

**San José State University**

**Communication Studies 149: Rhetoric and Public Life, Section 01, Summer 2009**

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<b>Office hours:</b>	T (12-1), by appointment, and every weekday via email
<b>Class days/time:</b>	TR - 1300 to 1615
<b>Classroom:</b>	HGH 219
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	upper division standing

**Catalog Description:** Knowledge of rhetorical theory and practice as they relate to public life, democratic governance and social conflict and consensus from the classical era to contemporary times.

**Course Goals:** We study how philosophical, religious, national, corporate, and technological forces have caused the rhetorical and embodied experience of the public sphere to expand and contract through history. Our goal is to reveal and renew the struggle for community in a fragmenting world.

**Department Learning Objectives**

- [DLO1] *Theories of Communication:* Demonstrate understanding of the major theories that have shaped the communication field.
- [DLO2] *Ethics:* Demonstrate understanding of ethical responsibilities in communicating with others in interpersonal, organizational, small group, intercultural, mediated, and public settings.

**Course Learning Objectives**

- [CLO1] Identify historical shifts in community construction and social governance from ancient times to the contemporary age.
- [CLO2] Understand the role of rhetoric in the maintenance of social order and the critique of that order made by under-represented populations.
- [CLO3] Develop and compare models for public life in a manner that demonstrates knowledge and evaluation of historical examples.

**Required Texts/Readings**

Bellamy, E. (1888/1997). *Looking backward*. New York, NY: Dover Thrift Edition.

More, T. (1516/1997). *Utopia*. New York, NY: Dover Thrift Edition.

*Other readings:* A list of other required essays (corresponding with authors noted on the calendar) is located at the end of this syllabus. Several of these essays require using SJLibrary's electronic databases.

**Library Liaison:** Susan Klingberg is the library liaison for Communication Studies. Contact her at [Susan.Klingberg@sjsu.edu](mailto:Susan.Klingberg@sjsu.edu) with questions you may have as you research the topics for your essays.

## **Classroom Protocol**

**Attendance:** In this class, we will frequently discuss issues and concepts that cannot be found in the assigned readings. Therefore, your participation is required. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get class notes or other necessary information from a colleague.

**Make-ups:** Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period noted on the syllabus. Unexcused late assignments (with the exception of quizzes) may be made up. However, I deduct 10 percent per 24-hour period after the assignment is due.

**Tardiness:** Be seated when class begins. I reserve the right to alter your assignment requirements if you are excessively tardy.

**Extra Credit:** I do not offer extra credit. Given the many resources I make available in this class, I believe that every student has an opportunity to earn 500 points. Moreover, grading extra assignments for students who request "extra credit" is unfair to other students who work within the 500-point limit.

**Mobile phones and other electronic leashes:** Please switch all of your communication devices to non-audible status while in the classroom. Sending or receiving a text? Please step outside of class to do so.

**Dropping and Adding:** You are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. found at [http://sa.sjsu.edu/student\\_conduct](http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct). You should be aware of the new deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

**Academic integrity:** You are expected to be familiar with the University's Academic Integrity Policy. Please review this at [http://sa.sjsu.edu/student\\_conduct](http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct). "Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical development." Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. "If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors."

**Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act:** If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

## Rhetoric and Public Life, COMM 149 Course Schedule

(Note: subject to change with fair notice.)

Week	Description	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1 (6/2)	A permeable membrane of probability	We begin our exploration of rhetoric, relating this topic to central questions that animate this class. <b>Activity:</b> The Rhetoric of Hometown. <b>Reading:</b> None today
1 (6/4)	The future isn't what it used to be	We explore the notion that our popular culture, built environment, and textual landscapes contain overlapping and contradictory vision of the good life. <b>Viewing:</b> <i>Things to Come</i> . <b>Reading:</b> Gibson
2 (6/9)	Philosophers, kings, and women	We discuss Plato's response to the problems of civic life in his era, analyzing how his <i>Republic</i> structurally and rhetorically separates "others" (including most women) from the public sphere. <b>Viewing:</b> <i>Star Trek - "The Cloud Minders."</i> <b>Reading:</b> Plato's <i>Republic</i> Book Five
2 (6/11)	More, utopia, and communism	We study renaissance rhetoric, examining new tensions between governance and the emerging "individual" who struggles to reconcile the edicts of church and state with his conscience. <b>Viewing:</b> <i>A Man For All Seasons</i> . <b>Reading:</b> More. <b>Assignment due:</b> Summary Paper 1 (Plato)
3 (6/16)	An American Jeremiad	We explore enlightenment and jeremiadic rhetorics, imagining the New World as an intersection between religion, science, polity, and commerce. <b>Viewing:</b> <i>Frontline</i> "Apocalypse." <b>Reading:</b> Winthrop
3 (6/18)	Looking backward to the Year 2000	We examine nineteenth century rhetorics of modernism and progress, focusing on utopian literature and community building as a social force in European and United States societies. <b>Reading:</b> Bellamy
4 (6/23)	<b>Midterm</b>	Course project discussion. Individual consultations. <b>Assignment due:</b> Summary Paper 2 (Bellamy)
4 (6/25)	World's fairs, the machine, and the garden	We examine the planning of world's fairs and the pastoral myth of garden cities as modern rhetorical counterpoints to the crafting of contemporary urban life. <b>Reading:</b> Bank
5 (6/30)	A great big beautiful tomorrow	In 1939-40, Arcadian promises of open vistas and peaceful concord between self and society are bypassed as corporate and government planners focus the nation's attention toward the promise of technopia. <b>Viewings:</b> "The World of Tomorrow" and "The Middleton Family at the 1939 World's Fair." <b>Reading:</b> Fotsch
5 (7/2)	Nostalgia for an impossible age	The promise of a community shaped and maintained by its shared vision of the future seems to be replaced by fragmented and customized nostalgia as evidenced by an architectural movement called new urbanism. <b>Viewings:</b> <i>Pleasantville</i> and <i>The Simpsons</i> ("You only move twice"). <b>Reading:</b> Putnam
6 (7/7)	Public life amidst all those texts, tweets, and LOLs	We conclude our investigation of rhetoric and public life with a discussion about the increasingly mobile and mediated ways in which we manage our relationships with friends, neighbors, and strangers. <b>Reading:</b> Edmundson. <b>Assignment due:</b> Ideal Community Project
6 (7/9)	<b>Final Exam</b>	Course is completed. No late work accepted.

## Assignments

**Quizzes** (25 points each - total of 100 points - meets CLO1 and DLO1): To inspire you to retain the material we cover in this class, I will conduct seven brief multiple-choice quizzes throughout this course. Each quiz helps me assess your understanding of the reading to be completed on the day the quiz is offered. You can drop your three lowest grades; I will only use your four top scores for this component.

**Summary Paper 1** (50 points - meets CLO2): The essay is a 2 to 3-page paper about Book Five of Plato's *Republic*. I recommend that you write five half-page paragraphs. In your summary paper, analyze ONE aspect of Book Five (eg., war, family, or education) with an introduction, conclusion, and three specific main points (each with at least one brief citation from the text). This is your chance to offer a unique and well developed reading of the book; do not simply replicate the course notes. Download and paperclip the gradesheet:

<http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/wooda/gradesheet.pdf>

**Summary Paper 2** (50 point - meets CLO2): The essay is a 2 to 3-page paper about Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. I recommend that you write five half-page paragraphs. In your summary paper, analyze ONE aspect of *Looking Backward* (eg., war, family, or education) with an introduction, conclusion, and three specific main points (each with at least one brief citation from the text). This is your chance to offer a unique and well developed reading of the book; do not simply replicate the course notes. Download and paperclip the gradesheet:

<http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/wooda/gradesheet.pdf>

**Ideal Community Project** (100 points - meets CLO3 and DLO2): Write a 4 to 5-page paper to apply your understanding of concepts and issues explored in this class to propose an original notion of an ideal community. The paper shall draw from classroom conversations and readings to introduce and describe a site where *people work together according to a coherent ethical standard to address problems in contemporary public life*. Your setting might be a city, school, monument, recreational site, or another locale. However, your choice must be an imaginary place, entirely created by you.

*Sources:* You will employ at least five separate citations to illustrate (or serve as contrast for) your project. In this assignment, online handouts and class notes do not count as cited evidence. You may use outside citations (newspapers, magazines, scholarly articles, or books), but at least three of your references shall be classroom readings. Moreover, I expect you to employ evidence from the entire range of readings in our course, not just the first texts. Attach a reference page (not included in the page length) that follows APA format.

*Practicality:* While your project is imaginary, it goes beyond our initial classroom conversations about utopias; it is not a fantasy. Your project must be a physical community whose workings are drawn from contemporary technology and social norms, even as you attempt to alter those norms. Given the brief page length, I strongly suggest that you choose a small and manageable site. Don't raise more questions than you can answer.

*Organization:* An effective organizational pattern might be a tour of your community. Ensure that each stage of your tour includes both conceptual and theoretical background and vivid description of your site. Throughout, you will include in-text references to classroom readings to provide points of comparison and contrast.

*Artifact:* You shall also provide some artifact: a drawing, a map, or some other illustration of this community. Be creative. I won't grade on artistic "quality," only on the care you take to communicate your ideas in a meaningful and interesting way. Take a look at the course online art archive to see some successful examples: <http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/wooda/149/149artcollection.html>

*Gradesheet:* Download and paperclip the gradesheet: <http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/wooda/gradesheet.pdf>

**Midterm and Final Examinations** (100 points each, 200 points in total): These exams offer an opportunity to demonstrate through multiple choice, true/false, and matching questions your understanding of the material discussed in this class. Time permitting, I will offer a review. *Bring an 882-E Scantron and a #2 pencil.*

**Grading:** your final grade is based on the following point system:

Quiz One (unannounced date)	_____	out of	25	points (5%)
Quiz Two (unannounced date)	_____	out of	25	points (5%)
Quiz Three (unannounced date)	_____	out of	25	points (5%)
Quiz Four (unannounced date)	_____	out of	25	points (5%)
Summary Paper One (due 6/11)	_____	out of	50	points (10%)
Summary Paper Two (due 6/23)	_____	out of	50	points (10%)
Midterm Exam (scheduled 6/23)	_____	out of	100	points (20%)
Ideal Community Project (due 7/7)	_____	out of	100	points (20%)
Final Exam (scheduled 7/9)	_____	out of	100	points (20%)
Total:	_____	out of	500	points

485+	A+				
465-48	A	450-464	A-	435-449	B+
415-434	B	400-414	B-	385-399	C+
365-384	C	350-364	C-	335-349	D+
315-334	D	300-314	D-	-299	F

**Readings** (including books) in order of appearance

Gibson, W. (1981). The Gernsback continuum. In T. Carr's (ed.), *Universe 11* (pp. 81-90). Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company. **Online (HTML):**

[http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/it/1988/1/1988\\_1\\_34.shtml](http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/it/1988/1/1988_1_34.shtml)

Plato. (360 BCE, 1991). *The republic: Book five* (A. Bloom, trans.). New York: Basic Books. **Another translation online:** [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Republic/Book\\_V](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Republic/Book_V)

More, T. (1516/1997). *Utopia*. New York, NY: Dover Thrift Edition. **Another translation online:** <http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Utopia>

Winthrop, J. (1630/1838). A modell [sic] of Christian charity. *Collections of the Massachusetts historical society, 3<sup>rd</sup> series 7:31-48*. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society. **Online (paginated HTML):** <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html>

Bellamy, E. (1888/1997). *Looking backward*. New York, NY: Dover Thrift Edition. **Online (HTML):** [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Looking\\_Backward\\_From\\_2000\\_to\\_1887](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Looking_Backward_From_2000_to_1887)

Bank, R.K. (2002). Representing history: Performing the Columbian exposition. *Theatre Journal*, 54(4), 589-606. **Online (PDF):** Available from [Project MUSE](http://www.projectmuse.com) using SJLibrary's online catalog.

Fotsch, P.M. (2001). The Building of a superhighway future at the New York World's Fair. *Cultural Critique*, 48, 65-97. **Online (PDF):** Available from [JSTORE](http://www.jstore.org) using SJLibrary's online catalog.

Putnam, R.D. (1995). Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1), pp. 65-78. **Online (paginated HTML):** Available from [Project MUSE](http://www.projectmuse.com) using SJLibrary's online catalog.

Edmundson, M. (2008, March 18). Dwelling in possibilities: Our students' spectacular hunger for life makes them radically vulnerable. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 54(27), B7. **Online (HTML):** <http://chronicle.com/free/v54/i27/27b00701.htm>