GENG 516: Political and Civic Rhetoric

Spring 2021
T 6:00-9:00 pm

Fernando Sánchez
fsanchez@stthomas.edu
Office Hours: By appointment

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 - 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?

Texts:

ALEXANDER, *Unruly Rhetorics*. University of Pittsburgh Press. ISBN: 9780822965565

DELGADO, *Critical Race Theory*. NYU Press. ISBN: 9781479852772

DINGO, *Networking Arguments*. University of Pittsburgh Press. ISBN: 9780822961888

RICE, *Distant Publics*. University of Pittsburgh Press. ISBN: 9780822962045

ROBERTS-MILLER, *Rhetoric And Demagoguery*. SIU Press. ISBN: 9780809337125

SIMMONS, *Participation And Power.* SUNY PRESS. ISBN: 9780791469965

WALTON, *Technical Comm After Social Turn*. Taylor and Francis. ISBN: 9780367188474

Various PDFs on Canvas

Assignments:

2 Synthesis Papers (2 @ 10% each; 20% total)

Weekly Discussion Forum posts (10% of total grade)

Conference Proposal (10% of total grade)

In-Class Participation (5%)

1 Workshop Presentation (15%)

1 Final Seminar Paper (20 or 25%)*

Conference Panel Reviews (2 Panel Reviews at 2 Conferences) (5%)*

2 Rhetorical Term Definitions (5%)

1 Prospectus (10%)

*Conference Panel Reviews contingent on online modality and departmental funding

Description of Work

[note: Canvas will only accept .doc ; .docx ; or .pdf file extensions]

Synthesis Papers
Twice this semester, you will write a paper that asks you to find the connections and the tensions between our readings while exploring a topic you find particularly noteworthy. You will be asked to read these papers in class.

Discussion Forum Posts
Each week of class requires substantial reading. Prepare 500-750 word responses to the assigned reading. I have created a few forums in Canvas under Discussion for folks to post. These will mostly be open discussion unless I have a specific prompt. Feel free to use this space to

- Post a reaction
- Connect to other readings from class
- Ask a question
- Respond to other's posts

Please note that most/all of these discussion posts will be due by Monday at noon to give me enough time to plan for discussion the next day.

Workshop
You are responsible for leading discussion on one chapter from our readings one time this semester via a workshop.

Workshops should include

- a brief summary of the most important points,
- an extended example connecting something in that chapter to current or recent events (make sure to make the connections relevant and explicit and not just move on),
- discussion questions,
- other elements that help us to gain a rich understanding of the material.

You are not responsible for covering the entire text or other supplementary materials that we will be reading that day. That said, you certainly can bring in other material covered in previous class sessions. Post supplementary materials that you will use in the Discussion section of Canvas under Workshop Materials (handouts, short news articles to read in class, powerpoint, prezi presentations, etc). Consider the workshops as your opportunity to focus on an idea that you think is important for class members to consider and pose questions and focus our attention on an important issue or development in the field.

We will select/finalize class days the second week.

Seminar Paper
Write a 15-page paper (not including references) that explores and develops an idea, issue or theory raised in readings and class discussion. This can take on several forms. You can:

- extend the theoretical knowledge that circulates regarding Political and Civic Rhetoric
- apply rhetorical theoretical conversations to a recent political even or civic process (digital communication, policy issues, etc).
- put forth a proposal for improving or researching issues in a political context based on the readings of the semester

Other possibilities can be considered with enough time. This paper should be written with the intention of being revised for submission to a rhetoric, professional writing or technical communication journal. Please review the submission guidelines and requirements for whichever journal you choose to submit to.

Prospectus
Before you write your seminar paper, you will be asked to submit a prospectus in which you document what you hope to produce for the Final Project. We will go over the requirements for this prospectus in class, but you will need to be precise in what you hope to accomplish and how you will go about accomplishing it. Note that although we will look at some examples, that you will turn in something much shorter. I will try really hard to make sure that we don't get mixed up between this assignment and the next one.

Conference Proposal
Based on your seminar paper, you will respond to a conference Call for Proposals (CFP). Your goal here will be to tailor your project to meet the requirements of this CFP in a way that engages reviewers and discusses a wide-range of potential and interest at the conference. We will discuss conferences and CFPs in class. Usually, CFPs to *Conference on College Composition and Communication* (CCCC) and *Rhetoric Society of America* (RSA) are released around March/April/May. I will look for other conferences as well. You will submit a proposal on Canvas. I will provide you with feedback and if you would like, you may submit to the actual conference. Due dates will be determined by when the Conference proposal due dates are.

Rhetorical Terms Definitions (2 per student)
In order to help us all understand how our readings this semester are furthering rhetorical theory and practice, I am asking that every week, we contribute to a running list of rhetorical terms that we will find in our readings. Most of these will be explicitly mentioned when authors write something like "Here I extend so and so's notion of 'rhetorical dexterity' to show…" Others will be a little more subtle. Thus, **at least twice** this semester, I am asking that you all post to a Google Sheets document where we keep track of these rhetorical terms by writing down where you found the term, who the writer is attributing credit to, the citation for that seminal piece and your working definition. My hope is that by the end, we have a good list of terms and definitions that we can apply to our final papers. 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.

Conference Panel Reviews
As of this writing, both CCCC and the Watson Conference are expected to take place online. You are expected to look through each conference's program and attend at least two panels over the course of each conference. After you attend, you will be asked to complete a Conference Panel Review (see Canvas for assignment). The Graduate Program will reimburse you for your registration.

Participation
The class is molded by your engagement with the subject matter. I will bring in a few activities or artifacts that might help guide our discussion of the readings, but you will need to sustain the conversation and even get the ball rolling. As this is a graduate course, I expect everyone to be engaged and invested in the ideas, questions, and implications of the topics at hand. I have purposely slimmed down the readings to allow folks enough time to read through them in depth and come to class prepared to have discussions. If it seems like we are running out of steam too early in our class periods, I will add more assignments to the calendar.

Scores and Grades

Every assignment has its own rubric on Canvas. That said, 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 and Lateness

You should attend class every day. That said, I understand that life happens. Therefore, you are allowed to miss one day due to other outside obligations that arise without any penalty. Afterwards, your score will be reduced by one letter grade for every absence. This is my general policy, but obviously accommodations will be provided during these heady times.

Zoom Attendance

Please have your camera on for our class. You may switch out your background as needed. Please let me know if this is not workable for you.

Email and Emergencies

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

Late Work

My general policy is that I do not accept late work. If you foresee an issue with a due date, plan ahead and let me know so that we can plan with enough time. That is all I ask.

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 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.

Syllabus Statement for 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/

COVID-Related Information and 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.

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 Integrity

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).

Schedule

Feb 2: Have Read Delgado and Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory*
Introductions

Feb 9: Roberts-Miller, *Rhetoric and Demagoguery*
Responses

Feb 16: Alexander et al. *Unruly Rhetorics*, Parts 1 and 2
Workshops Begin
Responses

Feb 23: Dingo, *Networking Arguments*
Responses

Mar 2: Special Issue of *Technical Communication* on Election Technologies
Responses

Mar 9: Synthesis Paper Day 1

Mar 16: Rice, *Distant Publics*
Responses

Mar 23: Simmons, *Participation and Power*
Responses

CFPs to CCCC RSA Released

Spring Break--- 2nd half of semester still under construction

Walton, Moore, Jones. *Tech Comm after the Social Justice Turn*
Responses
Discuss Prospectus and Proposal Genres if time

CCCC: Attendance

Apr 13: Synthesis Paper Day 2
2 CCCC Panel Reviews due

Apr 20: *Unruly Rhetorics*, Part 3
Prospectus due
Proposals due (depending on CFP due dates)

Apr 21-23: Watson Conference Attendance

Apr 27: Final Paper Conferences
Proposals due (depending on CFP due dates)
2 Watson Conference Panel Reviews due

May 4: Workshopping Papers
Proposals due (depending on CFP due dates)

May 11: TBD