

# COMMUNICATION STUDIES 4898

## Critical Methods in Communication Research

Prerequisites: COMST 3756 and COMST 3799

3 semester hours credit

### **Course Syllabus**

*Instructor:* Dr. Lawrence W. Hugenberg

*Office:* 2027 Bliss Hall

*Office Hours:* To be announced. Other times by appointment.

*Phone Number:* 330.941-3633 [I choose not to use voice mail.]

*E-Mail Address:* lwhugenberg@ysu.edu

### **Textbooks [required]**

Foss, S. K. (2004). *Rhetorical criticism: Exploration and practice* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland.

Bourhis, J., Adams, C., & Titsworth, S. (2006). *Style Manual for Communication Studies* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

### **University Description**

The advanced study and application of rhetorical, historical and critical methods in communication research.

### **Department Description**

COMST 4898 helps students understand the dominant approaches and methods of critical communication research – including rhetorical, historical and critical cultural methods. We focus on different methods of qualitative research as they relate to studying and understanding communication.

### **Objectives**

The over-arching objective of COMST 4898 is to help students appreciate communication research that utilizes critical methods. By the end of the course, students will be able to read and better understand critical communication research studies. Students will gain experience at using critical research methods studying a communicative artifact of their choosing. Specifically, COMST 4898 is intended to help students:

- understand contemporary views of critical communication research
- apply different critical methods
- to analyze critical research results
- understand how to complete a critical research study
- present the results of their critical study to the class

## Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for:

- their own learning and meeting all course obligations
- reading assignments for the day listed on the course calendar
- participating qualitatively and quantitatively in class discussions
- asking relevant questions about course materials
- respecting others, including the instructor, by listening to what they have to say
- turning off cell phones, pagers, etc. *before* you enter the classroom (if one of your electronic devices disrupts class, you will lose ½ letter grade off your final grade for **each** occurrence)
- avoiding what the instructor deems inappropriate behaviors (interrupting, making personal remarks, doing work for another class, reading the newspaper, engaging in private conversations, etc.)
  - the first occurrence you will be asked to leave class; the second occurrence, you will be reported to the University Discipline Committee to be removed from class

## Course Policies

### 1. Attendance

Attendance in class is not mandatory. The instructor does not and will *not* listen to excuses for absences. The instructor cannot *and* will not re-teach a class you missed. A student who misses a class must assume total responsibility of informing themselves of class notes, announcements, and assignments.

Failure to turn in an assignment at the beginning of class on the date assigned by the instructor will result in the lowering of your grade on that assignment one letter grade per calendar day. If you turn in a second assignment late, you will receive a “O” (no points) for that assignment. A student’s absence does not excuse an assignment from being late. This policy applies until the instructor has the assignment in his hand -- turning it in to the office or placing it in the instructor’s mailbox does not constitute receipt of the assignment. Pushing it under the instructor’s door may result in your work being thrown out with the trash.

Quizzes must be taken on the date administered by the instructor. No make up quizzes will be given *regardless* of excuse.

### 2. Academic Dishonesty

All work is to be original for this course. Your work may not be used to meet course requirements in any other class. See the University *Student Code of Responsibility* for additional information about plagiarism – whether intentional or unintentional. The most severe penalty will be imposed on students violating this important aspect of professional behavior.

### 3. *Class Participation*

The nature of this class requires students participate in class discussions – meaning you have to come to class prepared to discuss readings assigned in the syllabus. Class participation is intended to encourage students to participate in qualitative and quantitative ways to class discussions. Class participation is intended to discourage students from carrying one sided-conversations with other classmates not intended for everyone's ears – in fact these side conversations will have a negative effect on your participation grade. Class participation is the instructor's subjective evaluation of each student's contributions to class discussions.

### 4. *Extra Credit*

There is no extra credit in COMST 4898. So don't ask!!

## **Assignments**

### 1. *Artifact Analyses*

The student will select one communication artifact for in-class analysis using different critical methods. The student must have a copy of the artifact stapled in a folder so it is always available for analysis. This artifact must be selected by the beginning of the fourth week of the term. Duplicate artifacts will not be accepted – it is first come, first served. Students are expected to analyze the articles study by applying concepts discussed in the texts and class discussions.

### 2. *Research Paper*

Each student is expected to take concepts and theories from class discussions and the texts to complete a critical research study. Students should feel free to use appropriate methods discussed in class or read in the text to help in their preparation. The more comprehensive the research project, the better the paper. Students will be permitted to work in self-selected pairs for this assignment – the expectations of the final project will be higher since two people will be working on the project.

### 3. *Research Project Presentation*

Students will present their critical study to the class in a 10-12 minute informative presentation at the end of the semester.

### 4. *Quizzes*

The quizzes, some announced and some “surprise”, will cover both text and class discussion materials. Quizzes will be administered at the beginning of class. If you are late, after all the quizzes are distributed, you will not be permitted to take the quiz. Quizzes will be brief, objective in nature, and will last no longer than 10-minutes. After receiving a quiz back from the instructor, the student has one class period to prepare a written defense for responses marked by the instructor. The written defense and completed quiz must be returned to the instructor for the defense to be considered. The instructor does not listen to verbal arguments regarding the grading of a quiz.

### Assignment Requirements

1. All assignments must follow the latest APA style for set up, citations, cover sheet, abstract, documentation, etc. No exceptions. Failure to use the APA Style will result in a two letter grade penalty on the assignment.

2. All assignments handed in for this course must be double-spaced and typed. Computer printouts must be dark enough to read. Handwritten assignments, unless completed in class, will not be accepted.

3. Typographical, spelling, and grammatical errors are to be corrected prior to turning in any assignment. a paper judged to have too many errors (usually three) will be reduced in grade accordingly – depending on the number of errors. Handwritten corrections also count as errors.

4. Assignments must be STAPLED in the upper left corner (*No Paper Clips!*). Papers will not be accepted in plastic or paper folders.

5. Papers are due at the beginning of class -- when the instructor collects them. If you are not going to be absent, they are due to the instructor **before** the start of class.

### Grading

#### Percentage

The following scale will be used in determining your final grade in COMST 4898:

Quizzes (highest 7)	20%	20 points
Presentation	20%	20 points
Research Paper	20%	20 points
Analyses Assignments (4)	20%	20 points
Class Participation	<u>20%</u>	<u>20 points</u>
	100%	100 points

#### Final Grades

The following scale will be used in recording your final grade in COMST 4898:

A	=	90 - 100 points
B	=	80 - 89.9 points
C	=	70 - 79.9 points
D	=	60 - 69.9 points
F	=	< 60 points

#### Incomplete Grades

The only valid reason for an incomplete grade (I) in COMST 4898 is with medical or other tragic reason so extreme to cause the student to be unable to complete the course. This tragic event must have occurred after the last day to drop a class. To be eligible for a grade of incomplete, the student must have completed 50% of the course with a grade of "C" or higher. The final determination of issuing a grade of incomplete rests with the instructor. Part of this decision includes all applicable rules of the University policy for issuing a grade of incomplete.

### *Students with Disabilities*

In accordance with University procedure, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, you must contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Disability Services at the beginning of the semester or when given an assignment for which an accommodation is required. Students with disabilities must verify their eligibility through the office of Equal Opportunity and Disability Services' intake procedures (330-941-3370).

### **Announcements**

- Grades are a private matter between you and your instructor. As such, they will not be discussed during class time, out in the hall before or after class, or via email. See your instructor during his office hours or make a special appointment to see him.

- Final grades in COMST 4898 will not be posted at the end of the semester. If you want your final grade ahead of having access to your University Grade Report, give your instructor a self-addressed, stamped envelope at the end of the semester. Do not call the Department office to inquire about your final grade in the class.

**TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR (\*)**

Week 1	W	Introduction to the Course	
Week 2	M	The Nature of Rhetorical Criticism	Chapter 1
	W	Quiz	
Week 3	M	Doing Rhetorical Criticism	Chapter 2
	W	Quiz	
Week 4	M	Neo-Aristotelian Criticism ...	Chapter 3
	W	Communication Artifact Due Quiz	
Week 5	M	Cluster Criticism	Chapter 4
	W	Analysis 1	
Week 6	M	Fantasy-Theme Criticism	Chapter 5
Week 7	M	Feminist Criticism	Chapter 6
	W	Analysis 2	
Week 8	M	Generic Criticism	Chapter 7
	W	Quiz	
Week 9		SPRING BREAK	
Week 10	M	Ideological Criticism	Chapter 8
Week 11	M	Metaphor Criticism	Chapter 9
	W	Analysis 3	
Week 12	M	Narrative Criticism	Chapter 10
Week 13	M	Pentadic Criticism	Chapter 11
		Analysis 4	
Week 14	M	Generative Criticism	Chapter 12
Week 15	W	Research Paper Due	
Week 16	M	Presentations	
	W	Presentations	
Week 17		[Finals Week] - Presentations (if necessary)	

(\*) Subject to Change With Advance Notice.