

---

## COM 494 Rhetorics of HIV/AIDS

---

Instructor:  
Email:

Office:  
Office phone:

---

The AIDS epidemic is cultural and linguistic as well as biological and biomedical. ...It is the careful examination of language and culture that enables us, as members of intersecting social constellations, ...to use our intelligence and critical faculties to consider theoretical problems, develop policy, and articulate long-term social needs even as we acknowledge the urgency of the AIDS crisis and try to satisfy its relentless demand for immediate action.<sup>1</sup>

Rhetoric may be fruitfully defined as *both* a particular type of discourse *and* a perspective, or sensibility, about language and culture. “Rhetorics of HIV/AIDS,” then, announces an interest in and appreciation of multiple discourses and multiple perspectives about HIV/AIDS. Throughout the semester, we will engage in rhetorical investigations—or discoveries, syntheses, analyses, evaluations, critiques, actions, and interventions about language and culture—about HIV/AIDS. Importantly, rhetorical investigations assume and thus excavate the political and ideological dimensions of linguistic and cultural productions.

### ***Course Goals:***

Each of you will enter this course with personal goals, and your goals will be solidified, clarified, amended, and/or multiplied during the semester. During and by the end of this course, it is my hope that I will be able to facilitate the following for you:

- Understand and practice a distinctly rhetorical approach to the study of HIV/AIDS
- Understand early patterns of communication practice about HIV/AIDS in the U.S. and globally
- Discern how historical structures and practices of communication inform contemporary practices
- Examine recurrent *topoi* about HIV/AIDS across the span of the last several decades
- Investigate the assumptions, logics, forces, and consequences of key discourses about HIV/AIDS
- Attend to the ways in which race, class, sex, and other forms of difference shape the epidemic

### ***Required Reading Materials:***

Across the span of the semester, our assigned readings will include scholarly articles, popular cultural texts, activist texts, websites, films, videos, and more. Assigned readings will be delivered through the “Assigned Readings” area of our Blackboard site. Readings are listed on pages 5-7 of this syllabus. On pages 8-10, I have provided full reference information for all assigned readings during the semester.

### ***Statement of Teaching Philosophy:***

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.

---

<sup>1</sup> Paula A. Treichler, “Prologue,” in *How to Have Theory in an Epidemic: Cultural Chronicles of AIDS* (1999): 1.



### ***Course Assignments:***

There are four types of assignments in this course.

**195 pts** 1) Critical Essay: Writing is a process. And 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 investigation and analysis of (an) HIV/AIDS-related text(s). I will expect thoughtful and rigorous discussion of salient aspects of context as well as thoughtful and rigorous analysis of your text(s). Furthermore, in your writing you should demonstrate your ability to synthesize and apply ideas, concepts, and arguments that emerge from class readings and discussion. The Critical Essay process has four components:

**20 pts** a) Research Proposal: This document should clearly announce your topic, the specific text(s) that you will examine, three-to-four research questions, and at least ten scholarly sources that will help you to craft your Context Essay, Rhetorical Analysis Essay, and Final Critical Essay.

**50 pts** b) Context Essay: A five-to-seven (5-7) page essay (not including cover page, abstract, endnotes, or references) in which you explain the origins of your HIV/AIDS-related text(s), describe key events, documents, and people related to your text(s), and detail the current status of your text(s).

**25 pts** c) Rhetorical Analysis Essay: A three-to-four (3-4) page essay (not including cover page, abstract, endnotes, or references) in which you perform rhetorical analysis of your HIV/AIDS-related text(s).

**100 pts** d) Final Critical Essay: A fourteen-to-sixteen (14-16) page essay (not including cover page, abstract, endnotes, or references) that builds upon your revised Context and Rhetorical Analysis Essays and frames your research project with an introduction and conclusion.

**45 pts** 2) Reading Quizzes: Three times during the semester, I will test your comprehension of specific readings. These quizzes will take the form of short answer responses and will be administered during class. Quizzes will take place on January 19, March 15, and April 19.

**75 pts** 3) Midterm Examination: On February 25, you will take an in-class examination. This exam will challenge your understanding of rhetorical and cultural theory, critical concepts, and issues and controversies that we explore in class. Material for the exam will come from assigned readings, lectures, discussion, online and digital materials, and announcements.

**135 pts** 4) Participation: For participation, I will assess the quantity and quality of your engagement with course materials. In this course, your participation should take three distinct forms:

**75 pts** a) Engagement with course materials in and/or out of class: In class, your engagement can take the form of responses to questions, question-posing, syntheses and analyses of course materials, contributions to our HIV/AIDS timeline, and summaries of current events. Outside of class, engagement can take the form of documented electronic communications (e.g., private emails; public postings to Blackboard discussion boards; public postings to blogs, social networking sites, YouTube, etc.) about course-related materials, phone calls and office visits about course-related materials, and documented service (e.g., volunteer or activist work for which you are not already earning academic credit or income) for HIV/AIDS-related organizations or constituencies.

**45 pts** b) Reflection Papers: Three times during the semester, I will ask you to submit two-page reflection papers that respond to a specific question or prompt provided at least one week in advance. These papers should be typed, double-spaced, and written in 10-to-12-point font and should employ standard/default margins. Reflection papers will be due on January 28, March 31, and April 26.

**15 pts** c) Discussion Questions: Each student will be responsible for crafting three (3) questions designed to stimulate thinking and provoke discussion for one specific assigned reading. These questions must solicit more than purely informational or technical responses, and they should be posted to Blackboard at least twenty-four (24) hours before the class period during which we discuss the reading.

### **Grading:**

1) Generally in this course, “excellent” work earns “A”-range grades, “good” work earns “B”-range grades, “average” work earns “C”-range grades, “unsatisfactory” work earns “D”-range grades, and “poor” work earns “E”-range grades. More specifically, I employ the following scale:

A+ = 97-100% (436.5-450 pts)	B- = 80-82.9% (360-373 pts)
A = 93-96.9% (418.5-436 pts)	C+ = 77-79.9% (346.5-359.5 pts)
A- = 90-92.9% (405-418 pts)	C = 70-76.9% (315-346 pts)
B+ = 87-89.9% (391.5-404.5 pts)	D = 60-69% (270-314.5 pts)
B = 83-86.9% (373.5-391 pts)	E = 0-59% (0-269.5 pts)

2) All formal writing components of the Critical Essay should be submitted *both* to your instructor in class in hardcopy format on the days that they are due (first priority) *and* to the Safe Assignment database through our class Blackboard site (next priority). Please do not submit final versions of Critical Essay writing assignments by sliding them under my office door or by leaving them with an office assistant. Critical Essay writing assignments will be considered “received” only when they have been submitted both in-person and electronically.

3) If you are curious or concerned about an assignment grade, then I encourage you to initiate a discussion with me about that grade. I ask that you follow a “24/7” principle—please wait until twenty-four hours after the graded assignment has been returned, and please wait no longer than seven days to initiate such a discussion. I reserve the right to ask you to present your grade concerns to me in writing.

4) Those who are registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and who would benefit from alternative sites, dates, or formats for class assignments should notify me during the first two weeks of the semester. I will gladly work with you to accommodate your needs.

5) I do not offer extra credit in this course. Please plan accordingly.

### **Academic Honesty:**

1) 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>.”

2) Plagiarizing the work of others is one form of academic dishonesty. “Self-plagiarism” is another form of academic dishonesty for which the penalties outlined above also apply. Here are helpful definitions and distinctions: “Whereas *plagiarism* refers to the practice of claiming credit for the words, ideas, and concepts of others, *self-plagiarism* refers to the practice of presenting one’s own previously published work as though it were new.”<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this class, *self-plagiarism* includes using the same academic work to earn credit in two or more classes this semester; it also includes presenting one’s own coursework (either a whole assignment or part of an assignment) from a *previous* semester as if it were new material for this course. In short, you are not permitted to submit the same work to earn credit in different classes at ASU.

---

<sup>2</sup> *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2010) (6<sup>th</sup> ed.), “Self-Plagiarism,” 170.

*Additional Instructions and Invitations:*

- 1) I encourage you to contribute your ideas and pose questions during class discussion.
  - 2) If there are twenty of us in this course, then there may be twenty different perspectives on any specific topic. We may not agree with all of the views expressed in class, but we must all agree to be willing to listen to each other's perspectives.
  - 3) Common courtesy and basic respect for your peers and instructor demand that you turn off (not just turn down or turn to vibrate) cellular phones before class begins and that you leave them turned off until class is over. To put a sharper point on the issue: Do not send or monitor text messages in class. If ever you attend class with the possibility of receiving an emergency phone call, then please let me know before class begins.
  - 4) Additionally, if you plan to use a laptop computer in class, please demonstrate courtesy and respect to your peers and instructor by using your computer only for note-taking and not for monitoring email accounts, updating social networking websites, or similar activities. If I witness you using your laptop for non-class-related activities, I will ask you not to use your laptop in class for the remainder of the semester.
  - 5) Class will begin promptly at 12pm and will typically end at 1.15pm. Routinely arriving late to class or leaving early from class will be considered disruptive and discourteous acts.
  - 6) I will answer your emails primarily during office hours. Outside of office hours and during the week, I will strive to respond to your emails within a 24-hour period. During the week, if I have not responded to your email within 48 hours, please resend the email and/or call me to make sure that I know you are trying to contact me. Please note that I will not be obligated to respond to emails during the weekend.
  - 7) If you are enrolled in Barrett, The Honors College, then I am happy to work with you to craft an Honors Enrichment Contract. All contracts require that the student be mentored for a minimum of eight hours over the course of the semester. A contract should be proposed by the student and negotiated with the mentor faculty.
  - 8) While our readings and discussions will frequently reference technical and demographic information about HIV transmission, prevention, and treatment, we will not spend a great deal of time in class vigorously learning such information. If you want or need to familiarize or re-familiarize yourself with such information, please peruse the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/index.html>.
  - 9) When we rhetorically investigate HIV/AIDS, we necessarily confront aspects of sex and sexuality. Several of our readings confront those aspects directly and candidly through words and visual images, and many of our discussions will do so as well. Please keep this in mind as you decide whether you will be able and willing to stay enrolled in the course.
-

---

## COM 494, SLN#20888: Rhetorics of HIV/AIDS

Spring Semester 2016  
School of Human Communication  
Arizona State University

---

### Reference List for Assigned Readings (in Order of Use)

- Foss, S. K. (2004). The nature of rhetorical criticism. In *Rhetorical criticism: Exploration and practice* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) (pp. 3-9). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.
- Hart, R. P. (1997). The critical perspective. In *Modern rhetorical criticism* (pp. 21-36). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Varmus, H. E. (1989). Naming the AIDS virus. In E. T. Juengst & B. A. Koenig (Eds.), *The meaning of AIDS: Implications for medical science, clinical practice, and public health policy* (pp. 3-11). New York: Praeger.
- Preda, A. (2005). In lieu of a conclusion: Do rhetorical practices matter? In *AIDS, rhetoric, and medical knowledge* (pp. 225-248). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015, November 6). HIV basics. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/index.html>
- Geary, A. M. (2014). Rethinking AIDS in black America. In *Antiblack racism and the AIDS epidemic: State intimacies* (pp. 1-29). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tsikata, P. Y. (2015). The subaltern speaks back into the image factory: Justine Sacco's AIDS tweet cross-pollinates social and mass media. *Communicatio: South African Journal for Communication Theory & Research*, 41, 90-107.
- Grover, J. Z. (1992). Visible lesions: Images of the PWA in America. In J. Miller (Ed.), *Fluid exchanges: Artists and critics in the AIDS crisis* (pp. 23-52). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Advisory Committee of People with AIDS. (1983, June). Denver principles. Retrieved from [http://data.unaids.org/pub/ExternalDocument/2007/gipa1983denverprinciples\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/ExternalDocument/2007/gipa1983denverprinciples_en.pdf)
- Nasty Queen. (1992, December/1993, January). Dealing with AIDS. *Infected Faggot Perspectives*, 12, 27-29.
- Caron, D. (2014). Excerpts from *The nearness of others: Searching for tact and contact in the age of HIV* (pp. 161-186) [electronic resource]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Race, K. (2010). Click here for HIV status: Shifting templates of sexual negotiation. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 3, 7-14.
- Spieldenner, A. R. (2014). Statement of ownership: An autoethnography of living with HIV. *Journal of Men's Studies*, 22, 12-27.

- Howard, L. A. (2013). Expressions of experience and transformation: Performing illness narratives. *Text & Performance Quarterly*, 33, 133-150.
- Decoteau, C. L. (2008). The specter of AIDS: Testimonial activism in the aftermath of the epidemic. *Sociological Theory*, 26, 230-257.
- Fernández Cerdeño, A., Martínez-Donate, A. P., Zellner, J. A., Sañudo, F., Carrillo, H., Engleberg, M., Sipan, C., & Hovell, M. (2012). Marketing HIV prevention for heterosexually identified latino men who have sex with men and women: The *hombres sanos* campaign. *Journal of Health Communication*, 17, 641-658.
- Payne, R. (2014). Frictionless sharing and digital promiscuity. *Communication & Critical/Cultural Studies*, 11, 85-102.
- Bennett, J. A. (2008). Passing, protesting, and the arts of resistance: Infiltrating the ritual space of blood donation. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 94, 23-43.
- Sero. (2016). Sero. Retrieved from <http://seroproject.com/>
- Baeten, J., & McCormack, S. (2016, January). Welcome to the preexposure prophylaxis revolution. *Current Opinion in HIV & AIDS*, 11, 1-2. Retrieved from [http://journals.lww.com/co-hivandaids/Fulltext/2016/01000/Welcome\\_to\\_the\\_preexposure\\_prophylaxis\\_revolution.2.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/co-hivandaids/Fulltext/2016/01000/Welcome_to_the_preexposure_prophylaxis_revolution.2.aspx)
- Auerbach, J. D., & Hoppe, T. A. (2015). Beyond “getting drugs into bodies”: Social science perspectives on pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV. *Journal of the International AIDS Society*, 18, 30-34. Retrieved from [http://www.jiasociety.org/index.php/jias/article/view/19983/pdf\\_1](http://www.jiasociety.org/index.php/jias/article/view/19983/pdf_1)
- Doe, L. (2015, February 3). Sexplanations with Dr. Doc: PrEP. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqrcIuWWGUQ>
- Murphy, T. (2014, July 13). Sex without fear: The new pill that could revolutionize gay life is reawakening old arguments. *New York Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://nymag.com/news/features/truvada-hiv-2014-7/>
- Crimp, D., & Rolston, A. (1990). Nine days of protest. In *AIDS demo graphics* (pp. 53-69). Seattle, WA: Bay Press.
- Hubbard, J., & Schulman, S. (n.d.). *ACT UP oral history project*. Retrieved from <http://www.actuporalhistory.org/>
- Excerpts from Morris, C. E., III. (Ed.). (2012). Forum: Remembering AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP) 1987-2012 and beyond. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 98, 49-68.
- Excerpts from Morris, C. E., III. (Ed.). (2012). Forum: Remembering AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP) 1987-2012 and beyond. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 98, 81-102.
- Visual AIDS. (n.d.) Visual AIDS. Retrieved from <https://www.visualaids.org/>

- Castiglia, C., & Reed, C. (2012). Remembering a new queer politics: Ideals in the aftermath of identity. In *If memory serves: Gay men, AIDS, and the promise of the queer past* (pp. 175-215) [electronic resource]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Brier, J. (2009). Epilogue: We struggle against it together: The South African AIDS Alliance, 1996-2003. In *Infectious ideas: U.S. political responses to the AIDS crisis* (pp. 190-200). Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Brouwer, D. C., Ferderer, B. B., Gamboa, E., Kramer, H., & Mistretta, E. (2012). Toward a critical pedagogical syllabus of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies*, 8, 107-136. Retrieved from <http://liminalities.net/8-5/syllabus.pdf>