



English 515

Histories and Theories of Rhetoric:

Rhetoric and Justice

FALL 2025

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Shannon Carter

Pronouns: she/her/hers

Office Location: Talbot Hall, 214

Office Hours: via Zoom

University Email Address: Shannon.Carter@tamuc.edu

Office Fax: 903-886-5980

Course Materials

The History and Theory of Rhetoric: An Introduction, 7th Edition, by James A. Herrick (2021)

Course description:

A study of histories and theories of rhetoric. Designed to guide students in interpreting and contributing to current discussions in the field, this course situates these conversations in historical contexts. The title of this course foregrounds the dynamic, evolving, ever-changing histories of rhetoric. We use the term “histories” strategically. In its singular form, the term “history” implies a singular, dominant narrative that marginalizes the many

important contributions made by people of color, LGBTQ, and other historically marginalized populations. This course will bring to the fore those absent voices that rhetoricians have and continue to recover -- recoveries that actively resist and fundamentally challenge dominant narratives that have historically privileged the white, heteronormative, Western approach to rhetorical studies.

Student Learning Outcomes

Through a mixture of reading, writing, and discussion throughout the fall term, students will:

- Engage with rhetorical history and theory and gain exposure to rhetorical terminology
- Practice rhetorical analysis through the lexicon of rhetorical studies
- Gain a **functional**

To this end, we will be taking up the theme “**justice**” alongside histories and theories of rhetoric to reimagine our definitions of rhetoric, justice, democracy, discourse, the social functions of rhetoric, and the art of rhetoric in contemporary contexts and over time.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

As an instructor, my approach to this course is via a “labor-based model.” Here’s how Traci Gardner describes this approach in “When Your Grades are Based on Labor” (<https://tracigardner.com/labor/index.php>):

Grades in this course are based on your labor—on the time and intensity that you put into your writing. You are not punished for making mistakes as long as you work to improve throughout the term.

To help explain what this means, she offers the following infographic, which I find communicates this approach more clearly than most anything I've encountered on the subject. We will, of course, discuss this approach on the regular throughout the course, but to get us started in this important document, the syllabus:

When Your Grades Are Based on Labor
Read more at tracigardner.com/labor

Your grades are based on your labor—on the time and intensity you put into your writing. Here's how to approach your projects.

- Focus on Ideas**
Focus on your ideas, on what you're trying to say. Forget about the pressure to be perfect. Focusing on perfection can distract writers from developing their ideas. Because you are graded on labor, mistakes won't undermine your grade.
- Write for Yourself**
You're studying the kinds of writing that are important in your field and developing a sense of what makes that writing effective. Don't worry about impressing me. Write what will make you successful in the workplace.
- Take Risks**
Try kinds of writing that stretch your abilities and help you learn new things. There's no need to play it safe. After all, the safe, easy route doesn't push you improve your writing.
- Have a Do-Over**
If you take a risk and it doesn't turn out, you can always try again. Just as in a game, you have unlimited do-overs. Making mistakes is part of the learning process. As long as you are trying to improve your work, you can't fail.
- Put In the Effort**
You will write, rewrite, start over, and try again. All this work counts, as long as you listen to feedback, incorporate what you hear, and reflect on how to improve.

Credits: Infographic was created on canva.com. Icons are all from The Noun Project, used under a CC-BY 3.0 license: report by LL Squid, Fluorescent Light Bulb by Matt Brooks, analytics by Wilson Joseph, aim by Gilbert Bages, Switch Controller by Daniel, and Gym by Sathish Selladurai.

Grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

- FC: full credit (direct, rich, and full engagement with the prompt, the readings, and classmates)
- PC: partial credit (much less direct, richness, and nuance in response to prompt and readings and classmates, but still on topic)
- NC: no credit (didn't submit on time or submission off topic)

Assignment Weights

20%	Discussion Boards
10%	Assignment 1: Preproposal for Final Project
15%	Assignment 2: Academic Journal Review
10%	Assignment 3: Full Proposal for Final Project
15%	Assignment 4: Book Review
30%	Final Project: Keywords in Justice Portfolio

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Interaction with Instructor Statement

If you email me Monday-Friday, expect a 24–48-hour response. If I do not respond within that time, feel free to send up a follow email...seriously! Please do! I get a LOT of emails and sometimes one might get lost in the shuffle, or I simply might not have received it. **Never feel bad about follow-ups.** If you email me after 5pm on a Friday, though, you will most likely not get a response until Monday at the earliest. I like my weekends, just like you. You are welcome to email me nonetheless, just please be aware the response will not be as quick as an email sent during the week. Also, you are welcome to come to my office.

Communication

Communication is SO important in this course! If you communicate with me, I can and will do whatever I can to best help you. However, if you do not communicate with me, I cannot even begin to know what you need or how I can help. Communication is key. You can email me. We'll sort it. I am here however you need, but help me help you by utilizing communication.

Attendance

Since this is an online class, your attendance will be determined by your active participation in the forums and other activities, as well as the amount of time you have spent in the course. It is important for you to regularly check in to avoid falling behind.

Please do not disappear without any communication. Firstly, we will worry about you. Additionally, if I am unaware of your situation, I won't be able to collaborate with you to find a possible path towards successfully completing this course. We understand that sometimes life can make it difficult to reach out and inform your instructors about what's going on. That is understandable, as we are all human beings first. If you find yourself overwhelmed and unable to cope, there is no shame in deciding that this might not be the right semester to take on this class.

Grievance Procedure

Students who have concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor in order to reach a resolution. Students who are unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation or have not been able to meet individually with their instructor, whether in-person, by email, by telephone, or by another communication medium, should then schedule an appointment with **Dr. Hunter Hayes, Chair of the Department of Literature and Languages** (hunter.hayes@tamuc.edu). Where applicable, students should also consult University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.05 ("Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation").

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance and will be to the students' benefit.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism:

The official departmental policy: "Instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion. (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b [1,2,3])

If you ever have any questions about a particular use of a source, always ask your instructor (me). They (I) want you to avoid plagiarism, too, so they (I) will help you do so whenever and wherever they (I) can. Do what you can to take advantage of this support – to look innocent in addition to being innocent when it comes to charges of plagiarism.

Students guilty of academic dishonesty or plagiarism can expect to fail the assignment in question or the entire course depending on the nature of the incident.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

AI Use in Courses

East Texas A&M acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided, the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Collection of Data for Measuring Institutional Effectiveness

To measure the level of compliance with the university's Institutional Effectiveness guidelines, throughout the semester, I will collect some of the ungraded texts you produce. The texts will be part of a portfolio created on your behalf and will be measured to ensure that our program "promotes practices that result in higher student academic achievement; an enhanced student experience; aligned and transparent decisions; and readily available information for improvement, accountability, and accreditation" (see "Department of Institutional Effectiveness," <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutus/institutionalEffectiveness/default.aspx>). This is solely an assessment of program effectiveness and in no way affects students' course grades or GPAs.

Students with Disabilities -- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

RESOURCES

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

Writing Center

The Writing Center offers writers free, one-on-one assistance. We welcome all writers, majors, and disciplines—undergraduate and graduate students alike. In fact, we work from the premise that all writers, no matter their ability level, benefit from the feedback of knowledgeable readers. The Writing Center staff is trained to provide writers with just this service. In short, we are here to help you help yourself. The Writing Center offers one-on-one sessions with writers—both face-to-face and online—begin on the hour and last up to 45 minutes. You cannot sign up for back-to-back appointments, but you may sign up for as many appointments as you'd like each day and week. For more information, visit <https://www.tamuc.edu/writing-center>

Library

The Velma Waters Library supports the research, learning and teaching interests of students, faculty and staff. Connect with a librarian, explore our research and course guides, and attend workshops.

- **Chat with a Librarian!** Get immediate assistance with our [chat service](#) on the main Library page: <https://www.tamuc.edu/library/>
- **Email** ask@tamuc.libanswers.com. We will respond to your email within 24 hours, often much sooner.

- **Text** your question to 903.225.2862.
- **Call** the Waters Library at 903.886.5718 or contact the librarian for your college/department to discuss your research needs.
- **Meet With Us!** Don't stay up all night searching Google. Schedule a one-on-one consultation held in-person or via Zoom with the librarian for your college/academic department.
- **Visit Us!** We'd love to meet you in-person!
 - Waters Library Research Office: Second Floor, Room 213
 - Waters Library University Archives: 4th Floor, Room 406A
 - A&M – Commerce at Mesquite Metroplex Center: Second Floor, Study Room

Student Career Preparedness Office

Meet with career advisors who can help you with the resources and tools needed to prepare you for your next phase after graduation and beyond. To schedule an appointment, you can either call 903.468.3223, emailing hirealion@tamuc.edu or go online by clicking [schedule an appointment](#).

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Calendar

Readings

Our core text is Herrick's *Histories and Theories of Rhetoric*. However, we will also be making use of *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* (RSQ), *constellations: a cultural rhetorics publishing space*,

Deadlines

		deadlines
20%	Discussion Boards	ongoing
10%	Assignment 1: Preproposal for Final Project	Week 6
15%	Assignment 2: Academic Journal Review	Week 8
15%	Assignment 3: Book Review	Week 10
10%	Assignment 4: Full Proposal	Week 12
30%	Final Project: Keywords in Justice Portfolio	Finals Week

Discussion Boards

Purpose: To encourage reflective, critical engagement with readings and to build a collaborative learning community. When engaging with Herrick, you should draw from one of the discussion questions at the end of each chapter (your choice).

Expectations:

- Post one initial post to get the conversation going (approx. 300–400 words).
- Respond to at least two peers (100–200 words each).

Deadlines:

- Initial post due Wednesday, midnight, CST--to ensure your classmates have time to respond to your initial post
- Response due before midnight cst on Sunday

Grading: Labor-Based Model (see above)

- More specifically, concerns here with engagement with texts, reflections, and meaningful interaction with peers.
 - Respond to classmates to keep the conversation moving in generative ways.
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Week-by-Week Schedule

Week 1: An Overview of Rhetoric

Forum 1: Herrick, Chapter 1 (an overview of definitions)

Forum 2: Introductions! (introduce yourselves and welcome one another)

Week 2: An Overview of Rhetoric (continued)

Forum 3: Herrick, Chapter 1 (discourse, social functions and the art of rhetoric, recurring themes)

Forum 4: Introducing the Final Project

Week 3: The Origins and Early History of Rhetoric

Forum 5: Herrick, Chapter 2

Forum 6: Keywords in Rhetoric and Justice (FP)

Week 4: Plato and Aristotle

Forum 7: Herrick, Chapter (chapters 3-4)

Forum 8: Keywords in Rhetoric and Justice (FP)

Week 5: Rome, Christian Europe, and the Global South

Forum 9: Herrick, Chapter 5-6

Forum 10: Prep for Assignment 1

Week 6: Renaissance and Enlightenment

Forum 11: Herrick, Chapters 7-8

Assignment 1 due: Preproposal for Final Project

Week 7: Arguments, Audiences, and Science

Forum 12: Herrick, Chapter 9

Forum 13: Prep for Assignment 2

Week 8: Narrative, Display, and Objects

Forum 14: Herrick, Chapter 9

Assignment 2 due: Academic Journal Review

Week 9: Narrative, Display, and Objects

Forum 14: Herrick, Chapter 10

Form 15: Assignment 2 prep

Week 10: Text, Power, and Alternatives

Forum 16: Herrick, Chapter 11

Assignment 3 due: Book Review

Week 11: Texts, Power, and Alternatives

Forum 17: Herrick, Chapter 12

Forum 18: Assignment 3 prep

Week 12: Keywords in Rhetoric and Justice (FP)

Forum 19: Herrick, Chapter 12

Assignment 4 due: Complete Proposal Due

Week 13: Work on Final Projects

Working week

Week 14: Happy Thanksgiving!

Nothing due

Week 15: Peer Review, Final Projects

Forum 20: Peer Review

Finals Week: Final project due