

COM 691, SLN#71169: Rhetoric and the Public Sphere

Wednesdays 6-8.45pm Stauffer A13
Fall Semester 2012
School of Human Communication
Arizona State University

Instructor Information

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The key terms in contemporary rhetorical criticism such as agency, addressivity, audience, style, figuration, judgment, decorum, prudence, text and context, intertextuality, and most important, the very idea of a ‘public,’ remain undertheorized.¹

The public and its problems, to steal a phrase, are the central research questions of rhetorical studies.²

Course Description

Historically, the *idea* of the “public sphere” has also served as an *ideal*—a normative concept that prescribed and proscribed particular configurations of people, places, and topics. As a realm constituted by discourse, where the force of the better argument was imagined to prevail, the public sphere inspired democratic institutions. Actual discourse practices and the recognition of multiple and interdependent publics, however, challenge the ideal of the public sphere. So, too, do activists and scholars who expose and critique the various exclusions—along lines of race, class, sex, sexuality, and more—that constitute the normative model of the public sphere. ***Rhetoric and the Public Sphere*** will explore the history of the public sphere and its relationships with other spheres of human activity. Seminar participants will interrogate the complexities of publics—enduring or transient, dense or diffuse, dominant or marginal—and the rhetorical practices that conjure, sustain, and challenge publics. Participants will also examine the intersections among public sphere theory, rhetorical theory, and a number of related theoretical lines, including queer theory, feminist theory, globalization theory, counterpublic theory, and critical media studies.

Assigned Readings

Across the span of the semester, our readings will be delivered in the form of three books—

- Daniel C. Brouwer and Robert Asen (eds.), *Public Modalities: Rhetoric, Culture, Media, and the Shape of Public Life* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010). (BA)
- John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (rev. ed.). (Athens, OH: Swallow Press, 1954). (DW)
- Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (T. Burger & F. Lawrence, trans.) (Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1989) (original work published 1962). (HB)

¹ Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, “The Forum: Publics and Counterpublics,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88 (2002): 411.

² Ronald W. Greene, “Rhetorical Pedagogy as a Postal System: Circulating Subjects through Michael Warner’s ‘Publics and Counterpublics,’” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88 (2002): 434.

—through the ASU Course Reserve system (<http://library.lib.asu.edu/screens/reserves.html>), and as articles individually acquired as PDF documents via ASU Libraries online database subscriptions (<http://lib.asu.edu/>). Readings delivered via the latter two media will be coded with either CR (Course Reserve) or ONL (online databases) in the list of readings on pages 4-5 of this syllabus. On pages 6-7, I have provided full reference information for all course reserve and online database readings.

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

I would like to share that I think of teaching in ecological terms, meaning that I value *interdependence*—the ways in which we influence each other in and out of the classroom—and *contingency*—the ways in which unpredictable events provide unforeseen possibilities for learning and growth.

Decorum

While we will constitute our own norms of decorum throughout the semester, I believe that we should agree to some basic rules of decorum in the conduct of our class.

- *Attendance.* To honor our scholarly interdependence as participants in a graduate seminar, please commit to diligent, perfect attendance. I would appreciate notification of a necessary absence involving a serious illness or other extenuating circumstances.
- *Respect for learning styles.* Some of us learn best in quiet reflection, others in lively discussion, still others in heightened, performative conflict. Each of these styles (and more) is likely to appear in our seminar, and I ask that each of us be careful (that is, full of care) as we both employ and perceive these styles.
- *Academic honesty.* Here is the official version: “In the *Student Academic Integrity Policy* manual, ASU defines plagiarism [as] using another’s words, ideas, materials, or work without properly acknowledging and documenting the source. Students are responsible for knowing the rules governing the use of another’s work or materials and for acknowledging and document the source appropriately. You can find this definition at: <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity/defined>. Academic dishonesty, including inappropriate collaboration, will not be tolerated. There are severe sanctions for cheating, plagiarizing, and any other form of dishonesty.” Here is where this policy might apply especially to a graduate seminar: With regard to graduate students, the most salient concern about academic honesty involves “double-dipping,” or turning in the same or very similar work for credit in different courses. I support your efforts to extend previous work that you have conducted on materials pertaining to this course; however, please notify me if you choose to extend previous work, and please indicate how you intend to craft a unique project for this course.

Assignments

Three different types of assignments will invite you to demonstrate your understanding and appreciation of course material.

200pts 1) *Critical essay.* Writing is a process. Writing well requires careful attention and diligent effort at multiple stages in the process. In a series of writing events, you will present the results of your semester-long engagement with course-related material. The critical essay should strive to summarize, apply, extend, and/or critique concepts and issues relevant to rhetorical theory and public sphere theory. The essay should arrive in three different stages of development:

- 25pts** a) Proposal with preliminary bibliography (2-3 pages; 20 sources minimum)
- 75pts** b) Advanced draft (12-15 pages, not including cover page, abstract, endnotes, and references; 20 sources minimum)
- 100pts** c) Final manuscript (25-30 pages, not including cover page, abstract, endnotes, and references; 25 sources minimum)

For the final manuscript, you should strive to create a manuscript that has a high potential for being accepted to a regional, national, or international communication (or allied field) conference or a manuscript that you could submit to a journal specializing in rhetorical theory or studies in the public sphere.

75pts 2) *Short papers.* The short papers are designed to elicit your focus and creativity on specific issues in public sphere theory. Short papers should be composed of two to three (2-3) pages.

25pts a) *Theoretical construct.* Advancements and innovations in theory sometimes occur through audacious acts such as naming or renaming phenomena, synthesizing or juxtaposing seemingly disparate phenomena, or positing the existence of heretofore unimagined or unperceived phenomena. This assignment calls for you to be audacious in crafting a new and innovative theoretical construct. This paper should announce, define, elaborate, and defend your construct.

25pts b) *Peer manuscript review.* Our writing improves when we receive competent criticism from people who care about our work. Similarly, our writing improves when we care about and scrutinize the writing of others and offer them competent criticism. This assignment asks for you to read and critique the advanced draft of a peer's seminar paper, detailing the strengths of the draft and possible areas for improvement.

25pts c) *Public artifact.* What makes a phenomenon "public"? This will be a recurrent question in the course. As part of our investigation of this question, craft a public artifact. It can be any sort of artifact, conveyed through any sort of medium. Once you have crafted a public artifact, explain precisely how your artifact functions as a "public" artifact. I encourage you to think creatively about this project.

125pts 3) *Participation.* For participation, I will assess the quantity and quality of your engagement with course materials. In this course, participation takes two distinct forms:

100pts a) *Commentary about course materials in and out of class:* During class, your commentary can take such forms as question-posing, responses to questions, syntheses and analyses of course materials, and interrogations of claims. Outside of class, commentary can take the form of electronic communications (private emails and public postings to Blackboard discussion boards), phone calls, and office visits about course-related materials.

25pts b) *Presentations of non-assigned readings:* Twice during the semester, we will hear each seminar participant explain, very briefly, the main arguments of a non-assigned reading and the relationship of the reading to required readings and course assignments. Each presentation should last between 3-5 minutes. I encourage you to take this opportunity to share with us your keenest discoveries.

Those who are registered with the Disability Resource Center and who would benefit from accommodations in order to achieve course goals and complete course assignments should notify me during the first two weeks of the semester. I will gladly work with you to accommodate your needs.

Grading

Generally in this seminar, "excellent" work earns "A"-range grades, "good" work earns "B"-range grades, "average" work earns "C"-range grades, "unsatisfactory" work earns "D" grades, and "poor" work earns "E" grades. I employ the following grading scale:

A+ = 99-100% (396-400 pts)	B- = 80% (320-323.5 pts)
A = 91-98% (364-395.5 pts)	C+ = 79% (316-319.5 pts)
A- = 90% (360-363.5 pts)	C = 70-79% (280-315.5 pts)
B+ = 89% (356-359.5 pts)	D = 60-69% (240-279.5 pts)
B = 81-88% (324-355.5 pts)	E = 0-59% (0-239.5 pts)

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Events

Date	Topics, Readings, and Events
Aug 29	<i>Orientation and Overview</i> Reading: Warner, "Public and private," pp. 21-63 (PDF)
Sept 5	<i>The Public and Its Problems</i> Reading: Dewey, pp. 3-74, 110-184, and 217-219 (DW)
Sept 12	<i>Emergence, Structure, and Functions of the Bourgeois Public Sphere</i> Reading: Habermas, pp. xii-140 (HB)
Sept 19	<i>Transformations of the Bourgeois Public Sphere</i> Reading: Habermas, pp. 141-250 (HB) <i>Assignment due:</i> Critical Essay Proposal
Sept 26	<i>Emergence and Development of Public Sphere Theory in Communication Studies</i> Readings: Hauser & Blair, "Rhetorical antecedents," pp. 139-167 (CR) Goodnight, "The personal, technical, and public," pp. 214-227 (CR) Phillips, "The spaces of public dissension," pp. 231-248 (ONL) Goodnight, "Opening up," pp. 270-275 (ONL) Hauser, "On publics and public spheres," pp. 275-279 (ONL)
Oct 3	<i>Critiques of the Bourgeois Public Sphere: On Class, Race, and Sexuality</i> Readings: Negt & Kluge, "On the dialectic between," pp. 54-95 (CR) Squires, "Rethinking the black public sphere," pp. 446-468 (ONL) Watts, "Pragmatist publicity," pp. 33-59 (BA) Berlant & Warner, "Sex in public," pp. 187-208 (ONL)
Oct 10	<i>Critiques of the Bourgeois Public Sphere: The Challenges of Counterpublics, I</i> Readings: Felski, "Politics, aesthetics, and the feminist public sphere," pp. 154-182 (CR) Fraser, "Rethinking the public sphere," pp. 109-142 (CR) Mansbridge, "Using power/fighting power," pp. 46-66 (CR) Solanas, "SCUM Manifesto" (http://www.womynkind.org/scum.htm) <i>Assignment due:</i> Short Paper #1—Theoretical Construct
Oct 17	<i>Critiques of the Bourgeois Public Sphere: The Challenges of Counterpublics, II</i> Readings: Asen & Brouwer, "Introduction," pp. 1-32 (CR) Asen, "Seeking the 'counter' in counterpublics," pp. 424-446 (ONL) Brouwer, "Communication as counterpublic," pp. 195-208 (CR) Warner, "Publics and counterpublics," pp. 49-90 (ONL) Anonymous, "Queers Read This!" (http://www.actupny.org/documents/QueersReadThis.pdf)
Oct 24	<i>Case Studies of Publics, I</i> Readings: Pezzullo & Depoe, "Everyday life and death," pp. 85-108 (BA) Sloop, "Citizenship, freedom, and the family," pp. 195-218 (BA) Brouwer, "Risibility politics," pp. 219-239 (BA) Smith and Gunn, "VIII. Lowghost publicity," pp. 60-84 (BA) Katriel, "Sites of memory," pp. 1-20 (ONL)

Oct 31	<i>Writing for Intellectual Publics</i> <i>Assignment due:</i> Advanced Draft of Critical Essay
Nov 7	<i>Case Studies of Publics, II</i> <i>Readings:</i> McKinnon, “(In)hospitable publics,” pp. 131-153 (BA) Hegde, “Eyeing new publics,” pp. 154-172 (BA) Martin, “From citizenship to queer,” pp. 81-94 (ONL) Stephenson, “Forging an indigenous,” pp. 99-118 (ONL) <i>Assignment due:</i> Short Paper #2—Peer Manuscript Review
Nov 14	<i>No Class Meeting: National Communication Association Convention</i>
Nov 21	<i>The Challenges and Resources of Faith and Institutional Religion</i> <i>Readings:</i> Eder, “The public sphere,” pp. 607-611 (ONL) Lafont, “Religion and the public sphere,” pp. 127-150 (ONL) Hoexter, “The <i>waqf</i> and the public sphere,” pp. 119-138 (CR) Göle, “Islam in public,” pp. 173-190 (ONL) Hirschkind, “An Islamic counterpublic,” pp. 3-32 (ONL) Garfield, “What is the ‘Arab Street?’” (http://www.onthemedial.org/2011/feb/04/what-is-the-arab-street/)
Nov 28	<i>The Challenges and Resources of Globalization and Transnationalism</i> <i>Readings:</i> Bell, “The potential of an ‘unfolding constellation,’” pp. 1-5 (ONL) Fraser, “Transnationalizing the public sphere,” pp. 7-30 (ONL) Randeria, “De-politicization of democracy,” pp. 38-44 (ONL) Nash & Bell, “The politics of framing,” pp. 73-86 (ONL) Brownell, “Human rights and the Beijing Olympics,” pp. 306-327 (ONL)
Dec 5	<i>The Challenges and Resources of Communication Technologies and Modalities</i> <i>Readings:</i> Sheller & Urry, “Mobile transformations,” pp. 107-125 (ONL) Brouwer & Asen, “Introduction: Public modalities,” pp. 1-32 (BA) Zimmerman and Favell, “Governmentality, political field,” pp. 489-515 (ONL) <i>Assignment due:</i> Short Paper #3—Public Artifact
Dec 14	<i>Final Exam Meeting Period</i> <i>Assignment due:</i> Critical Essay

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Bibliography for ASU Course Reserve (CR) and ASU Libraries Online Database (ONL)
Readings

September 26

- Hauser, G. A., & Blair, C. (1982). Rhetorical antecedents to the public. *Pre/Text*, 3, 139-167. (CR)
- Goodnight, G. T. (1982). The personal, technical, and public spheres of argument: A speculative inquiry into the art of public deliberation. *Journal of the American Forensic Association*, 18, 214-227. (CR)
- Phillips, K. R. (1996). The spaces of public dissension: Reconsidering the public sphere. *Communication Monographs*, 63(3), 231-248. (ONL)
- Goodnight, G. T. (1997). Opening up 'the spaces of public dissension.' *Communication Monographs*, 64(3), 270-275. (ONL)
- Hauser, G. A. (1997). On publics and public spheres: A response to Phillips. *Communication Monographs*, 64(3), 275-279. (ONL)

October 3

- Negt, O., & Kluge, A. (1993). On the dialectic between the bourgeois and the proletarian public sphere. In *Public sphere and experience: Toward an analysis of the bourgeois and proletarian public sphere* (P. Labanyi, J. O. Daniel, & A. Oksiloff, Trans.) (pp. 54-95). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (Original work published 1972) (CR)
- Squires, C. R. (2002). Rethinking the black public sphere: An alternative vocabulary for multiple public spheres. *Communication Theory*, 12(4), 446-468. (ONL)
- Berlant, L., & Warner, M. (1998). Sex in public. *Critical Inquiry*, 24(2), 547-566. (ONL)

October 10

- Felski, R. (1989). Politics, aesthetics, and the feminist public sphere. In *Beyond feminist aesthetics: Feminist literature and social change* (pp. 154-182). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (CR)
- Fraser, N. (1992). Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. In C. Calhoun (Ed.), *Habermas and the public sphere* (pp. 109-142). Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press. (CR)
- Mansbridge, J. (1996). Using power/fighting power: The polity. In S. Benhabib (Ed.), *Democracy and difference: Contesting the boundaries of the political* (pp. 46-66). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (CR)

October 17

- Asen, R., & Brouwer, D. C. (2001). Introduction: Reconfigurations of the public sphere. In R. Asen & D. C. Brouwer (Eds.), *Counterpublics and the state* (pp. 1-32). Albany: State University of New York Press. (CR)
- Asen, R. (2000). Seeking the "counter" in counterpublics. *Communication Theory*, 10(4), 424-446. (ONL)
- Brouwer, D. C. (2006). Communication as counterpublic. In G. J. Shepherd, J. St. John, & T. Striphos (Eds.), *Communication as...: Perspectives on theory* (pp. 195-208). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. (CR)

Warner, M. (2002). Publics and counterpublics. *Public Culture*, 14(1), 49-90. (ONL)

October 24

Katriel, T. (1994). Sites of memory: Discourses of the past in Israeli and pioneering settlement museums. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 80(1), 1-20. (ONL)

November 7

Martin, F. (2000). From citizenship to queer counterpublic: Reading Taipei's New Park. *Communal/Plural*, 8(1), 81-94. (ONL)

Stephenson, M. (2002). Forging an indigenous counterpublic sphere: The Taller de Historia Oral Andina in Bolivia. *Latin American Research Review*, 37(2), 99-118. (ONL)

November 21

Eder, K. (2006). The public sphere. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 23(2-3), 607-611. (ONL)

Lafont, C. (2009). Religion and the public sphere: What are the deliberative obligations of democratic citizenship? *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 35(1-2), 127-150. (ONL)

Hoexter, M. (2002). The *waqf* and the public sphere. In M. Hoexter, S. N. Eisenstadt, & N. Levtzion (Eds.), *The public sphere in Muslim societies* (pp. 119-138). Albany: State University of New York Press. (CR)

Göle, N. (2002). Islam in public: New visibilities and new imaginaries. *Public Culture*, 14(1), 173-190. (ONL)

Hirschkind, C. (2001). Civic virtue and religious reason: An Islamic counterpublic. *Cultural Anthropology*, 16(1), 3-32. (ONL)

November 28

Bell, V. (2007). The potential of an 'unfolding constellation': Imagining Fraser's transnational public sphere. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 24(4), 1-5. (ONL)

Fraser, N. (2007). Transnationalizing the public sphere: On the legitimacy and efficacy of public opinion in a post-Westphalian world. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 24(4), 7-30. (ONL)

Randeria, S. (2007). De-politicization of democracy and judicialization of politics. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 24(4), 38-44. (ONL)

Nash, K., & Bell, V. (2007). The politics of framing: An interview with Nancy Fraser. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 24(4), 73-86. (ONL)

Brownell, S. (2012). Human rights and the Beijing Olympics: Imagined global community and the transnational public sphere. *British Journal of Sociology*, 63(2), 306-327. (ONL)

December 5

Sheller, M., & Urry, J. (2003). Mobile transformations of 'public' and 'private' life. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 20(3), 107-125. (ONL)

Zimmermann, A., & Favell, A. (2011). Governmentality, political field or public sphere? Theoretical alternatives in the political sociology of the EU. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 14(4), 489-515. (ONL)