



ENGL 6805/7805 – History of Rhetoric: Early Modern to Contemporary

3 credit hours

Peck Hall 306 | Thursdays | 6–9 p.m.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor:	Dr. Eric Detweiler
Office Location:	Peck Hall 323A
Office Phone:	(615) 898-2585
Email Address:	eric.detweiler@mtsu.edu
Office Hours:	Mondays 12–2 p.m., Tuesdays 3:30–5 p.m., and by appointment

COURSE INFORMATION

Description

This course covers the history of rhetoric from the early modern era through the present day. We will read primary sources from the period covered as well as historically focused scholarship in rhetorical studies.

While this course is focused on surveying the history of rhetoric rather than a particular theme or topic, there are a few key questions that will guide our discussions: How do we shape, represent, and engage with history as part of the work of rhetorical scholarship? What is the relationship between rhetoric and violence? What role has rhetoric played in public and educational life in and beyond the United States?

Objectives

This course is designed to:

- Via primary and secondary texts, introduce students to a diverse array of rich rhetorical traditions that have operated and developed over the past 500 years,
- prepare students to work and write with the academic conventions of contemporary rhetorical scholarship, and
- help graduate students develop new strategies for incorporating rhetorical theories and concepts into their pedagogical and professional practices.

COURSE MATERIALS

Textbooks

There are no required textbooks for this course. We will read parts of a number of books and all of Ersula Ore's *Lynching: Rhetoric, Violence, and American Identity*, but all are available as ebooks through Walker Library and in PDF from via D2L. You are welcome to purchase copies if you prefer hard copies to digital ones.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Grading Procedure

Your grade for this course will be tied to four writing projects as well as D2L discussion posts. I will assess and respond to your work based on your developing familiarity with rhetoric as a field of study, your engagement with course content, and your writing.

Grading Scale

The grading scale for this course is as follows:

A: 90-100	C+: 77-79	D: 63-66
B+: 87-89	C: 73-76	D-: 60-62
B: 83-86	C-: 70-72	F: 59 and under
B-: 80-82	D+: 67-69	

Assignments and Projects

I will provide more detailed guidelines for the one-pagers and final project during the first few weeks of class.

- **D2L Posts (25%):** I will set up D2L discussion boards where you will post informal written responses to course readings. A post will be due by noon each Thursday when there's a reading assignment on the course calendar (this gives me some time to read over and consider the posts before class). To get full credit, you must have 10 posts of at least 250 words apiece by the end of the course. During the first day of class, each student will also select one day on which they will be the class's resident superposter. For that day, instead of your usual post, you'll need to create a multi-page document (attached to a post as a

PDF or Word document) in which you summarize and overview all of the days' assigned readings. Think of it as a combined annotated bibliography/review that will help you and your classmates recollect the substance of your assigned days' readings as you all work on subsequent projects.

- **Summary/Response Papers (3 papers, 15% apiece):** Three one-page papers in which you summarize a reading we've encountered in class, then use that reading to analyze an artifact you'll choose during the first weeks of class. "Artifacts" could include texts, events, archives, technologies, etc. These papers must be single-spaced, no more than a single page, use a font between 10-12 points, and have no more than 1" margins. We will look at some examples in class. Each one-pager may be revised and resubmitted up to two additional times after the initial submission. You will read these aloud in class on the day they're due—or, alternatively, play an audio recording of you reading them. In part, these are meant to help prepare you for your final project. That is, you can borrow liberally from the one-pagers as you're composing your final project.
- **Final Project (30%):** The final project will differ in scope for MA and PhD students. All students must submit a short (~500-word) piece of reflective writing that introduces, contextualizes, and reflects on the project. MA student will write a paper the length of a conference presentation (2500–3000 words) related to the course. For PhD students, a paper the length of a short article (4000+ words) related to the course or a piece of digital scholarship, discussed with and approved by me, by the beginning of Thanksgiving break. You will give short presentations about your projects during our scheduled final exam meeting.

Feedback

- In general, I will provide feedback on your projects within a week of the due date. That feedback will be posted in the D2L dropbox where you submitted the project. I typically record audio feedback, but let me know if that isn't an accessible option for you and I'm happy to provide written feedback instead. I am also willing to look at and respond to early drafts of projects prior to the final due date.
- Major projects should be submitted to the corresponding D2L dropbox and will not be accepted via email.

Attendance

I ask that you miss no more than two days of class. This will be a highly participatory course, so it is easy to fall behind if you're absent. That said, I know illness and personal emergencies happen. If you do miss more than two classes, you will need to schedule a one-on-one meeting with me to make sure you have a path forward in the course and that we agree on what that entails. If you don't schedule that meeting, you won't pass the course.

Late Work

If you anticipate needing an extension on a project or a reading discussion, just let me know and we can determine an appropriate deadline.

OTHER POLICIES

Academic Integrity/Misconduct

Please review the information on [Academic Integrity and Misconduct](#). The instructor will be submitting materials to an online service (Turnitin.com) which will review the work for plagiarism. Students should also review the report generated for each assignment and self-check for plagiarism. Information on how to cite work correctly is provided within the course modules or through the [University Writing Center](#). You may read more about how to avoid plagiarism from the [Office of the University Provost](#).

Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Submitting as one's own work, themes, reports, drawings, laboratory notes, computer programs, or other projects prepared by another person
- Knowingly assisting another student in obtaining or using unauthorized materials
- Submitting assignments previously used in other courses where you received credit for the work
- Improperly crediting or lack of crediting an original author's work

Students guilty of academic misconduct are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class. In addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions (including expulsion from the university), which may be imposed through the regular institutional procedures as a result of academic misconduct, the instructor has the authority to assign an "F" or zero for an activity or to assign an "F" for the course. Students guilty of plagiarism will be immediately reported to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.

I am True Blue

As a member of this diverse community, I am a valuable contributor to its progress and success. I am engaged in the life of this community. I am a recipient and a giver. I am a listener and a speaker. I am honest in word and deed. I am committed to reason, not violence. I am a learner now and forever. I am a BLUE RAIDER. True Blue!

Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades are given rarely and only in extenuating circumstances. The information below can be found in the Graduate Catalog under [Academic Regulations](#).

- The grade I indicates that the student has not completed all course requirements due to illness or other uncontrollable circumstances, especially those which may

occur toward the close of the term. Mere failure to make up work or turn in required work on time does not provide a basis for the grade of I unless the extenuating circumstances noted above are acceptable to the instructor. When a student fails to appear for a final examination without known cause, the grade to be reported should be determined as follows: If the student has done satisfactory work to that point, the grade I may be reported on the assumption that the student was ill or will otherwise present sufficient reason for official excuse; if the student has attended irregularly and has not done satisfactory work to that point, the grade F should be reported.

- The "incomplete" must be removed during the succeeding semester, excluding summer. Otherwise, it converts to a grade of F. A student should not make up the "incomplete" by registering and paying again for the same course. The I grade carries no value until converted to a final grade.

Email

For email communication, please contact me at eric.detweiler@mtsu.edu. In cases where email correspondence includes discussion of student education records protected by the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#), I will follow up with you via D2L email. I am not permitted to respond to student emails via a non-institutional assigned email, so please contact me using your MTMail addresses.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Students with Disabilities

Middle Tennessee State University is committed to campus access in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Any student interested in reasonable accommodations can consult the [Disability & Access Center \(DAC\)](#) website and/or contact the DAC for assistance at 615-898-2783 or [DAC Email](#).

Tutoring

MTSU Online supports multiple [Online Student Services](#).

Grade Appeals

[University Policy 313, Student Grade Appeals](#), provides an avenue for MTSU students to appeal a final course grade in cases in which the student alleges that unethical or unprofessional actions by the instructor and/or grading inequities improperly impacted the final grade.

Title IX

Students who believe they have been harassed, discriminated against or been the victim of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking should contact a

Title IX/Deputy Coordinator at 615-898- 2185 or 615-898-2750 for assistance or review [MTSU's Title IX website](#) for resources.

MTSU faculty are concerned about the well-being and development of our students and are legally obligated to share reports of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking with the University's Title IX coordinator to help ensure student's safety and welfare. Please refer to [MTSU's Title IX website](#) or contact information and details.

COURSE CALENDAR

This calendar includes deadlines for reading assignments and major writing projects. All readings will be available via D2L as PDFs. Readings and projects are listed on the day they're due.

Week 1	
Aug. 28	Introductions, Syllabus and Course Calendar, Intro to the History of Rhetoric
Week 2	
Sept. 4	Rhetorical Situations and Ecologies <u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lloyd Bitzer – “The Rhetorical Situation” • <i>Optional:</i> Richard Vatz – “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation” • Barbara Biesecker – “Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation through the Thematic of <i>Differáncé</i>” • Jenny Edbauer Rice – “Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation to Rhetorical Ecologies” • Catherine Chaput – “Rhetorical Circulation in Late Capitalism: Neoliberalism and the Overdetermination of Affective Energy” • <i>Optional:</i> Introduction to <i>Responsible Pedagogy</i>
Week 3	
Sept. 11	Early Modern Rhetoric in the Americas <u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg – “Renaissance Rhetoric: Introduction” • Lois Agnew et al. – “Octalog III: The Politics of Historiography in 2010” • Damián Baca – “<i>te-ixtli</i>: The ‘Other Face’ of the Americas” (you can skip the chapter summaries) • Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz – from <i>The Poet’s Answer to the Most Illustrious Sister Filotea de la Cruz</i> • Rocío Quispe-Agnoli – “Spanish Scripts Colonize the Image: Inca Visual Rhetorics”
Week 4	
Sept. 18	Introduction to Enlightenment Rhetorics <u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg – “Enlightenment Rhetoric: Introduction”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giambattista Vico – from <i>On the Study Methods of Our Time</i> • S. Noble Frank – “Feminist Historiography <i>As If</i>: Performativity and Representation in Feminist Histories of Rhetoric” • Madeleine de Scudéry – “Of Conversation” and “Of Speaking Too Much, or Too Little” • Mary Astell – from <i>A Serious Proposal to the Ladies</i>
Week 5	
Sept. 25	Summary/Response 1
Week 6	
Oct. 2	<p>The Scottish Enlightenment and Belletristic Rhetoric</p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Longaker – <i>Rhetoric and the Republic</i>, Chapters 2 & 3 • David Hume – “Of the Standard of Taste” • Hugh Blair – from <i>Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres</i>
Week 7	
Oct. 9	<p>Nineteenth-Century Indigenous Rhetorics</p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lisa King, Rose Gubele, and Joyce Rain Anderson – “Careful with the Stories We Tell” • Jason Edward Black – “Native Resistive Rhetoric and the Decolonization of American Indian Removal Discourse” • Tecumseh – “Sleep No Longer, O Choctaws and Chickasaws” • Andrew Jackson – “Second Annual Message to Congress”
Week 8	
Oct. 16	<p>Abolitionist Rhetorics</p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patricia Roberts-Miller – <i>Fanatical Schemes</i>, Introduction and Chapter 7 • Frederick Douglass – Select Readings • Sarah Grimké – <i>Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Conditions of Women, Letters III, IV, and XIV</i>
Week 9	
Oct. 23	<p><u>Reading</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ersula Ore – <i>Lynching: Rhetoric, Violence, and American Identity</i>
Week 10	
Oct. 30	<p>U.S. Rhetorical Education</p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexander Bain and Adams Sherman Hill – Select Readings • Zitkala-Ša – “The School Days of an Indian Girl”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryan Skinnell – “Conceding Composition to Create a New Normal”
Week 11	
Nov. 6	Summary/Response 2
Week 12	
Nov. 13	<p>Twentieth-Century Rhetorical Theory, Part 1</p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg – “Modern and Postmodern Rhetoric: Introduction” • I. A. Richards – from <i>The Philosophy of Rhetoric</i> • Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca – from <i>The New Rhetoric</i> • Kenneth Burke – Select Readings
Week 13	
Nov. 20	<p>Twentieth-Century Rhetorical Theory, Part 2</p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Toulmin – from <i>The Uses of Argument</i> • Wayne Booth – from <i>Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent</i> • Jacques Derrida – “Signature Event Context” • Hélène Cixous – <i>The Laugh of the Medusa</i> • Gloria Anzaldúa – from <i>Borderlands/La Frontera</i>
Week 14	
Nov. 27	THANKSGIVING BREAK
Week 15	
Dec. 4	<p>No Class Meeting</p> <p>Summary/Response 3 (due by 11:59 p.m.)</p>
Finals	
Dec. 11	<p>Final Presentations (6–8 p.m.)</p> <p>Final Project</p>