

## COM 691, SLN#29334: Rhetoric and the Public Sphere

Wednesdays 6-8.45pm Stauffer A431  
Spring Semester 2016  
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.<sup>1</sup>

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

### 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). (PM)
- John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (rev. ed.). (Athens, OH: Swallow Press, 1954).
- 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).

<sup>1</sup> Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, "The Forum: Publics and Counterpublics," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88 (2002): 411.

<sup>2</sup> 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 our course Blackboard site, 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 BB (Blackboard) or ONL (online databases) in the list of readings on pages 4-5 of this syllabus. On pages 6-8, I have provided full reference information for all BB and ONL 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.* In December 2013, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee and Faculty Senate approved the following Academic Integrity Statement to be included on all new course syllabi: “Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, laboratory work, academic transactions and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification, and dismissal. Forms of academic dishonesty are varied but include plagiarism. 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.’ For more information, see <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>.” With regard to graduate students, one 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) *Public artifact.* What makes a phenomenon “public”? This will be a recurring 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.

**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) *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.

**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)

A = 91-98% (364-395.5 pts)

A- = 90% (360-363.5 pts)

B+ = 89% (356-359.5 pts)

B = 81-88% (324-355.5 pts)

B- = 80% (320-323.5 pts)

C+ = 79% (316-319.5 pts)

C = 70-79% (280-315.5 pts)

D = 60-69% (240-279.5 pts)

E = 0-59% (0-239.5 pts)

## Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Events

Date	Topics, Readings, and Events
Jan 13	<i>Orientation and Overview</i> Readings: Warner, "Public and private," pp. 21-63 (BB) Hauser, "Civic conversation," pp. 57-81 (BB)
Jan 20	<i>The Public and Its Problems</i> Reading: Dewey, pp. 3-74, 110-184, and 217-219
Jan 27	<i>Emergence, Structure, and Functions of the Bourgeois Public Sphere</i> Reading: Habermas, pp. xii-140
Feb 3	<i>Transformations of the Bourgeois Public Sphere</i> Reading: Habermas, pp. 141-250 <i>Assignment due:</i> Critical Essay Proposal
Feb 10	<i>Emergence and Development of Public Sphere Theory in Communication Studies</i> Readings: Hauser & Blair, "Rhetorical antecedents," pp. 139-167 (BB) Goodnight, "The personal, technical, and public," pp. 214-227 (BB) 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)
Feb 17	<i>Critiques of the Bourgeois Public Sphere: On Class, Race, and Sexuality</i> Readings: Negt & Kluge, "On the dialectic between," pp. 54-95 (BB) Squires, "Rethinking the black public sphere," pp. 446-468 (ONL) Watts, "Pragmatist publicity," pp. 33-59 (PM) Berlant & Warner, "Sex in public," pp. 187-208 (ONL)
Feb 24	<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 (BB) Fraser, "Rethinking the public sphere," pp. 109-142 (BB) Mansbridge, "Using power/fighting power," pp. 46-66 (BB) Solanas, "SCUM Manifesto" ( <a href="http://www.womynkind.org/scum.htm">http://www.womynkind.org/scum.htm</a> ) <i>Assignment due:</i> Short Paper #1—Public Artifact
Mar 2	<i>Critiques of the Bourgeois Public Sphere: The Challenges of Counterpublics, II</i> Readings: Asen & Brouwer, "Introduction," pp. 1-32 (BB) Asen, "Seeking the 'counter' in counterpublics," pp. 424-446 (ONL) Brouwer, "Communication as counterpublic," pp. 195-208 (BB) Warner, "Publics and counterpublics," pp. 49-90 (ONL) Anonymous, "Queers Read This!" <a href="http://www.actupny.org/documents/QueersReadThis.pdf">http://www.actupny.org/documents/QueersReadThis.pdf</a>
Mar 9	<i>No Class Meeting: Spring Break Observed</i>

Mar 16	<p><i>Case Studies of Publics, I</i></p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Sloop, “Citizenship, freedom, and the family,” pp. 195-218 (PM)</p> <p>Brouwer, “Risibility politics,” pp. 219-239 (PM)</p> <p>Chávez, “Counter-public enclaves,” pp. 1-18 (ONL)</p> <p>Katriel, “Sites of memory,” pp. 1-20 (ONL)</p>
Mar 23	<p><i>Writing for Intellectual Publics</i></p> <p>Assignment due: Advanced Draft of Critical Essay</p>
Mar 30	<p><i>Case Studies of Publics, II</i></p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>McKinnon, “(In)hospitable publics,” pp. 131-153 (PM)</p> <p>Hegde, “Eyeing new publics,” pp. 154-172 (PM)</p> <p>Martin, “From citizenship to queer,” pp. 81-94 (ONL)</p> <p>Stephenson, “Forging an indigenous,” pp. 99-118 (ONL)</p> <p>Assignment due: Short Paper #2—Peer Manuscript Review</p>
Apr 6	<p><i>The Resources and Challenges of Globalization and Transnationalism</i></p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>McLaughlin, “Feminism and the political economy,” pp. 156-175 (ONL)</p> <p>Bell, “The potential of an ‘unfolding constellation,’” pp. 1-5 (ONL)</p> <p>Fraser, “Transnationalizing the public sphere,” pp. 7-30 (ONL)</p> <p>Randeria, “De-politicization of democracy,” pp. 38-44 (ONL)</p> <p>Nash &amp; Bell, “The politics of framing,” pp. 73-86 (ONL)</p>
Apr 13	<p><i>The Resources and Challenges of New Communication Technologies</i></p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Sheller &amp; Urry, “Mobile transformations,” pp. 107-125 (ONL)</p> <p>Pfister, “Cultural technologies of publicity,” pp. 18-50 (ONL)</p> <p>DeLuca &amp; Peeples, “From public sphere to public screen,” pp. 125-151 (ONL)</p> <p>Renninger, “Where I can be myself...,” pp. 1513-1529 (ONL)</p>
Apr 20	<p><i>The Resources and Challenges of Performance</i></p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Long, “An impromptu theater,” pp. 55-63 (ONL)</p> <p>Balme, “Distributed theatrical aesthetics,” pp. 174-202 (ONL)</p> <p>Olson, Genette, &amp; Linde, “Toward a theory,” pp. 1-8 (ONL)</p> <p>Olson, Genette, &amp; Linde, “Civility in urban spaces,” pp. 1-17 (ONL)</p> <p>Assignment due: Short Paper #3—Theoretical Construct</p>
Apr 27	<p><i>Revisiting, Revising, and Revisioning Theories of Rhetoric, Publics, and Counterpublics</i></p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Beard, “Introduction: On the anniversary,” pp. 132-134 (ONL)</p> <p>Rowland, “Spheres of argument,” pp. 195-197 (ONL)</p> <p>Goodnight, “The personal, technical, and public spheres,” pp. 258-267 (ONL)</p> <p>Brouwer &amp; Asen, “Introduction: Public modalities,” pp. 1-32 (PM)</p> <p>Pason, Foust, &amp; Rogness, “Introduction,” pp. 1-51 (BB)</p>
May 4	<p><i>Final Exam Meeting Period – Wednesday, 6-7.50pm</i></p> <p>Assignment due: Critical Essay</p>

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Bibliography for Course Blackboard (BB) and ASU Libraries Online Database (ONL)  
Readings

### January 13

- Warner, M. (2002). Public and private. In *Publics and counterpublics* (pp. 21-63). New York: Zone Books. (BB)
- Hauser, G. A. (1999). Civic conversation and the reticulate public sphere. In *Vernacular voices: The rhetoric of publics and public spheres* (pp. 57-81). Columbia, SC: The University of South Carolina Press. (BB)

### February 10

- Hauser, G. A., & Blair, C. (1982). Rhetorical antecedents to the public. *Pre/Text*, 3, 139-167. (BB)
- 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. (BB)
- 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)

### February 17

- 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) (BB)
- 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)

### February 24

- 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. (BB)
- 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. (BB)
- 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. (BB)

### **March 2**

- 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. (BB)
- 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. Striphas (Eds.), *Communication as...: Perspectives on theory* (pp. 195-208). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. (BB)
- Warner, M. (2002). Publics and counterpublics. *Public Culture*, 14(1), 49-90. (ONL)

### **March 16**

- Chávez, K. R. (2011). Counter-public enclaves and understanding the function of rhetoric in social movement coalition-building. *Communication Quarterly*, 59(1), 1-18. (ONL)
- 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)

### **March 30**

- 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)

### **April 6**

- McLaughlin, L. (2004). Feminism and the political economy of transnational public space. *The Sociological Review*, 52(2), 156-175. (ONL)
- 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)

### **April 13**

- Sheller, M., & Urry, J. (2003). Mobile transformations of ‘public’ and ‘private’ life. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 20(3), 107-125. (ONL)
- Pfister, D. S. (2014). Cultural technologies of publicity: Rhetorics, public spheres, and digital communication networks. In *Networked media, networked rhetorics: Attention and deliberation in the early blogosphere* (pp. 18-50). University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press. (ONL)
- DeLuca, K. M., & Peebles, J. (2002). From public sphere to public screen: Democracy, activism, and the ‘violence’ of Seattle. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 19(2), 125-151. (ONL)
- Renninger, B. (2015). “Where I can be myself...where I can speak my mind”: Networked counterpublics in a polymedia environment. *New Media & Society*, 17(9), 1513–1529. (ONL)

### **April 20**

- Long, E. (2008). An impromptu theater: A local public that turns its back on formal institutions. In *Community literacy and the rhetoric of local publics* (pp. 55-63) [electronic resource]. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press. (ONL)
- Balme, C. B. (2014). Distributed theatrical aesthetics and the global public sphere. In *The theatrical public sphere* (pp. 174-202) [electronic resource]. New York: Cambridge University Press. (ONL)
- Olson, C. D., Genette, J., & Linde, J. A. (n.d.). Toward a theory of civil communication: The impact of Civil Dialogue® (pp. 1-8) [white paper]. Carefree, AZ: The Institute for Civil Dialogue. Retrieved from <http://www.civil-dialogue.com/toward-a-theory-of-civil-communication.html> (ONL)
- Olson, C. D., Genette, J., & Linde, J. A. (n.d.). Civility in urban spaces: The use of Civil Dialogue® in urban controversies (pp. 1-17) [white paper]. Carefree, AZ: The Institute for Civil Dialogue. Retrieved from <http://www.civil-dialogue.com/civil-dialogue-in-urban-controversies.html> (ONL)

### **April 27**

- Beard, D. E. (2012). Introduction: On the anniversary of Habermas's *Structural transformation of the public sphere*. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 49(2), 132-134. (ONL)
- Rowland, R. C. (2012). Spheres of argument: 30 years of influence. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 48(4), 195-197. (ONL)
- Goodnight, G. T. (2012). The personal, technical, and public spheres: A note on 21<sup>st</sup> century critical communication inquiry. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 48(4), 258-267. (ONL)
- Pason, A., Foust, C. R., & Rogness, K. Z. (in press). Introduction: Rhetoric and the study of social change. In C. R. Foust, A. Pason, & K. Z. Rogness (Eds.), *Social movements and counterpublics: Connections, contradictions, and possibilities for understanding rhetorics of social change* (pp. 1-51). Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press. (BB)