Syllabus
Senior Capstone in Communication
COMS 450
Tuesdays 6-10

_Insofar as man is the “typically symbol-using animal,” it should not be surprising that men’s thoughts on the nature of the Divine embody the principles of verbalization._ – Kenneth Burke

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course Note
The purpose of this course is to examine the interrelationship between religion and communication. While this class is about religion as a general concept, there is a clear Judaic-Christian emphasis within this class because of the merging of Greco-Roman rhetorical theory and Judaic-Christian theology that occurs during the first through fourth centuries within the Roman Empire.

Course Assumption
The following assumptions are made regarding your preparation for being in the course:
This is a senior capstone in communication studies, so technically to be in this course you should be a senior communication major.

Required Readings

All required readings are on Blackboard. NOTE: this is the Athens Blackboard system, not the OU-Southern Blackboard system.

There are NO Required Texts, but Two Are Strongly Recommended:


Important Websites:
American Psychological Association’s Style website - http://www.apastyle.org
National Communication Association – http://www.natcom.org
GRADING
Final grades in this course will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-77</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>68-69</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>64-67</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

ASSIGNMENTS (% of points)

- Religious Leader Interview (15) _____________
- Rhetorical Analysis of a Religious Artifact (15) _____________
- Course Project (25) _____________
- Examinations
  - Midterm (10) _____________
  - Final (15) _____________
- Course Preparation (20) _____________
- Extra Credit (X) _____________

TOTAL _____________
You should monitor your own grades. It is very helpful to know your standing in the course at any time during the quarter. Since the passing of the Buckley Amendment by Congress, I am not allowed to give grades over the phone or Internet. However, you may inquire about your grades at anytime in person. Additionally, you may inquire in person about your final exam grade after you have received your quarter grade reports through the mail from the university.

**Course Procedures**

*Attendance*

Punctual attendance is expected at all class sessions, especially on speech days. If you participate in University sponsored activities (e.g., intercollegiate sports), you must inform your instructor before you are absent. Ohio University policy regarding attendance will be followed. Students are responsible for all missed work.

*Extra Credit* is not guaranteed in this course, but if opportunities arise they will be announced in class.

*Academic Integrity*

Honesty and originality are expected in all the work you present in this class. Proper citation and documentation of others’ work is required on all oral and written assignments. Plagiarism, cheating, or unethical behavior of any kind will not be tolerated.

*American With Disabilities Act*

Any student, who, because of a disability, may require some special arrangements as prescribed by Ohio University in order to meet course requirements should contact me as soon as possible to make necessary accommodations. Accommodations will be made, but I must be aware of your needs in order to make proper accommodations.

*Course Schedule*

Please note the schedule given on the first day of class is a tentative schedule and changes can be made at the instructor’s/course administrator’s discretion. To keep on top of any possible changes in the course schedule, regular attendance in class is necessary.

*Readings*

While there is a lot to read in this class, the books are interesting and easy to read, so readings that are assigned should be read before you come to class. The readings in this class are either in your textbooks or on Blackboard in the Course Documents section under “readings.”

**Course Assignments**

*Midterm Examination and Final Examination*

There are midterm and final examinations in this course. Your midterm will occur halfway through the course and the final will occur during the final testing period. The final will cover
ALL material discussed in this course. These tests will be short answer/essay tests.

**Religious Leader Interview**

The goal of this project is to interview a religious leader within the Ohio Valley from a religious faith not your own. During the course of your interview, you will engage your interviewee in her or his perception of the use of communication as a tool. Without leading your interviewee, you should attempt to see if your religious leader’s perception of communication more generally and rhetoric more specifically is aligned with any of the classical thinkers. While your discussion could stay strictly with the religious leader’s use of communication, you may expand your view and look at her or his perception of communication within the religious organization as well.

This paper should be 5-7 pages using APA style utilizing the following format:

- Brief explanation of the interview.
- Explanation of the interviewee’s religion & religious training.
- Explanation of the interviewee’s training in communication/rhetoric.
- Interviewee’s view on her or his use of communication/rhetoric in her or his profession.
- Interviewee’s perception of the usefulness of communication/rhetoric in her or his profession.
- Your analysis of the interviewee’s perception of communication.
- Comparison of your interviewee with classical notions of communication and religion.

**Rhetorical Analysis of a Religious Artifact**

Using the concepts explored by Kenneth Burke in *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology* you are going to rhetorically analyze a religious artifact of your choosing. The religious artifact may be classical or pop-culture based. The artifact should be from a religion that you do not personally ascribe to in order to be the most open and aware of the rhetorical devices and implications within the text as possible. This paper should be 5-10 pages using APA style.

**Course Project**

Throughout the quarter you will undertake some type of major research project related to communication and religion. This project can take on many forms depending on your particular areas of interest in religion and communication. Possible project ideas could be an extended rhetorical analysis of a religious artifact, an examination of a specific historical figure that spent time writing on rhetoric and religion, or a qualitative/quantitative research project. These projects may be completed in groups (no more than 4 people). For each project, we will work together to create a contract between us on what you will accomplish during the project.

**Course Preparation**

During the first five weeks, I will be the primary teacher in this class. Starting in the 6th week, everyone will be responsible for teaching portions of the course. Primarily, everyone will prep one of the articles for that week for a 30-45 minute discussion/teaching session. More detail will be given during class.
# Tentative Schedule of Course Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Of</th>
<th>Content to be Covered</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/28/06</td>
<td>The Two Legs of Western Thought: Greco-Roman Philosophy &amp; Judaic Tradition</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUE</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4/5/06</td>
<td>Two Traditions Colliding</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/12/06</td>
<td>The Influence and Legacy of St. Augustine of Hippo</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUE</td>
<td>1 page project proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/19/06</td>
<td>The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUE</td>
<td>Religious Leader Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/26/06</td>
<td>Rhetoric and Hermeneutics</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/3/06</td>
<td>Religious Rhetorical Thinkers After Augustine</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUE</td>
<td>Midterm Examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/10/06</td>
<td>Religious Communication as Communicative Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUE</td>
<td>Religious Artifact Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/17/06</td>
<td>Applied Religious Communication in Health Care &amp; Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUE</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5/24/06</td>
<td>Religious Communication and Pop Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/31/06</td>
<td>Social Scientific Approaches to Religious Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/7/06</td>
<td>Final Examination &amp; Project Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUE</td>
<td>On this day, the first half of the period you will take your Final Examination. When everyone has completed the examination, everyone will present their final projects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading List

Week 1: The Two Legs of Western Thought: Greco-Roman Philosophy & Judaic Tradition


Week 2: Two Traditions Colliding


Week 3: The Influence and Legacy of St. Augustine of Hippo


Week 4: The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology


**Week 5: Rhetoric and Hermeneutics**

**Required**


**Recommended (but not required)**


Week 6: Religious Rhetorical Thinkers After Augustine


Week 7: Religious Communication as Communicative Performance


Week : 8

**Applied Religious Communication in Health Care & Organizations**

**Health Communication** (If Health Comm, focus on these articles)


**Organizational Communication** (If Org Comm, focus on these articles)


**Week 9: Religious Communication and Pop Culture**


Other Reading (Non-Required)


**Week 10: Social Scientific Approaches to Religious Communication**


