

# Kutztown University

ENG 470 Selected Topics  
Spring 2005

**Professor:** Kevin Mahoney  
**Office:** LY 237  
**Phone:** 3-4337  
**Email:** mahoney@kutztown.edu  
**Hours:** Tuesday: 11:30am—12:30pm  
Wednesday: 1:00pm—4:00pm  
Thursday: 11:30am—12:30pm  
**Web:** <http://faculty.kutztown.edu/mahoney>



## **Rhetorical Traditions/Contemporary Renditions: Advocacy, Activism, and Public Rhetoric in American Culture**



“It’s just rhetoric.” “Enough of this sophistry, let’s get to the truth.” “That politician is only spewing a bunch of rhetoric to cover over the real issues.” “Let me ask you a rhetorical question.”

We’ve all heard the term “rhetoric” used to refer to talk or writing that is “empty” or “deceptive.” And “sophistry”—a term deriving from ancient Greek rhetoric teachers, the Sophists—has come to mean “a deliberately invalid argument displaying ingenuity in reasoning in the hope of deceiving someone” (WordNet, Princeton University). Yet, over the past couple of decades, the study of rhetoric has seen something of a revival. Rhetorical theory is increasingly being used to understand how language and symbolic communication constructs knowledge, identity, and agency in our world. In addition, the growing interest in globalization, mass media, civil society, and democracy has revived interest in how “citizens” can effectively participate in a democratic process. This interest brings us back to the roots of rhetorical traditions: to educate “citizens” to be effective participants in a democracy.

This course will examine traditions of rhetoric, current developments in the field of Composition and Rhetoric, and specific examples of individuals and groups intervening in social and cultural debates. The course will focus on historical and contemporary relationships among rhetoric, literacy, citizenship, and democratic practice. We will read both primary and secondary texts in the field and research historical and current social movements that have made or are making

significant interventions into dominant and/or common sense discourses. This course will also provide a significant introduction to current debates in the field of Composition and Rhetoric. We will consider the multifaceted ways in which rhetoric is taking a critical role in exploring the discursive construction of our world and how we can develop effective strategies to intervene in it.

### Required Texts:

- Cope & Kalantzis, Eds. Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Covino & Jolliffe, Eds. Rhetoric: Concepts, Definitions, Boundaries. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995.
- Gray-Rosendale & Gruber, Eds. Alternative Rhetorics: Challenges to the Rhetorical Tradition. Albany: SUNY P, 2001.
- Jarratt. Rereading the Sophists: Classical Rhetoric Refigured. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1991.
- Lakoff. The Language War. Berkeley: U of California P, 2000.
- Lunsford, Ed. Reclaiming Rhetorica: Women in the Rhetorical Tradition. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1995.
- Shaw. The Activists Handbook: A Primer. Berkeley: U of California P, 2001.
- Sullivan & Goldzwig, Eds. New Approaches to Rhetoric. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004.
- Weisser. Moving Beyond Academic Discourse: Composition Studies and the Public Sphere. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2002.
- *In addition to the above books, I have posted several articles on eReserve in the KU Library. To access these articles, follow the instructions attached to the end of this syllabus.*

### Seminar Format

This course will be run as a seminar. That is, you will be expected to take primary responsibility for the direction of the discussion and to come to each class prepared to discuss the readings critically and in depth. We will sit in a circle and everyone will be expected to participate.

### Major Writing Assignments and Grading:

Your grade in this class will be based on the following projects. I will give you more specific information on each of the assignments in the next couple of weeks.

<b>Paper #1: Considering the Relevance of Classical Rhetoric</b>	20%
<b>Paper #2: Alternatives, Intersections, and Critiques</b>	20%
<b>Paper #3: Rhetorics of Social Movements</b>	20%
<b>Weekly Reading Responses</b>	20%
<b>Group Presentations</b>	10%
<b>Class participation</b>	10%
	<b>100%</b>

**Note on Grading:**

*You will be graded on a plus/minus system on each paper. However, Kutztown University does not currently use a plus/minus grading system for calculating your GPA. I use the plus/minus system throughout the semester to provide you with a better sense of your performance in the class.*

**General Guidelines for Papers:**

- All papers must be word-processed or typed, double-spaced, stapled (not paper-clipped or folded), and follow MLA style guidelines. I will not accept papers that are not stapled.
- Reading Response papers should be handed in every week. You should try and limit Reading Response papers to a maximum of two (2) pages. I would prefer reading responses to be single-spaced.
- For each paper you hand in you should include a **title page** or **header** with the following information:
  - your name
  - the assignment name/paper number
  - the date you are handing in the paper
  - a title
  - course name and section number
  - my name
- **Save all your work!** I can't stress this point enough.

**Late Papers and Email Copies:**

- To receive full-credit you **must** hand in your papers in class on the due date. If you hand in your paper late, you will be graded down for that paper. For each day your paper is late, you will be graded down by a third of a letter grade. In other words, an "A" becomes an "A-," an "A-" becomes a "B+," and so on. If you do not hand in a paper, you will receive a zero (0) for that assignment.
- **Emailing papers.** If you cannot make it to class on the date a paper is due, or if you need to hand in a paper on a non-class day, you may email me your paper. To be accepted, you must send your paper as an attached **Microsoft Word** file. **DO NOT** copy your paper in the body of an email message, and **DO NOT** send your paper as a Microsoft Works file. Make sure your name is on your paper and you "sign" your email. Never send an email copy of your paper without a short message telling me what you are sending. Papers received by 5pm on the due date will not be marked late.
  - **YOU MUST PROVIDE ME WITH A HARD COPY OF YOUR PAPER THE NEXT CLASS PERIOD.** I will not consider your paper handed in until I receive a hard copy from you in the format outlined above.
  - **The only purpose of emailing me the paper is to avoid any additional late penalties.** I will not read your paper until you give me a hard copy.

**Class Policies:**

- It is crucial that you attend every class to do well. Unlike a lecture class, this course depends on active discussion and in-class work. If you need to be absent, it is your responsibility to find out what happened in class from another student.

- If you are not in class when I hand out paper assignments you will need to go to the course website (will be active by the second week of class) to download a copy of the assignment or come to my office to pick up a hard copy of the assignment. I WILL NOT carry extra copies of assignment sheets around with me. To download assignment sheets, go to the course website at:  
<<http://faculty.kutztown.edu/mahoney/Courses/ENG470.htm>>.
- If you are not in class when I hand back your papers, you must pick up your paper in my office, 237 Lytle Hall.
- You should be prepared for each class. This includes **completing all the reading and writing assignments** due on that day. **Reading is NOT optional.** Active reading entails taking notes on the reading, reflecting on the reading, and coming to class prepared to have something to say about what you have read. If I notice that people are coming to class without reading, I will begin giving quizzes at the beginning of each class.
- Turn off or set to silent all cell phones prior to class.
- Respect your classmates.

### Special Note on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. Plagiarizing one of your papers or a significant portion of one of your papers will result in **failure of the course**. In addition to failing the course, I will notify the University of the violation. If you have not already, please review the University's Academic Dishonesty policy at the following web address: <http://www.kutztown.edu/admin/conduct/>. The university subscribes to an anti-plagiarism service for checking student papers against material posted on the Internet—this includes websites that require payment to download papers.

Academic Dishonesty as defined in the student handbook, *The Key*:

#### *Definitions of Academic Dishonesty*

Academic dishonesty involves any attempt to obtain academic credit or influence the grading process by means unauthorized by the course instructor. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to the following situations and examples.

1. Providing or receiving unauthorized assistance in course work and lab work, or unauthorized assistance during examinations or quizzes.
2. Using unauthorized notes, materials, and devices during examinations or quizzes.
3. Plagiarizing the work of others and presenting it as one's own without properly acknowledging the source or sources. At its worst extreme, plagiarism is exact copying, but it is also the inclusion of a paraphrased version of the opinions and work of others without giving credit. It is not limited to written materials. It includes the wrongful appropriation in whole or in part of someone else's literary, artistic, musical, mechanical, or computer-based work.
4. Presenting material to fulfill course requirements that was researched or prepared by others (such as commercial services) without the knowledge of the instructor.
5. Falsifying or inventing data to be presented as part of an academic endeavor.
6. Gaining unauthorized access to another person's or the University's computer system. Violations include tampering with or copying programs or data or access codes associated with coursework.

7. Possessing or arranging for someone else to possess course examination or quiz materials at any time without the consent of the instructor.
8. Altering or adding answers on exercises, exams, or quizzes after the work has been graded.
9. Making fraudulent statements, excuses, or claims to gain academic credit or influence testing or grading.
10. Taking examinations or quizzes for someone else or arranging to have someone take examinations or quizzes in place of the person registered for the course.

**Special needs:**

*If you have any special needs including physical or mental disabilities, please let me know and contact the Disabilities Services located in the Office of Human Diversity, Room 115 in the Stratton Administration Building. We will make any necessary accommodations. To get further information about Disability Services visit their website at:*

<http://www.kutztown.edu/admin/humandiversity/disabilityservices/>

**From: Lazere, Donald. "Ground Rules for Polemicists: The Case of Lynne Cheney's Truths." College English 59 (1997): 661-685.**

Polemics: "Heatedly partisan argumentation."

Polemicist: Someone who engages in polemics.

*Below is a passage by Donald Lazere, a professor of English at Cal. Tech. He is arguing that there can be heated partisan debate that does not lapse into "invective" and undemocratic forms of argumentation. I think these "rules" provide a good framework for the kind of writing and discussion we should hold ourselves to in this course. [KM]*

### **Ground Rules for Polemicists:**

1. Do unto your own as you do unto others. Apply the same standards to yourself and your allies that you do to your opponents, in all of the following ways.
2. Identify your own ideological viewpoint and how it might bias your arguments. Having done so, show that you approach your opponents' actions and writings with an open mind, not with malice aforethought. Concede the other side's valid arguments—preferably toward the beginning of your critique, not tacked on grudgingly at the end or in inconspicuous subordinate clauses. Acknowledge points on which you agree at least partially and might be able to cooperate.
3. Summarize the other side's case fully and fairly, in an account that they would accept, prior to refuting it. Present it through its most reputable spokespeople and strongest formulations (not through the most outlandish statements of its lunatic fringe), using direct quotes and footnoted sources, not your own undocumented paraphrases. Allow the most generous interpretation of their statements rather than putting the worst light on them; help them make their arguments stronger when possible.
4. When quoting selected phrases from the other side's texts, accurately summarize the context and tone of the longer passages and full texts in which they appear.
5. When you are repeating a second-hand account of events, say so—do not leave the implication that you were there and are certain of its accuracy. Cite your source and take account of its author's possible biases, especially if the author is your ally.
6. In any account that you use to illustrate the opponents' misbehavior, grant that there may be another side to the story and take pains to find out what it is. If opponents claim they have been misrepresented, give them their say and the benefit of the doubt.
7. Be willing to acknowledge misconduct, errors, and fallacious arguments by your own allies, and try scrupulously to establish an accurate proportion and sense of reciprocity between them and those you criticize in your opponents. Do not play up the other side's forms of power while denying or downplaying your own side's.
8. Respond forthrightly to opponents' criticisms of your own or your side's previous arguments, without evading key points. Admit it when they make a criticism you cannot refute.
9. Do not substitute derision for reasoned argument and substantive evidence.

(Lazere 661-662).

## Course Calendar

### Key:

#### Symbols:

- : Required reading for class discussion
- \*\* : Class discussion will focus on these texts
- ↪: Additional reading/Historical text

#### Abbreviations for Course Texts:

*Several of the texts for this course are edited collections. If the readings for a particular class read “**Part I and Part II**” of one of the edited collections, read all of the articles in those parts.*

#### eReserves:

*Several additional readings are on eReserve in the KU Library. Articles made available on eReserve will say “(eReserve)” following the title of the article. For information on how to access, download, and print articles from eReserve see the attachment at the end of this syllabus.*

### Tue 1/11 Introduction to Rhetoric

#### Read:

- Herrick, “An Overview of Rhetoric” (eReserve)
- Kuypers and King, “What is Rhetoric” (eReserve)
- Hauser, “The Eventfulness of Rhetoric” (eReserve)
- **Part I**, “An Introduction to Rhetoric,” of Covino & Jolliffe, Rhetoric.

### Tue 1/18

#### Read:

- Herrick, “The Origins and Early History of Rhetoric” (eReserve)
- Herrick, “Plato Versus the Sophists: Rhetoric on Trial” (eReserve)\*\*
- Herrick, “Aristotle on Rhetoric” (eReserve)
- McComisky, “Disassembling Plato’s Critique of Rhetoric in the *Gorgias*” (eReserve)\*\*
- Poulakos, “*Kairos* in Gorgias’ Rhetorical Compositions” (eReserve)\*\*
- Gorgias, “Encomium of Helen” (eReserve)\*\*

↪ Plato, “Gorgias” (Handout)

↪ Aristotle, “From *Rhetoric*,” (Handout)

**Tue 1/25**

**Read:**

- Jarratt, Rereading the Sophists.

**Tue 2/1**

**Read:**

- Ostwald, “Shares and Rights: ‘Citizenship’ Greek Style and American Style” (eReserve)
- Tolbert Roberts, “Athenian Equality: A Constant Surrounded by Flux” (eReserve)
- Wood, “The Demos Versus ‘We the People’: From Ancient to Modern Conceptions of Citizenship” (eReserve)

**Tue 2/8**

**Read:**

- **Introduction, Part I, and Part II** of Gray-Rosendale and Gruber, Alternative Rhetorics (pp. 1-144)\*\*
- Bizzell, “Future Directions for Rhetorical Traditions” (eReserve)

☞ Rosteck, “Approaching the Intersection: Issues of Identity, Politics, and Critical Practice” (eReserve)

**Tue 2/15**

**Read:**

- Lunsford, Reclaiming Rhetorica.

**Tue 2/22**

**Read:**

- **Part IV** of Covino and Jolliffe, Rhetoric (pp. 319-825). *Readings will be dividing among several working groups. Each group will choose two (2) “Rhetoric and...” sections and present to the rest of the class.*

**Tue 3/1**

**Read:**

- **Part I, Part II, and Part III** of Cope and Kalantzis, Multiliteracies (pp. 1-234).
- Selections (TBA) from **Part IV and Part V**, Cope and Kalantzis, Multiliteracies.

**Tue 3/8—NO CLASSES—SPRING BREAK!!!**

**Tue 3/15**

**Read:**

- Weisser, Moving Beyond Academic Discourse.

**Tue 3/22**

**Read:**

- Lakoff, Robin Tolmach. The Language War.

☞ Lakoff, George, “Framing 101: How to Take Back Public Discourse” (eReserve)

**Tue 3/29**

**Read:**

- Sullivan & Goldzwig, New Approaches to Rhetoric. *Groups will choose which parts to present.*

**Tue 4/5**

**Read:**

- Shaw, The Activist’s Handbook.
- “Social Movement Criticism” (eReserve)

**Tue 4/12 NO CLASS—SPRING RECESS**

**Tue 4/19**

**Presentation of Applied Rhetorical Analysis Projects**

**Tue 4/26 LAST DAY OF CLASS**

**Presentation of Applied Rhetorical Analysis Projects**

**FINAL EXAM WEEK—5/2-5/6**

***HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!!***

## Accessing eReserves

### Instructions for Use

- Go to the library eReserves webpage at:  
<<http://ereserves.kutztown.edu/>>.
- Click on "Electronic Reserves and Course Materials".
- On the MAIN COURSE INDEX screen, select "Mahoney, Kevin" from the "Select an Instructor" drop down list, and click on the GO button.
- On the COURSES screen click on ENG 470.
- On the next page, type in the password (the password is GO). Click on the ACCEPT button.
- On the next screen, click on the title of the reading you want to view.
- When the password screen appears, type the password (GO). Click on the CONTINUE button.
- Adobe Acrobat Reader will open and your document will appear on the screen.
- You can print or download the article from this screen.
- If you have any problems or comments, call the library at: 610-683-4480, or send an email to [Susan Czerny](mailto:Susan.Czerny).