

English 342WI: Women & Rhetoric

Fall 2008
Instructor: Jane Greer
Office Hours: Mon., 12:30-1:30; Wed., 3:15-4:00
E-Mail: greerj@umkc.edu

2:00-3:15 p.m. M/W
Office: Rm 104, 5201 Rockhill Rd.
Office Phone: 816.235.2557

Cockefair 105

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to English 342WI: Women & Rhetoric. This writing intensive course offers you the opportunity to study the position of women within the traditions of western rhetoric and the rhetorical practices of women as they pursue both public and private goals. You will also be developing your own rhetorical skills as you complete a variety of written assignments that reflect your engagement with questions about how women in a variety of historical contexts have acquired rhetorical training and shared their expertise with other women; about how women have asserted their right to speak in public forums; and about the ways in which women have authored new discursive forms.

REQUIRED TEXTS & EQUIPMENT

Ritchie, Joy and Kate Ronald, eds. *Available Means: An Anthology of Women's Rhetoric(s)*

Hobbs, Catherine, ed. *Nineteenth-Century Women Learn to Write*

Articles available on Blackboard Web Site.

Isolating Headphones (available for around \$25 at Target, Office Depot, etc.)

A jump or thumb drive—lots of gigs are good (to store electronic resources)

Lunsford, Andrea. *The Everyday Writer* (recommended)

COURSE POLICIES and ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance: The success of this class depends a great deal on your interests, insights, and questions; therefore, you should be prepared to participate productively in daily class discussion and activities. That means you should have read *and* thought about each assignment before coming to class.

Because class discussion, small group work, and class activities will be important components of your educational experience, your regular attendance and participation are required in order for you to be successful. For every absence over three your grade may be lowered; if you miss class six times, I will advise you to drop the course rather than receive a failing grade.

Since arriving late to class is distracting to your classmates (and to me), you are expected to arrive on time. Three late arrivals will count as an absence.

Rhetorical Biography: Over the course of the semester, you will be working on completing a rhetorical biography of a woman you believe should be included in histories of rhetoric. Your rhetorical biography may take the form of a traditional research paper (approximately 15 pages) or you may wish to construct a multi-media Sophie book as a way to present your research on the women rhetor. You can check out Sophie books at <http://www.sophieproject.org/>, and we'll be discussing in class some of the issues you might consider as you decide between a traditional research project and a Sophie book.

You may choose a woman included in one of our course texts, or you may choose to write about a woman you have discovered on your own. While you may share the details of your subject's life with your readers, your essay will need to focus on a detailed analysis of texts she authored and/or speeches she delivered. Your rhetorical biography will also need to acknowledge the work of previous scholars & historians who have also studied your subject. The final paper you produce from your research will be worth **35%** of your grade in our class. You'll receive a more detailed description of this assignment in the first weeks of the class.

We'll be dividing the work of completing this rhetorical biography into several smaller assignments that build toward the final paper:

- Project proposal
- Annotated bibliography of relevant secondary scholarship
- Peer response draft & peer response
- Letter of submission/self-assessment

Each of these stepping stone assignments will be worth **5%** of your final grade, and you'll receive more detailed information about each of these smaller assignments in class. Due dates are on the attached course schedule.

Class Project—Creating a Sophie Anthology of Women Rhetors: New media technologies create new rhetorical opportunities and place new demands on those who wish to communicate persuasively. This semester we'll explore how we might communicate in new ways about our own developing work by exploring Sophie books as a way to present and share information. Each member of our class will create a single Sophie book page about the women rhetor he or she is studying, and we'll compile them into a single, collaboratively-authored Sophie book. This will provide us all with an opportunity to think about how multimodal (visual, aural) composition is different from composing in alphabetic print and what the rhetorical affordances are of various modalities. If you don't feel particularly tech-savvy, don't panic. We'll be spending lots of time in class learning about Sophie and working on our pages together. Your Sophie page will be worth **10%** of your grade.

Reading Folder: In class, we will often do informal writing activities and other exercises to extend our analyses of the texts we have read. These activities may take the form of quizzes, group activities, or graphic organizers. I will collect these the products of these class activities and keep a reading folder for each one of you. Your folder will be evaluated cumulatively, meaning that a single poor performance will not unduly affect your grade. Instead, I will be looking for consistent and conscientious effort on your part

as you consider seriously issues involving women and rhetoric. Your reading folder will be worth **10%** of your final grade.

A Commonplace Book: In defining a five-step process of composing public discourse that is still very much with us today, the classical rhetoricians placed *invention* at the beginning of the process. A crucial method of invention through the centuries has been consideration of common topics, or *topoi*. Such commonplaces are forms of culturally sanctioned knowledge and accepted forms of argumentation. For Aristotle, *topoi* included whether a thing has occurred; whether it will occur; whether things are bigger or larger than they seem; and whether a thing is or is not possible. In keeping a commonplace book to aid him in his compositions, a schoolboy in 1800 might have recorded maxims like: “Well begun is half-done,” or “Necessity is the mother of invention.” In the second half of the 19th century, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union published its own “memory gems,” which were facts about alcoholism, to aid high school students in preparing speeches or essays on the prohibition of alcohol.

As part of your work in our course, you’ll keep your own commonplace book. You can copy out quotes from the texts we’re reading & add materials from other texts that you deem relevant to your study of women and rhetorical history. The purpose of this assignment is to provide you with an opportunity to interact with the texts and ideas we’re studying and to create a permanent resource that you can turn to this semester and in future courses you might take. Bring your commonplace book to class with your every day; we will at times use our commonplace books as the basis for our work in class. Your commonplace book will be worth **10%** of your final grade.

Additionally, you will write a short take-home midterm exam (approximately four pages) that will be based on your commonplace book. Your midterm will be worth **15%** of your final exam.

Due Dates: Due dates are listed on the course schedule, and your final paper and commonplace book will be due during final exam week. Course work may not be submitted electronically; you will need to bring a hard copy of your work to class. No late work will be accepted. If unusual circumstances will keep you from completing an assignment on time, please speak to me about it immediately. When requested in advance, extensions are readily granted.

Blackboard Website: A copy of this syllabus, several required readings, and assignments are archived at <http://blackboard.umkc.edu>. You can access these course materials using your UMKC username and password. Important course information and reminders (e.g., class cancellations, schedule changes, etc.) will also be posted as “Announcements” on our blackboard site. If you are unfamiliar with Blackboard as a learning tool, you may wish to complete the tutorial available at <http://umkc.edu/blackboard/students/>.

The Writing Center: UMKC’s Writing Center is located at 5201 Rockhill, 2nd floor. Writing consultants in the lab can help you develop ideas for your papers, articulate your thesis, organize your material, and hone your grammar skills. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Center’s services—your tuition dollars help to fund the

Writing Center, so you should take advantage of all it has to offer. You can schedule an appointment by calling 816.235.1146.

Access for Students with Disabilities: To obtain disability-related accommodations and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Offices of Services for Students with Disabilities (OSSD) as soon as possible. The OSSD phone number is 816.235.5696.

Plagiarism: Intentionally using someone's words (or ideas) as your own is a serious offense in the university, which can result in reprimands, suspensions, and expulsions. If you have questions about proper citation and documentation of any sources you are using, please see me.

Student Code of Conduct: All students at UMKC are expected to abide by the Student Code of Conduct, which sets forth expectations and guidelines for appropriate behavior within a productive and intellectually engaging academic community. You can review the Code of Conduct at <http://www.umkc.edu/umkc/catalog/html/append/policy/0020.html>.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Mon Aug 18 Introductions. What is rhetoric?

Women Claiming the Right to a Rhetorical Education

Wed Aug 20 **Margaret Fuller**, "Woman in the Nineteenth Century," (pgs. 125-137 in *Available Means*)

Mon Aug 25 **Nicole Tonkovich**, "Writing in Circles," (pgs. 145-175 in *19th-C. Women*)
Louisa Caroline Tuthill, excerpt from *The Young Lady at Home*
Almira Hart Lincoln Phelps, excerpt from *Lectures to Young Ladies* (Available at Blackboard)

Wed Aug 27 **Vickie Ricks**, "In an Atmosphere of Peril," (pgs. 59-83 in *19th C. Women*)
Lauren Petrillo, "The Visible Rhetoric and Composition of Invisible Antebellum Female Seminary Students: Clay Seminary, Liberty, Missouri, 1855-1865."
<<http://www.bk.psu.edu/Documents/Academics/VISIBLERHETORIC.pdf?cn21>>
Heidmarie Z. Weidner, "Silks, Congress Gaiters, & Rhetoric," (pgs. 248-263 in *19th-C. Women*)

- Mon Sept 1 **NO CLASS--Celebrate Labor Day.**
- Wed Sept 3 **Workshop on Research Strategies—Resources at MNL.**
- Mon Sept 8 **Susan Wells**, “Women Write Science,” (Available at Blackboard)
Susan Carter Simmons, “Radcliffe Responses to Harvard Rhetoric,” (pgs. 264-292 in *19th-C. Women*)
- Wed Sept 10 **Anna Julie Cooper**, “Higher Education of Women,” (pgs. 163-170 in *Available Means*)
Fannie Barrier Williams, “The Intellectual Progress of the Colored Women,” (pgs. 180-187 in *Available Means*)
- Mon Sept 15 **DUE: Project Proposal**
- Wed Sept. 17 **Writing Workshop**
- Mon Sept 22 **Shirley Logan Wilson**, “Literacy as a Tool for Social Action,” (pgs. 179-196 in *19th-C. Women*)
Reader’s Choice: Maria Stewart, Sojourner Truth, Frances E.W. Harper, or Ida B. Wells from *Available Means*
- Wed Sept 24 **Gloria Anzaldúa**, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue,” (pgs. 356-365 in *Available Means*)
Ruth Bader Ginsburg, from “United States v. Virginia,” (pgs. 471-477 in *Available Means*)
Take-Home Midterm Assigned in Class

Women Claiming the Right to Speak in Public

- Mon Sept 29 **Seneca Falls Convention**, “Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions,” (pgs. 138-142 in *Available Means*)
- Wed Oct 1 **Carol Mattingly**, “Women’s Rights in Women’s Wrongs” (Available at Blackboard)
- Mon Oct 6 **DUE: Take-Home Midterm**
In Class: Writing Workshop
- Wed Oct 8 **Virginia Woolf**, “Professions for Women,” (pgs. 242-246 in *Available Means*)
(Note: Friday, October 10, is the last day to withdraw w/o

assessment.)

Mon Oct 13 **Audre Lorde**, "Transformation of Silence," (pgs. 310-315 in *Available Means*)
Nancy Mairs, "Carnal Acts," (pgs. 391-400 in *Available Means*)

Wed Oct 15 **Dorothy Allison**, "Two or Three Things I Know for Sure," (pgs. 343-353 in *Available Means*)
Allison Interview with Charlie Rose
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MapT2sYGT2I>
Advance timer to 41:18 for Allison interview.

Mon Oct 20 **Research Day**

Wed Oct 22 **In Class: Wrap Up & Catch Up**

Women Claiming the Right to Chart New Discursive Territory

Mon Oct 27 **Maryan Wherry**, "Women & the Western Military Frontier," (pgs. 217-229 in *19th-C. Women*)

Wed Oct 29 **Writing Workshop & Sophie Book Page**

Mon Nov 3 **Patricia Williams**, "The Death of the Profane," (pgs. 409-415 in *Available Means*)
Roxanne Mountford, "Sermo Corporis" (Available at Blackboard)

Wed Nov 5 **DUE: Annotated Bibliography**

Mon Nov 10 **Ruth Behar**, "Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart," (pgs. 479-488 in *Available Means*)

Wed Nov 12 **Trinh T. Minh-Ha**, from *Women, Native, Other*, (pgs. 377-382 in *Available Means*)
DUE: First Draft of Rhetorical Biography

Mon Nov 17 **Nomy Lamm**, “It’s a Big Fat Revolution,” (pgs. 454-461 in *Available Means*)
Joy Nash, “Fat Rant”
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUTJQIBI1oA>> and “Fat Rant 3: Staircase Wit”
<www.youtube.com/watch?v=PyQ_IKkAM9I>
Interview with Joy Nash,
<<http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art50462.asp>>

Wed Nov 19 **DUE: Peer Response Drafts of Rhetorical Biography**
In Class: Peer Response

Thanksgiving Break!
No Classes—November 24-28

Mon Dec 1 **Kathryn Kish Sklar**, “Coming to Terms” (Available at Blackboard)

Wed Dec 3 **DUE: Page for Collaborative Sophie Book**
Writing Workshop and Course Evaluations

Final Celebration of semester and viewing of our Collaborative Sophie Book.
Final copies of Rhetorical Biographies
with submission letters & Commonplace Book also due at time of our officially
scheduled final exam
(Thursday, December 11, from 8:00-10:00 a.m.)