need significant revision. The content is often incomplete and the organization is hard to discern. Verbal and visual style is often non-existent or chaotic.

Below 60 (F)—The work does not meet the requirements or is not submitted completely or with care.

If you are a person who wants or *needs* a particular grade in this course, start working toward that grade right now. Don't wait until the end (or even the middle) of the semester to decide that you need a B or an A.

If you think I have misjudged or misinterpreted your work, come to my office and talk to me about it. I will not discuss grades in the classroom, but I don't mind if you come to my office and talk to me about your paper.

Attendance

There are three pertinent attendance policies I have.

1. Please attend every class day.
2. It is up to you to determine what you miss during a class period so be sure to---

3. Exchange emails with at least two people in class. If you are sick or need to miss class, be sure to contact them for information on what you missed.

I will speak to you if you are persistently late to class. This may result in a lower score, but such instances will be taken on a case by case basis.

Participation

I expect everyone to not only attend class but to contribute to class discussion. I will provide a few prompts, but you are generally in charge of what we discuss. If we continually reach the end of our discussions before the end of class, this is a signal to me that we do not have enough to talk about and will add more assignments as necessary.

Zoom Participation

Please have your cameras on during our class. You may change your backgrounds as you need to. Please speak to me if this is not workable for you.

Email

I will respond to emails within 24-48 hours (excluding weekends).

If the campus needs to close due to an emergency, these policies may be changed. You will be notified via e-mail by me if class is cancelled.

Late Work

My general policy is that I do not accept late work. The majority of the work is not for me. We use it in class, and if you miss a submission, there's generally no point in turning it in late. Occasionally, extension can be requested for major projects (not Responses or Posts); just let me know at least 48 hours prior to the deadline. That is all I ask.

COVID-related Policies

Because this course will meet online and have an asynchronous component, we are spared most of the difficulties that come with masks in class and illness and attendance. However, there are a few key points that you should keep in mind in terms of COVID 19 and class participation and attendance.

- If you are feeling unwell, you may miss class, but it is your responsibility to check in with your peers to ascertain what you have missed.
- If you will not be able to complete or submit an assignment due to illness, you must let me know ASAP and, per my policy above, not after the deadline.
- You may not simply disappear from class and expect me to accept all work that you missed late or to receive an incomplete.

Submissions, Feedback, Calendar

I expect you to pay close attention to due dates by checking the calendar on Canvas. Typically, I have deadline information posted on the Canvas calendar, which I only need to change once, and not written out in assignment descriptions. This ensures that if I need to change an assignment's description or due date, I only need to worry about updating that information in one place. So, my rule of thumb is to always check the Canvas calendar. Also, I will generally use your discussion posts and your activities as jumping off points in class, so I may not have a lot of feedback for you on these.

That said, I have mapped out the first half of the calendar. As of the beginning of the semester, the second half of the calendar is still under construction because you will be working on your fact sheet/blueprint document and your final paper. Expect there to be other work and meetings as well.

Center for Writing

Writing is not a solitary act, but one that requires attention to social and interpersonal connections. I hope that you will consider making a consultation with the writing center on campus to help you along at any point of your projects.

The Center for Writing: *Before you write, as you write, and after you write*
www.stthomas.edu/writing
writing@stthomas.edu

Undergraduate and graduate peer consultants in the Center for Writing provide free support online as you write.

- Talk to us FACE-TO-FACE ON ZOOM.
- Submit your draft for WRITTEN FEEDBACK.
- EMAIL US with quick questions or for more information.

We help you with course papers, research papers, presentations, personal statements and much more as you:

get started	**focus and organize your ideas**
understand the assignment	**incorporate and document evidence**
be clear	**analyze a text or your data**
revise and edit	**gain confidence**

Go to www.stthomas.edu/writing to make an appointment or email us!

St. Thomas Bias Reporting System

St. Thomas is committed to providing an inclusive living, learning and working environment that supports the well-being of each member and respects the dignity of each person. Incidents of hate and bias are inconsistent with the St. Thomas mission and convictions and have no place here. If you are a student who has experienced or witnessed a bias or hate incident, we want to address the incident and provide you with resources. Go to the Bias or Hate Reporting website (https://www.stthomas.edu/deanofstudents/bias-reporting/) to get more information and to make an online report. Students can also report in person to the Dean of Students Office (room 241, Anderson Student Center) or to Public Safety.

Students with Disabilities

Accommodations will be provided for qualified students with documented disabilities. Students are invited to contact the Disability Resources office about accommodations early in the semester. Telephone appointments are available to students as needed. Appointments can be made by calling 651-962-6315 or 800-328-6819, extension 6315. You may also make an appointment in person in Murray Herrick, room 110. For further information, you can locate the Disability Resources office on the web at https://www.stthomas.edu/student-life/resources/disability/

Title IX

I am a responsible employee when it comes to reporting sexual violence. That means I am required to report certain incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Our school cares about the safety of our students and has created this requirement because sexual violence, in all its forms, is unacceptable, and we're committed to holding perpetrators accountable and keeping survivors safe. Your privacy is of utmost importance and this institution will do everything possible to keep all reports private and only share with those who need to know. You will never be forced to share information and your level of involvement will be your choice.

Academic Honesty

Honesty and trust among students and between students and faculty are essential for a strong, functioning academic community. Consequently, students are expected to do their own work on all academic assignments, tests, projects and research/term papers. Academic dishonesty, whether cheating, plagiarism or some other form of dishonest conduct related to academic coursework and listed in the Student Policy Book under "Discipline: Rules of Conduct" will automatically result in failure for the work involved. But academic dishonesty could also result in failure for the course and, in the event of a second incident of academic dishonesty, suspension from the university. Here are the common ways to violate the academic integrity code:

Cheating

Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit

Fabrication
Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Facilitating Academic Dishonesty
Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity.

Plagiarism

The deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgment. You commit plagiarism whenever you use a source in any way without indicating that you have used it. If you quote anything at all, even a phrase, you must put quotation marks around it, or set it off from your text; if you summarize or paraphrase an author's words, you must clearly indicate where the summary or paraphrase begins and ends; if you use an author's idea, you must say that you are doing so. In every instance, you also must formally acknowledge the written source from which you took the material. (This includes material taken from the World Wide Web and other Internet sources.)

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Students are encouraged to report incidents of academic dishonesty to course instructors. When academic dishonesty occurs, the following procedures will be followed:]

Consequences

a) Sanctions

The instructor will impose a minimum sanction of failure for the work involved. The instructor also will notify the student and the appropriate academic dean in writing of the nature of the offense and that the minimum sanction has been imposed. The instructor may recommend to the dean that further penalties be should imposed.

If further penalties are imposed, the dean will notify the student immediately and the student will have five working days to respond to the intention to impose additional penalties. The student has the right to respond to the charge of academic dishonesty and may request in writing that the dean review the charge of academic dishonesty as fully as possible.

If the dean determines that no further sanctions will be applied, the instructor's sanction will stand and the instructor's letter to the dean and student will be placed in the student's file. If no further charges of academic dishonesty involving the student occur during the student's tenure at St. Thomas, the materials will be removed from the file upon graduation.

b) Previous Incident

If the student has been involved in a previous incident of academic dishonesty, the dean will convene a hearing, following guidelines listed under "Hearings and Procedures" in the Student Policy Book. During the hearing, all violations of academic integrity will be reviewed. The student and the faculty member charging the most recent incident will be present at the hearing.

IN EITHER SITUATION, A OR B

If the dean determines that further sanctions are warranted, the student will be informed in writing. Among the sanctions considered by the dean will be the following: failure for the course in which the incident occurred; suspension from the university for the following semester; expulsion from the university; community service; a written assignment in which the student explores the principles of honesty and trust; other appropriate action or sanctions listed under "Sanctions" in the Student Policy Book. The materials relating to the incident, including the instructor's original letter to the student and dean and the dean's decision following the hearing, will become part of the student's file.

COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINE

The Committee on Discipline shall have the authority to investigate the facts of the particular case that has been appealed and the committee may:

Affirm the original decision and sanction.
Affirm the original decision and reduce or increase the original sanction.
Reverse the original decision.
Disallow the original decision and order a new hearing by the dean (or designee).