Rhetoric and Media Studies

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From its humanistic roots in ancient Greece to current investigations of the impact of digital technology, rhetoric and media studies is a dynamic and unique field of study—both one of the oldest and one of the newest disciplines. Our department addresses contemporary concerns about how we use messages (both verbal and visual) to construct meaning and coordinate action in various domains, including the processes of persuasion in politics and civic life, the effects of media on beliefs and behavior, the power of film and image to frame reality, and the development of identities and relationships in everyday life. While these processes touch us daily and are part of every human interaction, no other discipline takes messages and their consequences as its unique focus.

The Department of Rhetoric and Media Studies offers a challenging and integrated study of theory and practice. Our discipline is rooted in the classical liberal arts tradition of rhetorical theory and has evolved to include social science theories of the causes and effects of messages as well as critical theories of the relationship between media, culture, and society. Our curriculum focuses on the content, transmission, and consequences of oral, print, visual, interpersonal, and electronic messages. Understanding how messages construct meaning, identity, relationships, and communities is central to the life of a liberally educated person and to the development of critical and creative thinking, speaking, listening, and writing.

Resources for Nonmajors

Nonmajors can obtain an overview of theories and research in the field through RHMS 100 Introduction to Rhetoric and Media Studies. Courses in interpersonal media, interpersonal rhetoric, argumentation, and public discourse are open to all students and provide opportunities to apply theory to everyday life. Our flexible minor requirements enable students to create a concentration of courses to complement any major. Nearly all of our advanced courses are open to nonmajors as long as they have completed the prerequisites. (Internship credit requires department approval.)

Activities

Public Advocacy. Competitive forensics and noncompetitive public forum activities. Students may compete in parliamentary debate, extemporaneous speaking, oratory, expository, after-dinner speaking, and oral interpretation in intercollegiate tournaments. Participation in forensics includes research and weekly practices. Students may qualify for Pi Kappa Delta, a national speech honorary. The forensics squad has earned national recognition. Credit is available for qualified students through the practicum program.

KLC Radio. One of the largest campus activities, with a station staff of 40 to 60 students each semester. Staff members participate in all aspects of broadcasting, station management, and operations, including programming, production, news, and promotions. The station broadcasts 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at college.lclark.edu/student_life/klc_radio. KLC is a cocurricular activity sponsored by the Department of Rhetoric and Media Studies. Credit is available to qualified students through the practicum program.

Pioneer Log. The weekly student newspaper of Lewis & Clark. Students work in all phases of newspaper production: reporting, editing, photography, electronic publishing, advertising, and layout. Credit is available for qualified students through the practicum program.

Facilities

Radio. Located in Templeton Campus Center, KLC Radio includes two fully equipped stereo studios, a newsroom, and offices. The station webcasts on and off campus.

Print. Pioneer Log offices are located in Templeton Campus Center. Students have use of electronic publishing technology and digital cameras.

Video. Lewis & Clark’s video production facility includes digital editing capabilities, computer graphics, portable cameras and recording equipment, and a multiple-camera production studio. Additional video recording systems are available on campus.

The Major Program

The major in rhetoric and media studies combines core requirements with the flexibility of electives. Requirements involve the historical and contemporary study of rhetoric; the critical evaluation of communication theories and practices related to interpersonal interactions, organizations, public discourse, interpersonal rhetoric, and interpersonal media; engagement with both quantitative and qualitative research methods; and the satisfactory completion of a capstone course. These requirements are essential for the student who intends to pursue graduate study or enter a rhetoric or media studies-related field.

Students should declare the rhetoric and media studies major by the end of the sophomore year to provide maximum flexibility in planning for core requirements and electives. Students are also encouraged to consult with their department advisors about coursework from other departments that can be appropriately integrated into their study of rhetoric and media studies. Each major is expected to complete a capstone during the senior year.

Major Requirements

A minimum of 40 semester credits, distributed as follows:

- RHMS 100 Introduction to Rhetoric and Media Studies
- RHMS 203 Rhetorical Theory
- RHMS 260 Empirical Research Methods
- RHMS 301 Rhetorical Criticism
- RHMS 302 Mass Communication Theory
- At least one of these three courses:
  - RHMS 200 Mass Media Messages: Design and Analysis
  - RHMS 270 Interpersonal Media
  - RHMS 275 Interpersonal Rhetoric
- One of the following 400-level capstone courses:
  - RHMS 406 Race, Rhetoric, and Resistance
  - RHMS 420 Health Narratives
  - RHMS 425 American Cinema Studies: Advanced Analysis and Criticism
  - RHMS 470 Popular Culture and Socialization
- Twelve additional semester credits to complete the 40-credit requirement. Eight of these semester credits must be at the 300 or 400 level.

Students may apply up to 4 semester credits of practicum or independent study to the major.

Minor Requirements
A minimum of 24 semester credits, distributed as follows:
- RHMS 100 Introduction to Rhetoric and Media Studies
- One of the following combinations selected in consultation with your minor advisor to complement your rhetoric and media studies coursework and your major:
  - RHMS 260 Empirical Research Methods and an additional media studies course at the 300 or 400 level
  or
  - RHMS 203 Rhetorical Theory and an additional rhetorical course at the 300 or 400 level
- One of the following 400-level capstone courses:
  - RHMS 406 Race, Rhetoric, and Resistance
  - RHMS 420 Health Narratives
  - RHMS 425 American Cinema Studies: Advanced Analysis and Criticism
  - RHMS 470 Popular Culture and Socialization
- Eight semester credits of rhetoric and media studies electives, 4 of which must be at the 300 or 400 level.

Practicum and independent study coursework do not count toward the minor.

Practicum and Internship Program
A variety of practica and internships are available to qualified students. Internships provide an opportunity to explore the relationship between theoretical concepts and skills learned in the classroom and the work done in various organizations, including community service agencies, government offices, advertising companies, and the media. Practicum credit is also available for participation in the Public Advocacy, KLC Radio, and Pioneer Log organizations at Lewis & Clark. Practica and internships are supervised by rhetoric and media studies department faculty and involve additional readings and written assignments beyond the time spent in the organization. Credit is offered on a credit-no credit basis through RHMS 244 Practicum/Internship and RHMS 444 Practicum. A detailed written description of the program is available in the department.

Honors
Rhetoric and media studies majors with a grade point average of 3.500 or higher overall and in the major are invited by the department to prepare their capstone projects as honors projects. Capstones submitted for consideration for honors normally require more extensive preparation than other courses. Two faculty members assist the student and evaluate the capstone on completion. Students whose capstone projects are deemed worthy are granted honors on graduation.

Faculty


RHMS 100 Introduction to Rhetoric and Media Studies  
Faculty: Rhetoric and Media Studies Faculty.  
Content: Introduction to the conceptual and philosophical foundations of the discipline, from classical rhetorical theory through contemporary perspectives, including critical theories of human interaction. How humans construct and negotiate meaning in different contexts, including interpersonal relationships, public address, small groups and organizations, mass media. Moral, ethical, and policy issues.  
Prerequisites: None.  
Usually offered: Annually, fall and spring semester.  
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 200 Mass Media Messages: Design and Analysis  
Faculty: Christenson, Sebok.  
Content: Theory, aesthetics, and practice in the production of mass media messages. Organizing principles and aesthetic theories concerning writing for print and electronic media, message organization, visual composition, photography, audio production, basic editing. Ethical responsibilities to information sources and audiences.  
Prerequisites: RHMS 100.  
Usually offered: Annually, fall and spring semester.  
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 203 Rhetorical Theory  
Faculty: Reyes.  
Content: History and theory of rhetoric, including major developments in rhetorical theory from antiquity up to the present. Rhetoric’s relationship with philosophy, knowledge, and culture. Examination of persuasive messages in various forms, including politics, advertising, film, video.  
Prerequisites: RHMS 100 or consent of instructor.  
Usually offered: Annually, spring semester.  
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 210 Public Discourse  
Faculty: Rhetoric and Media Studies Faculty.  
Content: Development of basic public speaking skills, listener-critic abilities, and appreciation for the role of public discourse in society. Library research, organization and outlining, language style, presentation skills, rhetorical/communication criticism.  
Prerequisites: None.  
Usually offered: Annually, fall and spring semester.  
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 221 Argumentation  
Faculty: Rhetoric and Media Studies Faculty.  
Content: Introduction to argumentation in public arenas. History, background, and strategies for parliamentary debate. Critical thinking, library research, logic and reasoning, listening and note taking, argument creation and refutation. Practice of debate skills.  
Prerequisites: None.  
Usually offered: Annually.  
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 244 Practicum/Internship  
Faculty: Rhetoric and Media Studies Faculty.  
Content: Field learning experience combining theoretical concepts and skills learned in the classroom with practical work in on-campus and off-campus organizations. Additional readings and written assignments required. Three specific practica—forensics, KLC Radio, and Pioneer Log—are offered, in addition to others. Credit-no credit. May be repeated for credit. Maximum of 4 semester credits, total, in practicum and/or independent study may be counted toward the major.  
Prerequisites: None.  
Restrictions: Sophomore standing and consent required.  
Usually offered: Annually, fall and spring semester.  
Semester credits: 1-4.

RHMS 260 Empirical Research Methods  
Faculty: Rhetoric and Media Studies Faculty.  
Content: Methods of communication research grounded in data collection for the purposes of prediction and explanation (quantitative methods) or description and interpretation (qualitative methods). Course spans philosophy of inquiry; relationship of theory to data in developing questions and hypotheses; logic of sampling, measurement, and statistical inference; uses of interviews, fieldwork, and textual analysis; criteria for evaluating quantitative and qualitative work; research ethics.  
Prerequisites: RHMS 100 or consent of instructor.  
Usually offered: Annually, fall semester.  
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 270 Interpersonal Media  
Faculty: Goldsmith.  
Content: Introduction to theories of interpersonal communication processes (e.g., social support, uncertainty management, privacy management, conflict, deception). Influence of new media on these processes, impact of communication media on identities, relationships, and communities.  
Prerequisites: None.  
Usually offered: Annually, spring semester.  
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 275 Interpersonal Rhetoric  
Faculty: Goldsmith.  
Content: Introduction to theories of communication competence; how we use messages strategically to accomplish tasks, enact identities, and construct relationships in personal life. How we use content, style, and organization of messages to adapt to particular conversation partners and communication situations. Cross-cultural variation in interpersonal interaction.  
Prerequisites: None.  
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required, unless section number is preceded by an "F."  
Usually offered: Annually, spring semester.  
Semester credits: 4.
RHMS 299 Independent Study
Faculty: Rhetoric and Media Studies Faculty.
Content: Independent reading and/or research in an area other than the normal course offerings of the department. Maximum of 4 semester credits, total, in independent study and/or practicum may be counted toward the major. Credit-no credit. May be repeated for credit.
Prerequisites: None.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing and consent required.
Usually offered: Annually, fall and spring semester.
Semester credits: 1-4.

RHMS 301 Rhetorical Criticism
Faculty: Reyes.
Content: Major critical methods for analyzing and understanding communicative action. Major historical developments in rhetorical criticism during the 20th century. Role of criticism in understanding persuasive messages in various forms, including political discourse, advertising, music, film, television.
Prerequisites: RHMS-203.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Annually.
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 302 Mass Communication Theory
Faculty: Christenson, Sebok.
Content: Survey of the key theories and research regarding the role of media in shaping society, spanning the early 20th century to the present. Coverage includes areas such as media’s impact on the political process, the cultivation of attitudes and values through media exposure, critiques of mass culture and mass society, and the role of interpretation and social construction in media audiences.
Prerequisites: RHMS 260 or consent of instructor.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Annually, fall and spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 313 Politics of Public Memory
Faculty: Reyes.
Content: Investigation of public memory as the public negotiation of the past for political purposes in the present. How different cultures have remembered and rhetorically constructed traumatic historical events such as the Holocaust and institutionalized slavery. Role of communication and persuasion in public acts of remembrance.
Prerequisites: RHMS 100 or consent of instructor.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Alternate Years, fall semester.
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 321 Argumentation and Social Justice
Faculty: Reyes.
Content: Investigation of argumentation and social justice. Exploration and application of scholarship through the community-based Thank You for Arguing, a mentoring program run with local inner-city public schools. Theoretical and methodological frameworks for understanding the role of argumentation in fostering social justice explored through readings, classes discussion, and writing assignments. May be taken twice for credit.
Prerequisites: RHMS 100 or RHMS 221 or consent of instructor.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Annually, fall and spring semester.
Semester credits: 2.

RHMS 325 The Documentary Form
Faculty: Sebok.
Content: Critical analysis of the documentary with emphasis on institutional practices that shape and sustain the genre, argument in documentaries, expectations of audiences. Organization of materials for documentaries, editing and montage, principles of visual composition as they relate to moving images, functions of sound, ethical considerations. Planning and production of short documentaries.
Prerequisites: RHMS 200 or consent of instructor.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Annually, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 332 Rhetoric of Gender in Relationships
Faculty: Goldsmith.
Content: Study of how gendered identities and relationships are socially constructed through communication. Covers the development of empirical research on similarities and differences in men’s and women’s communication and various theories proposed to account for similarities and differences. How everyday language and communication practices construct gender. How gender identities intersect with other identities, such as race and sexual orientation.
Prerequisites: RHMS 100 or GEND 200 or consent of instructor.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Alternate Years, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 340 Media Across Cultures
Faculty: Christenson, Sebok.
Content: Theoretical perspectives on the political and social role of mass communication in developed and developing nations. Mass communication organizations, content, regulatory models, audiences in diverse cultures. Implications of public versus private ownership of mass media. Evaluation of claims of U.S. cultural imperialism.
Prerequisites: None.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing or consent required.
Usually offered: Alternate Years, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.
RHMS 352 Gender in Public Rhetoric and Mass Media
Faculty: Goldsmith.
Content: Rhetoric of gender equity movements and feminist theories of rhetoric. Rhetorical strategies used to redefine gender and gendered relations. How gender is represented in news and entertainment media. Activist strategies to change access to and representation in media.
Prerequisites: RHMS 100 or GEND 200.
Restrictions: Sophomore standing required.
Usually offered: Alternate Years, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 360 Digital Media and Society
Faculty: Sebok.
Content: Cultural, industrial, political, and economic implications of digital technology and innovation on cultural expression, media storytelling, democracy, globalization, and news gathering and dissemination. New media theory and investigation of meaning, knowledge, and power related to digital technologies. Investigation of the nature of production of consumption and active audiences.
Prerequisites: None.
Restrictions: Junior standing or consent of instructor required.
Usually offered: Alternate Years, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 406 Race, Rhetoric, and Resistance
Faculty: Reyes.
Content: Role of rhetoric in social conflicts regarding issues of race. Theories and strategies of resistance and the implications for political action. Examination of major race and resistance texts.
Prerequisites: RHMS 100 or consent of instructor.
RHMS 301 recommended.
Restrictions: Junior standing required.
Usually offered: Annually, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 420 Health Narratives
Faculty: Goldsmith.
Content: Theories of narrative as they apply to communication about health and illness; role of narratives in creating health- or illness-related identity, securing social support, creating communities. Competing narratives in interactions with health care providers. Impact of narratives in public and private medical decision making.
Prerequisites: RHMS 100.
Restrictions: Junior standing required.
Usually offered: Annually, fall semester.
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 425 American Cinema Studies: Advanced Analysis and Criticism
Faculty: Sebok.
Content: Application of major theories from media, film, and cultural studies (e.g., psychoanalysis, genre study, formalism, auteur study, national cinemas) to a given set of media texts. Close analysis of media texts in context, taking into consideration technological, aesthetic, and industrial shifts.
Prerequisites: RHMS 100, RHMS 200.
Restrictions: Junior standing required.
Usually offered: Annually, fall semester.
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 444 Practicum
Faculty: Rhetoric and Media Studies Faculty.
Content: Advanced fieldwork and practical application of theoretical concepts and skills via internships with off-campus organizations. (Students participating in on-campus practica—forensics, KLC Radio, or Pioneer Log—should enroll in RHMS 244 instead.) Additional readings and written assignments required. Credit-no credit. May be repeated for credit. Maximum of 4 semester credits, total, in practicum and/or independent study may be counted toward the major.
Prerequisites: RHMS 100.
Restrictions: Junior standing. Consent of instructor.
Usually offered: Annually, fall and spring semester.
Semester credits: 1-4.

RHMS 470 Popular Culture and Socialization
Faculty: Christenson.
Content: Role of the mass media and popular culture in the process of growing up. Television, popular music, and other media as influences in the personal and social lives of children and adolescents. Uses and misuses of empirical research in solving public-policy issues related to media and youth.
Prerequisites: RHMS 100 and RHMS 260 or consent of instructor.
Restrictions: Junior standing required.
Usually offered: Alternate Years, spring semester.
Semester credits: 4.

RHMS 499 Independent Study
Faculty: Rhetoric and Media Studies Faculty.
Content: Advanced-level independent reading and/or research in an area other than the normal course offerings of the department. Maximum of 4 credits total in independent study and/or practicum may be counted toward the major. May be repeated for credit.
Prerequisites: None.
Restrictions: Junior standing and consent required.
Usually offered: Annually, fall and spring semester.
Semester credits: 1-4.