

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

RHETORIC NOTES

THE DEPARTMENT OF RHETORIC NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE DEO

BY KRISTY NABHAN-WARREN

Happy *almost* 2022, everyone! As I reflect on the past six months, one of the things that comes to mind are the many strengths that I see in this department. You are incredibly bright, hard-working, and dedicated teachers, scholars, and community leaders. While there have been and remain challenges—as there are in any workplace—I am optimistic that we can work together to build on the department’s many strengths and to forge ahead as we enter the new year.

I’m currently reading Jeffrey L. Buller’s book *Positive Academic Leadership: How to Stop Putting Out Fires and Start Making a Difference* (Jossey-Bass, 2013) and am struck by his wise and practical approach to leadership. I think that Buller is quite

right that it is much easier to focus on what needs to be fixed rather than nurturing what is already working and the strengths that are already in place. We most certainly have our share of university and CLAS-related challenges, not to mention those particular to the Rhetoric Department. But what if we approached the challenges with a more positive psychological approach and focused on what is in our individual and collective control rather than what is outside of our control? Buller writes, “Problems at universities are like candies in a PEZ dispenser: as soon as you remove one, another pops up. But we do have alternatives. We can say ‘It’s not a crisis. It’s just the environment in which I work. Now how do I go about making things better?’” (xiii, emphasis mine). Buller’s suggestion that we redirect and focus on what

we can do rather than what we cannot, applies to so much of—well, everything!

For example, speaking from my own life and work, as much as I want to, I can’t personally fix our nation’s immigration crisis, as it is outside of my scope and power. BUT what I can do/what is in my wheelhouse is to educate and draw attention to systems and possibilities in my scholarship and work with local agencies and nonprofits that work directly with refugees and other immigrant groups. And zooming in on our university, I’m pondering yesterday’s DEO meeting and the sobering budgetary challenges that face the college. One way of looking at the situation is that we should just throw in the towel, so to speak, and despair. But what if we acknowledged the complexity of the situation and set to work on what

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FAILURE

BY SARAH BARRINGER

When attending the Medieval Festival in New York City, a festival “patronizingly dismissed or laughed at” by professional medievalists, Carolyn Dinshaw describes watching a man wearing a bathrobe.¹ The ‘wrongness’ of the Festival is neatly captured in the anachronistic, pseudo-monk’s robe, yet Dinshaw “felt a vibrant resonance between this amateur medievalism and professional medievalism.”² In almost all professions there is a chilly distance between the professional and the amateur. In classrooms, students are amateurs in nearly everything, an exhausting state to exist in for so long. But queer theory celebrates failure, being wrong, incomplete, or doing something

else entirely.

In his search for utopia, José Esteban Muñoz says, “[q]ueer failure is often deemed or understood as failure because it rejects normative ideas of value.”³ In “Bad Listeners,” J. Logan Smilges begins, “The truth is that I’m a bad listener—at least, occasionally.”⁴ Smilges is neurodivergent and has “sensory limits that are different than those of [their] nondisabled peers.”⁵ Sometimes they must record class and answer student questions later, or answer e-mails at 3 am instead of from 9-5. Queer failure allows us to fail out of systems that aren’t for us and find new ones. As an in-class reading, “Bad Listeners” also lends itself to a larger discussion about where we fail and why, in an effort to learn about the class-

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“Message from the DEO” cont. from pg. 1

we can do to improve our work environment? That is in our control, is it not? While I have not known you all for very long, I am an astute ethnographer and participant-observer, and I know this to be true: the Rhetoric Department has an abundance of talented individuals (YOU) with a passion to teach and creativity in spades. I am confident that you/we together can harness these gifts and passions into something that makes coming in to work meaningful and that brings us joy—and yes, even in the midst of real challenges that face our university, college, and department. As someone who leans into a positive leadership model, I would like to see us place a greater emphasis on collaborating and sharing governance. I would like to continue to work with you on being future-oriented and proactive—this is your department to define and to build, and it is my honor to work alongside you in that construction as a partner-colleague.

As I sign off, I want to leave you with some philosophical as well as practical questions to ponder: What do you want the Rhetoric Department to look like moving ahead? How can we learn from the challenges and events of the past, while focusing on moving forward? What are your goals as well as your hopes and dreams for

this department? On this note, I am happy to announce that we’ll be having a Rhetoric faculty “advance” January 2022. This will be an in-person, masked, and catered event that is more of an “advance” (many thanks to my GWSS/SJUS peeps for setting the bar high!) than a “retreat.” We will come together to discuss our goals for moving ahead as a department and this will be a catered event. More details forthcoming!

Thank you and have a great rest of your week, semester, and 2021!



EMPOWERING STUDENTS AS KNOWLEDGE PRODUCERS

BY CASSANDRA BAUSMAN

In composition circles, there can often be debate about whether or not expecting students to provide a “so what” to their argument is necessary or good practice, or when and where it may be a step too far. As the semester concludes, occasioning all of the introspection and reflection that comes with such tidal academic rhythmic, I’m drawn, inevitably, to think about that question as an instructor. We spent 16 weeks together: so what? We’ll soon craft other 16-week itineraries for new travel companions, charting next semester with our syllabi: so what? We tinker, and copy and paste wholesale, and radically overhaul, and embrace new experiments: so what?

As I think about endings and beginnings and all the spaces between, it’s sometimes astonishing to realize how different each incarnation of rhetoric is. And,

too, to multiply that departmentally, by our many other ever-morphing, responsive instructors. We all have our own different individual mental landmarks (I feel myself turning into the ‘old man yells at cloud’ Simpsons gif every time I stumble into ‘when I first taught ‘fake news’ it meant the early years of Stewart and Colbert’ territory, for example, as I conjure new activities to teach digital literacy and ways of combatting pervasive disinformation in the present, darkly timelined day). But when I zoom out fully, try to take stock with an eye to totality, to mission and purpose, to things so conceptually large they can become difficult to hold and even harder to put into language, I start to see how my teaching over the years, in both all its diversity and more familial, fractal iterations, may share a trend of increasingly searching for ways to empower my students as knowledge producers.

In one sense, this can be found in something as silly or seemingly trivial as the tenor of my pre-class chatter.

QUICK LINKS: INSTRUCTION AND TUTORING SUPPORT

The Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.uiowa.edu>

The Speaking Center: <https://speakingcenter.uiowa.edu/>

The Conversation Center: <http://clas.uiowa.edu/rhetoric/conversation-center>

Iowa Digital Engagement and Learning (IDEAL): <http://ideal.uiowa.edu>

Success in Rhetoric (SiR): <https://tutor.uiowa.edu/find-help/help-labs/success-in-rhetoric-sir>

Hearing students exclaim over the delightful sass of the picture bookification of “The Fergamerican National Anthem” for Christmas; hearing them freak out about what a certain SNL skit was doing and how they couldn’t wait to get to class to dig into it properly with conversation partners who ‘would understand’; hearing them incessantly dissecting some viral TikTok’s rhetorical choices, or overhearing a pair of students who’ve become lifting buddies thinking about the version of masculinity being sold in the videos of their favorite influencers, or another pair debating making a movie date while mock-wailing about how I’ve ruined watching movies for them forever because they can’t stop thinking, analyzing, or, in one student’s overdramatic rendering, pointing at the screen and yelling “that’s such a chooiii-ceeee!” can almost be enough to make me want to stop, or not-start, class and say, never mind, we don’t need final presentations. I can hear you doing what I

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“Failure” cont. from pg. 1

room space and ourselves. Smilges’s discussion is one of systematic oppression, but a discussion of their article can also be about small failures. We teach our students to write the thesis first. I write mine last, and it took me a long time to learn that. I hope that a discussion of this article can lead students to ask why they fail, however small or unimportant the failure is, and if they should, as Smilges does, bow “out of able-normative logics, to resist what neurotypicals say is normal or right or good and relish our weirdness and wrongness and badness.”⁶

“To be an amateur is to fail, wonderfully.”

Part of being a failure, an amateur, is “a perpetual becoming.”⁷ Academic assignments have a resounding finality. Passed from the student to the teacher, the assignment is left vulnerable, the context of its production thin and patchy, its worth processed entirely by an outside gaze. Next semester, I hope to implement an ungrading system. For me, ungrading is about

“Empowering Students” cont. from pg. 2

what you to do. You’re doing it now, already (organically!). That’s the point. We’re done here. Of course, I can’t tell students I could sometimes almost judge them on their unselfconscious banter, but I do think, increasingly, that I can judge myself—and my semester’s success—by it. Here’s the thing: the more I think about what Rhetoric is for, and question my role as an instructor of it, the more I lean into the idea that I’m largely here to fan the flames of intellectual curiosity (or to prevent them from being smothered by other things), and to use those sparks to co-constitute the classroom, and sometimes even the curriculum itself, with the students positioned as partners and active participants. As the past few years in particular have shown, we can’t be sole furnaces ourselves, or we burn out, or burn cold or dull, or warm others only when in our presence. I want to keep working to de-center myself in the classroom, to keep the onus and responsibility for growth on the students, since the more it comes from them, the more likely it is to continue outside the classroom. As I mix metaphors here and dial up the schmalz in thinking about Rhetoric’s role in continuing education,

putting the assignment back into the student’s hands. I bring experience and a holistic view to the conversation, but students bring the context and authority on their work. Queer failure allows us not only to focus on the process, but also to extend the process into the completed project, to celebrate simply having done something, whether it’s polished, in revision, or simply good enough.

In her discussion of the man in the bathrobe, Dinshaw celebrates the amateur. An amateur is in a “perpetual becoming,” existing in the process and the potential future.⁸ To be an amateur is to fail, wonderfully. I want to celebrate my students as much as the professionals. In its wide net, queer failure catches everyone, and in the failure to be normal catches utopia, if even for a brief moment.

Notes

1. Carolyn Dinshaw, *How Soon is Now?: Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers, and the Queerness of Time*. (Durnham: Duke University Press, 2012), xii.
2. *Ibid.*, xiii.

the more I see the seeds we plant, and the work we offer in providing the conditions for growth, the space and support poles to guide it.

“The more I think about what Rhetoric is for...the more I lean into the idea that I’m largely here to fan the flames of intellectual curiosity (or to prevent them from being smothered by other things).”

Ultimately, I want our students to be able to critically read the world around them and make arguments about it; I want them to be able to express their ideas about that world, what matters in it, and why, challenging them to “make meaning” in every academic, but also every popular and practical, sense. Each time I work with a crop of final essays, I want more of showing students how much their individual voices matter. More recognition of how they, in growing up watching the US national soccer team fight for gender equality, they whose first experiences with and ideas about feminism came filtered through that

3. José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 173.

4. J. Logan Smilges, “Bad Listeners,” *Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition* 23, no. 1 (2020), <https://cfsfrc.org/article/bad-listeners/>.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 100.

8. Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 100; Dinshaw, *How Soon Is Now?*, xiv.



Image via SayingImages.com

particular context, are particularly equipped to be the ones writing about its shape and impact. More acknowledgment that the same is true of their parasocial relationships with figures like Taylor Swift, muse of an entire generation of women growing into themselves year by year and finding resonant echoes in public conversations. More celebration of students’ positioning themselves against professional critics who lambast a show like *Outer Banks* but—in not knowing how it feels to be teenagers, who, balanced on the edge of childhood and adulthood, lost a vital summer of adventures with friends—miss the centrality of its particular, modern rendering of nostalgia and escapism that may speak louder than its flaws. As an instructor, it can be intimidating to open a classroom to courting so many particular, madly individual white rabbit holes, or to cede the control, certainty, or structures the collective-minded tenets pedagogical practice traditionally teaches, but if I conceptually or philosophically “teach” anything in this course which is emphatically not a “content course,” it may fundamentally boil down to the importance of adding student voices to those culture

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writers/speakers charged with telling us how the work our contemporary culture produces reflects or makes meaning of the culture we live in.

As many of you know, I'll be piloting a new minor course this spring on "The Rhetoric of Harry Potter," a course grown entirely from this idea: from watching young people decide what the Harry Potter texts, as a commonly shared cultural touchstone—so rare in our increasingly fragmented media landscape—mean. Swirled in controversy, from JK Rowling's TERF-positioning that has led the general public to engage with 'death of the author' debates to conversations about gun control and politics and innumerable issues of representation, the so-called "Harry Potter generation" is quite actively using the language and imagery of Potter to decipher their feelings about the wider world. Accordingly, this new course will explore the potent cultural legacy of Harry Potter, considering how the Potter series informs current discussions about race, gender, and sexual identities and initiates discussion about concepts of

ethics; social justice; toxic relationships; youth agency and resistance; definitions of heroism; racism and prejudice; class privilege; governmental and journalistic abuses; the cult of, and responsibilities of, celebrity; and systems and practices of education. We'll also work to challenge the rhetoric of fantasy as "escapist" in order to uncover its potential to invite social and political conversations and envision change, and we will examine the discourse of fan communities to understand the potent nature of the ongoing, interpretive practices which shape popular understandings of Harry's world and our own. In exploring the relationship between fans, text, author, and fandom—from problematic readings and critique to active re-envisioning—these Potter students will question the central importance texts, and representation within texts, play in shaping our understanding of the world and our responses to it.

As I've said, empowering students as knowledge producers encourages a participatory approach in the classroom, as well as allowing students to help co-constitute not only the space of that classroom and what its purpose is, but the curriculum

and conversations happening inside it as well, and our new Minor addition with "The Rhetoric of Harry Potter" very much puts this principle into practice. Just like this class will shift focus away from Rowling's words to how the Potter texts and paratexts are being used to make other important socio-cultural arguments or to ask complex socio-political questions, I can't wait to see how our own students will subvert, fracture, reexamine, recast, or repurpose the Potter story this Spring, as their expansions and elaborations very much do have the power to dictate its legacy.

I'm glad to be with you all on this journey, and, as new semesters dawn for us all, I hope you, too, are committed to uplifting the voices and perspectives of students and devising coursework and classroom spaces that create opportunities to celebrate and empower.

NEWS FROM YOUR UNIVERSITY OF IOWA LIBRARIES

BY KATIE HASSMAN

We are wrapping up another successful information literacy instruction season here in the UI Libraries and are continually grateful for the relationships we have with your department. UI Libraries Undergraduate Engagement Department (UED) instruction statistics are back to pre-COVID levels, but as always it is the qualitative impact of our collaborations that is the most important. A few examples:

- **The excitement that Sara Pinkham, our UI Main Library Gallery Exhibition & Engagement Coordinator, shared after chasing me down, overjoyed with witnessing students' curiosity during Rhetoric class visits to the Gallery.** This is the type of engagement we have been working towards since the gallery first opened. Collaborating with your department has helped us achieve that. Thank you! We hope to see some of you again this spring semester when our next exhibition, "We Are Hawkeyes: 175 Years of Student Life at the University

of Iowa," opens. More details below.

- **The way a process-based assignment prompts students to enter honest and iterative inquiry.** As is standard, I had several Rhetoric students schedule individual research consultations with me this semester. I enjoyed the conversations, hearing students think aloud about the sources they found, the keywords we saw emerging in our searches, and how this all fit within the context of their classrooms. I could tell in these consultations that assignment parameters and the guidance you provided set students up with the confidence to be curious and discerning. These consultations were truly one of the highlights of my fall semester and a testament to the careful and essential work you all do.
- **Students insisting their instructor schedule a class session at The Perch.** After an unpredictable false start to opening [The Perch](#) in February 2020, we were overjoyed with the number of requests to schedule class visits to The Perch this fall. But one scheduling request still stands out. It went something like this: "I know this is a late request, but my Rhetoric students are insisting that

we schedule a session at The Perch. Is that still possible?" (How could I not squeal with joy after receiving that?!) I could go on sharing positive feedback I have received about The Perch from instructors, faculty, public patrons, students, and librarian colleagues across our organization. Thank you for being the inspiration for The Perch. We could not and cannot do it without you. Let us know if you have ideas and how we can support your class engagement with The Perch.

SCHEDULING LIBRARY/INFORMATION LITERACY INSTRUCTION

It is never too early to schedule library information literacy instruction sessions and class sessions in The Perch for the spring 2022 semester. Schedule your library sessions using the [online form](#) or contact Katie Hassman (katie-hassman@uiowa) with questions or ideas for collaboration.

MAIN LIBRARY GALLERY NEWS

["We Are Hawkeyes: Celebrating 175 Years of Student Life at the University of Iowa"](#) opens January 18th, 2022. On display are snippets of student life from throughout the university's history: the

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Iowa Memorial Union as a center of activity, the performing arts as a source of vibrancy, and military service and Greek life as time-honored traditions. Decades of student publications and glimpses of social and political activism are seen throughout, demonstrating the diversity of student voices on campus.

[Plan a class visit to the gallery](#) and consider having your students complete the 'Reading an Object in the UI Libraries Gallery' activity. Students completing the activity will:

- Practice documenting research and inquiry
- Name and describe cultural and information objects
- Reflect upon the characteristics of cultural and information objects that indicate the underlying creation process
- Articulate how individual objects relate to exhibit themes and topics
- Recognize rhetorical strategies

Questions about scheduling a visit to the gallery or the Reading an Object

activity can be directed to Gallery Exhibition & Engagement Coordinator, Sara Pinkham (sara-pinkham@uiowa.edu), or Undergraduate Engagement Librarian & Rhetoric Liaison, Katie Hassman (katie-hassman@uiowa.edu).



["In the Reading Room in Macbride Hall."](#) image via UI Libraries.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

REFLECTIONS ON THE RHETORIC MINOR AND BEING A SIR MENTOR

BY KATHERINE KUSTES

When my academic advisor informed me that Rhetoric: 1040 was a required course for graduation, I rolled my eyes. I was beginning my freshman year of college and was convinced I already had the skills necessary to thrive as an undergraduate. In high school, teachers praised my writing and offered virtually no critiques for improvement. I perceived this as a sign that I had perfected the craft of writing. What could a basic rhetoric course teach me that I did not already know? It turns out, the answer is everything. In so many ways, my freshman rhetoric course humbled me. My instructor not only helped me cultivate skills to become a better writer, but introduced me to the art of persuasion. I was astonished to learn that writing goes beyond grammar and punctuation. I viewed this enlightenment as a challenge to improve, which ultimately led me to pursue a minor in rhetoric. In my rhetoric courses, my instructors used real-world examples to demonstrate the power behind

compositional techniques, imagery, word choice, and so much more. I absorbed these lessons and quickly realized that rhetoric is omnipresent in our daily lives. Whether texting with a friend, writing an email to a professor, or watching an elected official speak on television, rhetoric is prevalent in every situation. One of the most useful techniques I have learned is how to disagree without being disagreeable. I am confidently able to write persuasively without disparaging or insulting the opposing viewpoint, which has led to more favorable outcomes in everyday arguments and in academic persuasive writing.

In addition to my minor, I serve as a Success in Rhetoric (Sir) Mentor for Dr. Jennifer Stone's Rhetoric 1040 course. This position has been instrumental in elevating my teaching and speaking skills and has brought me personal fulfillment and joy. In this role, I tutor students individually to help improve their writing and persuasive techniques, as well as create mini lectures unpacking the rhetoric surrounding relevant social justice issues. In Dr. Stone's class, we cover a myriad of topics, including media bias, visual arguments, persuasive appeals, and fallacies.

UI LIBRARY EVENTS

Main Library Gallery

We Are Hawkeyes: Celebrating 175 Years of Student Life at the University of Iowa

Opening January 18, 2022.

This exhibit celebrates students at the University of Iowa, recognizing student life as the very core of the university. It offers a sampling of historical documents and objects found in the University Archives at the University of Iowa Libraries.

On display are snippets of student life from throughout the university's history: the Iowa Memorial Union as a center of activity, the performing arts as a source of vibrancy, and military service and Greek life as time-honored traditions. Decades of student publications and glimpses of social and political activism are seen throughout, demonstrating the diversity of student voices on campus.

More importantly, students are taught to apply their knowledge to pertinent social injustices. Mass incarceration has been a major area of focus in Dr. Stone's class, and students often feel emboldened to speak openly on their viewpoints because the assignments are set up to encourage meaningful feedback. For example, students investigate mass incarceration from different, but related, research angles: the efficacy of lengthy prison sentences; juvenile brain science and criminal sentencing; the foster care-to-prison pipeline; the mental illness-to-prison pipeline; the veteran-to-prison pipeline; mass incarceration's connection to big business; and more. Their overlapping, but varied research journeys allow them to engage in discussions and provide feedback from an informed stance. There is nothing more powerful than effective and persuasive rhetoric in situations where individuals are being excluded and oppressed, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to create a safe space for students to learn in collaboration with Dr. Stone.

Rhetoric courses are not based on memorization and students are not required

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to select the best answer on a multiple-choice exam. Rhetoric is transformative and translates into any environment where communication happens. Regurgitation of information is not intellect. There is no one who understands this better than the faculty in the Department of Rhetoric who are teaching students to be critical thinkers and to view the world through various lenses. As a current junior, I have now nearly completed all Minor requirements and attribute much of my academic success to the skills I have learned throughout my rhetoric courses.

REVELATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS: CONVERSATION PRACTICUM

BY NAUDYA CHHUON

If you were to tell me two years ago to be a part of the Conversation Practicum, I would look at you in confusion. It sounded like a course only for those interested in rhetoric classes or even a communication course, but who knew I could be so wrong. The first time I heard about this course was when I spoke with a friend who was an international studies major. She was so happy to be taking the course, even to the point of suggesting the course to me. Hearing about the details of the course made me feel like I was not fit to speak with others, especially those who want to learn English, while I was a biochemistry major. How could someone like me, with this type of major, take this course? What could I or the people I speak with learn if I am a biochemistry major? Throughout my first year, the same friend kept telling me to take this course and I kept brushing it off, explaining that "I have no time" or "I am a biochem major, not a communication major."

My second year of college, I needed 3 more semester hours to be a full-time student...so I did what I would never expect: I took the course. I unfortunately took the course 2-3 weeks in and was nervous about what I was going into, especially during this time of Zoom and everyone's camera was on. By this time, the sweet little icebreaker games were over, and I did not know anyone's major,

SPRING 2022 GRAD COURSES

RHET 5352: Seminar: Teaching & Professional Development

Megan Knight | Th 3:30-6:00 pm

RHET 5375: Teaching in a Writing Center

Carol Severino | W 3:30-5:00 pm

RHET 7500: Science Communication in the Digital Age

Brittany Borghi | W 4:00-6:00 pm

RHET 7930: Writing in the Disciplines

Megan Knight & Anne Sand | M 3:30-6:15 pm

RHET 7940: Public Speaking for Academics

Katlyn Williams & Charles Williams
M 1:30-4:15 pm

so again, I suspected everyone to be some type of international studies student or pursuing a rhetoric major. Each passing week, I was extremely nervous to engage with international students or people wanting to practice English, because what could I possibly do or say in conversations with my major? The time came when my first conversation began...I remember sitting in my room and imagining the worst possible scenario: "What if I am boring?" or "What if they expect me to be in these certain types of majors? What if they just end the call on me?" But these negative thoughts turned into positive things. My conversation partner just wanted to talk about all the different things to do in Iowa City or what dorm they should live in when they come to the university. They were not worried if I was this type of major or if I could "teach" her; they simply wanted to know about the university. Throughout this semester, that was most of my conversations—about life in Iowa City or about my or their cultures.

Two years ago, I missed an opportunity to be a part of someone's life from a different culture and to help them at the university. No matter what major or minor, or if you could "teach" English or not, DO NOT miss out on a wonderful course. You could be changing someone's or your life, but most importantly you could be missing out on great relationships you can make. So, from me to you, if you need an extra course or want to be a part of something amazing...take Conversation Practicum—you will not regret it!

WE WANT YOU TO CONTRIBUTE!

Do you have something to share in a Faculty Bookshelf or Innovative Pedagogies column? Or have you been working with an undergraduate student on a neat project that you'd like to highlight? We'd love to feature your ideas and share the awesome things you're doing in (and out!) of the classroom.

Features: E-mail Jennifer Janecek at jennifer-yirinec@uiowa.edu.

Faculty Bookshelf: E-mail Justin Cosner at justin-cosner@uiowa.edu.

Innovative Pedagogies: E-mail Bevin O'Connor at bevin-oconnor@uiowa.edu.

SPRING 2022 MINOR COURSES

RHET 2055: Persuasion and Advocacy

Takis Poulakos | W 5:30-8:00 pm

RHET 2065: Persuading Different Audiences

Joseph Steinitz | TTh 2:00-3:15 pm

RHET 2070: Persuasive Stories: The Rhetoric of Harry Potter **NEW!**

Cassandra Bausman | TTh 2:00-3:15 pm

RHET 2085: Speaking Skills

Takis Poulakos | T 5:00-7:30 pm

RHET 2090: Conversation Practicum

Ben Hassman and Sonja Mayrhofer
TTh 3:30-4:45 pm

RHET/SJUS 2135: Rhetorics of Diversity and Inclusion: The Language of (Dis)ability

Jennifer Janecek | ARR/ONLINE

RHET 3005: Narratives of the Midwest **NEW!**

Wayne Anderson | MW 3:30-4:45 pm

RHET 3350: Gaming (the) Systems

Justin Cosner | TTh 11:00 am-12:15 pm

RHET 3700: Advocacy and Sustainability

Will Jennings | TTh 3:30-4:45 pm

INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGIES

REFLECTING ON FEEDBACK AND REVISION

BY CAROL SEVERINO

After composing a detailed feedback and revision letter to accompany a revised article I recently resubmitted to a journal, I realized its amazing benefits, both to writers and readers, teachers and students. Such a letter holds writers like me accountable for the many problem-solving decisions we must make in response to readers' and reviewers' feedback. We must consider the merits of each feedback point we have received. In response, we must decide whether, where, how, and how much to cut, add, synthesize, or reorganize. Likewise, a feedback and revision document guides readers and reviewers in processing and assessing the revised draft and comparing it to the original. It helps them see to what extent the revised document has changed and improved.

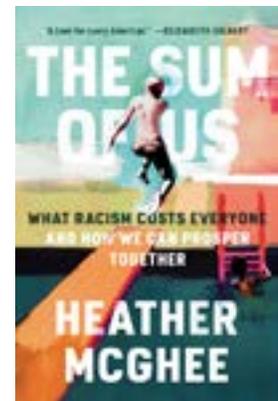
Like many Rhetoric teachers, I assign what I call a feedback and revision paragraph (FRP) to my students of both creative writing and academic writing. The FRP asks them to describe the feedback they have received from their readers and

to tell me which feedback points they used and why, as well as which they decided not to use and why. In reading the second drafts of my first-year seminar students' travel essays, I turned first to their FRP. Before I read their next draft, it is necessary for me to know first how they perceive their work, the state they think it is in, and what they believe it still needs. It is necessary for me to know first which feedback points they consider more and less valuable. Then in light of their FRP, I read their next draft looking out for the changes they made. I not only comment in the margins and at the end of that next draft but on their FRP, asking them to reconsider a classmate's suggestion or to go a bit further to develop a character or theme. For me, responding to the FRP is participating in a conversation with them about their evolving project.

The FRP pertains to my own feedback in the same way it does to peer (and parent!) feedback. Students can take or leave my perspectives and suggestions, but I want to know why they did so. I don't want to impose my feedback on them, but I do want them to have seriously considered my responses to their work.

Megan Knight and I assign the same type of FRP to the Writing Fellows,

whom we pair up in their training course to "follow" one another's drafts of two major papers: their literacy memoir and their philosophy of following. We also advise the course instructors we work with in the Fellows Program to assign their students FRPs after they read their fellows' commenting letters and work with their fellows in one-to-one conferences. The process of composing the FRP keeps writers accountable and brings to their conscious awareness the decisions they have made or not yet made about revising. For readers, the FRP not only facilitates and but humanizes assessing the revised draft.



FACULTY BOOKSHELF

THE SUM AND ITS PARTS: TEACHING HEATHER MCGHEE'S *THE SUM OF US*

BY JUSTIN COSNER

Let's start where Heather McGhee starts: "Why can't we have nice things?"

McGhee's book on the racial dimensions of inequality in the US begins by asking this question—a question so many of us sigh in exhausted tones. And it is with the question's earnestness, accessibility, and candor that she walks through an incredibly complex narrative of social history.

The project emerges from a series of studies which argue that a "zero-sum" assumption lies at the core of the white electorate in the United States, a view not shared by communities of color that enfranchisement of those communities comes at a direct cost to white people. McGhee focuses each chapter of her book on the ways that the "zero-sum" fear has gutted political programs which might benefit everyone, covering unions, health care, and housing, even ecology. Each chapter

also discusses a "solidarity dividend," times and ways our country has benefited from a rejection of the zero-sum story.

Walking the reader through vivid historical research, *The Sum of Us* tells the story of America's public pools in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, which stood as monuments to civic pride and community. When civil rights victories in the 60s and 70s enshrined the rights of all communities to access the pools, most of these cities sold them to private and exclusive clubs, developed stacked "lotteries" for membership, or simply filled them with concrete.

McGhee details the way "drained pool politics" was developed, stoked, and masked in the public consciousness under the auspices of "small-government austerity." In an era when the term "systemic racism" has become cultural parlance, McGhee shows that elusive connection between racist systems and actual people. This connection which often goes unarticulated, frequently frustrates those who struggling to see how racism persists in a world where everyone they know seems to earnestly denounce racism.

And yet, despite this explication, McGhee's book is deeply, continuously invested with a rejection of the zero-sum story, showing how everyone lost when racism drained the city pool.

The Sum of Us may be the most powerful book I've read on race in America. McGhee lays out a story of America's racism that is unflinching but hauntingly human. She draws historical connections between causes and effects that students often admit that, until then, they'd uncomfortably accepted on flimsy understandings and faith. She lays out an actionable and, dare I say, hopeful case for how we just might become better.

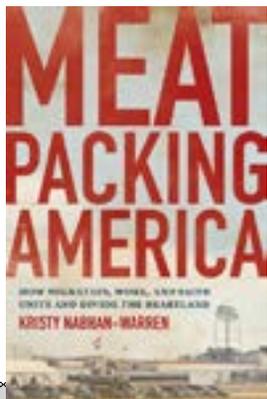
Leaving the sometimes-challenging topics of fragility and privilege to others, McGhee assumes a different tack in framing the struggles for racial equality as part of a broader struggle in human history toward dignity, affluence, and belonging. Her deep generosity in the book, her meticulous research and palpable conviction make *The Sum of Us* an irrevocable part of the thinking of all those who read it.

FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CASSANDRA BAUSMAN presented “SF Memes and the Rhetoric of Popular Resistance” on the SF/F in 3D: Activism, Pedagogy, Leadership panel at the American/Pop Culture Association Conference, November 10–13, 2021. She also participated in a virtual workshop hosted by the APCA on “Advocacy Steps After Harry Potter” and JK Rowling’s betrayal of the LGBTQ community that she hopes will help her to keep thinking through how to pedagogically process and help students navigate the same.

JENNIFER JANECHKEK published two peer-reviewed electronic resources: “[Using Print Culture to Research Disability and Rehabilitation](#),” *Research Methods: Primary Sources*, United Kingdom: Adam Matthew, 2021; and “[Deafness](#),” *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Victorian Women’s Writing*, ed. Lesa Scholl, Palgrave, 2021.

KRISTY NABHAN-WARREN published her book *Meatpacking America: How Migration, Work, and Faith Unite and Divide the Heartland* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2021). She shared a [reading from her book and participated in a discussion of it](#) at the Iowa City Book Festival on October 23, 2021, at the Iowa City Public Library.



“Nabhan-Warren’s prose is clear and often absorbing. Unclogged with needless jargon and centered firmly on the fascinating lives of her subjects, it is easily readable for a general audience. Anyone interested in the intersection of migration, labor and animal agriculture—situating the American Midwest, one of the world’s major food providers, in the global context to which it properly belongs—will benefit from *Meatpacking America*.” —*Little Village Magazine*

ANNE SAND AND MICHAEL OVERHOLT were awarded an additional \$22,500 to their Innovations in Teaching and Technology (ITT) award that they received in 2020 to support their project, “Student Community and Information Literacy.” The additional funding was granted to support the full cost of application development needed to ensure the successful implementation.

EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

FYS PROPOSALS FOR FALL 2022

LEARN MORE: <https://fys.uiowa.edu/instructional-pillars>

DEADLINE TO APPLY: JANUARY 31, 2022

First-Year Seminars should be designed around the four pillars of a First-Year Seminar: 1) Academic Inquiry, 2) Active Learning, 3) Community and Connectedness, and 4) Exploration of Identity. Additional explanations for these pillars, which offer structure and guidance for course design, can be found at <https://fys.uiowa.edu/instructional-pillars>. To submit a proposal, please go to <https://fys.uiowa.edu/proposals>.

OBERMANN WORKING GROUPS

LEARN MORE: <https://obermann.uiowa.edu/programs/working-groups#!apply>

DEADLINE TO APPLY: APRIL 12, 2022

Obermann Center Working Groups provide space, structure, and discretionary funding for groups led by faculty that may include advanced graduate students, staff members, and community members with a shared intellectual interest. Groups have used this opportunity to explore new work and to share their own research, to organize a symposium, and to develop grant proposals.

OBERMANN FELLOWS-IN-RESIDENCE

LEARN MORE: <https://obermann.uiowa.edu/programs/fellows-residence#!apply>

DEADLINE TO APPLY: MAY 3, 2022

Obermann Center Fellows-in-Residence fully devote themselves to projects within an interdisciplinary community. The program supports artists, researchers, and scholars during periods when focus and feedback are crucial.

DEPARTMENT NEWS & DEADLINES

PROPOSE A MINOR COURSE!

Faculty interested in proposing a Rhetoric Minor course for 2023 and beyond should submit the following materials to Jennifer Janecek at jennifer-yirinec@uiowa.edu:

- A brief description of the proposed course
- A justification of the course (explanation of how it integrates with the other Rhetoric Minor courses, how it will appeal to undergraduates, and how it teaches students specific skills)
- A list of weekly assignments

We are looking for instructors with interest and expertise in the relevant subject matter to teach the following courses:

- RHET 2070: Persuasive Stories
- RHET 3009: Negotiation and Conflict Resolution
- RHET 3250: Persuasive Writing for Science and Health Care Professionals

SPRING 2022 SYLLABUS TEMPLATES

Please use the Spring 2022 syllabus templates if you are teaching 1030, 1040, or 1060. The templates can be found on the Rhetoric Department website: <https://clas.uiowa.edu/rhetoric/instructors/syllabus-templates>.

“FACULTY-STAFF ADVANCE”

The Rhetoric Department, the DEI Committee, and Mo Haskins will be organizing a “faculty-staff advance,” likely on Friday, January 21 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Attendance will be highly encouraged but optional. We look forward to spending time together to strengthen our department culture. Mark your calendars with this tentative date!

CALLS FOR PAPERS

POPULAR CULTURE ASSOCIATION (PCA) CONFERENCE

LOCATION: VIRTUAL

DATES: APRIL 13–16, 2022

DEADLINE: DECEMBER 23, 2021

Browse the [areas](#) to find the area which best fits your submission. Due to limited space and time, presenters may only give one paper at the conference. We welcome fresh approaches to subjects that maintain our commitment to scholarship and to a professional presentation. In addition to a paper presentation, you may be part of one roundtable/panel OR present one original, creative work (ie. poetry, non-fiction writing, fiction writing). Abstracts must not exceed 300 words.

44TH ANNUAL NJCEA CONFERENCE

LOCATION: SETON HALL UNIVERSITY, SOUTH ORANGE, NJ

DATES: MARCH 19, 2022

DEADLINE: JANUARY 15, 2022

Many academic institutions have been evaluating their diversity and inclusion statements. At the department level, several faculty members recognize that their curriculum also needs to be evaluated.

The New Jersey College English Association invites proposals for full traditional panels including at least four presenters, roundtables of six to eight speakers, workshops, individual papers, posters, and presentations that consider the following questions for the profession, for the discipline, for our areas of specialization, and for the larger society:

- What does a diverse and inclusive curriculum look like?
- Is a diverse and inclusive curriculum possible within the current department structure?
- What is our role as scholars, researchers, teachers, and community members during this time of reflection and evaluation?
- How do we move forward?

All proposals should be submitted [here](#) by January 15, 2022.

SPECIAL ISSUE OF RHETORIC SOCIETY QUARTERLY

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 4, 2022

Each year, *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* publishes a special issue, the aims of which are to help set the intellectual agenda in rhetorical studies, encourage focused statements on timely topics in rhetorical studies by scholars working in related areas, attract participation by top scholars, and stimulate scholarly activity within the Rhetoric Society of America, such as pre-conference colloquia, convention sessions, and workshops. Proposals for the 2023 special issue should identify the Guest Editor(s), provide a descriptive rationale of 500-1,000 words, a list of authors, and a précis of 150-250 words for each essay. The rationale must demonstrate the timeliness of the topic, describe how the topic falls within the scope of *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* as defined in its general submission guidelines, and show how the issue as planned will speak to the Journal's broad audience. In addition, the proposal should situate the issue alongside relevant contemporary scholarship, including other similarly themed issues or edited collections, and describe the qualifications of its guest editor and contributors to speak to the field on the topic's behalf. RSA will make available to the guest editor up to \$1,000 reimbursement for expenses related to the special issue.

In preparing the proposal, guest editors should consider whether they will solicit a few longer essays, numerous shorter essays, or some combination of the two. Guest editors should also consider whether they will invite someone to write a preface or afterword, or to participate in an interview. These should be included in the original proposal. Direct inquiries and completed proposals to: Joshua Trey Barnett, RSQ Associate Editor for Special Issues, barnett@psu.edu.

WISCONSIN ENGLISH JOURNAL SPRING/SUMMER 2022 ISSUE

DEADLINE: MARCH 1, 2022

College students with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and/or other learning disabilities are frequently allowed to complete examinations and assignments under separate rules or even in a separate, distraction-reduced setting. For example, although

separate room test accommodations are believed to provide students with equal access to testing and thereby improve performance, little experimental research has examined their effects on actual test/essay scores. Even less research and scholarship focus on the location of testing and the impact of testing centers on students with various documented disabilities.

This issue of the *Wisconsin English Journal* encourages scholars to explore both sides of the accommodation process by sharing their own experiences regarding both the pros and cons of various testing practices and testing accommodations as well as their impact on students' long-term and short-term success, mental health, etc. We encourage scholarly research, personal reflections from both students and teachers, lesson plans, discussions of policy, and so on.

Specifically, we also hope to examine documented disabilities and support services offered by both secondary and postsecondary institutions. While we always encourage the focus of these discussions to be on the writing classroom, we also invite interdisciplinary papers and papers that explore the topic more broadly without inherently tying the work to writing as we realize these issues impact all classrooms, students, and teachers. We are also accepting all traditional submission topics at this time (e.g. rhetoric, composition, literature, poetry, book reviews, veteran studies, gender studies, literary criticism, etc.).

Please visit the *Wisconsin English Journal's* submission guidelines at: <https://wisconsinenglishjournal.org/submission-guidelines> or email the Editor at wi.english.journal@gmail.com.

December 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3 Colloquium	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 Faculty Meeting Close of Classes	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 4:30 pm deadline to submit grades to DEO	21	22 4:30 pm grades must be in "approved" status	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

January 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 First Day of Classes	19	20	21 (Tentative) Faculty-Staff Advance 9:00 am-1:00 pm	22
22 29	23 30	24 31 Deadline for FYS Proposals	25	26	27	28