The purpose of Rhetorical Theory and Criticism is to provide advanced instruction in the analysis and creation of various texts. The course will focus on many of the theoretical/historical issues and practical skills necessary to understand “the how-to, the what, and the why” of these documents and the production practices necessary to make them. In summary, in this course you will:

• develop vocabulary and conceptual understandings of rhetoric theory and history.
• apply rhetorical terminology to the analysis of chosen texts.
• write various documents using rhetorical techniques.
• read research on rhetorical theory for the purpose of bringing this research to your writing practices.
• read about historical and theoretical contexts relevant to the course, and
• develop your own strategies for solving the problems you encounter in your everyday and academic writing tasks.

Course Requirements

There will be five components to the class: two major rhetorical analyses, some short writing and analysis assignments, and “common readings” during the semester. I will give you an individual handout for each project as we proceed through the semester, but below is a summary of the projects.

1. Keep a structured “inventional” notebook of the readings in the class. The purpose of the notebook is to record basic vocabulary and concepts of rhetorical theory and then use this terminology to informally analyze chosen texts throughout the semester. These compilations will be used to promote understanding of the concepts and to serve as starting points for more formal analysis. 15%
2. Create a “cycle” of documents that lead to a substantial analysis of President Barack Obama’s inaugural speech. 25%
3. Create a second “cycle” of documents that analyzes a topic of your choosing. 25%
4. Take a mid-term exam over topics covered in the first half of the semester. 20%
5. Performance in class (see below under Evaluation). 15%

Course Materials


Metaphors We Live By by Lakoff and Johnson. Chicago UP, 2003.

Photocopies or printing of some readings and course projects or other materials.
Evaluation

You will be evaluated in three ways. The first method of evaluation will be grades given on the major projects as you finish them throughout the semester. Included will be your two major analysis assignments and the mid-term exam. The approximate percentages for each project are listed above in the overview of each project; documents within each project will be apportioned according to their “weight” in terms of the entire project.

The second measure will be grades on your inventionar notebook. These will be given as + or a 0 if you do not hand anything in.

The third measure will be your performance as a member of the class. Here I will be looking at your attendance, participation, and professionalism. Any in-class presentations will fall under this area of evaluation, too. Examples of the criteria here are • active participation in discussions and in group work • a sense that you are willing to contribute to the knowledge of the class • your ability to manage deadlines • and a sense of humor (there are other more important things in life, you know).

MTU Policies and Academic Assistance Documents

Academic regulations and procedures are governed by University policy. Academic dishonesty cases will be handled in accordance the University's policies. If you have a disability that could affect your performance in this class or that requires an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please see me as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate arrangements. The Affirmative Action Office has asked that you be made aware of the following:

Michigan Tech complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at Michigan Tech, please call the Dean of Students Office, at 487-2212. For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head or the Affirmative Action Office, at 487-3310

Academic Integrity:http://www.studentaffairs.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/academic_integrity.html

Affirmative Action:
http://www.admin.mtu.edu/aoa/

Disability Services:http://www.admin.mtu.edu/urel/studenthandbook/student_services.html#disability