**UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON -- NEW COURSE PROPOSAL**

Electronically submit this completed form with attachments in one file to the Chair of the College Curriculum Committee.

**COLLEGE (check one):** Arts and Sciences | Business | Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Title: Seminar in Digital Rhetorics</td>
<td>COMM 460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department/discipline and course number*: COMM 460</td>
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*This course number must be approved by the Office of the Registrar before the proposal is submitted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of credits proposed:</th>
<th>3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisites:</td>
<td>COMM 341: Communication Research Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will this be a new, repeatable “special topics” course? (Do you want students to be able to take this new course more than once if the topic changes?)</td>
<td>NO</td>
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Date of first offering of this new course: Fall Semester, 2015

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<tr>
<th>Proposed frequency of offering of the course:</th>
<th>Annually</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List the faculty who will likely teach the course:</td>
<td>P. Anand Rao and Jessy Ohl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are ANY new resources required?</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
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**This new course will be (check all that apply):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required in the major: Communication and Digital Studies (proposed major): Required for Special Majors in Communication</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>General Elective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elective in the major: English major</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>General Education**</td>
</tr>
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**AFTER the new course is approved, a separate proposal must be sent to the General Education Committee.**

**Catalog Description:**

COMM 460: Seminar in Digital Rhetorics

Prerequisites: COMM 341 or permission of the instructor. Study of the contemporary function of rhetoric in the context of our globally networked society.

**COURSE HISTORY**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Was this course taught previously as a topics or experimental course?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Number and Title of Previous Course</td>
<td>Semester Offered</td>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td></td>
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**CHECK HERE** if the proposed course is to be *equated* with the earlier topics or experimental offerings. This means that students who took the earlier “topics” course will only be able to take the new course if they made a C- grade or lower in the earlier course.

**NOTE:** If the proposed course has not been previously offered as a topics or experimental course, explain in the attached rationale statement why the course should be adopted even though it has not been tried out.

**REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS:**

1. **Rationale Statement** (Why is this course needed? What purposes will it serve?)
2. **Impact Statement** (Provide details about the Library, space, budget, and technology impacts created by adding this new course. Include supporting statements from the Library, IT Department, etc. as needed.)
3. **Sample Syllabus**

Department Chair Approval: ____________________________ Date: ____________

CCC Chair Approval: ____________________________ Date: ____________

UCC Chair Approval: ____________________________ Date: ____________

New Course Proposal Cover Sheet (July 2013)
1. **Rationale statement** (Why is this course needed? What purposes will it serve? Resources needed?)

*COMM 460: Seminar in Digital Rhetorics* has not been taught as a topics course and is new to the curriculum. It has been developed to serve as the capstone for the proposed major in communication and digital studies. As the capstone, this seminar will build upon the work completed in coursework in the major. Coursework in *COMM 340: Introduction to Rhetoric and Communication* (proposal to renumber from COMM 350) and *COMM 341: Communication Research Methods* provides students with a foundation in communication and rhetorical theory and the research methods utilized in the discipline. Additional coursework in digital studies, both required and elective, will provide students with a variety of studies and practices in digital media. This capstone course, COMM 460, will draw from those experiences and provide the student with the opportunity for a more sophisticated and detailed study of how some of the digital media they have been exposed to and used can be understood and studied through the critical rhetorical lens. This capstone also trains students to utilize the analytical tools necessary to succeed in graduate school and competitive careers.

This new course will also serve as the capstone course for new special majors in communication.

No additional resources are necessary to offer this course.

2. **Major Program Impact** (Explain how the new course affects major requirements. If major requirements have been changed recently, how will this course affect prior major requirements?)

This course will serve as the capstone course for the proposed major in communication and digital studies. No other 400-level seminar in communication has been offered, and the only other option for student completion of the capstone requirement in the major will be to complete *COMM 491: Individual Study*. 
Course Summary and Objectives

The art of rhetoric was the first academic discipline taught in Western civilization, and its influence continues over 2,500 years after its creation. While rhetoric has remained central to human relations, it has also undergone significant transformations throughout history. This course aims at exploring the contemporary function of rhetoric in the context of our globally networked society. The advent and popularity of networked media (blogs, wikis, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.) pose a new set of opportunities and challenges for traditional understandings of rhetoric. Accordingly, in this class we will be applying classical Greek concepts to our contemporary period, in the hopes of gaining a stronger appreciation for the everyday rhetorical conventions of our increasingly interconnected world. This course will demonstrate that although some “tweaking” is in order, many of the classical ways of thinking about rhetoric remain relevant today.

Course Objectives

1. Become familiarized with an assortment of critical concepts related to rhetoric and networked media.
2. Account for the shifts in rhetorical practice occurring within digitally networked contexts.
3. Recognize the role of rhetoric in everyday life and communication.
4. Apply critical concepts to a contemporary phenomenon in the form a short analysis paper.
5. Develop skills in designing, researching and communicating ideas in various mediated and non-mediated performance contexts, including oral, visual, and written presentation.
6. Explore processes of knowledge production and communication concepts by using digital technology in critical thinking and problem solving.

Required Readings


Additional readings will be made available on Blackboard.

Course Requirements

Class blog: 30%. Students will be expected to post three “class contributions” to the course blog during the semester. Each post is worth 10 points, and a post is due at the end of January, February, and March. No credit will be given for posts after the assigned month. I will provide regular prompts at the end of each lecture that you may use to initiate your post, but you are not limited to these ideas. You may explore a question posed during class, provide some examples of a course concept, or offer a short analysis of a text using the course material.
Research Project: 50% (25% paper, 25% presentation). This assignment is an individual research project. Each student will select a digital medium/network/platform/application for study. They will analyze the rhetorical workings of that medium, discussing how communication practices have been adapted or changed through this new medium. Students are expected to employ the methods introduced in COMM 341: Communication Research Methods to analyze and study this topic. The project will culminate in a 12-15 page research paper that will then be presented to the class at the end of the semester. Grading rubrics for the paper and presentation will be made available. Students are expected to seek assistance from the Writing and Speaking Centers in preparing their final paper and presentation.

Class Participation: 20%. Students are expected to be prepared for class and fully participate and contribute to class discussion. Class participation includes attending to the class blog, reading entries and preparing for comment both in class and on the blog.

Tentative Schedule of Readings

PART I: A NETWORKED RHETORICAL CANON

Week 1: Introduction to Networked Rhetoric
Tuesday, January 14
-Review syllabus and introduce course
Thursday, January 16

Week 2: Introduction to Networked Rhetoric Cont.
Tuesday, January 21
Thursday, January 23

Week 3: Canon 1: Invention
Tuesday, January 28
Thursday, January 30
*January blog post due on the 31st

Week 4: Canon 2 & 3: Arrangement and Style
Tuesday, February 4
Thursday, February 6

**Week 5: Canon 4: Delivery**
Tuesday, February 11

Thursday, February 13

**Week 6: Cannon 5: Memory**
Tuesday, February 18

Thursday, February 20

**Week 7: Adding to the Canon**
Tuesday, February 25

Thursday, February 27
*February blog post due on the 28th*

**Week 8: Recapping the Canon**
Tuesday, March 3
-Catch up and discuss short paper

Thursday, March 6
-Watch “Press, Pause, Play”

**PART II: NETWORKED RHETORICAL TOPOI**

**Week 9: Democracy/Citizenship**
Tuesday, March 11

Thursday, March 13
* Short analysis paper due

**Week 10: Argumentation/Persuasion**

Tuesday, March 18

Thursday, March 20

**Week 11: ---**

Tuesday, March 25
NO CLASS—Spring Break

Thursday, March 27
NO CLASS—Spring Break

*March blog post due on the 31st.

**Week 12: ---**

Tuesday, April 1
Adapting the project for presentation

Thursday, April 3
Presentation workshop

**Week 13: Politics/Protest**

Tuesday, April 8

Thursday, April 10

**Week 14: Workshop Week**

Tuesday, April 15
Final project presentations
*Final Papers Due

New Course Proposal Cover Sheet (July 2013)
Thursday, April 17
Final project presentations

**Week 15: Presentations**
Tuesday, April 22
Final project presentations
Thursday, April 24
Final project presentation

**Week 16: Finals Week**
Final course discussion and presentations