PROPOSAL FOR A RHETORIC DEPARTMENT MINOR IN RHETORIC AND PERSUASION

"To be successful, leaders in every type of organization must find practical and action-oriented ways to market their ideas and achieve buy-in from the members of the group.” (Daly, 2012)

RATIONALE FOR MINOR:
The General Education course Rhetoric (010:003) helps to develop basic skills in the effective use of language by having students engage with important social controversies and by guiding them to analyze and describe the various perspectives on these controversies as well as to craft and advocate their own positions (Description, Analysis, Advocacy).

Building on these fundamental skills, the proposed new minor in Rhetoric and Persuasion educates students in the responsible, credible, and effective methods to empower them to take active leadership roles in engaging social issues in personal, professional, and communal settings. Conceived for students entering any discipline, field, or career, the vision behind the minor is to provide students with a way of looking at the world as a place open to change and receptive to influence. The minor also develops undergraduates’ skills in a way that helps them to look at themselves as agents capable of improving the world and their place in it.

While our departmental vision stresses students’ long range commitment to the welfare of society, our pedagogical objectives are aligned with the current demands placed by the new global market on students of any major. Our minor aims to professionalize students—whether in their capacity as individual citizens, members of the community, or leaders in the workplace—by guiding them to understand audiences and situations, to use language responsibly and strategically, and to develop the integrity and authority of their own voice.

THE BENEFITS OF A MINOR IN RHETORIC AND PERSUASION
The proposed minor in Rhetoric and Persuasion has no disciplinary attachment and does not seek to duplicate but to work in tandem with others. The minor will sharpen students’ ability to act professionally in a variety of contexts and seeks to enable students to strengthen their own voice by using language strategically, on the one hand, to promote their own interests, perspectives, and visions and, on the other hand, to adapt their voice to the needs of situations, contexts, and audiences.

Designed to supplement the academic training of any major, the minor focuses on the mastery of practical skills that recur in everyday situations during and after college life. To this end, the minor places an emphasis on presenting oral and written projects involving multimodal formats, enabling, equally, nursing students to improve communication with patients, and art students “get their work out there,” or chemistry majors to craft effective grant proposals. Our focus on fundamental skills is expected to attract students with a variety of majors from CLAS but also students from the Tippie College of Business, the College of Engineering, and the College of Education.

SCH COSTS TO THE COLLEGE
Courses for the minor include those already offered by the Department of Rhetoric and other units. In effect we are combining existing courses around a theme and making their interconnection more transparent. Thus, the "cost" of the Minor to the College would be counted not in terms of additional resources that need to be allocated, but rather in terms of the loss of GE sections per semester that would not be taught by faculty redirected to the Minor [about four GE sections per year].
ADVISING
Advisors are not assigned by the College for minors. However, any student seeking substitution for a course would bring the request to the DEO of the Department of Rhetoric. Students can also seek advice on the minor from the DEO or from instructors in Rhetoric.

THE MINOR COURSES
The proposed minor requires 15 credit hours with a minimum of 12 s. h. taken at The University of Iowa, and at least 9 s. h. taken in the Department of Rhetoric. A minimum GPA of 2.00 in the UI GPA and in the cumulative GPA is required.

- The GE course Rhetoric 010:003 [RHET: 1030] does not count toward the minor; nor does 010:004 [RHET: 1040] or 010:006 [RHET: 1060] used to fulfil a GE requirement.
- All courses include an oral/performative and a written component.

I. **Group One: “Building a Persuasive Presentation”**
   A minimum of 6 s. h. is required
   This group of courses enhances a classic purpose of rhetoric: “adjusting ideas to audiences and audiences to ideas.”

**THTR: 1140 Basic Acting  3sh [Legacy 049:020]**
This course is intended for students who are not theatre arts majors but wish to enhance performative aspects of speechmaking. This course is an introduction to the elements of performance, including exercises in concentration, imagination, observation, communication, relaxation, and sensory awareness. Classes are designed to promote toning the voice and body, freeing creative expression, and developing an understanding of the dramatic situation and the audience.

**RHET: 2055 Practices of Rhetoric and Persuasion 3sh, 010:055**
An exploration of historical approaches to the practice of rhetoric, using multimodal presentations to apply course concepts to modern demands. This course will enable students from all disciplinary and professional backgrounds to understand the variety of rhetorical and persuasive strategies available to them as well as to create effective means of influence for special moments and situations. Skills of mediating personal expressions and awareness of audience reception will be particularly highlighted.

**RHET: 2065 Persuading Different Audiences 3sh, 010:065**
This course examines a variety of ways through which people seek to sway one another in different contexts. Skills here hinge on the understanding of the best means to impel a specific audience in a particular moment, recognizing that audiences and contexts are multiplied by technology. Students will critique current presentational techniques, paying special attention to how each succeeds or fails in its approach to relevant audiences. In a service-learning project, students will create a multimodal project for a local advocacy group with a focus on community action, environmental concerns, or other topics relevant to public engagement. Students will present the results of inquiry-guided research in two formal presentations.

**RHET: 2085 Speaking Skills 3sh, 010:085**
Rhetoricians have long recognized five basic skills of speaking ["The five canons"]: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. This course will develop these skills, working from their classical roots to modern times and situations, and building on what has been learned in basic Rhetoric. Assignments will practice these five skills as part of presentations of many different kinds, all relevant to persuasion and to the active use of rhetoric in everyday life.
RHET: 2095 Fundamental Strategies Of Persuasion 3sh, 010:095
Strategies of approaching persuasion in a variety of personal, professional, and communal contexts. Fundamentals of persuasion—including audience adaptation, creating reasoned and passionate appeals, conveying character, and enabling identification—are taught from the perspective of production and are worked through weekly oral and written assignments.

RHET: 2075 Crafting Electronic Identities 3sh, 010:075
The production of a persuasive self in social media; issues of identity and performance in electronic forms.

CLSA: 3742 Word Power: Building English Vocabulary 3sh, 20E:142
This course offers a systematic approach to vocabulary-building by focusing on the Latin and Greek elements in English words. Recognizing these elements is the key to understanding and remembering the meanings of thousands of English words. The course deals with a wide range of English words; and by exploring the origins, development, and present meanings of words, students will improve their speaking, reading, and writing vocabularies. The ability to recognize Latin and Greek components in English words is a skill that will accompany students long after the course. As an added benefit, students will acquire a lasting fascination with words and their origins. Web-based independent study course.

II.   **Group Two: “Persuading Communities to Create Change”**

A minimum of 9 s. h. is required
This group of courses applies Group One skills to particular social issues and situations.

COMM: 2016: Business and Professional Communication. 3sh, 036:016
Introduction to business and professional communication at individual and corporate levels; individual-level topics cover organizational communication, business vocabulary, speaking and writing, professionalism and interviewing; corporate-level topics focus on marketing, advertising, public relations, corporate communications, crisis communication management, business and communication plans, proposals; guest speakers from for-profit and not-for-profit organizations.

RHET: 2990: The Art of Marketing Ideas Online 3sh, 010:090
This course investigates principles of persuasion, marketing, and new media so as to understand forms of self-presentation, current methods of targeting audiences, and dynamics of social interaction. Content covers strategies and tactics for attracting, generating, and maintaining interest for audiences who are at a distance or entirely virtual. Emphasis is placed on specific and popular forms of new media technology today (twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, as well as blogs), and assignments focus on analyzing the tools and techniques of presenting and interacting therein. Class projects enable students to formulate their ideas (about a product, an event, a fashion, a social cause, or a way of life), express them persuasively to targeted audiences, and market them strategically through social media sites.

GWSS: 3138 Writing to Change the World. 3sh, 131:138
If you know how to frame questions, carefully weigh competing points of view, structure an argument, and write and speak with clarity and respect for diverse audiences, you can be a powerful agent for change. In this course, we will work with three organizations whose missions are shaped by our society’s attitudes to gender and sexuality. Assignments will include learning how to create editorials; position papers that illuminate complexities of an issue; grant applications; short informational videos, and
simple technologies. Grades will be based on thoughtful participation, timely completion of assignments, your growth as a writer and speaker, and self-evaluations.

**RHET: 3140 Nature and Society: Controversies and Images. 3sh, 010:140**
This course discusses theoretical perspectives that explain and/or interpret environmental change and human environmental interactions. The course is structured to provide conceptual tools to understand the complex relationship between Nature and Society at multiple scales. It illustrates some of the ways in which individuals and communities have overcome economic and environmental limitations both in the economically developed countries and economically developing countries. Learning strategies for this course are designed to foster critical thinking through the exposure to contentious viewpoints and assessment of their strengths and weaknesses.

**GWSS: 3421:0001: Performing Autobiography 3sh, 131:114**
Students will write and perform original pieces stemming from their own personal experiences and interests. Along with studying published material, students will engage in improvisational performance and writing exercises in class to foster deeper reflection on their own experiences and stimulate creativity. This course is designed for all students, whether or not they have had experience in the theatre. Grading will be based on one analytical paper researching the genre of autobiographical performance, short written responses to related articles, films, or videos as assigned, regular participation in and contributions to class exercises, the final performance and written version of the script.

**RHET: 3610: Influence in Health Care: End of life 3sh, 010:161**
This service learning course is designed to develop effective speaking and narratives about health care, with special emphasis on end of life issues. The course integrates experiential learning at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics with an overview of thinking surrounding presentations and the medical professions. Students will take UIHC’s volunteer training and do 25 (negotiable) hours of hospital volunteer service. They will read a selection of European and American writing concerning medical care, focused on the last half-century. There will be many informal writings, class presentations, and a formal project at the end.

**RHET: 3700 Multimodal Influence and Change: Sustainability 3sh, 010:170**
Sustainable development, environmental protection and economic globalization; influencing public opinion and communal action.