The Rhetoric of Rage & Revolt in Popular Culture Texts

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Texts of fury, angst, rebellion, rage, and revolution! Where do they come from? Why are they here? In what forms do they travel and spread throughout a social structure? These are some of the questions that we will be discussing and exploring this semester through the analysis of popular culture films, poetry, fiction, essays, and other media that perpetuate social change through the rhetoric of rage and revolt.

You are expected to reflect critically on your processes of writing and reading, and to interrogate the ways in which texts (re)produce particular social constructions and power relations, such as those around gender, race, nationality, class, disability, and sexuality. You will learn to question, explore, explain, analyze, develop, and critique ideas effectively; undertake writing projects that have depth and complexity; and make appropriate decisions about argument, structure, and rhetorical conventions. Our objectives in this class are to read texts with an analytical eye and apply principles for writing expository, argumentative, and research based essays as well as explore select thematical elements for this course.

It will be important for you to discard your prudishness, if any, as soon as you walk through the door of this classroom because you will be reading/exposed to content of a mature nature.

TEXTS

Required:

ASSIGNMENTS

Reader Responses | Personal Essay | Argumentative Essay(s) | Research Essay | Final Project

Reader Responses
You will have multiple responses due throughout the semester. These responses (at least 500 words) are meant to be informal write-ups on our class texts (on syllabus) that are typed, stapled, and double-spaced. Use these responses to explore your ideas and probe concepts. We will be discussing these responses in class.

Personal Essay
25% of Final Portfolio grade
You will have one personal essay to complete throughout the semester. This personal essay should explain who you are, where you are from, and what your goals in life are. Feel free to elaborate on anything else about yourself. This essay must be at least 800 words.

Argumentative Essay(s)
25% of Final Portfolio grade
You will have one OR two argumentative essay(s) to complete throughout the semester, depending on the track you choose. Argumentative essays may be on any controversial topic of your choice or address topics within any of our class texts. Choose one of the tracks below:

**Argumentative Essay Track 1:** For this argumentative essay track, you must complete two argumentative essays. Each essay must be at least 800 words. Please see the required assignment details section of this syllabus for formatting requirements. You must cite at least four sources for each essay.

--- OR ---

**Argumentative Essay Track 2:** For this argumentative essay track, you must complete one 1600-word argumentative essay. Please see the required assignment details section of this syllabus for formatting requirements. You must cite at least eight sources.

Research Essay
Rhetoric in Pop Culture Music, Film, Fiction, and Poetry
25% of Final Portfolio grade
Focus: Representations of rhetoric (i.e., rage, revolt, revolution) through popular culture texts.

For this research essay, I want you to choose a popular song, film, novel, or poem and analyze it in order to extract the message/theme that dwells within. It is important to know that the theme does not necessarily need to be that of rage and revolt but it is an option. Become familiar with the context in which it was produced. Write a 1200-2000 word research paper on (a) what the message is, (b) whom you propose the main audience, (c) what is the topic/theme of the text, and (d) fully examine the context in which it was created. You should fully research the topic/message in question.

This is not meant to be a personal response. Consult and cite at least five secondary sources (as well as the primary source) to research the topic/theme that your chosen text discusses. I expect you to consult many
secondary sources (texts other than those assigned in class; consider the campus library and other resources the campus has to offer).

It is important, for this assignment to be effective and to produce a well-crafted essay, that you choose a valid selection that has a legitimate message/topic and critically engage with that topic/theme through the utilization of secondary sources.

Final Project & Presentation

Creating Rhetoric: A Creative Project

25% of Final Portfolio grade

Focus: Making connections within the rhetoric of popular culture.

Think and reflect on the content that we have covered in this class. Contemplate the texts that we have covered. From fiction to poetry to film, we have been exposed to blatant as well as clandestine representations of rage, rebellion, revolt, fury, angst, and revolution.

For this assignment, produce your own text of rage, revolt, angst, fury, or revolution and explain the significance of it. Alternatively, if you have another topic/message to convey other than rage and revolt, let me know and we can discuss it.

To explain this further, the project has been split into three modules:

Module 1: Create a well-developed screenplay (minimum seven pages), short story (minimum five pages), poem (minimum thirty lines), or an other media project (other media projects can include DV and AVI productions, musical score[s] or mix[es], website, performance piece, sculpture, found-art, painting, illustration, installation, a collection of photography [minimum five proofs], or other approved media [please let me know if you are thinking about doing something not listed above]).

Module 2: The Explanation (expository essay): To satisfy the writing requirement for this class, this second module of the creative project must be fulfilled. After you have produced your pop-culture piece of rhetoric, you must compose a 800-1000 word (or more) expository essay based on the following criteria: (a) explain the intended message meant to be conveyed to the reader/audience, (b) explain and discuss any rhetorical devices that have been used, (c) in detail, explain what it is about your creation that is important to you, and lastly, but most importantly, (d) how is your project different or similar to a text that you have explored in class (i.e., theme, tone, character, symbolism, and so on). "Exposition is a type of oral or written discourse that is used to explain, describe, give information or inform." -- Stanford University (http://www.stanford.edu/~arnetha/expowrite/info.html#what)

Module 3: Finally, for the third module of this project, you must share a draft of your creation with the entire class. This presentation should be no less than 10 minutes and longer than 15 minutes.

If your piece happens to be longer than 15 minutes, please try to abbreviate the presentation (be creative) for time conservation purposes. If you have chosen an other media project, please bring it in, share/perform/read to the class, and provide an abstract of your explanation for the class that explains the significance or meaning of your creation. This is a formal presentation to the class.
THE FINAL PORTFOLIO

The portfolio of written work you are required to turn in on the last meeting of the semester must be in a three ring binder and include the sections indicated below. You are only required to include the final graded versions of each assignment, as designated below, however, please feel free to include all drafts if you wish. Any portfolio not in this format or a portfolio that falls short of content will be marked down significantly.

- **Table of Contents** (required)
- **Preface** (required) | In 300-500 words, discuss how the work in your portfolio reflects your overall development as a writer and thinker, and specifically how your engagement with the idea of cultural critique has or has not impacted your writing and thinking as well as your ideas about the social functions of writing. Support this discussion with specific commentary on some or all of the texts in your portfolio — evaluate their strengths and weaknesses — and discuss your revisions in detail. Do not respond to these prompts mechanically, your preface should read as a cohesive whole. The preface is not an evaluation of the course or of the professor.
- **Personal Essay** (25%)
- **Argumentative Essay(s)** (25%)
- **Research Essay** (25%)
- **Final Project Modules 1 & 2** (25%) | You must include your creative project text as well as the essay that you wrote for it (modules one and two). If your creative project cannot physically be included in the portfolio (i.e., sculpture, painting, things of this nature), please compose a brief abstract of your piece and include it with the essay.
- **Reader Responses** (required)

GRADES

Ancillary assignments and participation.................................................................10%
Portfolio (refer to portfolio requirements for itemized assignment values)..............90%

If you do not participate, fully, in class, this will count against you in the form of lack of attendance.

**Grading Scale:**
90% - 100% = A
80% - 89% = B
70% - 79% = C
60% - 69% = D
0% - 59% = F

**Essay Standards**
from Palomar College's Grading Policy & Standards

An “A” paper will have a limited topic, well organized central and supporting ideas, an abundance of telling details, apt word choice, sophisticated sentence structure, mastery of grammar and usage of conventions of standard English.

A “B” paper will have a limited topic, organized central and supporting ideas, good details, good word choice, some distracting errors in grammar and usage.
A “C” paper will have a limited topic, some organization, adequate development, general word choice, some distracting errors in grammar and usage.

A “D” paper will have a topic that is not limited, a lack of organization, inadequate development, a vocabulary that is too general, sentences without much subordination or parallelism, serious error in grammar and usage.

An “F” paper will have a topic that is extremely broad, confusing organization, inadequate development, a vocabulary that includes misused words, sentences that are confusing to the reader, many distracting errors in grammar and usage.

**ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is mandatory. Unexcused absences or tardiness will not be tolerated. “An instructor may elect to drop a student for the following reasons: 1) excessive absences, normally defined as more than the number of times the class meets per week; 2) failure to take examinations; 3) failure to complete class assignments…The primary responsibility for class attendance and maintaining an accurate registration record rests with the student…Students are expected to attend all sessions of a class in which they are enrolled. Anticipated absences should be reported to instructors in advance in order to complete assigned work by due dates.”

-- Palomar College 2006-2007 Catalog, Section 5 – Academic Regulations and Standards (p. 36)

**ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS**

All written assignments (except in-class writing) must be typed and double-spaced, using 12pt Times New Roman font. You are also required to adhere entirely to MLA format (i.e., margins, overall formatting, citing sources, et al; see *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*). Revisions will not be accepted without prior drafts. Late work will not be accepted. One revision for each essay is allowed and will not be accepted after one week of original return date (the higher score will be recorded). For example, if your paper is returned to you, by me, on Wednesday, the latest your revision can be turned in is on the following Wednesday. There are no exceptions to this policy.

**ESSAY WORKSHOPS**

Throughout the semester, there will be numerous essay workshops, where you will have the opportunity to have your essay reviewed by your peers. It is important that when you workshop an essay and write a response, you carefully choose your words in a constructive manner, address the positive and negative aspects of the texts, and critically engage with each text.

**BLACKBOARD**

There is a Blackboard component assigned to this course. Within the Blackboard pages, you will find important announcements, the course syllabus, assignments, various essential course documents, and other useful resources.
To access the course site, visit www.palomar.edu/blackboard/ and log in using your Palomar College username and password.

THE WRITING CENTER

The English Department Writing Center at Palomar College includes a computer classroom, a drop-in computer lab, and a tutorial center. The computer classroom is located in room ES-9 and the drop-in lab and writing consultants are located in room LS-15 on the San Marcos campus.

The Writing Center offers one-on-one consultation and tutoring at all stages of the writing process: brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing.

While the Writing Center will assist you with the rules of grammar and punctuation, it is not an editing service; rather, it seeks to work with you in developing and improving your problem-solving strategies and analytic abilities.

For this class, it is recommended that you consult with tutors in the Writing Center at least twice during the semester.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Class Etiquette
As adults in the class, you are expected to act as such and not behave in any manner that may inhibit the learning process. Silent all cell phones, pagers, or any other devices upon entering the classroom.

Academic Dishonesty
Plagiarism, either accidental or intentional, will not be tolerated in this class and any cases of it will result in a zero for the particular assignment. Further, students who plagiarize may be subject to more severe punishment including removal from the course, or suspension or expulsion from Palomar College. Additionally, in this class, you are expected to not partake in any type of academic dishonesty including cheating, using an assignment from a concurrent or previous course, or aiding another student in any act(s) of dishonesty.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with documented disabilities who require special accommodations, please consult with me no later than the second week of class. Additionally, Palomar College offers academic assistance for students with disabilities. These services include registration assistance, mobility assistance, notetaking assistance, testing accommodation, adaptive equipment, alternate media, assistive listening devices, counseling, and ASL interpreting. For more information, please contact the Palomar College’s Disability Resource Center at 760.744.1150 x2375 or visit them on the San Marcos campus.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 | WEDNESDAY 8/27/08

Introductions
Syllabus Overview

Introductory Lecture
MLA Formatting | Basic Essay Structure | Effective Writing Practices | Introductions and Conclusions

WEEK 2 | WEDNESDAY 9/03/08

Writing Due
Personal Essay

Reading Due
Keys for Writers (1a – 2e)

WEEK 3 | WEDNESDAY 9/10/08

Writing Due
Response to Fight Club (Chapters 1-6)
Argumentative Essay(s) Proposal(s): 500 words each proposal

Reading Due
Fight Club (Chapters 1-6)
Keys for Writers (3f – 4m)

In Class
Argumentative Essay(s) Proposal(s) Workshop

WEEK 4 | WEDNESDAY 9/17/08

Writing Due
Response to Fight Club (Chapters 7-11)

Reading Due
Fight Club (Chapters 7-11)
WEEK 5 | WEDNESDAY 9/24/08

Writing Due
Rough Draft: Argumentative Essay(s)
Response to *Fight Club* (Chapters 12-17)

Reading Due
*Fight Club* (Chapters 12-17)
*Keys for Writers* (5a – 5e)

In Class
Argumentative Essay(s) Workshop

WEEK 6 | WEDNESDAY 10/01/08

Film and Discussion

WEEK 7 | WEDNESDAY 10/8/08

Writing Due:
Final Draft: Argumentative Essay(s)
Response to *Fight Club* (Chapters 18-end)
Response to *Crash*

Reading Due:
*Fight Club* (Chapters 18-end)

Film and Discussion

WEEK 8 | WEDNESDAY 10/15/08

Writing Due
Response to *Fight Club* the film vs. *Fight Club: A Novel* (compare/contrast)
Research Essay Proposal (500 words; this should include the topic, thesis, and general outline of your research essay)
Working Bibliography for your Research Essay (consult the library, Internet, or other institutions for secondary sources)

Reading Due
*Keys for Writers* (6a – 7f)

In Class
Research Essay Proposal Workshop
WEEK 9 | WEDNESDAY 10/22/08

Writing Due
Rough Draft: Research Essay w/ Works Cited page

In Class
Research Essay Workshop

WEEK 10 | WEDNESDAY 10/29/08

Film and Discussion

WEEK 11 | WEDNESDAY 11/05/08

Writing Due
Final Draft: Research Essay
Response to Office Space
Response to Howl (poem)

Reading Due:
Howl (poem)
Revisit Keys for Writers (5b: Writing about poetry / Figurative language)

WEEK 12 | WEDNESDAY 11/12/08

Creative Writing Segment Begins
Introduction to Creative Writing

WEEK 13 | WEDNESDAY 11/19/08

Creative Writing Segment
Poetry Emphasis

WEEK 14 | WEDNESDAY 11/26/08

Creative Writing Segment
Fiction Emphasis
WEEK 15 | WEDNESDAY 12/03/08

Final Project Presentations

WEEK 16 | WEDNESDAY 12/10/08

Final Project Presentations

FINAL WEEK | WEDNESDAY 12/17/08

Due
The Final Portfolio (no exceptions, no extensions)