

San José State University
English and Comparative Literature
English 157, Topics in Rhetorical Analysis, Section 1, Spring, 2022

From the Greek *rhētorikē*, meaning the art of speaking, *rhetoric* as a particular body of work about strategic language use has a 2,500-year history in the West, although *rhetorical activity*, which we also generally refer to as *rhetoric*, is much older of course and more geographically dispersed. ~ **Keith Gilyard & Adam J. Banks**,
On African-American Rhetoric

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Ryan Skinnell
Virtual Office Link:	Skinnell Office Hour Zoom Link
Email:	ryan.skinnell@sjsu.edu
Phone:	408-924-4207 (email is easier and usually faster)
Office Hours:	Mon. 3:00pm-4:00pm & Tues. 8:30am-9:30am, & by appt.
Class Days/Time:	MW 1:30pm-2:45pm
Classroom:	Zoom Link to Our Class
Prerequisites:	Upper-division standing. May be repeated once for credit.
Reqs fulfilled	Professional & Technical Writing elective requirements

Course Description

Focused study of a topic in the theory and practice of rhetoric, such as feminist rhetorics, political rhetoric, or rhetorics of new/social media.



Buy! Vote! Pray! Care! Commit! People are constantly trying to persuade each other to think and act in certain ways. What messages do you pay attention to? Why? How do you make sense of different messages from different people? How do you persuade others? In English 157 we will look at how rhetoric shapes our world—how language teaches us to think and act in certain ways, how common beliefs prepare us to receive new information and change our minds (or not), how we organize ourselves into groups. We'll build the class

around student interests and analyze examples from culture, politics, and history to understand what rhetoric is, what it does, and how we can use it to live together.

Course Format

Our course will be technology intensive with an online delivery format (at least for a few weeks) that utilizes both synchronous and asynchronous learning. This will require us to have access to technologies, which may include a device with video conferencing capabilities. We will need internet connectivity to participate in online classroom activities and review/submit assignments. Some software applications we will use include: Zoom, Canvas, SJSU Google Suite, a PDF reader, Discord, etc. If you need to borrow laptops, iPads, and more, please contact [Student Computing Services](#). If you need software training, contact [Student Technology Training Center](#).

Teaching to blank boxes is really hard. Therefore, I'd love it if everyone's cameras could be on. But you'll have to decide what you're comfortable with. Hopefully we'll be in the classroom together soon.

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](#). You're responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU to learn of any updates. For help with using Canvas see [Canvas Student Resources page](#).

Course Goals

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. develop an understanding of rhetorical theories and principles
2. practice applying rhetorical knowledge to a variety of texts
3. develop awareness of cultural and institutional discourses & systems
4. articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts
5. practice modes of academic inquiry

Required Texts/Readings

- **Losh, Elizabeth, Jonathan Alexander, Zander Cannon, and Kevin Cannon.** *Understanding Rhetoric: A Graphic Guide to Writing*, 3rd ed. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2021. (You can purchase this text through the campus bookstore or elsewhere online.)
- **Additional readings** will be accessible on Canvas.

Library Liaison

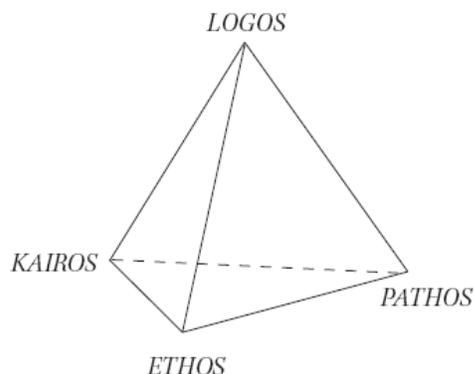
Our library liaison is Peggy Cabrera. She is available to help you find resources to do your work in this course. She has set up for students [a library resource page for the Department of English and Comparative literature](#). The tutorials on this page will help you to understand academic research processes and tools, and they will help you to develop an eye for the most valuable resources for your work.

You will find Peggy Cabrera's contact page by clicking on [this link](#).

Other Available SJSU Resources

The University provides all students several resources to help us successfully learn in this course. The services provided include counseling and psychological care, mentoring and tutoring, access to food and housing, to technology, and writing support.

- [Accessible Education Center](#)
- [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#)
- [Peer Connections](#)
- [SJSU Cares](#)
- [Spartan Food Pantry](#)
- [Student Technology Resources](#)
- [Writing Center](#)
- [Other Campus Resources](#)



Classroom Protocol

For a class like this one, much of the learning happens in class. Therefore, it is imperative that you be in class every day and participate in class activities and discussions.

That said, COVID times are what COVID times are, so we're going to need to adjust and manage our expectations appropriately. We're going to try to be like wolves—we'll work together as a pack, leave no one behind, occasionally fight a Kodiak bear (*Ursus arctos middendorffi*).

During most class periods, we will discuss readings, do group activities, and hear presentations. I strongly encourage students to visit me in my office hours to discuss course materials and/or assignments throughout the semester—especially in the event that course expectations are overwhelming or confusing.

Please note: sometimes projects and discussions include material that can be contentious and even potentially upsetting. We may encounter materials that differ from and perhaps challenge our ideas, beliefs, and understanding of reality. Students are encouraged to discuss issues about such materials with me. In class, discussion is welcome and encouraged, but comments found to be intentionally offensive, disrespectful, or combative will not be tolerated.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Time Commitment

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a **minimum of 45 hours** over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

It's an English course, I know, but let's do some quick math. ENGL 157 is a 4-unit course. That means we are signing up to do a minimum of 12 hours of study per week just for this class. 2½ hours will be class time. The remaining 9½ hours a week, you will work on your own or with your peers to prepare for class and complete assignments. I have designed the work using this math to guide us. I will refer to it often to help you manage this workload over the semester.

Assignments

Assignment	Learning Outcomes	Points possible
Participation / daily writing / in-class work	1–5	100
Weekly discussion posts (12 posts @ 25pts/ea)	1-3	300
Definitions	1, 2, 5	100
Midterm	1, 2, 4	150
Application #1: A Very Serious Issue	1–3, 5	150
Application #2: Everyday Rhetorics	1–3, 5	200
[FOR GRADUATE CREDIT] What is Rhetoric?	1–5	---
Total Points Possible		1000

Class Participation

Class participation entails: (1) demonstrating that you've completed the readings/out-of-class assignments, (2) contributing to class discussions/activities, and (3) completing in-class assignments.

Weekly Discussion Posts

You will do *brief* reading responses each week for the first 12 weeks of the semester. These responses enable you to reflect on course readings and prepare for class discussion. You are welcome to discuss your reactions to the reading (liked or disliked, agreed or disagreed, etc., and why), raise questions that the reading provoked for you, make connections between texts or to texts/issues beyond our class, make an observation for how it enlightens the work of our class, or reflect on the relationship of a reading to your own thoughts about rhetoric. Responses should be short (300-400 words is fine, though you can certainly write more), and you will submit them on Canvas. This is a pressure-free writing zone. You will not be graded on your ideas or writing in the individual responses. Rather, your grade for this component of the course is strictly dependent on your dedicated participation in these online discussions.

Definitions

The first part of the course is going to be a lot of concept identification that informs our understanding and application of rhetorical theory. Tldr: you'll learn new terms in order to apply them. But we'll test our knowledge with a midterm. These definitions are preparation for that test.

Each student will choose three (3) concepts that we compile during the semester and write definitions (approximately ½ page, single-spaced), which draw from and cite our readings to explain and contextualize the concepts. Each definition will have three (3) parts:

1. A **specific definition** of the term drawn from readings and class discussions.
2. **Citations** to discussions, readings, and/or other sources where the concept is discussed.
3. A **discussion** of the term in the context of our course subject. You should consider the question, "How does this term help us understand the subject and practice of rhetoric?"

These definitions will make up the study guide for the midterm.

Midterm

The midterm will consist primarily of concept identification, which includes providing basic definitions of terms we accumulate during the course and explaining their significance within the context of the course. There will also be a short answer portion to the midterm.

Applications 1 & 2

Rhetoric is designed to be used (as well as appreciated), so we're going to use it. The application papers will be very similar. For the first one, I will select a series of cultural texts (linguistic, visual, aural, spatial, and/or gestural), and you'll be asked to write an analysis using the concepts and practices we've been learning. In Application 2, you'll be responsible for selecting/providing texts that you discover "in the wild" and doing the same thing. I strongly encourage you to visit my office hours to discuss one or both well in advance of the due date. **The application papers should be a MAXIMUM of 2 pages, single-spaced.** I will provide more detailed prompts during the semester.

For Graduate Credit: What is Rhetoric?

This assignment is ONLY required of graduate students. Rhetoric is notoriously hard to define, but it begs for definition. So, you'll give it one. Drawing on the readings and discussions in ENGL 157, you'll choose (or write) a definition of rhetoric and make an argument for why that is the best definition. I will provide a more detailed prompt during the semester.

Final Examination or Evaluation

Faculty members are required to have a culminating activity for their courses, which can include a final examination, a final research paper or project, a final creative work or performance, a final portfolio of work, or other appropriate assignment. The culminating activity for undergraduates in ENGL 157 is Application #2 described in course assignments; for graduate students, it's Application #2 + What is Rhetoric?

Late Work Policy

All work should be submitted on time. Any unexcused late work will lose points according to how late it is. If there is a reason you cannot make a deadline, it's best to contact me ahead of time to make arrangements, but in COVID World, I'd be very happy to hear from you any time, and we'll work it out.

Grading Information

All major assignments must be completed to earn a passing grade in the class.

Your final grade in the course will be recorded as a letter grade, ranging from A to F. Course grades will be calculated using the following scale:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A</i>	93 to 100%
<i>A minus</i>	90 to 92%
<i>B plus</i>	87 to 89 %
<i>B</i>	83 to 86%
<i>B minus</i>	80 to 82%
<i>C plus</i>	77 to 79%
<i>C</i>	73 to 76%
<i>C minus</i>	70 to 72%
<i>D plus</i>	67 to 69%
<i>D</i>	63 to 66%
<i>D minus</i>	60 to 62%



University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, dropping and adding, accommodations, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>), which is hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Education. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Students are prohibited from recording class activities (including class lectures, office hours, advising sessions, etc.), distributing class recordings, or posting class recordings. Materials created by the instructor for the course (syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, presentations, etc.) are copyrighted by the instructor. This university policy ([S12-7](#)) is in place to protect the privacy of students in the course, as well as to maintain academic integrity through reducing the instances of cheating. Students who record, distribute, or post these materials will be referred to the Student Conduct and Ethical Development office. Unauthorized recording may violate university and state law. It is the responsibility of students that require special accommodations or assistive technology due to a disability to notify the instructor.

Special Needs or Accommodations

Any student that needs accommodations or assistive technology due to a disability should work with the [Accessible Education Center](#) (AEC), and the instructor. If you have special needs or accommodations requests, see me as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in forfeiting accommodations to which you're entitled.

English 157 / Topics in Rhetorical Analysis, Spring 2022, Course Schedule

Calendar subject to change with fair warning
 Readings listed should be read BEFORE class
 Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are on Canvas

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	1/26	In Class: New Class, Who Dis? / Syllabusin' bussin' / Zoom & Canvas / Discord Class: Via Zoom for now <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You should prep to log on at least <u>five minutes</u> before class starts. If you have trouble logging on, please email me at Ryan.Skinnell@sjsu.edu. Please make sure your <u>Zoom Name</u> is your <u>full name</u> on the first day.
2	1/31	Read Before Class: Allen, "Rhetoric, A Good Thing" Roberts-Miller, "A Short and Highly Idiosyncratic History" Crowley, "Some Basic Terms" Due Before Class: In Class: Community norms; What is Rhetoric?
2	2/2	Read Before Class: Covino & Jolliffe, "What Is Rhetoric?" Losh & Alexander, <i>Understanding Rhetoric</i> (Issues: Intro, 1, 4) Due Before Class: Discussion Board #1 In Class: Rhetoric as argument
3	2/7	Read Before Class: Carter-Tod, "Rhetoric(s): A Broader Definition" Heard, "Rhetoric in Dimness" In Class: Complicating our view(s)
3	2/9	Read Before Class: Chisolm, "For the Equal Rights Amendment" Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address" King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail" Baldwin, "Faulkner and Desegregation" Due Before Class: Discussion Board #2 In Class: Applying our lessons
4	2/14	BACK IN PERSON (probably? maybe? gods willing?) – BBC 130 Read Before Class: Bonsiepe, "Visual/Verbal Rhetoric" Davis, "Creaturely Rhetorics" In Class: Viz. rhet (ASPCA?)
4	2/16	Read Before Class: Cultural texts "TBD" Due Before Class: Discussion Board #3 In Class: Applying our lessons

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
5	2/21	Read Before Class: Howe, “The Story of America: A Tribalogy” Rios, “Performing Nahua Rhetorics” Dolmage, “Prosthesis” In Class: Rhetorical stories
5	2/23	Read Before Class: Tizon, “My Family’s Slave” Due Before Class: Discussion Board #4 In Class: Rhetoric of us
6	2/28	Read Before Class: Corder, “Argument as Emergence” Burke “Identification” In Class: Us as rhetoric
6	3/2	In Class: Midterm review Due Before Class: Discussion Board #5 Midterm Definitions
7	3/7	In Class: MIDTERM
7	3/9	Read Before Class: Losh & Alexander, <i>Understanding Rhetoric</i> (Issues: 2, 3, 8) Due Before Class: Discussion Board #6 In Class: Intro to “Very serious issues,” Writing rhetoric
8	3/14	Read Before Class: Selzer, “Rhetorical Analysis” Wells, “Mob Murder in a Christian Nation” Wells, “Southern Horrors” In Class: Rhetorical analysis
8	3/16	Read Before Class: Katz, “Ethic of Expediency” Burke, “Hitler’s Struggle” Due Before Class: Discussion Board #7 In Class: Living in a rhetorical world, and I am a rhetorical girl
9	3/21	Read Before Class: Losh & Alexander, <i>Understanding Rhetoric</i> (Issues: 5 & 6) In Class: Inventing arguments
9	3/23	Read Before Class: Chavez, “Beyond Inclusion” Sarkeesian, “ Damsel in Distress: Part 1 ” [YouTube Video] Due Before Class: Discussion Board #8 In Class: Take your common sense and shove it
10	3/28	Spring Break! No Class!
10	3/30	Spring Break! No Class!
11	4/4	Due Before Class: APPLICATION #1 Rough DRAFT In Class: Peer Review (rhetorical analysis of rhetorical analysis)
11	4/6	Read Before Class: Genre Analysis article “TBD” Losh & Alexander, <i>Understanding Rhetoric</i> (Issue: 7) Due Before Class: Discussion Board #9 In Class: <i>Paper Bag Princess</i>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
12	4/11	<p>Read Before Class: Finnegan, “The Naturalistic Enthymeme” Reading the Pictures: “Remarkably Everyday Photos of a Gender Creative 9-Year-Old with a Passion for Drag” Chatting the Pictures: Beyond Cute [video] In Class: More visual, more rhetoric</p>
12	4/13	<p>Read Before Class: Ridolfo & DeVoss, “Composition for Recomposition” Kreuter, “Muzzle Velocity, Rhetorical Mass, and Rhetorical Force” Due Before Class: Discussion Board #10 In Class: Rhetorical physics</p>
13	4/18	<p>Due Before Class: APPLICATION #1 DUE In Class: Inventing Application #2</p>
13	4/20	<p>Read Before Class: Skinnell, “Shitposting for Fun and Profit” Solanas, SCUM Manifesto Due Before Class: Discussion Board #11 In Class: Introducing “Rhetorics in the Wild”</p>
14	4/25	<p>Read Before Class: Roberts-Miller, “Dissent as ‘Aid and Comfort’” Hubrig, “Disabled Deaths Are Not Your “Encouraging News”” In Class: Arguing from commonsense</p>
14	4/27	<p>Read Before Class: Dickinson, “Joe’s Rhetoric” Wells, “Restaurant Review” Due Before Class: Discussion Board #12 In Class: Spatial rhetorics</p>
15	5/2	<p>Read Before Class: Butler, “Misplaced Hysteria” Gilbert, “Padma Lakshmi’s New Food Show” In Class: I just wanted to teach these two readings</p>
15	5/4	<p>Read Before Class: Muckelbauer, “Returns of the Question” Due Before Class: Discussion Board #13 In Class: Srsly, what is rhetoric?</p>
16	5/9	<p>Due Before Class: APPLICATION #2 Rough DRAFT In Class: Peer Review</p>
16	5/11	<p>In Class: TBD</p>
17	5/16	<p>In Class: TBD</p>
Final Exam	THURS 5/20	<p>Our regular class, 9:45AM-12:00PM DUE (on Canvas): APPLICATION #2 What Is Rhetoric? [for graduate students only]</p>