

Contact Info

Office: 263 Bessey Hall Office Hours:
Office Phone: (517) 884-2574 T, Tr: 1:00-3:00
Email: jmonberg@msu.edu

Course Goals

For the R&W program, WRA 882 serves as “a survey of modern, postmodern, contemporary rhetoric theories;” for PhD students in the program, it is one of the courses upon which your Core Comprehensive Exam will be based. At minimum, then, the course provides an opportunity for you to gain a sense of what it means to engage in rhetorical theorizing and to understand theory rhetorically.

Most importantly, students will study theoretical perspectives to help them to understand how knowledge is made in the field and to participate in the scholarly conversations of the discipline. This course will cover the major movements in intellectual history over the 20th and 21st centuries. Students will read both theory and practice (e.g., case studies, ethnographies, narratives, material culture, historiography, essays) from a wide range of perspectives and approaches. This course will help you develop a foundation for your intellectual projects as a graduate student and beyond.

My approach is especially interdisciplinary, integrating perspectives from sociology, anthropology, history and philosophy. This approach will serve to highlight why theories are seen as advances from the past, reveal empirical and normative assumptions, and map the alliances and disagreements across individual theorists.

I'll include a special focus on cities and the infrastructures that shape them. This focus builds on rhetoric's special focus on making publics: Who are we? What are our values? How do we make sense of future challenges? This focus also helps to provide concrete detail to otherwise abstract approaches. We live in an increasingly messy world with a complex interpenetration of subjectivities, performances, practices, objects, hybrids, infrastructures, ecologies, representations, and communities. Because these factors are tightly entangled, the readings and contexts in this class will also be entangled. Instead of treating gender, class, digital technologies, or race as distinct independent variables, we will explore and develop methodologies for generating knowledge that is accountable, rigorous, and productive.

In order to navigate that path, we'll do a lot of telling, talking, watching, seeing, hearing, imagining, interpreting, wrangling & wrestling with theoretical language, concepts and implications. I expect you to do substantial work on your own (read more, do online research, consult reference materials, work in theory support groups, etc.) in order to accumulate the genealogical & historical contexts that help you build an engaged theoretical practice for your own scholarship. To arrive at that place of practice, you must be patient with yourself, with one another, with me, and with the materials.

Course Materials

Required Texts to Purchase:

Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.

McLagan, Meg and Yates McKee. *Sensible Politics: The Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism*

Natoli, Joseph and Linda Hutcheon. eds. *A Postmodern Reader*.

Mignolo, Walter. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*.

Jacqueline Jones Royster & Gesa E. Kirsch, *Feminist Rhetorical Practices: New Horizons for Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies*.

Helpful Books

Books you might find useful if you're new to theory:

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory*;

Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today* and *Using Critical Theory*;

Various titles from W.W. Norton's *How to Read...* series; from Oxford's *a very short introduction* series; or, from Writers & Readers *for beginners* series. Wikipedia has become an excellent overview of theorists' intellectual terrains. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy provides another step forward in sophistication.

Texts Online

An extensive set of readings is posted on our D2L online course site.

Grading

Grading is tricky in a graduate seminar. When I evaluate your performance at the end of the semester, I'll look at it in two ways: 1) your daily performance, participation & contributions to the intellectual community (weekly writings, discussion responsibilities, attendance, participation); and, 2) your project work (conferences, group work, rhetorical analyses, group project). Though I won't assign a grade to your materials during the semester, I will respond to you evaluatively in writing. If you have any questions or concerns about what those responses mean, about the quality of your work in general, or how your work to/date might translate into a grade, please talk to me.

1. Attendance, Participation & Collegiality

Here's what has been used in the past for this seminar. How would you like to see us talk about this piece of the course?

Everyone in the course is a member of the intellectual community we're creating. We are all responsible for finding ways to be helpful, engaged, productive and decent in our relations with one another. This doesn't mean not asking difficult questions, or not disagreeing with one another; in fact, it often means doing just that, but doing it in a way that opens and furthers discussion. There are some simple practices that are part of your responsibility as a member of this community. First, you need to be in class every day. If you can't be in class, it's your responsibility to catch up on what you've missed in a timely fashion. Second, you must participate in class discussion and course activities regularly and with a good heart. This means keeping an eye toward the needs of the whole group, not just on your own needs as an individual, and consistently striving to be thoughtful and productive in your engagement with others. This community-minded approach makes the regular academic display and competition nearly impossible to maintain; it does so on purpose.

2. Weekly Writings

Here's what I've done in the past. It mostly works. Sometimes students write poems instead of narrative responses, sometimes folks make short videos, and sometimes they do other things. I'm pretty open about the form. The last compound sentence in the paragraph is really "the point" for me. These weekly engagements help me see how folks are doing, point folks in customized research directions, or help folks who are having difficulties. Because they get published to the whole class, they also can help folks help each other, make connections across interest areas, etc. Are there other ways that we might think about doing something on a weekly basis?

One of the ways that you'll consistently make a contribution to the intellectual community of the course is through weekly writings. Each week you'll have a 1-2 page critical response due to our discussion list no later than noon on the Tuesday prior to our class meeting. These writings serve as an opportunity for you to demonstrate intellectual engagement with the course materials & with the issues and discussions that arise from those materials. A critical response writing should not be a summary or a surface, skim of the readings that week; instead they should form a provisional response to that week's readings, explore issues raised by those readings, articulate questions across readings, or demonstrate your practice of theory in a deliberate, specific way.

Once during the semester, your weekly writing will lead our class discussion. You will sign up for date of this responsibility during the first day of class.

3. Sensible Politics: Mapping Theory Genealogies

This set of essays will allow us to see the impacts of rhetorical theory in the world. Pick an article from the *Sensible Politics* collection.

Map the intellectual genealogy of the article. What theorists were used as a foundation for the author's perspective? What kinds of questions did this foundation allow the author to pose? What are the stakes of the foundation—what can we see about the world? Who are the allies and enemies of the author? What kinds of methods are compatible with the foundation? What kinds of case studies work with the foundation?

Feel free to unleash your imagination.

Be imaginative in terms of the range of research you use to trace theoretical connections, you may need to take a risk to fill in some aporias.

Be imaginative in the format you use to represent your thinking. Poem, cluster maps, podcasts, parables, and other genres are encouraged.

Your limit is temporal, plan to take about 15 minutes of class time.

4. Project Work

The point of project work is to practice engaging with, synthesizing, and working from theory in a longer form than a weekly response can allow. There will be two projects for this course. One due no later than March 16th, the other due no later than May 4th. (There will be a D2L dropbox for projects.)

For each project, you'll choose from one of the below listed projects and will negotiate the details of it with me before you begin substantial work on it. Each of these options should result in a 5-7 page written product or the equivalent (any project can be done via any medium). Any of them can be collaborative.

CHOICES:

Midterm Rhetorical Analysis One of the central tasks of the course is to practice doing rhetoric theory.. A written rhetorical analysis of a text or media object, your analysis will be informed by a particular theorist or theoretical field but you will not use any citations; instead, you will build and articulate a rhetorical frame from that theorist/field and provide a list of works that contributed to that frame.

Canon Ride-alongs – Pick a traditional rhetorical theory text (or a series of 4-6 journal articles) from the same general decade as what we're reading for a given week, put it in conversation with the readings from this decade. The point of this analysis would be to look for commonalities and differences (in topic, approach, etc.) in the intellectual conversations happening across what were thought of as deep disciplinary divides.

Journal archeology/genealogy – Pick a couple journals in the field and look for how rhet/comp was using the theories that we're reading about. The point of such work would be to see what kinds of effect particular theories had (or have) on work inside the discipline.

Right here, right now –Pick a field, a couple of books, or 4-6 articles, that are happening NOW in rhet/comp and create a critical conversation/write-up between what’s happening now in the discipline in relation to last 50-60 years of theory we’ve been reading. A more synthesized & wider-reaching version of the Journal choice above, the point of this can be investigative (what happened?), situational (where do I fit?), or critique (what have we avoided/used and why?).

Freestyle -- a user’s guide to theory for rhetoricians? a multimedia piece? a graphic novel excerpt? an installation? you tell me.

Course Policies

Assignment Due Dates

You must complete all major assignments. If you do not submit all materials for each project, you will not pass the class. No late work will be accepted. Any exceptions to this policy must be made by written petition and approved by me before the due date.

E-mail Correspondence

If you need to contact me by e-mail, please include “WRA 882” in the subject line of your message. This will ensure your e-mail reaches the appropriate folder in my in-box. Please remember that faculty members (like you) juggle multiple commitments. I will do my best to respond to e-mails within 24 hours, Monday – Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm. Please do not contact me by e-mail about your grades. Because of privacy issues, instructors are discouraged from corresponding with students about their grades over e-mail.

Office Hours

Please feel free to come see me during office hours to discuss readings, projects, and any problems that may arise. If my office hours are not convenient, we can arrange another time to meet.

Plagiarism

Stealing and passing off as your own someone else’s ideas or words, or using information from another’s work without crediting the source, is called “plagiarism.” Some specific examples of actions that constitute plagiarism include pasting together uncredited information from the Internet or published sources, submitting an entire paper/project written by someone else, submitting a paper written for another class (and thus not original work), and copying another student’s work (even with the student’s permission). In order to avoid unintentional plagiarism and to represent your work honestly, you will need to be meticulous about giving credit to any and all sources, whether directly quoted (even a few words) or paraphrased.

Students who plagiarize will receive a failing grade on the assignment and may fail the course. For specific MSU policies on academic honesty, see *Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide* (<http://www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/index.htm>), especially General Student Regulations 1.0, “Protection of Scholarship and Grades,” and the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades and Academic Honesty.

MSU’s Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD)

Students with disabilities that may interfere with completing your course work should consult with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodating your needs. You will also need to contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities:

<http://www.rcpd.msu.edu/>

122 Bessey Hall

(517) 884-RCPD (4-7273)
TTY: (517) 355-1293

These policies are subject to change at any time with due notice to students.

Daily Schedule

Note: This schedule is tentative and likely to change. Any revisions will be reasonable and based on class needs. Please check D2L (or ask a classmate) for periodic updates.

1-13 **Introductions and Overview**

Star, "Anselm Strauss: An Appreciation"

1-20 **Fragmenting Enlightenment Foundations**

Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"

Foucault, from *Archaeology of Knowledge*:

Part I – Introduction, pgs. 3-17;

Part II – The Discursive Regularities, pgs. 210-76;

Part III – The Statement and the Archive:

 "Defining the Statement," pgs. 79-87;

 "The Enunciative Function," pgs. 88-105;

 "The Historical *a priori* and the Archive," pgs. 126-131;

Part IV – Archaeological Description:

 "Archaeology and the History of Ideas," pgs. 135-140;

 "Science and Knowledge," pgs. 178-195;

Part V – Conclusion, pgs. 199-211.

Kuhn, "The Resolution of Revolutions," from Natoli, *A Postmodern Reader*, pgs. 376-389

Weekly Response due by Tuesday, 1/19, @noon

1-27 **From Dewey to Bourdieu: Tensions in Agency and Structure**

Gopnik, "The Outside Game"

Emirbayer, "Dewey and Bourdieu on Democracy"

Wacquant, "Scrutinizing the Street"

Anderson, "The Ideologically Driven Critique"

Kwiek, "Rorty's Elective Affinities"

Weekly Response due by Tuesday, 1/26, @noon

2-3 **Postmodern(isms)**

Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*

Natoli et al, from *A Postmodern Reader*:

Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," pgs. 91-104;
Hassan, "Toward a Concept of Postmodernism," pgs. 273-287;
Jameson, excerpts from *Postmodernism*, pgs. 312-332;
Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra," pgs. 342-375
Optional: Huysen, "Mapping the Postmodern," pgs. 105-156.

Weekly Response due by Tuesday, 2/2, @noon

2-10 **Critical Postmodernisms**

Natoli et al, from *A Postmodern Reader*:

Hutcheon, "Beginning to Theorize Postmodernism," pgs. 243-272;
West, "Black Culture and Postmodernism," pgs. 390-397;
hooks, "Postmodern Blackness," pgs. 510-518;
Belsey, "Towards Cultural History," pgs. 551-568.

Foucault, Parts I and II, from *History of Sexuality*

Weekly Response due by Tuesday, 2/9, @noon

2-17 **Poststructural Systems**

Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context"

Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,"
(Natoli, pgs. 223-242)

Butler, "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire"

Butler, interview with theory.org <http://www.theory.org.uk/butOint1.htm>

Hall, "Encoding and Decoding" & "Cultural Identity and Diaspora"

Weekly Response due by Tuesday, 2/16, @noon

2-24 **Framing the City**

DeCerteau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*

Barthes, "The Eiffel Tower"

Sassen, "Whose City Is IT? Globalization and the Formation of New Claims"

Wacquant, "Crafting the Neoliberal State: Workfare, Prisonfare, and Social
Insecurity"

Anderson, "The Cosmopolitan Canopy"

Weekly Response due by Tuesday, 2/23, @noon

3-1 **Ethnography and the Global Imaginary**

Clifford, "On the Edges of Anthropology"
Appadurai, "Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination"
Marcus and Fischer, "Taking Account of World Historical Political Economy"
Marcus and Saka, "Assemblage"
Escobar, "Networks"

Weekly Response due by Tuesday, 2/29, @noon

3-8 **Spring Break**

3-16 **Actor Network Theories**

Latour, "Reassembling the Social", Introduction and Conclusion
Latour, "Ding Politics"
Latour, "An Attempt at a Compositionist Manifesto"
Lynch, "Composition's New Thing: Bruno Latour and the Apocalyptic Turn"

Weekly Response due by Tuesday, 3/15, @noon

3-23 **Tracing Networks of Materials and Culture**

Hu, *A Prehistory of the Cloud*

Weekly Response due by Tuesday, 3/22, @noon

3-30 **Postcolonial Stories**

Fanon, from *Black Skin, White Masks*:
Introduction, pgs. 7-14;
Chapter One, "The Negro and Language," pgs. 17-40;
Chapter Five, "The Fact of Blackness," pgs. 109-140.
Said, from *Orientalism*: "Introduction," pgs. 1-30;
Chapter One, "The Scope of Orientalism," pgs. 31-112.

Weekly Response due by Tuesday, 3/29, @noon

4-6 **Mignolo and Methodological Implications**

Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*

Weekly Response due by Tuesday, 4/5, @noon

4-13

Spivak

Morris, from *Can the Subaltern Speak: Reflections on the History of an Idea*:

Morris, Introduction, pgs. 1-18;

Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak," original essay published in *Marxism and the Interpretation of History*, pgs. 237-291; Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

revised essay published in *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, pgs. 21-78;

Birla, "Postcolonial Studies," pgs. 87-99;

Spivak, "In Response: Looking Back, Looking Forward," pgs. 227-236.

RESOURCES

<http://postcolonialstudies.emory.edu/gayatriOchakravortyOspivak/>

<http://www.postcolonialweb.org/poldiscourse/spivak/spivak1.html> Interview,

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fHoCiBhZ_0 Interview,

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8iPj6qka3o>

<http://www.nakedpunch.com/articles/21>

Weekly Response due by Tuesday, 4/21, @noon

4-20

Rhet/Comp Now

Jacqueline Jones Royster & Gesa E. Kirsch, *Feminist Rhetorical Practices: New Horizons for Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies*.

Weekly Response due by Tuesday, 4/19, @noon

4-27

Rhet/Comp Now

Articles to be determined

5-4

Final Meeting
