

**Department of English
University of Florida**

**SPC 4680 – Rhetorical Criticism
Fall 2021**

Instructor: Victor Del Hierro, Ph.D.

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Class Location: Little Hall 0125

Office Hours: T 11:30-1:30 Th 12:35-1:30

Class Time: Tues 1:55pm-2:45pm & Thurs 1:55pm-3:50pm

There's a story I know. It's about the earth and how it floats in space on the back of a turtle. I've heard this story many times, and each time someone tells the story, it changes. Sometimes the change is simply in the voice of the storyteller. Sometimes the change is in the details. Sometimes in the order of events. Other times it's the dialogue or the response of the audience. But in all the tellings of all the tellers, the world never leaves the turtle's back. And the turtle never swims away.

-Thomas King *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*

Course Overview:

This course will take up the call of Cultural Rhetorics to think about how we might simultaneously center multiple historical and cultural traditions. Specifically, this course will open up space to critically analyze the rhetorical elements and processes of a variety of rhetors, communities, and cultures. Focused specifically on contemporary contexts, this class will ask students to identify an important figure, movement, and/or moment, and ask them to trace a genealogy or trajectory for their chosen topic. By doing this, students will work to understand what discourses are in dialogue as well as working towards possible recovery of marginalized discourses. This course will have three main areas of focus: Rhetorics of Food, Digital Media, and Activism.

Course Objectives:

1. Develop a working theory of Rhetoric
2. Develop skills for rhetorical criticism
3. Understand Rhetoric as a practice situated within a community
4. Understand the process of tracing a historical lineage
5. Perform a historical rhetorical lineage

Course Texts:

King, Thomas. (2003). *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*. ISBN: 9780887846960

Hernandez, Jillian. (2020). *Aesthetics of Excess*. ISBN: 9781478012634

Epps-Robertson, Candace. (2018). *Resisting Brown*. ISBN: 9780822965558

All other readings will be available on CANVAS.

Class Policy

In my courses, I do my best to ensure that everything we do is purposeful and useful to students. I also come into the class with the assumption that everyone has something to offer. My assessment of the class and of myself is always in relationship to each other. If I assign something and a majority of the class is successful, then I perceive that to mean I have been successful at my job. If I find that most students are having a difficult time then I need reevaluate my approach and adjust accordingly.

My expectation is that all members of our class community will attend every class session and will submit all work on time, so that we can build and sustain a reciprocal and collegial relationship. I will take attendance during every class period, so please come speak with me immediately if you anticipate not being able to attend class and/or to submit your work on time. Attendance policy will adhere to the university guidelines on the matter, information can be found here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

If there is anything I can do to make the classroom environment more accessible to you for any reason, please come speak with me during the first week of class so that we can ensure that you have everything you need to be successful in this course and in the graduate program.

Grades and Assignments

All assignments must be submitted on time in order to pass the class. Grades will be assigned on each project and your final grade will be assigned cumulatively based on your scores on each assignment. If you are concerned with your grade at any point in the semester, please come see me during office hours. I will not discuss grades via email at any point. The table below outlines grade percentages and their corresponding point/letter grades.

Percent	Grade	Grade Points
93.4 – 100	A	4.00
90.0 – 93.3	A-	3.67
86.7 – 89.9	B+	3.33
83.4 – 86.6	B	3.00
80.0 – 83.3	B-	2.67
76.7 – 79.9	C+	2.33
73.4 – 76.6	C	2.00
70.0 – 73.3	C-	1.67
66.0 - 69.9	D+	1.33
63.0 - 65.9	D	1.00
60.0 - 62.9	D-	0.67
0 - 59.9	F	0.00

More information on UF grading policy may be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Overview

Class Participation and Attendance (10%)

Museum Visit Assignment (15%)

Mid-Term (15%)

Class Facilitation (15%)

Peer-Review (10%)

Final Presentation (10%)

Final Project (25%)

Mid-Term (15%)

For your midterm, you will write an 8-10page paper that will eventually serve as the basis for your literature review. You will draw on the readings for the course along with some of your own research to answer the following questions:

1. How are you defining rhetoric?
2. How are you defining a rhetorical practice?
3. What rhetorical tradition are you invoking? How is that tradition defined?
How is that tradition established?

Class Facilitation (15%)

Each student will pick a set of readings to facilitate a discussion around. During these facilitations, students are expected to lead discussion and are encouraged to engage in creative activities.

Final Project (25%)

For your final project you will write 10-12 page paper that identifies a rhetorical phenomenon or rhetorician that you believe merits further attention. The purpose of the paper is to clearly lay out a rhetorical historical trajectory supported by research from both academic and investigative sources. Finally, in your analysis you will discuss the rhetorical actions, practices, and implications that your subject contains. Your final deliverable may include digital or other media elements. An alternative to the 10-12page paper can be discussed and negotiated. Throughout the semester there will be various milestones and check-ins for your final project.

Museum Visit Assignment (15%)

During this semester the Harn Museum is featuring an exhibit titled *Shadow to Substance*. We will go on a guided tour and then you will be asked to complete a written rhetorical analysis of the exhibit.

Peer-Review (10%)

We will engage in at least two peer-reviews during the semester. These peer-reviews are to be spaces for you to think out loud with your classmates and to help you think thought your delivery. We can add additional sessions as we deem necessary.

Final Presentation (10%)

During the last week of classes, you will do a 10-minute presentation discussing your final project.

Class Participation and Attendance (10%)

I will grade participation based on student engagement in class discussions. Attendance will be taken but won't be graded.

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for

students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

Class Demeanor

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Please avoid the use of cell phones and restrict eating to outside of the classroom. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be held at minimum, if at all.

Materials and Supplies Fees

There are no additional fees for this course.

University Honesty Policy

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 (<https://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.

Campus Resources:

Health and Wellness U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting,

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.

On-Line Students Complaints: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.

Calendar

Week 1 – Introductions and Syllabus

Week 2 – *The Truth About Stories*

Week 3 – Understanding Culture Rhetorics

Week 4 – Understanding Language

Week 5 – The Role of Education, Writing, and Rhetoric

Week 6 – *Resisting Brown*

Week 7 – Shadow to Substance (Harn Museum & Homecoming Week)

Week 8 – Rhetoric in Digital Media

Week 9 – Rhetorical Criticism as a Theory

Week 10 – Writing Tools (Midterm Week)

Week 11 – Food and Culture

Week 12 – *Aesthetics of Excess*

Week 13 – Culture and Food

Week 14 – Thanksgiving Week

Week 15 – Cultural Rhetorics and Rhetorical Criticism a New Age

Week 16 – Last Week of Classes