

ENC 1145: WRITING ABOUT THE RHETORICAL TRADITION OF (STUDENT) ACTIVISM

Instructor: Scott Sundvall
Office: Turlington 4412
Contact: sundv004@ufl.edu
Office Hours: W 7-8 and by appointment

Description

Over the last several years, America (as well as the global community at large) witnessed a resurgence in activism, precipitated by military occupations, economic crises, sex and gender legislation, and mounting student debt. Rhetoric remains the functional foundation for all of these movements. As such, this course aims to improve critical reading and writing skills by examining the culture of American activism, especially student activism, 1960s to the present day. Our guiding question and point of departure will be: what makes political pleas, or activist rhetoric, effective or ineffective? To this end, we will not only examine and analyze activist rhetoric, but students will also apply these rhetorical strategies to their own writing.

The course breaks down into three basic approaches: analysis, experimentation/testing, and invention, in this order. The analysis section allows students to critically examine and identify the basic principles and strategies employed by various activist movements across time, as well as whether or not such rhetoric proves effective. The experimentation/testing section asks students to test various rhetorical strategies with the development of a “pamphlet” (meaning it will include visual elements). The invention section collects students into groups and asks them to invent a site/page (webpage, blog, Facebook group, etc.) that professionally closes in on a political question of mutual concern.

By the end of the course, students will have learned how to critically interrogate various arguments and texts (literature, speeches, manifestos, essays, visual rhetoric, commercials, etc.); developed the ability to identify and test the effectiveness of various rhetorical strategies; and improved their own rhetorical skills within a contemporary context, with the classical understanding of rhetoric as an *art* of persuasion. Lastly, the course will attempt to bridge the supposed gap between “classroom space” and the “world out there” through the application of these skills in the final project.

Required Texts

Hoffman, Abbie. *Steal This Book*. Boston: De Capo Press, 2002. Print.

Kahn, Seth and Lee, JongHwa. *Rhetoric and Activism: Theories and Contexts for Political Engagement*. New York: Routledge, 2010. Print.

O'Brien, Tim. *The Things They Carried*. New York: Mariner Books, 2009. Print.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously*. New York: Verso, 2012. Print.

Assignments

2 Short Analysis Papers (3 pages each) - 12.5% of Final Grade (each)

Students will choose a particular text or movement and situate it within the social, cultural, and political context of the time. Students will then identify the rhetorical strategies employed, explaining how and why the rhetorical strategies were used as such. Lastly, students will offer up a determination on whether or not the rhetorical choices prove(d) effective or ineffective, explaining why and how. **#1 Due Feb. 17th; #2 Due Mar. 14th**

Argumentative “Pamphlet” (3+ pages) - 20% of Final Grade

Students will adopt and “recycle” the rhetorical strategies identified in the analysis paper (including visual elements) to create a “pamphlet.” The “pamphlet” does not need to take the shape of a traditional, folded hand-out (though such is acceptable); it only needs to demonstrate a thoughtful joining of literate and visual rhetoric. **Due Apr. 1**

Group “Page” (2,000 words) - 25% of Final Grade

Students will break into groups based upon their expressed political interests/concerns. Students will continue adopting and “recycling” the rhetorical strategies identified in observed activist movements, but will also produce a “page” of some sort (webpage, blog, Facebook group, etc.) that organizes a particular argument or concern into an “organized call for action.” These pages will continue developing nuanced arguments, but will also call for specific forms of response (e.g., petition, online forums, dissemination of memes). **Due Apr. 30**

Weekly Blogs (250+ words per week) - 10% of Final Grade

Students will be responsible for maintaining a blog, updated weekly. Due every Sunday by midnight.

Weekly Quizzes - 10% of Final Grade

Weekly quizzes will test students’ completion of readings.

Attendance and Participation - 10% of Final Grade

Course Policies

Grading Methodology

A detailed assignment sheet and rubric will introduce each major assignment, explaining what is to be expected of the student, and what the student can expect in terms of the grading process.

Any questions regarding the assignment sheet and/or rubric should be forwarded to me as soon as possible. Blog expectations will be covered in the first week of class. Grade scales follow university guidelines, found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Final Grade Appeals

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant.

Statement of Composition Credit

This course can satisfy the General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

Statement of Writing Requirement

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing-and-math-requirement.aspx>

Attendance and Late Work

Attendance is mandatory and expected. In the event of a necessary absence, please attempt to contact me ahead of time. Habitual absenteeism may negatively impact your grade. Additionally, do your best to arrive on time. Habitual tardiness may also negatively impact your grade. All late work must be approved by me in advance. Incomplete assignments will not be accepted. For more information, please consult the university's policies at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Behavior

Be polite and courteous—to me and to each other. This generally covers decorous conduct: engaging in civil debate; not talking over each other, or while someone else is talking; staying awake during class; and consuming food and/or beverages in a polite manner.

Disability Policy

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Online Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Academic Honesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Harassment

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>

Course Schedule

Jan. 6

- Course Introduction
- Syllabus

Homework: Read the syllabus; read the first third of Plato’s *Phaedrus* (available at <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/phaedrus.html>)

Jan. 8

- Introduction to Writing and Rhetoric
- Crash Course in the Historical Foundations of Rhetoric

Homework: Read the second third of Plato’s *Phaedrus*

Jan. 10

- Plato Review
- Course Exercise: My Phaedms to Your Socrates

Homework: Finish Plato's *Phaedrus*; complete Blog #1

Jan. 13

- Plato Wrap-Up
- Play-Dough: Applying Plato to Contemporary Rhetoric
- Quiz

Homework: Read Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream Speech" (available at <http://www.archives.gov/press/exhibits/dream-speech.pdf>)

Jan. 15

- The Rhetorical Principles of MLK and the Civil Rights Movement
- Introduction to Civil Disobedience (as Rhetorical Act)

Homework: Read M.J. Braun's "Against Decorous Civility: Acting as if You Live in a Democracy" in AR.

Jan. 17

- The Question Concerning Civil Disobedience (And Not-So-Civil Disobedience)
- A Turn in Rhetorical Strategy: Introduction to the Tumultuous Late Sixties

Homework: Read "Interview with Huey P. Newton" (available at <http://digital.wustl.edu/e/eii/eiiweb/new5427.0458.119huevpnewton.html>); complete Blog #2

Jan. 20

NO CLASS

Homework: Watch "The Bombing of Osage Avenue" (available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVb01Y7svfE>)

Jan. 22

- The Rhetorical Strategies of the Black Panthers, MOVE, and the Free Mumia Movement
- Quiz

Homework: Read Dana Cloud's "The Only Conceivable Thing To Do: Reflections on Academics and Activism" in AR

Jan. 24

- An American Explosion: Introduction to 60s Student Activism and the "Operation of the Machine"

Homework: Casually consult the first half of Abbie Hoffman's *Steal This Book*; complete Blog #3

Jan. 27

- Chicago '68 and the Chicago 8 (... and Hoffman's Courtroom Rhetoric)
- Quiz

Homework: Casually consult the second half of Abbie Hoffman's *Steal This Book*.

Jan. 29

- The Rhetoric of the Free Speech Movement and the Bombing of Berkeley

Homework: Read Lee Artz's "Speaking Truth to Power: Observations from Experience" in AR; look over May '68 graffiti (available at <http://www.bopsecrets.org/CF/graffiti.htm>).

Jan. 31

- Meanwhile in Paris: The Rhetoric of '68 Student Activism Abroad

Homework: Read Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" (available at <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/179381>): complete Blog #3

Feb. 3

- Howl Gets Fouder: Escalation of the Vietnam Conflict, Rising Importance of Media, and Conflict in the Streets
- Quiz

Homework: Watch a clip concerning the JFK vs. Nixon debate (available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHG54535W_o); listen to CCR's "Fortunate Son" and Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young's "Ohio" (available on Youtube); watch the following clip on the media representation of the Vietnam War: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4aK-lhyHZU>

Feb. 5

- The Rhetoric of Style: The Function of TV and Music in Public Opinion
- The Anti-War Movement: Students for a Democratic Society, Kent St. Massacre, Draft Dodging

Homework: Read Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* (1-50)

Feb. 7

- The My Lai Massacre and the Rhetoric of "Baby Killers"

Homework: Read Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* (51-150); complete Blog #4

Feb.10

- The State Gets Rhetorical: Analyzing “The War on ” and “Peace With Honor” (and other clever phrases)
 - Quiz

Homework: Finish Tim O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried*

Feb.12

- The Rhetoric of Second Wave Feminism

Homework: Read Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (available at <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/ows/seminars/tcentury/FeminineMystique.pdf>)

Feb.14

- Roe v. Wade and the Rhetoric of the Abortion Debate (note: we will *NOT* be debating abortion; we will be looking at the rhetoric surrounding and informing the debate)

Homework: Read Ellen Cushman’s “*Gadugi: Where the Fire Bums*” in AR; complete Blog #5

Feb.17

- The American Indian Movement and the Free Leonard Peltier Movement
 - Quiz

Homework: Watch Sam Green’s *The Weather Underground* (available for \$2.99 rental online)

Feb.19

- Militant Activism Reexamined: The Weather Underground, Animal Liberation Front, and the Environmental Liberation Front

Homework: Read Kevin Mahoney’s “You Can’t Get There from Here: Higher Education, Labor Activism, and Challenges of Neoliberal Globalization” in AR

Feb. 21

- The Battle for Seattle: Globalization and the WTO, IMF, and World Bank

Read: Catherine Chaput’s “The Role of Communism in Democratic Discourse: What Activist Rhetoricians Can Learn from the World Bank” in AR; complete Blog #6

Feb. 24

- Activist Resurgence: Students Return, Occupy, Arab Spring
 - Quiz

Homework: Read Slavoj Žižek's *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously* (first half)

Feb. 26

- The Rhetoric of Occupy and the Occupy Manifesto

Homework: Finish Slavoj Žižek's *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously* (second half)

Feb. 28

- Economic Crisis and the Production of a New Rhetoric: Main St., Wall St., and the "1%"

Homework: Read Charles Bazerman's "The Work of a Middle Class Activist: Stuck in History" in AR; complete Blog #7

Mar. 1-9

SPRING BREAK!

Mar. 10

- The Tension of 2008: The RNC Welcoming Committee
 - Quiz

Homework: Watch "Terrorizing Dissent" (parts 1 and 4, available at <http://www.terrorizingdissent.org>)

Mar. 12

- Sounds Familiar: RNC 2008 and the RNC 8
 - Skype Interview with RNC 8 Member

Homework: Read Amy Pason's "Reclaiming Activism for Students" in AR

Mar. 14

- The UC Davis Incident: Pepper Spray and the Rhetorical Power of Silence (The Quiet Shunning of Chancellor Katehi)

Homework: Shelley Deblasis's and Teresa Grettano's "Breaking News: Armchair Activists Access Their Power" in AR; complete Blog #8

Mar. 17

- Coding a New Rhetoric: Anonymous, Wikileaks, Hacktivism and Slacktivism
 - Quiz

Homework: Review Wikileaks and Anonymous sites (additional sites to be given)

Mar. 19

- Who Owns What? Rhetoric, Information, Law, and Ethics

Homework: Read Seth Kahn's "(Re)Politicizing the Writing Process: An Exhortation and Cautionary Tale" in AR

Mar. 21

- Semester Review

Homework: Mid-Semester Review Evaluation; complete Blog #9; Read Krystie Lee Randoli's "Rape Culture Exists: An Open Letter to University of Wisconsin's David Hookstead" (available at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/11/07/rape-culture-exists-david-hookstead_n_4235955.html)

Mar. 24

- Take Back the Night, "SlutWalks," and the Rhetoric of Rape Culture
 - Quiz

Homework: Review the It Gets Better video campaign (available at <http://www.youtube.com/user/itgetsbetterproject>)

Mar. 26

- The Rhetoric of LGBTQ Activism: Glitter Bombing, Coming Out Day, It Gets Better

Homework: Read "Activism in the Ivory Tower: Finding Hope For Academic Prose"

Mar. 28

- Writing Review/Workshop

Homework: Find and send me three organizations with which you identify (by Sunday evening); complete Blog #10

Mar. 31

- Formation into Core Groups
 - Quiz

Homework: Read "Practicing Democracy: An Experience-Based Approach" in AR

Apr. 2

- Extensive Introduction and Explanation of Final Project

Homework: Read Melissa Dey Hassbrook's "Interventions and Rhetorics of War: Classical

Insights for Contemporary Activists” in AR

Apr. 4

- Review Strategies for Final Project
- Feedback

Homework: Read Theodor Adorno’s and Max Horkheimer’s “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” (first half, available at <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/adorno/1944/culture-industry.htm>); complete Blog #11

Apr. 7

- Repackaging and Selling Counter-Culture: Levi Jeans and the Profitable Image of Tear Gas
- Review
- Quiz

Homework: Finish Adorno and Horkheimer’s “Culture Industry”

Apr. 9

- Buying Your Own Repression and the Electrified Rhetoric of the Commodity/Commercial
- Homework: Read Gilles Deleuze’s “Postscript on the Societies of Control” (available at https://files.nyu.edu/dnm232/public/deleuze_postscript.pdf)

Apr. 11

- The Digital Institution, The Burden of Credit, and the Future of Surveillance and Control

Homework: Complete Blog #12

Apr. 14

- Group Workshops
- Review
- Quiz

Homework: Read Richard E. Vatz’s “Postscript to Chapter 7” in AR

Apr. 16

- Concluding Discussion on *Activism and Rhetoric* Collection

Homework: Read Jeff Schweers’ “Tuition equity” article (available at <http://www.gainesville.com/article/20131205/ARTICLES/131209798>)

Apr. 19

- Group Workshops

Homework: Read Donna Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century" (available at

<http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/irvinem/theory/Haraway-CyborgManifesto.html>)

Apr. 21

- Speculations on the Future of (Student/Cyborg) Activism
 - Group Workshops
 - Quiz

Apr. 23

- Evaluations