

# COMM 415

## AFRICAN AMERICAN RHETORIC & IMAGE: STRATEGIES, STYLES, AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

### SPRING 2016

*People hate each other because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they are so often separated from each other...*  
~Martin Luther King Jr.

*Let our scholarship be a communal activity where no one comes first and no one stands alone.*  
~James G. March

LOCATION ASC 228  
TIME 9:30-10:50 TTh  
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OFFICE HOURS TBA



#### REQUIRED TEXTS (Preliminary and Subject to Change)

Brown, Leslie, ed. African American Voices: A Documentary Reader from Emancipation to the Present. Malden, MA: Wiley, 2014.

Nunley, Vorris L. Keepin' It Hushed: The Barbershop and African American Hush Harbor Rhetoric. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2011.

\*\* *Additional supplementary readings distributed in class or via Blackboard as appropriate.*

#### GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THE COURSE

The primary objective of this upper division course is to understand how members of African American communities have used symbols rhetorically to construct and reconstruct images of themselves and their communities.

#### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

Students successfully completing this course will:

1. study the impact of racialized communication on the social and symbolic construction of the United States.
  - a. define and understand communication as a meaning centered process.
  - b. define and understand rhetoric as a special set of communication practices that create and define a cultural reality.
  - c. define and understand how such communication also serves to frame our individual identities.
2. review significant examples of symbol-using that constructed and maintained images of African Americans.
  - a. public contexts (speeches, the arts, media, and public demonstrations)
  - b. private contexts (interpersonal and small group in particular)
3. examine African American rhetoric/communication scholarship in terms of:
  - a. the theoretical and conceptual tools that have been used,
  - b. the limitations of existing data, and
  - c. the need for further research.
4. write a rhetorical criticism

#### Major Units of Study in African American Rhetoric

- Unit 1: Rhetorical Construction of Race and Community: Blackness and Whiteness Considered Theoretically  
Unit 2: Foundations of African American Rhetoric: An American Historical-Literary Perspective  
Unit 3: African American Rhetoric in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Understanding *Mediated* Representations of African Americans

## GRADING AND REQUIREMENTS (Preliminary and Subject to Change)

Class Participation, Quizzes.....	170 pts.
Journals.....	130 pts.
Group Discussion.....	100 pts.
Exam #1.....	150 pts.
Exam #2.....	150 pts.
Final Examination.....	200 pts.
Final Paper.....	100 pts.
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>1000 pts.</b>

## EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

### Readings

Readings are assigned to enhance our understanding of argumentation theory and practice as well as to stimulate class discussion. **All readings are mandatory**, unless indicated otherwise. Readings will come from the text(s) and articles that can be accessed on the web via Blackboard. In some cases readings will be distributed via email or in class as handouts.

### Midterm / Final Examinations

There will be three (3) examinations during the course of this semester. The exams will consist of multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, matching, definition of key terms, and/or short answer questions. The first and second exams **WILL NOT** be cumulative. The final exam **WILL BE** cumulative. Exam material will be taken from class activities, readings, and lectures. Translation: Everything on the syllabus (whether covered in class or not) as well as everything covered in class is eligible for testing. This syllabus is your review sheet, which means no additional review sheets will be provided by the professor. Scantrons and blue books will be provided for exams, as appropriate.

Exams #1 and #2 dates are listed on the tentative class schedule. The date of the final exam for our course will be announced in class or on Blackboard. You can also find this information by searching the USC Schedule of final exams website for this semester.

### Quizzes

There are no quizzes scheduled, but your instructors retain the prerogative to give unscheduled quizzes if student engagement with the course materials and/or discussion is found to be lagging. Each quiz will count toward your class participation grade. If a quiz is missed it cannot be made up.

### Journal

During this class we will be exploring a number of issues related to racial identity, community, interracial communication and the social construction of race. Many of our conversations in class will deal with these issues. Attached to this syllabus are conversation starters. Continue the conversation in a 1 page, double spaced, 1" margins, 12 point font, journal entry. A good journal entry is one that is self-reflective and carefully expressed. Your journal writing is *free writing*. **Journal entries must be posted no later than 11:59 pm on the date assigned in order to receive full credit toward your class grade. Each journal entry will be submitted electronically via Blackboard.**

### Group Discussion (*Select topic area of your choice as indicated*)

The **Black Rhetoric/Image Group Discussion**—Mediated images of race are powerful symbols circulating in our society. Consequently, as students of communication interested in how symbols are created and function, it is important that we have a good base of knowledge. You are required to utilize the assigned readings and you are encouraged to include additional information as needed.

Discussion Format: Your task is to become expert on your chapter and then lead the class in vigorous discussion of the chapter's main ideas. You will work in a group of two people. On the day of your presentation you may elect to divide up the class into small groups and assign each group questions to work on, or you can show us some media samples and then have us analyze the samples using the ideas from the chapter. Or you could.... do ANYTHING you can creatively devise that will get the class thinking and talking about these VERY provocative chapters. You must turn in a one page summary to Blackboard providing the 3 key ideas from the readings and 5 questions for class discussion.

**NOTE:** You/your group will be required to get Dr. Lake's approval ahead of time on the proposed content and style of project to be presented or discussion to be facilitated.

### Final Paper

For the final project in African American Rhetoric you are to research a contemporary issue related to African American rhetoric or communication and write a rhetorical criticism. You may want to look at the oral or written communication of contemporary political or religious leaders. Or you may want to analyze the media constructed image of African American men or women. Or you may examine and evaluate the representational strategy of an African American icon. Your topic choice is limited only by your own creativity.

1. The final project will take the form of a traditional term paper. Anticipated length: 5-7 pages with at least 8 sources included in your bibliography. All

sources must be cited properly – *if you don't know how, please ask!!* **At least four of your sources for final paper must come from readings assigned over the course of the semester.**

2. Shortly before the midterm exam we will ask each student to hand in a project proposal consisting of a topic, thesis statement and short list of resource material to be used to complete the project. Our goals are to help, to make sure that everyone is on track and to make sure that projects are approved before you begin working on them in depth.

You are to follow proper citation guidelines throughout this paper. Each failure to employ proper citation guidelines will cost you a point off your paper grade. Papers will also be graded on quality of writing, quality of analysis, and demonstrated understanding of concepts. Papers will lose one point for each error in spelling or grammar.

Papers with an excessive number of errors in grammar, spelling or proper citation guidelines usage will receive a failing grade. Remember, there are no opportunities to rewrite papers in this course so you must do your best work the first time or pay the consequences.

The final paper is due at the start of our last class session.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

Under construction.

## COMPLETE CITATIONS / ADDITIONAL READINGS

- African American Heritage Society. [www.aahlb.org](http://www.aahlb.org).
- Asante, Molefi Kete. The Afrocentric Idea. Philadelphia: Temple U P, 1987.
- Baldwin, James. The Fire Next Time. New York: Vintage International, 1962. pp. 1-10.
- Baraka, Amiri. "Black Art." "Poem for Half White College Students," The Black Poets Dudley Randall, ed. 12<sup>th</sup> Ed. New York: Bantam, 1988.
- Belly. Hype Williams Dir. Screenplay by: Nas, Anthony Bodden. Artisan Entertainment, 1998.
- Bennett, Lerone Jr. Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Group, 1982. pp. 34-46
- Bennett, Sybril. Innovate: Lessons From the Underground Railroad. Nashville: Buttons Brown Productions, 2013.
- Black Is, Black Ain't. Marlon Riggs, Dir and Writer. Independent Television Service, 1994.
- Black Panthers. "Ten Point Program." 1966 & 1972. <http://www.stanford.edu/group/blackpanthers/history.shtml>
- Black People Love Us. Webmasters: Sally and Johnny. <http://www.blackpeopleloveus.com/>
- Burke, Kenneth. Grammar of Motives. Berkeley: U of California Press, 1969.
- California Supreme Court. "Perez v. Sharp." Mixed Race America and the Law. New York: NYU Press, 2003. pp. 43-52.
- Chang, Robert S. "Who's Afraid of Tiger Woods?" Mixed Race America and the Law. New York: NYU Press, 2003. pp. 172-173.
- Chappelle's Block Party. Dir. Michel Gondry. Screenplay by: Dave Chappelle. Rogue Pictures, 2006.
- Chappelle's Show Season 1. Dirs. Rusty Cundieff, Andre Allen, Scott Vincent, Vill Berner, Bobcat Goldthwait, Peter Lauer. Written by: Dave Chappelle and Neal Brennan. Paramount, 2004.
- Chappelle's Show Season 2. Dirs. Rusy Cundieff, Andre Allen, Scott Vincent, Neal Brennan. Written by: Dave Chappelle, Neal Brennan. Paramount, 2004.
- Color Adjustment: Blacks in Prime Time. Dir. Marlon Riggs. Written by: Marlon Riggs. California Newsreel, 1991.
- Coombs, Mary. "Interrogating Identity." Mixed Race America and the Law. Kevin R. Johnson, ed. New York: NYU Press, 2003. pp. 179-180.
- Cose, Ellis. Rage of A Privileged Class: Why are Middle-Class Blacks Angry? Why Should America Care?. New York: Harper Collins, 1993.
- Davis, Angela Y. With My Mind on Freedom: An Autobiography. New York: Random House, 1974. pp. 126-129, 246-260, 323-328.
- Dawkins, Marcia Alesan. Eminem: The Real Slim Shady. Santa Barbara: Praeger/ABC-Clio, 2013.
- Dawkins, Marcia Alesan. Clearly Invisible: Racial Passing and the Color of Cultural Identity. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012.
- Dawkins, Marcia Alesan. "In Search of a 'Singular I': A Structural Analysis of Passing." Ethnic Studies Review 28.2 (2005): 1-16.
- Dead Prez. "Police State." "It's Bigger Than Hip Hop." Let's Get Free, 1999.
- Diawara, Manthia. "Afro-Kitsch." Black Popular Culture. Gina Dent, Ed. New York: The New Press, 1988. pp. 285-292.
- Do The Right Thing. Spike Lee, Dir. and Writer. Universal Pictures, 1989.
- Douglass, Frederick. "The Claims of the Negro, Ethnologically Considered." "On the Meaning of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July for the Negro." Rhetoric of Black Americans. pp. 56-73, 176-96.
- DuBois, W. E. B. "Of the Training of Black Men." Rhetoric of Black Americans. pp. 117-128.
- DuBois, W. E. B. The Souls of Black Folk. New York: Vintage Books: 1990.
- 8-Mile. Dir. Curtis Hanson. Screenplay by Scott Silver. Universal Pictures, 2002.
- Eyes on the Prize. Dir. Henry Hampton. Written by: Steve Fayer. Public Broadcasting Service, 1987.
- Ford, Thomas E. "Effects of Stereotypical Television Portrayals of African-Americans on Person Perception." Social Psychology Quarterly 60.3. (1997): 266-275. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0190-2725%28199709%2960%3A3%3C266%3AEOSTPO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-7>
- Foss, Sonja K. Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2004.
- Garnett, Henry Highland. "An Address." The Rhetoric of Black Americans. pp. 169-175.
- Garrow, David J., ed. The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It: The Memoir of Jo Ann Gibson Robinson. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999.
- George Washington's Boy. Writer and director Ted Lange. 2006.
- Get Rich or Die Tryin'. Jim Sheridan, Dir. Screenplay by: Terence Winter. Paramount Pictures, 2005.
- Golden, James L. and Richard D. Rieke. The Rhetoric of Black Americans. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1971.
- Guerrero, Ed. Framing Blackness: The African American Image in Film. Philadelphia: Temple U P.
- Hamilton, Charles V. and Stokely Carmichael. Black Power: The Politics of Liberation. New York: Vintage Books, 1967.
- Harris, Cheryl I. "Whiteness as Property." Mixed Race America and the Law. Kevin R. Johnson, ed. New York: NYU Press, 2003. pp. 155-6.
- Hauser, Gerard. Introduction to Rhetorical Theory, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2002.
- Hoch, Danny. Jails, Hospitals and Hip-Hop and Some People. New York: Random House, 1998.
- Hughes, Langston. "Passing." The Ways of White Folks. New York: Vintage Classics, 1933. pp. 51-57.
- The Human Stain. Dir. Robert Benton. Screenplay by Nicholas Meyer. Miramax Films and Lakeshore Entertainment, 2003.
- In Living Color: 1990-1994. Dir. Keenan Ivory Wayans. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox Television.
- Ice T. "Copkiller." "Bodycount." O.G. Original Gangster. <http://www.azlyrics.com/icet.html>
- Jackson, Jesse. "Keep Hope Alive." "1984 Democratic National Keynote Address." "1988 Democratic National Convention Address." [www.americanrhetoric.com](http://www.americanrhetoric.com)
- Jails, Hospitals and Hip Hop and Some People. Dirs. Marc Benjamin, Danny Hoch. Screenplay by: Danny Hoch. Stratosphere Entertainment LLC, 2000.
- Jefferson, Thomas. Notes on the State of Virginia. David Waldstreicher, ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.
- Julien, Isaac. "Black Is, Black Ain't." Black Popular Culture. Gina Dent, Ed. New York: The New Press, 1988. pp. 255-263.
- King, Martin Luther. "Facing the Challenge of a New Age." "I Have A Dream." Rhetoric of Black Americans. pp. 248-265.

- King, Preston. "On the Meaning and History of Slavery." Transatlantic Slavery Against Human Dignity. Anthony Tibbles, ed. London: National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1994. pp. 117-121.
- Kivy, P. "Jokes are a Laughing Matter." The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 6 (2003): 1-15.
- Levine, Lawrence. "Slave Songs and Slave Consciousness." Cultural Resistance Reader. Stephen Duncombe, ed. London: Verso Press, 2002. pp. 215-230.
- Lopez, Haney F. "The Social Construction of Race: Some Observations on Illusion, Fabrication and Choice." Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review 29 (1994): 1-62.
- Lorde, Audre. "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984.
- Lovell, John Jr. "The Social Implications of the Negro Spiritual." Journal of Negro Education. 8.4 (1939): 634-643.
- Madhubuti, Haki (Don L. Lee). "But He Was Cool or: he even stopped for green lights," The Black Poets Dudley Randall, ed. 12<sup>th</sup> Edition New York: Bantam, 1988.
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- Mathers, Marshall. The Slim Shady LP. Aftermath/Interscope Records, 1999.
- , Encore. Shady/Aftermath/ Interscope Records, 2004.
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- Walker, Margaret. "For My People" The Poetry of the Negro: 1746-1970. Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps, eds. New York: Doubleday, 1970.
- Washington, Booker T. "Atlanta Exposition Address." "Educational Outlook in the South." The Rhetoric of Black Americans. 107-128.
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- Wimsatt, William Upski. Bomb the Suburbs. Chicago: The Subway and Elevated Press Company, 1994. pp. 4-17
- Woolfe, George C. The Colored Museum. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1987.
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Rhetoric and Public Culture, Rhetorical Criticism, African American Rhetoric. Review of *Liberating Language: Sites of Rhetorical Education in Nineteenth-Century Black America* by Shirley Wilson Logan. Save to Library. To understand how risk and penalty are activated against black women intellectuals on television and social media, this essay analyzes the controversy and subsequent social media backlash Wake Forest University professor and former MSNBC host Melissa Harris-Perry experienced in late 2013 after off-hand remarks about former presidential candidate Mitt Romney's African American grandchild. Start studying Comm 415 Final. Learn vocabulary, terms and more with flashcards, games and other study tools. Can compel identification when images are manipulated to challenge viewers identity since we tend to think of photos as "real" representations of reality. The power and significance of Visual Rhetoric in social movements and activism. Visual rhetoric is also used to "shock" by showing images of cruelty, suffering, & death...to force us to confront a reality we often choose to ignore for the sake of supporting our consumption habits. Master's Tools. Division among marginalized groups is a strategy of dominant ideologies. the more that we (the oppressed) are divided the less we are able to fight against the dominant ideologies that oppress us. Historically, African American jeremiad (also known as Afro American jeremiad) rhetoric has been successfully applied to communicate to African American mass audiences, inspiring positive behavior change to advocate for systemic and individual action to confront major national crisis plaguing the group. Applying Bolter and Grusin's theory of remediation, Ortiz's theory of neoculturation, and McGuire's communication/persuasion model, the study concludes by way of an A/B Test experiment that the African American jeremiad form, applied as a linguistic and sociocultural approach to culturally com... 2016 Visual Rhetoric 187. as contemporary legal rhetorical devices. The recognition that a socio-epistemic group, combines social theories of community with epistemological theories. of learning to form a theory of communication that considers the interaction between. speaker, subject matter, and audience. construction of meaning, the creation of arguments, and the processes that allow the crea- tion of meaning and argumentation. See Linda Levine & Kurt M. Saunders, *Thinking Like*.