

Rhetoric of Social Movements – Fall 2006

Class Time: Tuesday & Thursday, 2:00-3:15 PM

Required Texts:

- Stewart, Smith, & Denton Jr., *Persuasion and Social Movements* 4th edition [PASM]
- Bowers, Ochs, & Jensen, *The Rhetoric of Agitation & Control*, 2nd edition [TROAAC]
(available at the campus bookstore and through Internet dealers)
- Additional readings will also be required, and will be provided via handouts or on Blackboard

Course Description & Objectives: Our goals for this course are to understand the anatomy of social movements in general, and to apply that understanding in a critical analysis of a specific social movement.

Each one of us has the potential to find ourselves in a position where we must either face addressing certain perceived ills or turn our back on them, perhaps to our peril. Phrased another way, none of us knows, right now, that the conditions in our lives won't become such that we might not become a Rosa Parks, a Norma Rae, a Ralph Nader, or an uncelebrated but active member of a "movement." Therefore, this course will give you an insight into the formation, performance, and dynamics of social movements.

To do this we will look at the rhetoric of social movements. That is, if we accept as a starting point Aristotle's definition for rhetoric, "to find in each case the available means of persuasion," then we will look to discover in this course the persuasive means available to social movements, and will discuss what works, what doesn't, and why. To do this, we will look at social movements generally and at some specific movements (for example, civil rights movement, feminist movement, and pro-choice/pro-life movements). Despite commonalities, each social movement presents unique challenges to its members and those who may resist it.

The reasons for such a course are several. First, when we speak of the rhetoric of social movements we are concerned with a multiplicity of things. In part, we are looking at how messages get composed for specific audiences. Second, when we speak of social movements we are also concerned with organizational behavior, or how it is that groups come together and function (or fail to). As such, much of what we will find operating in social movements may transfer to organizational behavior in general, be it in a corporation, nonprofit organization, school board, etc. Finally, it is likely that at some point in your life you will be presented the opportunity to join a social movement, perhaps even lead one (no one ever anticipates leading a social movement; it just happens). So no matter where the proverbial road of life may lead you, this course should offer you some practical knowledge for your future.

Grading: Your final grade for the course will be determined out of 800 possible points.

800-760: A	759-720: A-	719-696: B+	695-664: B-	663-616: C+
615-584: C-	583-536: D+	535-504: D	503-480: D-	479-0: F

Attendance & Participation - 300 points. Each class is worth 10 points.

Because this is a 400-level course, I'd like to keep lectures to a minimum. You are at the point in your academic career when you "know things" without your teacher having to tell you everything. I'd like this class to be an opportunity for you to show off what you know and for you to open yourself up for your ideas to be challenged. It is my goal that this class be treated more like a discussion, lead by you, and simply directed, moderated, or shaped by me. This can be a wonderful chance for you can learn from one another. But if this is going to

work, you need to be in class and be willing to participate in discussions and activities. 5 points will be earned for being in class for the entire time, and there will be a loss of 1 point for every 5 minutes late or every 5 minutes you cut out early. 5 points earned for active participation.

Reading Memos – 300 points. Each memo is worth 15 points

After each reading, you will be asked to post a 1-paragraph response to what you read to the class space on Blackboard. I am not asking you to summarize the reading. I am asking you to react to it – to comment on it (even if you didn't like it), to ask questions about it, or to expand on it with your own outside knowledge from your other classes or personal experiences, to tell what you learned or were surprised by; you may choose to focus on the entire reading or just one section of it. You will be asked to do this once a week. ***These should be posted no later than noon on Tuesday*** (and it would be awesome to have them posted by Monday evening) so that everyone can have a chance to read them before coming to class. We will use these memos as a way of advancing our in-class discussions, and I personally will use them to help shape my comments. You can earn the full 15 points by posting a thoughtful memo on time. Memos that will not receive full credit include posts like, "I really liked this reading. It was good." Or "This sucked." (If you're feeling really ambitious, bonus points may be earned by writing especially thoughtful or insightful comments.) Late memos can receive partial credit: 10 points after noon on Tuesday, 5 points if posted by class time Thursday.

Social Movement Speeches - 200 points.

We will discuss this assignment in greater detail as the semester progresses. For it, you will select a current social movement and will put yourself in the role of an active member, and perhaps leader. It is your task to write a set of 3 speeches for your cause. An informative speech that provides information to the public at large, or to your fellow movement members, or to the authorities; a persuasive speech that asks others to join your movement, or asks movement members to take new action, or asks the authorities to make a change; and a commemorative speech that eulogizes a fallen movement member, that honors the contributions of someone in the movement, or that celebrates an achievement by the movement. In writing your speeches, you should consider all of the issues that have been addressed in class and incorporate the appropriate techniques. You will also be asked to submit a 1-page self critique with each speech, explaining your rhetorical approach.

Class Etiquette:

Cell phones, beepers, and alarm watches **MUST** be turned off before coming into class. Failure to do this can significantly impact your participation grade for the day.

I ask you to be civil and polite to me and to your fellow classmates. Rudeness and other displays of a bad attitude will not be productive for the class or for me and may ultimately be counterproductive for you. **NOTE:** *This class is designed to encourage student participation. I will strive to keep my personal beliefs out of the classroom so that all students feel free to express their own perspectives. HOWEVER, no one should ever attack a fellow student's perspective or belief. Open discussion can only work if everyone feels comfortable to expressing opinions. Each person is entitled to his or her own beliefs and we should respect that, regardless of whether we agree or disagree with them..****

Blackboard:

This course will have a home on Blackboard. Materials you will find on the Blackboard site include, a copy of the syllabus, the course calendar, useful Web sites, and the message board where you will post your memos. Generally, lecture and discussion notes will not be posted, as Blackboard is not a substitute for class attendance (sorry). If you have problems with computer/Internet access, please see me in advance so alternate arrangements can be made for your assignments.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism occurs when you *create the impression* that something you present for a grade was produced by you when it wasn't. This happens when you create the impression that you read something you didn't, had an idea that wasn't yours, produced text that someone else wrote. Even if you somehow cite the source, but still create that false impression, it's plagiarism. Penalties will range from a failing grade on the assignment if any of it is plagiarized, to a failing grade in the course or worse if an entire assignment is plagiarized. If you are unsure if something is plagiarism, play it safe and cite your source and/or ask questions of me. If you are using someone else's words or ideas because you think they are effective for your purposes, you need to cite the source clearly and every time you use that person's, or others', quotes or ideas; if you fail to do so, it will be considered plagiarism. All other forms of academic dishonesty will also result in failing marks.

Contacting Me: I will hold regular office hours during which you can come in and discuss any concerns with the class you may have. If you absolutely *cannot* make my scheduled office hours, I will make an appointment with you at a time that is convenient for both of us. Coming in to see me is the BEST way of discussing whatever class concerns or questions you may have.

I can be reached by phone at the time of my office hours, and voice mail can be left when I am not there. I can also be reached by email, but I ask you to follow a few simple steps if you contact me this way.

- 1) Identify yourself by first and last name. I have no way of knowing who *hotnsexy@yahoo.com* or *nakedcoed@aol.com*.
- 2) Make sure you use a real subject line. If you leave this blank, or put in "hi" there's a chance that it might be filtered as SPAM (something like "rhetoric class" works).
- 3) Use good grammar and punctuation, and write in complete sentences. Not only is this a good habit to get into before entering the "real world," it is necessary to make sure I can understand your query. I do not speak instant message and email shorthand (I'm just not that cool). If your email is not written in your best English, I will not respond.

-During the workweek, specific questions will be answered promptly. On weekends, specific questions will be answered within about 24 hours. On breaks or long weekends, specific questions will be answered in 36-48 hours. After the semester ends, I can make no guarantees about how long it will be until you get a response.
 -Complaints will not be dealt with over email because there is too much room for misunderstandings that, for your sake and mine, I would like to avoid.

STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT AND ACCEPTANCE

If you remain enrolled in this class after receiving and reviewing the syllabus, I will take that as an indication that you have agreed to and accept the terms of the course as defined within the syllabus and that you will abide by these terms. This document is our contract.

Tentative Calendar:

Your reading assignments are marked in *italic* type. Unless otherwise discussed, please assume we are on schedule and keep up with the work appropriately. Any changes to the calendar will be thoroughly and clearly discussed in class and amendments will be made on Blackboard.

Tuesdays will be used as our general discussion days. Thursdays may be used for extended discussion, watching relevant movies, talking about current events, or analyzing real-world speeches.

Tuesday	Thursday
8/29 – Go over syllabus	8/31 – discuss civic engagement & the public sphere
9/5 – introducing the idea of social movements <i>PASM 1 + TROAAC 1</i>	9/7
9/12 – rhetorical strategies <i>PASM 2 + TROAAC 2 & 3</i>	9/14
9/19 – persuasion <i>PASM 3 + TROAAC 5 & 8</i>	9/21
9/26 – personal needs & membership <i>PASM 4 + “Sacrifice for the Cause” + “If You Don’t Do It”</i>	9/28
10/3 – Leadership <i>PASM 5 + TROAAC 6 + MLKjr letter</i>	10/5
10/10 – Fall Recess, no class	10/12 – Social Movement life cycles <i>PASM 6 + “Cycles”</i>
10/17 – Identification & Polarization <i>PASM 7 + “Conflict Networks”</i>	10/19
10/24 – Slogans, Obscenity, Ridicule <i>PASM 8 + graffiti articles</i>	10/26
10/31 – Music <i>PASM 9 + “Battle Notes” chapter</i>	11/2 – Music <i>bring in your favorite social statement song</i>
11/7 – Political Argument <i>PASM 10 + TROAAC 4</i>	11/9
11/14 – Narrative **stay tuned for additional info on this class** <i>PASM 11 + Wiccan movement article</i>	11/16 – Class Cancelled
11/21 - Transcendence <i>PASM 12 + TROAAC 7</i>	11/23 - Thanksgiving
11/28 - Conspiracy <i>PASM 13</i>	11/30
12/5 – Resistance <i>PASM 14</i>	12/7 – in class experiment