

**University of Calgary  
Department of Communication, Media and Film**

**COMS 369 Lec 02**

**Rhetorical Communication**

**Fall 2022: September 7 to December 7 (excluding October 10 and November 6-12)**

**Lecture: MW 14:00 to 15:15 – SA 235**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr. Marcia Jenneth Epstein
<b>Office:</b>	SS 316
<b>Email:</b>	epstein@ucalgary.ca
<b>Web Page:</b>	Use D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	M & W (15:15-16:00, after class)

**Course Description**

An introduction to the basic principles of rhetorical theory, criticism and practice. Students will learn rhetorical perspectives on elements of communication such as argumentation, persuasion, audience, situation, genre, and ethics. Students will apply rhetorical theory to the criticism of samples of public communication and will practice their rhetorical skills through in-class activities and assigned writing and oral presentations.

**Additional Information**

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found under 'Content' on D2L. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

**Objectives of the Course**

By the end of the course, students should be able:

- To understand the basic principles and terms of classical rhetorical theory
- To apply rhetorical theory to the criticism of a variety of public communication topics, media, and genres
- To apply rhetorical theory to the development of your own analytical, informative and persuasive writing and speech
- To improve skills for public speaking
- To enhance writing skills and learn to cite and integrate sources.

**Textbooks and Readings**

**Required:** J. Dan Rothwell, *Practically Speaking*, 3d ed. Oxford University Press.

**Recommended:** Casson, L. E. (Ed.). (2011). *A writer's handbook: Developing writing skills for university students* [Est. \$15 paper, \$10 PDF at [Broadview](#)]

**See Also:** The list of additional online sources at the end of this document.

## Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

Please familiarize yourself with the University's policy on the recording of lectures, which is outlined at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>, and carefully review the section on Instructor Copyright at the end of this outline.

Phones must be turned off in class unless you are a health care or law enforcement professional, or responsible for the care of a family member.

### Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Weight	Assessed Components	Due
10%	Writing task: Analysis of a political speech (1-2 pages)	9/14
10%	Individual Speech 1 – informative (max. 6 min, topic of choice)	9/21-10/5
15%	Individual Speech 2 – persuasive (max. 6 min, topic of choice)	10/17-26
15%	Group presentation on summary & rhetoric of blog article (15-20 min.)	11/16-23
20%	Group Task: Blog article + analysis of your work in a <b>Portfolio</b> : ca.1000-1500 words. Group size: 3-4.	On or before 11/30
15%	<b>Class Participation</b> (see assignment guidelines, below)	All term, to 12/7
15%	<b>Final essay.</b> A choice of topics will be posted by email to the class list on December 5. Answers must be submitted to the designated D2L Dropbox folder by 11:59 pm on December 7.	12/7

**Note:** You must normally complete all assignments and exams or a course grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

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### **Assignment Guidelines**

#### **Individual Presentations**

**Length:** The presentation should be a maximum of 6 minutes long.

You have the option of showing a short video clip if it is less than one minute long, and this one minute is not considered part of the time of your presentation. It should be well integrated into your presentation.

## Presentation topics

Topics should be well focused and aimed at informing an adult university-level population. You may use written, recorded, and/or visual sources as evidence. The informative speech can be based on personal experience.

**-Informative presentations** should choose topics that build on common knowledge of your audience and take that knowledge further. You may inform them of lesser-known individual or local stories, historical information, or reveal lesser known contexts, interrelationships between things, or complexities within topics. **Sample topics or main points:**

- Personal experiences: travel, special interests, family customs, etc.
- Brief history of an Indigenous or immigrant culture in Canada or Alberta
- Description of an activity you participate in, and why

**-Persuasive presentations** should go beyond information into the realm of motivating audience belief and/or action, and the actions or beliefs you recommend should be relevant to your audience's lives and within the abilities of your audience. Aim to move people, but don't be unrealistic in aiming to move them too far, too quickly. Persuasion has to be based on logos as well as pathos. **Sample topics or main points:**

- Consider volunteering for or supporting a particular charity or campus activity
- Certain common stereotypes about [country, city, or group] are false
- Social media are/are not addictive

Note: Promoting political or religious groups and standpoints is not permitted, although they might fit into the Informative category if they describe only your own experience.

## Your audience

Your audience consists of the people in the room (or Zoom room) where you present: primarily your fellow COMS 369 students, and secondarily your instructor. Within that audience, you may target certain kinds of students, or aspects of your audience.

## Your persona

Speak as yourself, not as a fictional person—consider yourself as a citizen of the world, resident of Calgary, and student at the University of Calgary, as well as the unique features of your identity and background that relate to your presentation topic.

As you build your ethos, protect your own privacy and do not reveal information that may make you or the people in the room feel embarrassed or uncomfortable. The classroom is not a private forum, and what you say may be paraphrased and repeated to others who are not present.

## Your tone

Your tone toward the audience and topic should be appropriate to the classroom forum, and appropriate to the subject matter and purpose of your speech. In persuasive presentations, avoid a tone that might communicate disrespect of any group of people for their race/ethnicity, religion, sex/gender, economic class, appearance, etc. Avoid scolding or begging your audience.

## Delivery

The oral delivery of your speech is crucial to its success. *If you tend to get nervous with presentations, please see your instructor for advice the week before your presentation is scheduled. Admitting that you are nervous is the first step toward overcoming stage-fright.*

## Use of PowerPoint

Your individual presentations do not require a PowerPoint to be used: you are welcome to use one if you choose. A PowerPoint (or equivalent format.) is required for your group presentation.

### *Guidelines for PowerPoint:*

- Use when your presentation requires quotations, images, and/or statistics to be displayed to the audience. Do not both post and read long quotations: it confuses the audience.

- Use if the flow of reasoning and relation of your main points to sub-points would be aided by the display of text in headings, bullet points, and sub-points that a PowerPoint can provide.

- Use if your presentation would not suffer from reduced eye contact and less gesture (informative presentations are more conducive to the use of PowerPoint slides).

All slides should be designed for visibility: be sure that print and images are large enough, and that colour contrast is optimal (e.g. light on dark or vice versa; no busy backgrounds under lettering).

**Note:** *Please do not read aloud from a script word-for-word.* Reading aloud can work for quotations, but it does not work well for expressing your own points and transitions.

**Note:** *Online submission of the portfolio file requires a title that includes your group number and the assignment preceded by the course number, e.g. COMS 369 Group 1 Portfolio. All names of group participants must be on the title page, in alphabetical order by surname (this speeds recording of scores).*

## Presentation Critiques

Each student is responsible for **two** brief and constructive critiques of other students' *Group Project Presentations*. Please include comments about whether you were informed, convinced, or otherwise motivated (e.g., to question a prior assumption or contribute to community action) by the presentation, what you especially liked and/or what could be improved. Comments will be submitted on D2L in the Dropbox. (5% x2)

*Comments will not be used to determine the speaker's grade score; they will be used to evaluate the commenter's participation score.*

**Participation** scores will also be determined by participation in discussions in class and on the D2L Discussion Board. (5%).

## **Group Blog Article and Portfolio**

Each group will collectively construct a **sample blog article**, along with a list of references and any visual aids used for the blog and the presentation (see below). This year, topics should focus on one of the following topics:

***Climate change: a problem and a potential solution.*** The scope can be local, national, or international.

***Indigenous history and culture in Canada: What can “settler” culture learn?***

Individuals within the group may divide tasks and concentrate on research or writing, but at least two people must be responsible for proofreading and corrections: that includes grammar, punctuation, syntax, style, and catching typos. (*This is a collaborative effort. If members of your group are challenged by writing in English, help them; if you are challenged, ask your group for help.*) Time will be taken in class to be sure that group dynamics are smooth.

**The blog article and all references will be submitted in D2L as part of the Group Portfolio.** (Designate one member of the group to do the posting for all items.) Each group will also give a 15 to 20 minute presentation to the class on the content of the article, the controversy it discusses, how the controversy was handled by the group, the research involved, and what rhetorical stances were used.

The portfolio will also include a **Learning Profile** for the group. This will consist of a collection of discussion notes, statements, sketches, images, wild ideas, or any other material that demonstrates the group process over the course of the term.

Each group should include the following roles:

- **Scribe** writes/draws what becomes the “artifact” of the group’s answers, notes, or sketches. These notes contribute to the final document.
- **Coordinator** keeps the group on task and ensures efficient use of time and resources.

(**Note:** Roles should change with each group session; e.g., the same person should not be the Scribe every time)

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### **Submission of Assignments**

Please submit all assignments by **uploading them to the designated D2L Dropbox folder**. Include your name and ID number on all assignments. *Be sure to keep a copy* of each submitted assignment and to submit the proper version.

Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recording for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

### **Policy for Late Assignments**

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of 3 points for each day late.

## Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/). Students who require an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. For the full policy on Student Accommodations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require a medical note. For information on the use of a statutory declaration, see the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

## Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

## Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course, assignments will be graded using point scores. Final grades will be assigned at the end of term by means of a total of earned points. Totals may be adjusted in appropriate circumstances (e.g., a total one point below the next letter grade).

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%

<b>1.70</b>	Approaching satisfactory performance	<b>C-</b>	55 - 59.99%
<b>1.30</b>	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D+</b>	53 - 54.99%
<b>1.00</b>	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	<b>D</b>	50 - 52.99%
<b>0.00</b>	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	<b>F</b>	0 - 49.99%

## Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

*You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas* where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. **In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin.** Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/resources.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html)

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support>

## Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including lectures, course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed, or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

To ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes & electronic versions of textbooks), all students are required to read the *University of Calgary Policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright* at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> and the requirements of the *Copyright Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>). Students who use material protected by copy-right in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

## Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the *University of Calgary Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

## Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

## Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferral of term work, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

For information about deferrals of final examinations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

For information about requesting a reappraisal of course work or of a final grade, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

## Student Support Services and Resources

Please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk. For resources on D2L, Zoom, Yuja, etc., see <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/resources-for-students/>. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

**Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings** will be available on D2L before the course starts, under Course Schedule in the Content section.

***Additional readings available online*** (for your information; some will be discussed in class):

Altman, C. (2013). *The Writer's Toolbox*. At <https://christopheraltman.wordpress.com/> This blog includes useful posts on punctuation, parallelism, and counterarguments.

Aristotle. (n.d.) *Rhetoric*. (Trans W. Rhys Roberts). Available at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.1.i.html>

Burton, G. O. (2007). *Silvae Rhetoricae: The forest of rhetoric*. At <http://rhetoric.byu.edu/> This site summarizes key concepts in rhetoric and defines a huge number of stylistic devices.

Clark, R. P. (2016, July 26). 8 writing lessons from Michelle Obama's DNC speech. Retrieved August 18, 2016 from *Poynter* at <http://www.poynter.org/2016/8-writing-lessons-from-michelle-obamas-dnc-speech/423307/>

Duke, G. (2012). The Sophists [opening overview, 5 paragraphs], in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, available at <http://www.iep.utm.edu/sophists/>

Dlugan, A. (2013, Sept. 2). Ethos, Pathos, Logos: Three Pillars of Public Speaking. Available at <http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/ethos-pathos-logos/> [read all parts]



Dlugan, A. (2014). *Six Minutes: Speaking and presentation skills*. At <http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/>.

- \_For the site's collection of short but useful articles on delivering effective talks, designing visuals, and analysing speeches, see <http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/articles/>
- \_For links to 18 other blogs on public speaking, see <http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/public-speaking-blogs/>

Wheeler, L. K. (2016). Logical Fallacies Handlist. Available at [https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/fallacies\\_list.html](https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/fallacies_list.html) [for reference] -- *[may not be available: website down in Dec. 2017]*

Zinsser, W. (2010). Writing English as a second language. *American Scholar*. Retrieved from <http://theamericanscholar.org/writing-english-as-a-second-language/>

(Despite the title, this essay on writing style has good advice for all students)

### **Schedule of Lectures and Readings:**

9/7 Introduction to rhetoric: Writing, speaking, informing, convincing;  
CLASSICAL RHETORIC 1: Socrates & Sophists  
Read: Rothwell ch.1-3 for next class.

*A full schedule will be posted on D2L at least a week before classes begin.*