

University of Florida
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Dial Center for Written and Oral Communication

Spring 2021

COM 4930 – Rhetoric of Covid-19

Class #: 25610 (F2F) & 29969 (online) Sec: CV19 & CV20 T 11:45-1:40 R12:50-1:40 ROL 211

Instructor: Amy Jung, PhD ajung@ufl.edu
Office: 414 Rolfs Hall
Office hours: MWF 9:30-10:30am
Website: <http://lss.at.ufl.edu> (Canvas)

Note : This is a tentative syllabus—assignments and schedule may be altered as necessary. This syllabus and any changes will be posted on Canvas.

Trigger Warning: The issues and materials that we will address in this course may contain language, images, issues, and perspectives that may be deemed offensive or difficult for some audiences. It is important in academic inquiry to wrestle with the difficult issues, but we need to ensure our mental health as well. If you find yourself having trouble with any of the topics or materials covered, please contact me and we discuss this in a Zoom meeting.

Texts: Foss, S. K. (2018). *Rhetorical criticism: Exploration and Practice, 5th Ed.* Long Grove, IL: Waveland.
Other materials may be distributed or assigned in class.

Course Description: In January of 2020, the world became aware of a novel coronavirus strain that could become a global pandemic, commonly referred to as Covid-19. In the following year, the pandemic swept around the world with a high death toll and increasingly complex longer-term effects. The causes, responses and fixes suggested by powerful figures varied widely and factions sprang up around ideological allegiances, including science and freedoms.

The public perception and response to this series of events has impacted U.S. education, travel, security, immigration, healthcare and civic discourse. Speeches, photos, and tweets about Covid-19 are just some of the forms of rhetoric that have impacted U.S. actions and attitudes, and therefore policies, over the past year. Focusing on public communication since and surrounding the arrival of Covid-19 in the U.S., this course “invites students to engage in a process of thinking about symbols, discovering how they work, and why they affect us” (Foss). Using multiple theoretical frameworks we will examine and critique Covid-19 rhetorical acts and will produce written works using these theories.

Learning Outcomes: This course will provide you with both a theoretical understanding of and practical experience with both Covid-19 and rhetorical criticism.

Covid-19 Student Learning Outcomes: At the completion of this class, you will have demonstrated the following:

1. Knowledge of the primary events that impacted U.S. perceptions and responses to Covid-19.
2. An understanding of the primary audiences and messages found in Covid-19 rhetoric.
3. An ability to critique the role these Covid-19 messages have had in developing U.S. policies and perspectives.

Rhetoric Student Learning Outcomes: At the completion of this class, you will have demonstrated the following:

1. Knowledge of the ways public communication functions to create group perceptions and responses.
2. An understanding of how symbols function in rhetorical acts.
3. Familiarity with multiple theoretical lenses used for conducting rhetorical criticism
4. The ability to employ diverse methods of criticism to examine a piece of rhetoric.

Assignments: All assignments must be submitted before the end of the day on dates indicated in the syllabus or in class. If you are absent it is your responsibility to get and complete the assignments by the due date to receive credit. Papers will be penalized 10% for each calendar day late. If you are late or absent on a debate day, you cannot be moved to another day. Keep a record of all your grades in order to calculate your overall grade. Use the scale provided to assess your course performance. Be certain to keep all materials for the class until your final grade has been issued in case any questions come up.

Grading	Points available
<i>Attendance and Participation</i>	100
<i>Discussion Posts & Responses</i>	100
<i>Timeline of Covid-19 Events</i>	100
<i>Analysis #1 Paper</i>	100
<i>Analysis #2 Paper</i>	100
<i>Analysis #3 Paper</i>	150
<i>Presentation of one Analysis paper</i>	150
<i>Summary Chart of Methods</i>	100
<i>Summary of Covid-19 Lessons</i>	100
TOTAL	1000

	B+ = 87-89 %	C+ = 77-79 %	D+ = 67-69 %
A = 93-100	B = 83-86	C = 73-76	D = 60-66
A- = 90-92	B- = 80-82	C- = 70-72	F = under 60

A = Excellence and consistency. Mastery of subject matter and application.

B = Solid mastery of subject matter and application but some lack of excellence or consistency.

C = Adequate understanding of subject matter and application. Minimum requirements met.

D = Inadequate understanding or application of subject matter or application. Lack of consistency.

F = Failure to demonstrate comprehension or application of subject matter.

Attendance Policy: Attendance for Face-to-Face student will be taken at the start of each class. Attendance for online students be taken from the Zoom record of your time interacting during the Zoom meeting. Three tardies or early departures are equal to one absence. If you ask permission to leave early to study for an exam or other reason, I will always say yes, but you will still be considered ‘leaving early’ and receive a 1/3 absence (unless you leave a full period/hour early and in that class, it counts as one absence).

You are allowed 2 absences (3 hours) for whatever reason, so it is not necessary to explain why you missed class. However, you do not get extra sick days excused if you used the 3 hours for visiting people, vacation, studying for an exam, etc. There is no excused and unexcused. Therefore, use your 3 hours wisely. If you have university business, or are hospitalized and expect that to exceed your 3 hours of class, you must provide documentation that shows you had to use up your absences and then some. Here is the point deduction for absences over 3 hours:

4th hour = automatic minus 20 points from participation grade

5th hour = automatic minus an additional 20 points from participation grade (minus 40 points total)

...and so on, with each additional absent hour worth a reduction of 20 more points

*Once all participation points are used up, points will be deducted off of the final grade.

If you are not present you are not able to participate, which will impact your participation and intellectual development.

Accommodations: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester in order to allow us to provide the most effective support.

Students with any accommodations should arrange a meeting with the instructor during the first week of class (and ideally before the end of drop/add) to discuss how we can work together to meet the students' needs and still adhere to the essential elements/functions of the course in regards to attendance and class participation.

Technology: You are encouraged to bring your laptop or other relevant technology to class to take notes and increase our collective brilliance. Technology is to be used only for purposes directly related to the class content and information. You may not view/respond to emails during class. You may not conduct unrelated searches during class. If you are discovered to be using your technology for purposes other than listed here, you will be asked to immediately leave the class and will not receive credit for the session or any activities conducted during class.

NO TEXTING. Cell phones should be turned to vibrate while in class and on silent or off when students are presenting. No phone calls should be accepted while in class except in the case of an emergency. If you anticipate that you will need to accept a phone call or text during class time, please discuss the situation with me in advance of the class's start.

Academic Integrity: Use of someone else's ideas, words, or organization without giving them due credit is defined as plagiarism. To avoid any appearance of ethical misconduct, use follow APA style for documentation and give due credit in any written or presented work you submit. When in doubt, cite your source or ask me for clarification.

All submitted work during the course, written or oral, will be the student's personal, original work, with credit given to sources used. If a student violates this understanding, evaluations of work must be affected accordingly and if necessary, adjudication will be processed by procedures approved by the University of Florida Honor Court. Please note the full UF Honor Code and conduct policies here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/1617/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>.

Zoom Practices and Policies

All course meetings will take place in real-time, during your course period, on Zoom or live (depending upon the section in which you are registered). Your active participation helps add to the learning environment and will shape your own skill development. If you anticipate connection issues due to your location this Spring, you should discuss this with your instructor during drop/add so you can both determine whether this particular class will work for you.

Please note the following guidelines for a successful classroom:

Participation: Participation in our class is fundamental to developing understanding. Thus, students enrolled in the online, synchronous section of this course are required to have their cameras on from start to finish during our classes on Zoom.

A default setting for our sessions in Zoom is that participants will be muted when they enter, so you will unmute yourself when you comment orally during our whole-group conversations and when you are in small groups. Your instructor may also ask students to reply in the chat box for specific activities. Oral comments on camera and written comments in the chat box are considered activities for participation. If you have technical issues, please immediately consult UF IT Help to resolve them and then contact your instructor.

Zoom sessions will NOT be recorded by the instructor and may not be recorded by students. In some cases, an audio recording might be necessary for an individual with specific DRC accommodations and will then only be shared with that individual. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded material is prohibited.

Physical space: this is a good time to learn about setting up a professional environment when communicating online. While you do not need a formal office, your space should be free from distractions. For instance, you should not be talking to someone off screen. Also, since this is a FERPA protected classroom, other people should not be in the room during class. Avoid distracting Zoom backgrounds. Think about how you can set up your camera to be at eye level. Your space should be free from pet, peer, and/or child interruptions.

Dress Appropriately: Be sure to dress appropriately for class. In other words, treat Zoom as if it was a live class on campus. On presentation days, you will need Business Casual dress.

Recordings: Presentation days will be recorded for your records. These recordings will be available to students in the class for self-critiques. Recordings will not be used in future classes unless you donate your speech/approve its use. Please do not share links to recordings with anyone who is not registered in your section, including family.

On Presentation days, students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

If you have any concerns about Zoom, you should talk with your instructor during drop/add.

Social Contract: Wrestling with different approaches to ideas and arguments can be challenging intellectually, socially and emotionally. Discussions during this class should allow and encourage participants to engage in the issues honestly and competently. Part of the task of this course is to equip you with the skills and confidence to respectfully grapple with the perspectives of others while maintaining an ethic of respect. This will require everyone to be prepared for discussions and to consider various perspectives with respect and concerned engagement. In class we will enact a “feminist ethic of listening” and “conscientious turn taking.” If you have not done the reading, please be selective in saying anything. If you have completed the reading, please speak – even if you are only explaining what you didn’t understand.

You voluntarily enter this contract by maintaining your enrollment in this class. If you remain enrolled in this course you acknowledge that you have read the syllabus and have been offered an opportunity to ask questions about it. If you remain enrolled, you indicate that you understand and agree to the requirements of this course.

Tentative Schedule (may change as needed). A minimum of 40 contact hours will fulfill the requirements of this 3-hour course.

WEEK	DATE	CLASS CONTENT	REACHING & ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Week 1	12-Jan	Course introduction and What is Rhetoric	Chapter 1, pages 3-6
	14-Jan	What is Covid-19	
Week 2	19-Jan	What is Rhetorical Criticism	Chapter 1, pages 6-8
	21-Jan	Rhetorical Criticism of Covid-19	Collected Covid-19 Rhetorical Artifacts
Week 3	26-Jan	Cont'd & Collective Memory	Chapter 2
	28-Jan	Neo-Aristotelian - Chap 3	Timeline of Covid-19 events draft
Week 4	2-Feb	Neo-Aristotelian - Cont'd & Sample article	Chapter 3
	4-Feb	Application to Covid-19 artifact	Artifact #1 chosen
Week 5	9-Feb	Cluster - Chap 4 & Sample article	Chapter 4
	11-Feb	Application to Covid-19 artifact	
Week 6	16-Feb	Fantasy-Theme Chap 5 & Sample article	Check Summaries
	18-Feb	Application to Covid-19 artifact	
Week 7	23-Feb	Check in & Feminist approaches	Analysis #1 due
	25-Feb	RECHARGE DAY - NO CLASS	
Week 8	2-Mar	Feminist - Chap 6 & Sample article	Chapter 6
	4-Mar	Application to Covid-19 artifact	Artifact #2 chosen
Week 9	9-Mar	Metaphoric - Chap 9 & Sample article	Chapter 9
	11-Mar	Application to Covid-19 artifact	
Week 10	16-Mar	Narrative - Chap 10 & Sample article	Chapter 10
	19-Mar	Application to Covid-19 artifact	Analysis #2 due
Week 11	23-Mar	Pentadic - Chap 11 & Sample article	Chapter 11
	25-Mar	Application to Covid-19 artifact	Artifact #3 chosen
Week 12	30-Mar	Visual - & Sample article	Assigned Visual Rhetoric reading
	1-Apr	Application to Covid-19 artifact	Check Summaries
Week 13	6-Apr	Discussion of Presentations	
	8-Apr	Presentations	
Week 14	13-Apr	Presentations	
	15-Apr	Presentations	
Week 15	20-Apr	Wrap-up	Analysis #3 due Summaries due
	22-Apr	READING DAY - NO CLASS	