

COM 598/798 – Spring 2008  
Professor V. Gallagher  
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### Visual Rhetoric

“It is the office of Rhetoric to make pictures of virtue and goodness so that they may be seen.” Francis Bacon

“When the visual and verbal dance in step, the power of each is magnified.” Kathleen Jamieson

### Overview of the Course

Aristotle defined rhetoric as the faculty of observing (or discovering) in any given case the available means of persuasion. The phrase “available means” suggests that rhetoric includes modes beyond those of speech or writing, yet much rhetorical scholarship and instruction, particularly in the last century, concentrated on one or the other of these two modes. Certainly, the study of rhetoric has always featured some emphasis on visual modes albeit under such guises as delivery (how a speaker or text “looks,” use of visual aids, and visual demonstration) and style (creating pictures in the minds of audience members or readers). In fact, eloquence was sometimes conceived of in visual terms, for example as “lively portraiture.” Advances in communication technology have resulted in new and more accessible means for creating and distributing visual images and artifacts. At the same time, the rhetorical impact of these images and artifacts is not yet well documented or understood. It is important to examine what rhetorical theory and criticism can offer to our understanding, interpretation, and use of visual images. In this course, students will:

1. Develop an understanding of the concepts and methods used to rhetorically analyze and interpret visual images and artifacts.
2. Demonstrate ability to engage in rhetorical analysis of visual images and artifacts.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical strategies employed in various primarily visual forms of communication including photography, visual art, advertising, and public commemorative activities.

### Texts

Foss, Sonja. (2004). *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Hill, Charles A. and Helmers, Marguerite. (2004). *Defining Visual Rhetorics*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Kress, Gunther and van Leeuwen, Theo. (2006). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Routledge.

Prelli, Lawrence, J. (2006). *Rhetorics of Display*, University of South Carolina Press.

Reserve readings – see bibliography and schedule of course readings and assignments

### Course Structure and Assignments

This course is run as a seminar. Learning in a seminar format depends upon preparation and involvement by the students as well as the professor. Therefore, it is very important that you not only read the assigned material, but also that you critically examine and interrogate it. The following questions should help you to do so:

1. What are the key concepts or terms?

2. How does this material fit in with other materials in the course as well as with relevant outside materials?
3. To what extent does this information and/or approach allow me to understand or illuminate the rhetoric of visual images and artifacts? How does it apply to practical ventures/my own experience?
4. What doesn't make sense to me? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this approach?

To aid us in our discussions, we will reserve the first 5-10 minutes of each class period for **class business**. To participate in class business, you need to bring in newspaper clippings, ads, web addresses, exhibit announcements, video clips, or any other images and artifacts you may run across that illustrate, contradict or in some other way relate to the issues raised in the readings for that class period. Participation in class business will be included as part of your class participation grade— each student should plan to participate *at least* once during the semester.

As your participation in discussion and other in-class activities is crucial to the success of this course, attendance is required. Excessive absences (defined as more than 2) during the semester will have a negative impact on your course grade.

Per university regulations, excused absences must fall into one of two categories: sanctioned anticipated situations and documented emergency situations. Anticipated situations, (e.g., participating in an official university function, court attendance, religious observances, or military duty) **must be submitted in writing at the beginning of the semester or one week prior to the anticipated absence**. Emergency absences (e.g., student illness, injury or death of immediate family member) **must be documented** within one week following the emergency. Make-up work will be allowed only in situations where absences were excused. Please consult the following web page for further information on university attendance regulations:

[http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/academic\\_policies/attend/reg.htm](http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/academic_policies/attend/reg.htm)

In addition to class business, there are three oral presentations in the course. The **chapter presentation** entails presenting an in-depth look at one of the critical methods presented in the Foss textbook. The **article presentation** entails presenting an in-depth look at one or more scholarly articles pertaining to a particular unit in class. Assignment sheets with further details are included at the end of the syllabus. The **final paper/project presentation** entails orally presenting a rhetorical analysis of a particular visual image(s) or artifact(s) to the class for feedback and critique prior to submitting a completed critical essay. This assignment is not graded separately but is part of your participation and attendance grade. There are also several short writing assignments building up to the final paper/project:

#### Short Paper #1

- describe the topic
- review some of the literature devoted to the topic

#### Short Paper #2

- describe the image or artifact to be analyzed
- describe the method or approach you will use in the analysis
- summarize your preliminary evaluation of the image or artifact

General requirements for the short papers include:

- You should consult several different sources, which should be cited in your paper.
- Your paper must be clearly organized and well written. It must be typed and checked for spelling and grammatical errors, approximately 5 pages in length.
- The paper should demonstrate an appropriate level of insight and understanding.

#### **Evaluation for Graduate Students**

Chapter Presentation	15%	
Article Presentation		10%
Short Paper I		10%

Short Paper II	10%
Final Paper (Critical Essay)	40%
<u>Participation and Attendance</u>	15%
Total	100%

Academic Integrity. Strict standards of academic honesty will be enforced according to the University policy on academic integrity found in the Code of Student Conduct. I expect a student's name or signature on any test or assignment means that you have neither given nor received unauthorized aid. Consult the following website for further details: <http://www.fis.ncsu.edu/ncsullegal/41.03-codeof.htm>

ADA Statement. The American with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning and/or psychiatric disabilities. Please contact me at the **beginning** of the semester to discuss any such accommodations needed for this course. Consult the following website for further specifications: [http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/hat/current/appendix/appen\\_k.html](http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/hat/current/appendix/appen_k.html)

Departmental Equity Statement. All persons, regardless of age, race, religion, gender, physical disability, or sexual orientation shall have equal opportunity without harassment in Department of Communication courses and programs. Any harassment should be reported immediately to either the classroom instructor or the department head.

### Organization and Assignments

(The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule, with appropriate notice to the class, based upon class interest and need). Reading and other assignments are listed on the day they are DUE to be covered in class and/or handed in. Additional readings and assignments for graduate students are listed.

#### Due Date

#### Reading and Other Assignments

##### **Week 1**

Jan 10

Introduction to the course

Read Introduction to *Defining Visual Rhetoric (DFV)*, pgs. 1-23 and Introduction to the *Grammar of Visual Design (GVD)*, 1-15

##### **Week 2**

Jan 15

#### Visual Rhetoric

Read DFV Chapter 1 and Electronic reserve articles:

Kenny, Keith and Scott, Linda M. (2003). A Review of the Visual Rhetoric Literature. In Scott, Linda M. and Batra, Rajeev, editors. *Persuasive Imagery: A Consumer Response*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers. 17-56.

Foss, Sonja. (1994). A Rhetorical Schema for the Evaluation of Visual Imagery. *Communication Studies*. 45:213-224.

Peterson, Valerie V. (Fall 2001). An Alternative to Foss's Schema. *Southern Communication Journal*. 67:19-32.

Olson, Lester C. (Jan. 2007). Intellectual and Conceptual Resources for Visual Rhetoric: A Re-examination of Scholarship Since 1950. *Review of Communication*, 7:1-20.

17

#### Rhetorical Criticism and Cultural Studies

Read Foss, ch. 1 and 2

Brummett, ch. 1 and 2, on reserve

**Week 3**

Jan 22

Methods of Analysis  
Read Foss, ch.3 and Brummett ch. 4

24

Methods of Analysis, cont'd.  
Read GVD, chs. 1 & 2

**Week 4**

Jan 29

Critical Approaches – Chapter Presentations  
Cluster Criticism and Fantasy Theme Analysis  
Read Foss chpts. 4 and 5

31

Critical Approaches – Chapter Presentations  
Feminist Criticism and Genre Analysis  
Read Foss chpts. 6 and 7

**Week 5**

Feb 5

Critical Approaches – Chapter Presentations  
Ideological Criticism and Metaphoric Analysis  
Read Foss, chpts. 8 and 9

7

Critical Approaches – Chapter Presentations  
Narrative Criticism and Pendantic Analysis  
Read Foss, chpts. 10 and 11

**Week 6**

Feb 12

Critical Approaches – Chapter Presentations  
Generative Criticism  
Read Foss, chp. 12

14

Theorizing the Visual  
Read *DVF* chs. 2 & 3 and GVD, ch. 3

**Unit II -- Visual Rhetoric in Photography, Painting, and Art****Week 7**

Feb 19

Visual Rhetoric in Painting – Guest Speaker  
Read electronic reserve

Gallagher, Victoria and Zagacki, Kenneth. (2005). Visibility and Rhetoric: The Power of Visual Images in Norman Rockwell's Depictions of Civil Rights. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 91:175-200.

Olson, Lester C. (1983). Portraits in Praise of a People: A Rhetorical Analysis of Norman Rockwell's Icons in Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" Campaign. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 69:15-24.

22

Visual Rhetoric in Painting and Art

Read electronic reserve

Foss, Sonja. (1988). Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party": Empowering Women's Voice in Visual Art. In Bate, Barbara and Taylor, Anita (eds), *Women Communicating: Studies of Women's Talk*. Norwood: NJ. 9-26.

### Week 8

Feb 26

#### Visual Rhetoric in Photography

Read *DVF* ch. 8, Rhetorics of Display (R of D) ch. 5  
and on Electronic Reserve:

Hariman, Robert and Lucaites, John Louis (200). Performing Civic Identity: The Iconic Photograph of the Flag Raising on Iwo Jima. *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 88:363-392.

Mar 1

#### Visual Rhetoric in Photography -- continued

Read *DVF* ch. 9 and on reserve

Dickson, Barbara. (1999). Reading Maternity Materially: The Case of Demi Moore. In Selzer, Jack and Crowley, Sharon, editors, *Rhetorical Bodies*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. 297-313.

Gallagher, Victoria and Zagacki, Kenneth. (2007). Visibility and Rhetoric: Epiphanies and Transformations in the *Life* Photographs of the Selma Marches of 1965. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*. In press.

### Week 9

Mar 3-7

**SPRING BREAK – RELAX AND ENJOY!**

### Week 10

Mar 11

#### Visual Rhetoric in Public Art and Public Spaces

Read *DVF* ch. 12 and electronic reserve

Rice, Danielle. (1992). The "Rocky" Dilemma: Museums and Popular Culture in the Postmodern Era. In Senie, Harriet F. and Webster, Sally (eds), *Critical Issues in Public Art*. NY: HarperCollins Publishers. 228-236.

Graves, Donna (1992). Representing the Race: Detroit's Monument to Joe Louis. In Senie, Harriet F. and Webster, Sally, (eds), *Critical Issues in Public Art*. NY: HarperCollins Publishers. 215-227.

Gallagher, Victoria J. and LaWare, Margaret (under review). Sparring with Public Memory: The Rhetorical Embodiment of Race, Power, and Conflict in *The Monument to Joe Louis*. In Dickinson, Greg, Ott, Brian and Blair, Carole (eds.) *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, University of Alabama Press.

13

#### Visual Rhetoric in Public Art and Public Spaces

##### **Short Paper #1 Due**

Read electronic reserve

Dickinson, Greg. (1997). Memories for Sale: Nostalgia and the Construction of Identity in Old Pasadena. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 83:1-27.

Read distributed manuscripts

Gallagher, Victoria J. and Zagacki, Kenneth. (under review). Rhetorical Depiction and the Mediation of Nature: The Case of the North Carolina Museum of Art Sculpture Park.

Gallagher, Victoria J. and Zagacki, Kenneth. (Under review). Museums and the Experience of History and Social Knowledge: A Rhetorical Analysis of “Titanic: The Artifact Exhibit.”

### **Unit III – Commemoration: Memorials, Monuments and Museums**

#### **Week 11**

Mar 18

#### **Field Trip or Guest Presentation**

20

#### The Rhetoric of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Read electronic reserve

Foss, Sonja. (1986). Ambiguity as Persuasion: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial. *Communication Quarterly*. 34:326-340.

Blair, Carole, Jeppeson, Marsha S., Pucci, Enrico, Jr. (1991). Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as Prototype. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 77:263-288.

#### **Week 12**

Mar 25

#### Rhetoric and Commemoration

Read electronic reserve

Blair, Carole. (1999). Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric’s Materiality. In Selzer, Jack and Crowley, Sharon (eds.), *Rhetorical Bodies*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. 16-57.

Biesecker, Barbara. (2002). Remembering World War II: The Rhetoric and Politics of National Commemoration at the Turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 393-409.

Mar 27

#### **NO CLASS – Work on Projects**

#### **Week 13**

Apr 1

#### Rhetoric of Civil Rights Commemoration

Read R of D, ch. 8 and electronic reserve

Gallagher, Victoria J. (Winter 1995). Remembering Together?: Rhetorical Integration and the Case of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial. *Southern Communication Journal*. 60:109-119.

Gallagher, Victoria J. (Summer 1999). Memory and Reconciliation in the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*. 2:301-320.

Gallagher, Victoria J., “Memory as Social Action: Cultural Projection and Generic Form in Civil Rights Memorials,” in *Communities, Creations, and Contradictions: New Approaches to Rhetoric for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Steven R. Goldzwig and Patricia A. Sullivan, (Sage Publications, Inc.) 2004.

3

#### **NO CLASS – SSCA Conference**

**Week 14**

Apr 8

Rhetoric of Civil Rights Commemoration

Read electronic reserves:

Blair, Carole and Michel, Neil (2000). Reproducing Civil Rights Tactics: The Rhetorical Performance of the Civil Rights Memorial. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*. 30:31-55.

Armada, Bernard J. (1998). Memorial Agon: An Interpretive Tour of the National Civil Rights Museum. *Southern Communication Journal*. 63:235-243.

10

Rhetoric of Commemoration and Museums

**Field Trip or Guest Presentation**

**Short Paper #2 due**

**Week 15**

Apr 15  
17

Course Wrap-up – In-class analysis

Course Wrap-up – In-class analysis

**Week 16**

Apr 22  
24

**Oral Presentations**

**Oral Presentations**

**Finals Week**

May 1

**FINAL Papers due**