

Rhetoric

Interim Chair

Sarah Lucinda "Cinda" Coggins Mosher

Undergraduate minor: rhetoric and persuasion

Faculty: <https://rhetoric.uiowa.edu/people/faculty>

Website: <https://rhetoric.uiowa.edu/>

The Department of Rhetoric offers undergraduate courses that fulfill the Rhetoric requirement of the different colleges at the university, as well as courses that apply toward the areas of Understanding Cultural Perspectives and Values and Society; see GE CLAS Core in the catalog. It also provides individual instruction in its Writing Center and offers other undergraduate courses, graduate seminars, and an undergraduate minor.

Rhetoric for the GE CLAS Core

All rhetoric courses focus on the development of foundational skills in college-level communication: writing, speaking, listening, and critical reading. Rhetoric courses teach foundational compositional and presentational skills, such as thesis statements, introductions and conclusions, claim-evidence format, and proper citation formatting. Courses also build competence in analysis and persuasion, as well as in research and inquiry. Rhetoric is not a content course; it is skills-based and teaches students *how* to think, not *what* to think.

Once students have researched the breadth and depth of controversy-based issues that interest them, they are well-positioned to contribute to those discussions deliberately, persuasively, and with multiple interests in mind. While all rhetoric sections adhere to specific department requirements, focus primarily on responsible inquiry and analysis, and require comparable workloads in terms of formal and informal assignments, each instructor assigns a unique set of texts and contexts to teach rhetorical concepts.

Rhetoric aligns with the overall GE CLAS Core's mission to provide opportunities for individualized instruction and small class experiences by offering an intimate studio dynamic that is student- and process-centered. During their first year at the university, most students enroll in the rhetoric course indicated on their degree audit unless their English proficiency evaluation requires them to complete one or more prerequisite courses in English as a Second Language (ESL). Students planning to transfer to the University of Iowa should discuss rhetoric course equivalencies as soon as possible with University of Iowa Admissions.

Students who undergo formal evaluation by Student Disability Services and are found to have a learning disability in reading, writing, listening, or speaking should request reasonable accommodations in order to complete rhetoric. Accommodations may be arranged by Student Disability Services in consultation with the Department of Rhetoric and individual instructors.

Programs

Undergraduate Program of Study Minor

- Minor in Rhetoric and Persuasion

Courses

Rhetoric Courses

RHET:1000 First-Year Seminar 1-2 s.h.

Small discussion class taught by a faculty member; topics chosen by instructor; may include outside activities (e.g., films, lectures, performances, readings, visits to research facilities). Requirements: first- or second-semester standing.

RHET:1010 Writing for Academic Success 1 s.h.

Individualized instruction in the Writing Center; in conjunction with GE CLAS Core Rhetoric courses.

RHET:1030 Rhetoric: Writing and Communication 4-5 s.h.

Analysis and critique to discover, question, explain, and justify positions and claims made in writing and speaking; reading and listening to comprehend and assess arguments; employment of rhetorical concepts (e.g., purpose, audience); understanding research as responsible inquiry for speaking and writing; special topics, activities. Requirements: completion of any required ESL courses. GE: Rhetoric.

RHET:1040 College Writing and Reading 3 s.h.

Introductory course in writing required of students who have completed a college-level public speaking course, but have not otherwise satisfied the rhetoric requirement. Requirements: completion of GE CLAS Core speaking requirement and any required ESL courses. GE: Rhetoric - Writing.

RHET:1060 College Communication and Reading 3 s.h.

Introductory course in speaking required of students who have completed 6 s.h. of college writing instruction, but have not completed a 3 s.h. college-level speaking course; intended to improve speaking, listening, critical, analytical, and advocacy skills. Requirements: completion of GE CLAS Core writing requirement and any required ESL courses. GE: Rhetoric - Speech.

RHET:2000 Big Ideas: Creativity for a Lifetime 3 s.h.

Exploration of what senior artists can teach about creativity and aging; interdisciplinary project-based collaborative learning opportunities that consider role of arts and creativity across a lifespan; essential skills necessary to be professionals in numerous careers including health, social work, education, humanities, and the arts; identification of ways for students to be more creative in their own lives and work. GE: Values and Society. Same as ARTS:2000, ASP:2000, EDTL:2000.

RHET:2055 Persuasion and Advocacy 3 s.h.

Maya Angelou said, "The wisest thing I can do is be on my own side, be an advocate for myself and others like me"; how to craft a powerful voice that aligns intellect with passions, shape audience impressions, and gain acceptance and recognition from others when advocating for yourself and for things you believe in; assignments tailored to student's interests and goals.

RHET:2065 Persuading Different Audiences: Launching a Successful Career 3 s.h.

Preparation for student's future persuasive demands as they start their careers; creation of several short projects addressing a variety of audiences, context, and situations with the goal of developing a professional and personable style; assignments reflect challenging circumstances in the workplace.

RHET:2070 Persuasive Stories 3 s.h.

Examination of the persuasive dimension of stories; students master the skill of storytelling by examining stories circulating within their culture and exploring the effects these stories have on thinking about their identities and discovering their own voices; integration of speaking and writing skills with persuasive storytelling skills through short oral and written assignments that lead to a final multimodal project of two interrelated storytelling assignments—production of a website and a podcast. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060. GE: Values and Society.

RHET:2085 Speaking Skills 3 s.h.

How to become confident and effective speakers; assignments include formal presentations and shorter, informal speaking activities; peer and instructor feedback help improve the impression students create as speakers; strengths developed include earning credibility, capturing and maintaining audience interest, and coming across as personable, professional, and confident. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060.

RHET:2090 Conversation Practicum 0-3 s.h.

Intercultural conversation with international students in small groups or pairs; readings, classroom discussions, and in-class training to develop cultural competence and related skills.

RHET:2095 Fundamental Strategies of Persuasion 3 s.h.

Strategies of approaching persuasion in a variety of personal, professional, and communal contexts; fundamentals of persuasion including audience adaptation, creating reasoned and passionate appeals, conveying character, and enabling identification. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060. Requirements: completion of GE CLAS Core Rhetoric.

RHET:2135 Decoding Disability: Rhetoric of Access and Accommodations 3 s.h.

Explores how language shapes perceptions of disability, access, and accommodations—acting both as a barrier to and a means of challenging societal norms. Students examine the role of rhetoric in defining ability and how communication practices impact accessibility. Through written, spoken, signed, and digital expression, they analyze how cultural frameworks value or marginalize different bodies and minds. Emphasizing practical strategies, the course equips students to foster accessibility and opportunity in academic, professional, and public spaces. GE: Understanding Cultural Perspectives. Same as SJUS:2135.

RHET:2350 Forensic Rhetoric 3 s.h.

Students strengthen argumentation, communication, and research skills while discussing the cultural phenomenon of forensic rhetoric (i.e., using the past to make arguments); rhetorical analysis of autobiographical stories, development of podcasts related to readings, and a multimodal project involving archival research.

RHET:2610 Acting for Success 3 s.h.

How skills learned by actors in the theatre world can be applied to presentations and interactions in business, education, and beyond; how to connect with others on a personal level; ability to stand out as a team player and a leader; acting techniques traditionally used in theatre to open up communication dynamics; how to display an authentic self in everyday situations. Corequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060. GE: Engineering Be Creative. Same as THTR:2610.

RHET:3220 Honors Writing Fellows: Writing Theory and Practice 3 s.h.

Preparation of honors students selected as writing fellows to serve as peer tutors in writing-intensive courses; theories of writing, evaluation of drafts, peer tutoring with students.

RHET:3350 Gaming (the) Systems 3 s.h.

Knowing that Rhetoric is the art and study of persuasion and meaning making, students examine how games—one of the newest and most important forms of modern media—participate in these rhetorical practices; students play, discuss, and read about games and how games interact with the cultural discourses surrounding us on their way toward crafting their own rhetorical contributions to the world of games and gaming media; students play small, indie titles and a few major games as they produce an argumentative article, a game review, a video blog, and finally a game itself; beginner friendly, no prior knowledge of games or design programs required. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060.

RHET:3560 Public Policy and Persuasion 3 s.h.

Students build their skill set in policy analysis, formation, and communication through a social justice lens; engagement in service learning projects in one Iowa community, where work done directly impacts that community's ability to make changes; development of effective writing and oral presentation styles that can be adapted to different audiences; focus on homelessness policy using social policy and social justice concepts to explore work of policy makers who have "right-sized" existing systems to serve communities in crisis and propose solutions to systemic problems that disadvantage marginalized populations. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060. Same as PBAF:3560, POLI:3560, SJUS:3560.

RHET:3700 Advocacy and Sustainability: Crafting Stories of People, Place, and Resilience 3 s.h.

How sustainable approaches to meeting critical social needs (food, water, shelter, air, work) have influenced food systems, policies on development, environmental problems, social justice, and policy both local and global in scope; readings and field research activities leading to creation of work of multimodal advocacy. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060. Requirements: fulfillment of GE CLAS Core Rhetoric.

RHET:4980 Special Projects for Undergraduates arr.

Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060.

RHET:5100 Practicum: College Teaching and Professional Development for Teaching Assistants arr.

Guidance for teaching assistants seeking introduction to teaching at college level; focus on practical pedagogical concerns, including how to structure a course, devise learning outcomes, develop a syllabus and a calendar of assignments, evaluate student work, and create a student-centered classroom with collaborate learning experiences; pre-semester intensive training session, weekly meetings during first month of semester, periodic meetings to address midterm and late-semester issues; concurrent with TA teaching assistantships. Recommendations: interest in teacher training and preparation. Same as CLAS:5100.

RHET:5350 Colloquium: Teaching Rhetoric 3 s.h.

Professional development program for new rhetoric teachers; includes three-day workshop.

RHET:5352 Seminar: Topics in Teaching and Professional Development 3 s.h.

Professional development and advanced study of pedagogical theories and practices; focus on teaching as a rhetorical act; readings on pedagogy, composition theories, and learning process; academic and alt-ac career options; teaching philosophy statement, teaching portfolio, peer classroom observations, and research project; for experienced rhetoric instructors and others teaching writing-intensive, process-oriented courses. Recommendations: previous or current teaching experience in composition-intensive courses.

RHET:5375 Teaching in a Writing Center 3 s.h.

Seminar/practicum to prepare graduate students to teach in the University of Iowa Writing Center or similar settings; seminar component on writing and reading processes, tutoring strategies, English-as-a-second-language issues; practicum experience tutoring in the Writing Center. Same as CNW:5375.

RHET:6330 Writing for Learned Journals 1-4 s.h.

Seminar that supports graduate students in bringing written work to publishable form; analysis of target journals' audiences, interests, and citation politics; submission and the publication process; response to reader reports and criticism; best writing and research practices; discussion of knowledge cultures and discourses in disciplines and the contemporary academy. Same as AMST:6300, GRAD:6300, GWSS:6300.

RHET:6980 Graduate Independent Study arr.

Exploration of advanced topics in the field of Rhetoric; pre-arranged and agreed upon by student and faculty member.

RHET:7500 Science Communication in the Digital Age 2-3 s.h.

Preparation for communicating scientific discoveries and importance of scientific endeavors in digital media; focus on adaptable and transferable skills; relevant preparation for digital communication in academic and nonacademic career paths; develop aptitude with speaking and performance skills relevant to video presentation; develop familiarity with video composition and editing processes.

RHET:7930 Writing in the Disciplines arr.

Writing instruction.

RHET:7940 Public Speaking for Academics 3 s.h.

Prepares graduate students for the public speaking occasions germane in their home disciplines and in their future professions; students gain experience moving between different rhetorical registers in public speaking through engaging in cross-disciplinary conversations about performance and speaking practices while refining discipline-specific speaking strategies; honing the ability to communicate the same information in different forms and styles (along with understanding the corresponding advantages and limitations of such) will contribute to students' teaching and scholarly skill sets.