

Spring 2018 – RHE 309K: Rhetoric of Bicultural Identity Syllabus, Class Policy Statement, and Schedule

Instructor: Erica Brozovsky

TEXTBOOKS

- *Everything's an Argument* 7. Lunsford, Ruskiewicz, and Walters, 2016.
- *The Little Longhorn Handbook*. Bullock, Brody, and Weinberg, 2014.
- Other readings available on Canvas or by instructor.

Prerequisite courses: RHE 306 or RHE 306Q

ABOUT THE COURSE

What do Kid Cudi, Olivia Wilde, and Louis CK have in common? And what about Eminem, Snooki, and Mindy Kaling? The members of the first group can be identified as multiracial: the children of parents of different ethnicities and races. The second group lends itself to a more multicultural lens: Eminem is not seen as just a rapper, but a white rapper; Snooki embodied the Italian-American guidette, but is in fact Chilean; and in the words of Mindy Kaling, “My parents raised me with the entitlement of a tall, white, blond man.” In this class we will examine mixed identity in both measures of race and of culture.

As globalization simultaneously shrinks the perceived distance between cultures and broadens our worldview, there has arisen a population of individuals who do not solely identify with one cultural ethnicity or community. From deciding which box to check on demographic forms to communicating with grandparents in makeshift sign due to language barriers, the offspring of multiculturalism often struggle with what unicultural people might consider innocuous tasks or decisions. What does it mean to be accused of “acting black” or, in the case of Rachel Dolezal, actually passing as black? How do people behave differently or speak differently in the various cultural spheres to which they belong? With this struggle comes the question of identity. Where do these people fit in?

Through a rhetorical lens, we will explore a multitude of topics such as historical viewpoints on miscegenation (and the negative connotation the word conveys), third culture, the immigrant experience, diaspora, and loss of culture. We will examine the way our society talks about multiculturalism, and in turn, how the way we talk about it shape the way that it exists. In this course, we will learn to engage critically with a variety of texts from laws to YouTube videos and evaluate them based on the rhetorical toolkit developed over the course of the semester. By researching credible sources, and writing and revising college-level papers, we will emerge at the end of the semester with a greater understanding of rhetoric, writing, and the multicultural world around us.

You will learn how to:

- Identify and analyze a text's relation to historical, cultural, and rhetorical contexts and various audiences

- Think critically and fairly about societies, politics, and cultural practices that may be quite different from your own
- Conduct thorough research using UT library resources and online search engines
- Identify and evaluate rhetorical strategies across a wide range of written, visual, and audio texts
- Evaluate the credibility of sources in light of their authors, audiences, and venues of publication
- Read closely and respond critically, thoughtfully, and fairly to the larger conversation concerning bicultural identity
- Reflect on the writing process by reviewing peers' work and revising their own
- Organize and construct clear and effective arguments in written compositions at the college-level

COURSEWORK AND GRADING

You will be graded on the following assignments this term:

- Project 1.1: Rhetorical Analysis: 10%
- Project 1.2: Rhetorical Analysis Revision: 15%
- Project 2: Annotated Bibliography: 15%
- Project 3.1: Argumentative Essay: 15%
- Project 3.2: Argumentative Essay Revision: 15%
- Project 4: Presentation: 10%
- Short Writing Assignments 15%
- Participation: 5%
- Peer reviews: Mandatory

Grades

Final grades will be determined on the following scale. Please note: To ensure fairness, all numbers are absolute, and will not be rounded up or down at any stage. For example, a B- will be inclusive of all scores of 80.0000 through 83.9999. The University does not recognize the grade of A+.

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| • A = 94-100 | • B- = 80-83 | • D+ = 67-69 |
| • A- = 90-93 | • C+ = 77-79 | • D = 64-66 |
| • B+ = 87-89 | • C = 74-76 | • D- = 60-63 |
| • B = 84-86 | • C- = 70-73 | • F = 0-59 |

Major Assignments

You will write an annotated bibliography, two essays ranging from 4-7 pages each (above designated Rhetorical Analysis and Argumentative Essay), and do one presentation. You will also be graded on your revision of the two essays based on my feedback. In addition, you will compose five short writing assignments.

In order to receive a passing mark for the course, regardless of your performance on other assignments or total average of all your grades, all major assignments must be completed to my satisfaction.

Participation

Active participation is essential to success in the course. Simply showing up to class is your responsibility. In order to receive full credit for participation, you must take part in all group activities and in-class assignments. All in-class and homework assignments will be graded on a credit/no-credit basis. Your grade will be determined by the number of assignments you completed out of the total number of assignments. No make up work will be accepted.

CLASS POLICIES

Email

If you have any questions about homework, assignments, or any other class-related matter, be sure to refer to the following resources:

- The syllabus
- Canvas
- Your notes and/or material recently passed out in class
- Your classmates

If your question was not answered by either of these resources, I am available by email. Keep in mind that I check my email only a handful of times a day, and rarely after business hours. You can expect a response from me within forty-eight business hours, but you should not expect to hear back immediately, and you should plan accordingly. Please be sure to use a proper salutation and observe proper rules of grammar and punctuation. If your question cannot be answered in a few sentences, you should come see me in office hours.

Grading Policy

I am happy to talk to you about your progress in the class at any time. Keep in mind that these discussions can only happen in person due to FERPA regulations. Before discussing grades please keep in mind:

- Look at the minimum requirements. If you met them, then you can expect a C. Meeting the minimum is not A or even B work. If you did no more than what was asked, expect a C. Even if you worked really hard but still didn't do what was asked, you will not get A. In high school, A's are often given for effort, but the same is not true of this class.
- Did you follow the directions completely? If you were absent and didn't get notes from a peer or look at any class documents, then that was a mistake on your part which will likely be reflected in your grade.
- Be proactive about your success in this class. Don't wait until the end of the semester to ask how your C- can be bumped up because you *need* an A to get into McCombs.

It will not happen. I am happy and willing to work with you from the outset to help you succeed in this course.

Learning Procedures

It is never okay to laugh at, belittle, or harass a peer because of their opinion or point of view. Always think about how your comments will support our learning as a group. But safe doesn't mean operating in an environment where beliefs and ideas go unchallenged. Challenging colleagues to explain their arguments in a thoughtful manner is key to creating an engaging learning community.

- Make a commitment to understand unfamiliar positions from the context or point of view of your peers.
- Speak for yourself rather than for a group (use your "I" statements).
- Be present – really listening to your peers will dramatically improve your in-class experience and prevent most misunderstandings.
- Take risks in speaking honestly; this will help the learning of the group.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE: TTH

*Please note that dates are subject to change

WEEK	DAY	MAJOR ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES
1	T 1/16	Snow Day
	Th 1/18	Complete Syllabus Quiz
2 - Unit 1	T 1/23	Read: <i>Everything's an Argument (EAA)</i> Ch 1
	Th 1/25	Read: Dennis – <i>Towards a Theory of Biculturalism</i> (Canvas) Summary of a Text due
3	T 1/30	Read: <i>EAA</i> Ch 6
	Th 2/1	Read: <i>EAA</i> Ch 2 Summary of a Contextual Source due
4	T 2/6	Read: <i>EAA</i> Ch 3 Peer Review Rhetorical Analysis
	Th 2/8	Read: <i>EAA</i> Ch 4 Project 1.1: Rhetorical Analysis due
5	T 2/13	Revision Meetings
	Th 2/15	Read: <i>EAA</i> Ch 13 Project 1.2: Rhetorical Analysis Revision due
6	T 2/20	Read: <i>EAA</i> Ch 14

	Th 2/22	Read: <i>EAA</i> Ch 17 Research Summary 1 (RS1) due
7	T 2/27	Read: <i>EAA</i> Ch 18 and 19 Research Summary 2 (RS2) due
	Th 3/1	Read: <i>EAA</i> Ch 20 Annotations of RS1 and RS2 sources due
8	T 3/6	Read: <i>EAA</i> Ch 22 “MLA Style”
	Th 3/8	Annotated Bibliography due (11:59pm)
9	T 3/13	Spring Break
	Th 3/15	Spring Break
10	T 3/20	Read: <i>EAA</i> Ch 8
	Th 3/22	Read: <i>EAA</i> Ch 9 Argumentative Essay abstract due (in class)
11	T 3/27	Read: <i>EAA</i> Ch 10
	Th 3/29	Read: <i>EAA</i> Ch 11
12	T 4/3	Peer Review Argumentative Essay
	Th 4/5	Project 3.1: Argumentative Essay due
13	T 4/10	Revision Meetings
	Th 4/12	Read: <i>EAA</i> Ch 5 Project 3.2: Argumentative Essay Revision due
14	T 4/17	Read: <i>EAA</i> Ch 15
	Th 4/19	
15	T 4/24	
	Th 4/26	Oral Presentations
16	T 5/1	Oral Presentations
	Th 5/3	Oral Presentations
