

COURSE DESIGN

English 304 & Communications 250: Professional Rhetorics

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Course Description

English 304 & Communications 250: Professional Rhetorics was a pilot project instituted at Clemson University in spring of 2008. The project integrally linked English 304 (*Business Writing*) and Communications 250 (*Public Speaking*), requiring the same students to be enrolled in both 3 credit-hour courses. It was designed to intertwine (and co-extensively develop) students' written, oral, and multimedia communicative/creative abilities—a linked development of connected rhetorics. The project, which focused on professional situations and environments for engaging various rhetorics, completed the university's *communication competency* requirement for students and addressed specific course requirements within students' majors.

Institutional Context

As a doctoral candidate in *Rhetorics, Communication and Information Design* (RCID), I actively pursue making connections across communicative cultures—that is, engaging knowing, doing, and making in relation to varying discourses and/or communicative modes. Additionally, the doctoral program afforded me the opportunity to teach in English and in Communication Studies, and from this split teaching I began to notice (1) students' inability to see connections across this disciplinary divide (writing/speaking) and (2) a significant amount of overlap in terms of rhetorics and rhetorical theories informing the courses themselves. Thus, the Professional Rhetorics pilot project developed from my experiences as a doctoral student, as a teacher, and even as a scholar. While its conception is “singular,” being a project I created, its development is by no means “singular,” as it required considerable collaboration from multiple individuals.

The project developed as joint venture between English and Communication Studies. At Clemson University, both departments are housed in the College of Architecture, Arts, and Humanities. Clemson, a land-grant university located in the northwest corner of South Carolina, in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, is a comprehensive, public university, with approximately 14,000 undergraduate and 3000 graduate students.

The Carnegie Foundation classifies Clemson as a research university with high research activity. Additionally, *U.S. News & World Report* (August 27, 2007 issue), ranked Clemson 27 out of 164 of the nation's public, doctoral granting universities.

The Professional Rhetorics pilot project option (heretofore referred to as PRO, for convenience) is comprised of two integrally linked (think intertwined) but separate courses: *Business Writing* and *Public Speaking*. According to the 2007-2008 University course catalog, *Business Writing*, which has a prerequisite of junior standing, provides an introduction "to audience, context, purpose, and writing strategies for texts common in professional business settings," and *Public Speaking* provides "practice in the preparation, delivery, and criticism of short speeches [...] and] develops an understanding and knowledge of the process of communication." *Business Writing* is part of Clemson's award winning Advanced Writing Program.¹ Clemson is also heavily invested in Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)² and Communication Across the Curriculum (CXC).

In addition to campus wide emphasis on the value of writing and communication, these two courses develop students' written and verbal communication skills—the number one job skill sought by employers (National Association for Colleges and Employers; c.f., Peter D. Hart Research Associates). Coupled with their prerequisites, they complete many students' communication (verbal and written) general education requirements.

Using *Business Writing* and *Public Speaking* as a basis, the core behind the PRO is to link, as much as possible, writing and speaking—to intertwine these two courses and their work. It actually encourages "double-dipping," but not in the sense of merely using the same work for two courses. Rather, it streamlines student efforts, focusing on one content-base, but engaging that content from multiple modes and multiple rhetorics: for example, students learn to write a proposal and to orally deliver that work—and how visual/media components and rhetorical strategies are employed in both. It allows for a dualistic (if not multiplistic) focus on approaching/responding-to professional situations.

While linked, these two courses remain separate, receiving separate grades, but share the same set of students. The courses were capped at 18 students to meet departmental requirements, but only 17 students (13 male and 4 female) participated in the PRO from beginning to end.

By utilizing these two courses, with the same set of students, and shifting the focus to rhetorics and rhetorical situations rather than simply business document types or speech types, I attempted to open spaces to help students develop the kinds of skills and abilities (critical and/or creative) they may need as employable graduates; specifically, I was trying to improve upon the current model at Clemson University (these two courses as unrelated entities) without completely reinventing the wheel. Thus, aside from work-

ing within the curricular limitations of the university and within my own instructional limitations, the basis for the PRO begins in at least three places: 1) trying to resituate rhetorics in a position of value, across and beyond the writing/speaking divide in academics, 2) creating pedagogical practices and learning environments that more accurately reflect life/rhetorical situations, and 3) more effectively addressing skills/abilities students need for various employment markets.

Theoretical Rationale

Writing and speaking work hand-in-hand, in numerous economies, and despite many discussions of inter/transdisciplinarity and multimodal paradigmatic shifts, the university continues to treat these two as if bringing them together would be apocalyptic. Is it such a radical idea to teach them in conjunction with one another, in a shared space? Professionals within/beyond the academic walls often write and speak in tandem (e.g., papers becoming conference presentations, briefings developing into formal reports), so why, then, this chasm between writing and speaking?

Not that long ago, “Rhetoric,” as James Berlin wrote, “served as the very core of the college curriculum in the United States” (*Rhetorics, Poetics, and Cultures* xiv). Less than 140 years ago (pre Harvard 1874) writing and speaking fell under the faculty of Rhetoric (see Berlin’s *Rhetoric and Reality*), but now both place rhetoric *in the service of* their respective disciplines—disciplinary rhetorics which are not to be crossed/mixed: “Keep the boundaries! We must be different, separate!” Each attempts to reject the other, maintain clear divisions, establish—out of necessity, and maybe understandably so—their own identities. Despite movements like WAC or CXC, writing and speaking at the university are still treated cautiously, as if dealing with embittered partners from a nasty divorce:³ we dare not invite them to the same social function, choosing sides prior to sending out invitations: quantitative vs. qualitative, performance vs. craft, speaking vs. writing. These are, of course, hyper-stereotyped binaries, for dramatic effect, but nonetheless continue to emerge in “water cooler” conversations across many campuses.

This writing/speaking divide has become so ingrained in our academic culture that even students resist their touching/mixing: in my *public speaking* courses students complain about being graded on their writing; in my *business writing* courses students complain about being graded on group presentations. One student a couple years ago quipped, “Why do speeches in a writing class? We don’t do human anatomy in math class.” It seems the best response to this kind of resistance is not recounting the proven value of writing and speaking for students’ continued growth, but rather to change (radically alter) the culture/climate of the division itself, to break down the boundaries creating these particular resistances.

The first issue, then, is how to change this tendency of exclusion, of us/them thinking? More specifically, how to alter the culture of separation between writing and speaking, and to do so in a way that is valuable to all involved (students, faculty, university, nation)? My suggestion is to resituate the relationship of writing and speaking to Rhetoric(s). This course design is an attempt to do just that—to help students learn to approach varying communicational exchanges in terms of rhetorics, rhetorical effects, and rhetorical situations instead of from the limiting practices of written or oral discourse.

This resituating is not a new idea. Victor Vitanza, in his 1987 “Critical Sub/Versions of the History of Philosophical Rhetoric,” began with this as a “predisposition.” Of course, as (un)expected with Vitanza’s work, this “one” was really “two” (if not more). The first move was to place writing and speaking (and I would add all rhetorical modes of communication) “as a subset of the grandest of all conceived mega-sciences or meta-disciplines, *Rhetoric* itself” (41-42); and the second was to envision a “*nondisciplinary* instance of Rhetoric” (42). This second move is “not concerned either with attempting to resolve rhetorical, interpretive differences or with even accounting for them. Instead, it identifies, *detonates*, and exploits the differences” (42, emphasis added). This approach, much like my intent, does not merely hope to resolve boundaries but rather to engage in the “detonation,” or perhaps “denotation,” of those boundaries, to radically and dangerously “*dramatically change* the activity of what we call ‘teaching writing’” (44) and I would add “the activity of what we call ‘teaching speaking’”—that is, to view these varying distinctions as “subsets of RHETORIC” (43, original emphasis).

In other words, we need to find spaces to allow students to work in/ across/through these divisions to develop a more complex sense of communication: orally, textually, and even multimedially. Thus, following Vitanza’s work, we will shift focus back to “RHETORIC[S].” But how to enact these theoretical shifts in pedagogical practices? How to “detonate/denotate” boundaries, in classrooms, within curricula, beyond hypothetical discussions in academic circles?

One approach might be to appropriate techniques from one to the other to make efforts within a given practice more effective. For example, as part of the 2007 *Communication in the 21st Century: Teaching and Learning across the Curriculum* Speaker Series at Clemson, Peter Elbow spoke on getting students to “write like they talk.” He discussed the dynamics of oral voice and how students could learn to more actively engage writing through connections to orality. Also in 2007, C. M. J. Van Woerkum published “Orality and the Process of Writing,” which investigates the overlooked potential of oral communication to written, technical communication: “Keeping the act of writing more free flowing, as in speech, can make it easier to arrive at an attractive and effective text” (197).

These are just two examples attempting to make connections between writing and speaking, and both could help add complexity to written discourses our students practice, but both explore contributions to written discourse through an oral perspective; this places practices of oral discourse *in the service of* writing, and thus creates conditions for what Jean-François Lyotard would call a *differend*⁴ (two positions in need of a third for adjudication). This *differend* would only further contribute to the marked boundaries I am trying to “un-mark.”

I do not want to imply that Elbow’s or Van Woerkum’s approaches to the oral/written relationships are without value (nor unintentionally undervalue them), as oral practices can greatly inform numerous aspects of writing (and vice versa), but for a refocusing on rhetorics we need a different approach—one more akin to Vitanza’s sub/versive rhetoric.

A model we might sample is Anthony Fleury’s *liberal education*. Fleury proposes that a *liberal education*, as a focal component of CXC, “encourages self-enlargement—broad-minded thinking and agile doing—by charting *multiple paths* to knowledge and rehearsing *multiple ways* of being” (73, emphases added). The multiple “paths” and “ways” are fundamental to his Communication Against the Disciplines (CAD), which focuses on helping students learn to “question received wisdom, practice an array of communication styles, and play with established communication conventions” (73). This should help free them/us from the limiting nature of “in” discipline thinking (Communication in the Disciplines [CID]) by opening alternatives for working “across” or “against” disciplines. We might think this as a shift from the singular, fixed perspective of “disciplining” communication (restricting what it means to communicate within a given discipline) to a perspective of working in/with *radical multiplicities*, engaging and understanding “communicational styles” that manifest *within* and *across disciplines*.

Rather than merely having students learn conventions of written or oral discourse, Fleury encourages a model where students learn to practice/play with these different styles and conventions—to become more critically/creatively aware of how conventions work and how they can be resisted or made to work otherwise: “If particular disciplinary ways of communicating are indeed productive of what counts as knowledge and constitute power relations within a field, it might be a good idea to teach students not only how to perform those disciplinary genres but how to *subvert* them” (78, emphasis added). Not only does this echo Vitanza’s sub/versive rhetoric, but it reiterates the necessity of a rhetorics focus (instead of writing/speaking), showcasing the importance of students developing the “ability to *cut across* and *resist* boundaries” (Fleury 78; emphases added).

What we can take here from Fleury's work is that to help students develop as effective communicators—as written, oral, and multimedia rhetors—we need not only teach them how to “perform” a given discourse but also how to challenge the rules/guides of that “performativity.”⁵ Thus, beginning from a point of contention—a shared-space of boundary-based discourses—we help students engage more than just the divisions of writing and speaking. The PRO asks students to navigate such tensions up front as opposed to blindly accepting disciplinary ideology.

While Fleury's work opens several considerations (pedagogically, epistemologically), his approach is primarily from an oral perspective; thus, we need to consider nuances from a writing perspective (if not others) to avoid perpetuating a *differend*.

In the same issue of *Communication Education*, Charles Bazerman writes a response to Fleury, providing, as part of his title indicates, a “view from the world of writing.” Bazerman tells us writing has gone through similar issues—specifically thinking how WAC evolved to Writing in the Disciplines (WID) (analogous to CXC to CID).

Citing Susan McLeod's work,⁶ Bazerman says faculty in non-English departments felt students should “be encouraged to develop the kinds of statement which count as thinking, argument, analysis, and evidence within their discipline” (87) instead of learning informal writing practices. These other faculty wanted WAC, but they wanted it to teach students *how to write in their own respective disciplines*—further placing writing instruction (and subsequently rhetoric) *in the service of* other disciplines. This is not the task of rhetorics, nor the task of writing/speech; neither rhetorics, nor writing, nor speech have to pursue (accept) a subjugated position to other disciplines to continue to establish their value at the University.⁷

Bazerman also discusses an inherent resistance WAC (or even CXC) encountered, and we can see similar resistances in parts of the PRO. For example, the informal writing mentioned above—most commonly linked to *writing to learn*, a mainstay in WAC (c.f. McLeod's “The Pedagogy”)—was found to be “outside the scope” of courses taught by faculty in other departments; those faculty “did not feel that course time and student effort should be expended in this way at the expense of their more disciplinary goals” (87). This kind of “reasoning” again resurfaces with regards to technology: faculty claiming students should utilize technologies, but not wanting to “waste time” teaching technology, especially at the cost of “content” (“I teach a speech/writing course, not a technology course”). This is true both inside and outside the humanities.

But students at Clemson must create e-portfolios as part of graduation requirements—one justification for incorporating multimedia technologies into classes—and our Communication Studies Department (following the

National Communication Association) recently recommitted to including visual aids as integral parts of *Public Speaking* (which students often take to mean, nearly singularly, as using PowerPoint). In this case, it is not “wasting time” teaching technologies as students are asked to and/or want to utilize various kinds of technological authoring environments.

It is also important to note, in relation to Bazerman’s and Fleury’s views, that these “across the curriculum” movements, and their inevitable “in the discipline” offshoots, do not necessarily open possibilities for altering divisionary “boundaries.” Rather, they continue to emphasize boundaries as each seeks to more significantly establish its own value at/to the university, via subjugation to other disciplines (WID/CID). What we need is to help students learn to *play* with styles and conventions of oral and written discourses, in varying situations.

Following current buzzword-trends like “transdisciplinarity,” some universities have begun altering curriculum to match this new trans-focus. One example: Samford University integrates writing and speaking in its Communication Arts series by emphasizing “practice in writing and speaking for target audiences” (General Education). The first course in the series (101) has a “Service Learning or Experiential Learning” focus and the second (102) a “research-based writing and argumentation” focus. While Samford, and other schools doing similar things, are making progressive strides in “detonating/denotating” boundaries, these approaches require curriculum reform—a process generally requiring significant reconstruction of department visions, relations, purposes, assessment procedures and such. Granted, these kinds of reform may be indicative of future directions, but in the immediate, short-term, on the level of an individual (i.e., me), these are not feasible options.

As an inter/trans disciple, I wanted to envision a more practical way for integrating writing and speaking, and to do so within the limits of my situation. First, I articulated an “adjudicating position” from which to operate, to avoid placing writing/speaking above speaking/writing; I located this “adjudicating position” in Rhetorics, a plurality, which includes both a shift back to Rhetoric (in Berlin’s sense) and shift forward to Rhetoric (in Vitanza’s sense)—but not limited to those two Rhetorics.

Second, I emulated curriculum reform (vis-à-vis Samford) without actually reforming curriculum, and did so within the parameters of my teaching assignments (*Business Writing* and *Public Speaking*). Thus, I created, proposed, and put into action, “Professional Rhetorics: Bridging the Gap between Writing, Speaking, & Digital Media.”

As the title may indicate, this allowed for incorporating multimedia (multimodal digital authoring) with writing and speaking. In this six credit-hour combination, I focused two-thirds on written discourses (from

the *Business Writing* component), two-thirds on oral discourses (from the *Public Speaking* component), and two-thirds on multimedia discourses (borrowing the one-third remainder from each). This helped combat “wasting time teaching technology” charges because the technological component was integrally involved, opening opportunities for addressing electronic discourses in the university setting (at the levels of knowing, doing, and making).

What follows is an exploration of the development of the PRO and a reflection on various components of its implementation. (Note, this course design should not be thought of as totalizing, but rather a tentative step toward integrated and linked options that “detonate/denotate” boundaries between writing and speech).

Critical Reflection

In application, blurring the boundaries between writing and speaking can develop in any number of ways. I chose to start from Kress & Van Leeuwen’s multimodal theory of communication,

which concentrates on two things: (1) the *semiotic resources* of communication, the modes and the media used, and (2) the communicative practices in which these resources are used. These communicative practices are seen as multi-layered and include, at the very least, discursive practices, production practices and interpretive practices, while they may also include design practices and/or distribution practices. (111)

To engage this multi-layering of practices, I decided to work with ethos, pathos, and logos (topoi for “making meaning” in the “many different modes and media” [111]—applicable ways for approaching *synaesthesia*⁸). My rhetorics-oriented approach, informed by Kress and Van Leeuwen’s multimodal theory of communication, provided a frame for addressing varied course content and constructions.

Ethos, pathos, and logos provided a way to explore (emerging) rhetorics. This was not to take students on a historical journey of rhetoric, but rather to create a vocabulary and shared discourse to engage knowing, doing, and making across practices. For example, we examined logos as it related to proposal writing and compared that to a presidential candidate’s convention address; we examined ethos in commercials vs. students’ informative speeches; we discussed pathos, and its potential rhetorical affects, and provided an opportunity for it to become a major player in our understanding of the complexity of human communication (across modes)—whether talking about music creating particular moods in multimedia creations, how images convey pathetically, or how language

use, voice, style, and so on (i.e., the poetic, even oral poetic) contribute to creating pathetic appeals. These three opened avenues to the material and the course assignments.

The PRO course assignments, which engaged at least two modes as much as possible (writing, speaking, multimedia), worked within the “standard” assignments for the courses (as separate entities). Both courses offered a group-oriented component, which, when linked or intertwined, became a guiding focus for student-directed learning and student engagement in varying rhetorical situations.

By using rhetorical situations and group-oriented work, we were able to work across discourse boundaries; the content could vary from student to student, group to group, subject interest to subject interest, but it was situation which became grounding (not the distinction of written or oral discourse): as Lloyd Bitzer has told us, “So controlling is situation that we should consider it the very ground of rhetorical activity” (5).

The way I navigated this focusing on situation, instead of just taking a “traditional” content-oriented approach, was to allow students, in groups, to develop course projects. Those projects—attempting to let students take ownership of their own learning (the projects reflecting their interests and choices)—became the “content” for their work efforts; thus, we had material ranging in focus from media ethics to freedom of speech to local housing restrictions to TV rating restrictions (i.e., V-Chip) and so on. The impact of chosen content-areas cannot be overlooked, however, as those foci influenced the types of written, oral, and multimodal discourses the students engaged—it is part of the complexities of rhetorics and rhetorical situations, of medium/message relationships (via McLuhan).

For example: students trying to convince Clemson City Council of problems in the current housing/zoning restrictions encountered a different rhetorical situation requiring different communicational exchanges (and rhetorics) than students trying to convince college students to engage in active citizenship in an attempt to change TV rating restrictions. Different rhetorical situations call for different types of rhetorical communications; different rhetorical communications call for the involvement of different rhetorics; different rhetorics, across communicational exchanges, in varied rhetorical situations, reflect (potentially more so) the complexity that is citizenship and employment-as-professional in our culture. This is the complexity of involvement, of consideration, and of thinking I wanted students to not only experience but to understand.

In practice, this is where the PRO really succeeded. Students began, after some effort, to understand the relationships between situation, medium, and rhetorical strategies. They not only understood but also were able to articulate, in discussion, why, for example, web-based creations were more fitting for the V-chip group targeting college students than for

the City Council group targeting Council members, or why the Media Effects group would employ different rhetorical strategies than say the City Council group.

While they worked within their own topic areas, seeing how discourses vary with situations and/or exigencies, students learned to navigate and negotiate certain rhetorical issues (around medium and message). Then, by workshopping and critically commenting on other groups' work, they were also forced to encounter differences, to think through the purposes for those differences, and to work across varying situations (some rhetorical, in Bitzer's sense, some not). In the end, this flexible form/content negotiation helped "detonate/denotate" boundaries because students were not merely writing/speaking to jump through preconceived "hoops," but rather creating written, oral, or multimodal/multimedia discourse based on rhetorical considerations (purpose, audience, situation, etc.) necessitated by their topic/focus.

It is, of course, not a perfect system, as getting students to work in this way was often like pulling teeth. As nearly all were upperclassmen, they already "knew how" to be students: instructor tells them what to do, how to do it, and then they do it according to those specifications (mimicking instructor desires or examples). My approach in the PRO resisted that model—this caused some initial resistance, especially from the "most successful" college students (i.e., the 3.5-4.0 GPA students): one even pleaded, in a moment of frustration, "Can't you just tell us what to do?" But students did start to see the benefits of this approach and some really appreciated it:

At first I was worried about how most of our projects were open ended and we could choose what we wanted to do and how we wanted to do it. After completing this course I realized that that "openness" allowed the class to grow as decision makers and problem solvers. (Student 1, course reflection)

The specifics that I liked were the group arrangements, freedom to kind of run with our own ideas, not a prefabricated departmental project or boring and cliché topic. I enjoyed being hands on and creative, both individually and in a group. I got a huge sense of accomplishment because I could actually see what I created and could feel proud of it. I also like the fact that we were given assignments and told that they were due on this day, and these things will help you, but it is up to you to make it your own. We had the opportunity to be creative with every assignment we had. (Student 2, course reflection)⁹

Granted, these are two selected quotes, but they indicate an interesting phenomenon echoed in many students' course reflections: there was a lot of talk of the "openness" and "freedom" to make their own decisions, to

work “creatively,” and how that helped them become decision makers or problem solvers or critical thinkers. There were one or two at the end who still were not happy about the open-endedness, about having to negotiate many rhetorical concerns themselves, but even they indicated benefiting from the experience.

One thing that helped students come to terms with this group-project orientation, and the situational-based refocusing on rhetorics in general, was that coursework folded into itself, with (nearly) all assignments contributing to a shared end: everything becoming part of the other, connecting to the other, guided by a unified group focus.¹⁰

On the upside, students spend an entire semester working within a single focus, over a two-course effort, which allows for considerable exploration. They learn to navigate issues within that focus, to work around or through problems, and to reveal further and further layers from sustained concentration. Several groups revised and narrowed their initial foci, as expected, but they became really insightful to the importance of moving “in” on a subject area and finding an angle to engage larger issues their initial foci identified: for example, the Media Effects group evolved into developing an after-school program to help educate children on how media impacts their lives and how to make choices not based on mediated-cultural pressure but on self-interests. This was just one component of their “program,” which also was to include nutrition education, self-esteem development, physical activity, and so on.

On the downside, students may get tired of such concentrated and sustained focus. About a month into the course, a few students expressed a desire to “take a break” from the project focus for a day or two. So, we altered an assignment and let them focus on things unrelated to their topic if they so chose. Some took this option, but several stuck with the project focus, seeing the benefits of the enfolding mentioned earlier.

With this enfolding, there is a sort of double-edge sword as significant portions of both course grades are not only interdependent but interrelated. For example, the better students did on researching and developing their Formal Reports, the more information they had to pull from for their Project Deliverables. This does not mean that poor Reports lead to poor Project Deliverables, but just that these two things are interrelated and students who struggle with the report may have to “catch up” a bit in terms of information they possibly need for developing deliverables.

This type of interlacing worked across nearly all assignments (the “double-dipping” I mentioned earlier). Beyond just group project interrelations, the assignments also were interdependent across courses: the Proposal was a written document for *Business Writing* and also the basis for

a Persuasive Speech for *Public Speaking*; the Informative Speech (shaped in the spirit of an organizational brief) for *Public Speaking* became launching point for more fully developed Formal Reports for *Business Writing* (see syllabus for more expansive look at assignments and their interdependence). The more assignments paired up, the more complex and integrated the PRO became; this, in my view, is much more reflective of what goes on in actual life practices: professionals, including ourselves, often work by bringing in progressively more complex connections, for progressively more complex situations. Why should we treat students different? Why should they learn certain practices in a vacuum, devoid of these other complexities that (can) play an integral part?

Providing students the freedom to determine their own needs and to make creations based on situations offers the potential of them becoming self-directed learners—a goal/value most universities reflect in their mission statements: “Preparing a future of life-long learners” or something similar to that effect. But this kind of flexibility can raise a few flags. When groups struggle to find direction or focus, they can easily become frustrated, especially as other groups take off. So, aside from helping students understand and navigate varying rhetorics, through writing, speaking, or multimedia authoring, instructors also have to work to help them learn to generate and develop possible foci (it is a slightly more expansive approach to rhetorical invention) and then to evaluate those foci in terms of course needs, project potential, student investment, and the like.

Also, as the PRO is more than just this group project, as it is an intertwining of these two (dis)courses, there is also a potential problem in terms of assessment. For example: initially, I struggled to create sets of evaluative criteria (i.e., grading rubrics) that would work across 5+ drastically different group projects with 10+ “gradable” creations each. These creations vary in parts, styles, components, needs, and so on, and it is difficult to prepare students for all the specific and particular ways in which an audience might evaluate their work. But certain rhetorical aspects work across purposes, reflective of the notion of *synaesthesia*, and ethos, pathos, and logos are one way to traverse students’ differing rhetorical creations. These classical rhetoric concepts were already built into my version of the PRO, and as such provided an evaluative consistency for students across rhetorical productions, whether oral, written, or multimedia.

Additionally, as these three formed the “backbone” of my rhetorics approach, students developed a fairly significant understanding of them early on (with us revisiting them often—nearly daily). I would argue this approach is more effective in getting students to understand evaluative criteria than trying to get them to understand the nuances of split infinitives, distracting mannerisms, or effective use of required number of sources (all which can

be discussed in terms of their effects on ethos, pathos, logos); I think this approach helps students understand how a speech with delivery or content problems can still succeed or a paper with grammatical mistakes can still be riveting or a short video with bad cuts and shoddy editing can still be entertaining, persuasive, and informative—if we focus on the individual components too much, sometimes we miss the forest for the trees (see Gar-side 2002; qtd. in Fleury 74). With ethos, pathos, and logos, I tried to help them see the forest while amidst the trees.

That is not to say these things are without problems, as any evaluative system is going to have issues, but where this succeeded is in providing students a vocabulary with which to engage a conversation on evaluation. This is one of the key advantages to this course design: whatever rhetoric-based focus instructors use to approach the intricacies between writing, speaking, and multimedia creations establishes an inherent basis for an evaluative stance; students interact with these foci in terms of theory, production, content, practice, and daily vocabulary, and to not utilize these, in terms of evaluation, seems to be a wasted opportunity.

Outside of the “evaluative criteria” issue, one of the more unexpected occurrences was that *students struggled to separate the two courses*. This was both ideal and a bit problematic: ideal because the inability to separate the two courses reflects the very basis of the approach—“detonating/denotating” boundaries—and shows how easy it is to integrate theory and practice and to get students to “buy into” the purpose of the PRO; problematic because despite this “singular” vision it was still six hours worth of course credit, which allows/requires, six credit-hours of effort from students.

Despite the PRO encouraging a pseudo “double-dipping,” with many (nearly all) of the assignments overlapping, streamlining efforts and reducing workload encumbrances, there is still a full set of work from both course components, and this can be a hefty (almost colossal) work requirement for students who develop (expectedly so) this “single course” vision. (Despite my teacherly optimism of them being able to complete all the work I had planned, I learned that a reduction here and there in the overall total quantity of work helped to relieve some burden and improve the quality of the work—this, too, was a student-led negotiation).

In addition to the particular pedagogical (or content) issues discussed already, it seems important in a course design like this to also reflect, even if only briefly, on the pragmatics of the course. One of the first issues, then, is whether or not this should be a single instructor project or collaborative instructor effort.

As a single instructor, I worked unilaterally in terms of shaping and developing the course. This opens numerous opportunities: whether re-

conceptualizing class space and time, revisiting “in-class” issues between students and instructor (amplified by six credit-hours of class time), or rethinking instruction in general (making course changes as needed to better suit students needs/desires). However, while my particular background and experience allowed me to meet state (or university and departmental) qualifications for teaching these two courses, I have to believe this is more the exception than the rule (especially with the inherent division between the disciplines of writing and speaking). Given the opportunity again, I would likely go collaborative—trying to gain a comparative understanding of the different dynamics (of navigating and negotiating linkages across courses and across instructors)—as to better assess the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.¹¹

A second issue to consider stems from locating students (i.e., getting the PRO to “make”). While I encountered several hurdles in this regard, my resolution was to create advertising materials (brochures, email blasts, flyers, etc.) to distribute to potential students. Thus, as I was targeting students in the College of Business and Behavioral Sciences (CBBS), I worked with student advisors in CBBS¹² and with the English and Communication Studies department coordinators (both invaluable in instituting the project) to locate, interest, and enroll students into the PRO. It is an issue requiring planning and patience.

A third issue is time itself. I decided to schedule the two courses as back-to-back Tuesday/Thursday classes. This created, twice a week, two 75 minute blocks of time, split by a 15 minute “between classes” break. The upside of this approach is that on days when more than 75 minutes is needed to complete something for one portion of the PRO, time is available: for example, we could make it through all student speeches in one day (compared to the usual two/three day split); or, as another example, on days when teaching different technologies, like video editing or building a website, I could open up a full 150 minutes for instruction, play/experience, assistance or trouble-shooting, and showing work. This creates a flexibility to re-envision the classroom environment on a daily basis: from two traditional lectures to a 150 minute studio space to other variations for discussion, activity, workshop, and so on.¹³ Of course, this “re-envisioned” 150 minute block led to at least one interesting development:

Single Instructor Effect: spending nearly three hours with a single instructor (and a single set of classmates) can be quite straining, especially when doing so twice a week. In this model, interpersonal skills and an ability to navigate relationships take on as much importance as any authority or power roles an instructor may have/use in the classroom. Borrowing from teacher-as-guide theories, feminist pedagogy, collaborative pedagogy, and so on, this model necessitates instructors use and develop

different skill sets than simply (or only) embodying traditional teacher-as-authority models. The extensive amount of time in the classroom with the same students asks us to reevaluate our approaches (students can deal with a wide variety of pedagogies—even the outlandish—in a 50 minute block, but 150 minutes is a different story).

There are other minor issues that emerge with this notion of time, like trying to establish course rhythms or keeping students involved/interested (finding ways not to “lose them” over the course of 150 minutes), but the advantages of having time to let students practice performing the skills they are supposed to develop in class (as these are performative courses) and then to discuss those issues is really quite promising.

Concluding Thoughts

Despite prolific scholarship, rhetoric lost some value in the university during the 20th Century, as it split and splintered into progressively tinier specialized factions, taking on further subjugated positions. To relocate its potentiality, we have to work together, across the disciplinary divide that is Rhetoric, Composition and Communication Studies, and do so while keeping the invaluable contributions of these splintered factions. This rhetorics refocusing can help us build dynamic and complex communicators, rhetors prepared for rhetorical/life situations, multimodal creators for a world of radical multiplicities.

What I am offering here is not radically a new idea—the integration of courses has been occurring for years: we have been linking writing and speaking to other courses for decades, not to mention direct reflections in WID/CID. But instead of putting these disciplines (and consequently rhetoric) *in the service of* others at the university, perhaps we should reconnect them, move them back to the juggernaut that was/is Rhetorics (and its position of significance within the university, within the *Trivium*), and create a more potent space for rhetorics in 21st Century universities.

Whatever approach, whatever combination used to integrally link these dividing disciplines, the fact remains that we have the potential to resituate the writing/speaking divide, to help students make rhetorical connections across communicative cultures, and we can do so without massively overhauling curriculum (for now). It begins by finding ways to bridge the chasm between writing and speaking: rhetorics being the approach championed here.

Notes

1. Clemson's Advanced Writing Program received CCCC's Writing Program of Excellence Certificate in 2004 and recently the South Carolina's Commission of Higher Education award.
2. In 1993, the first National WAC conference was held in Charleston, SC, and was co-hosted by Clemson University, The Citadel, and College of Charleston (as were the 1995 & 1997 WAC conferences).
3. The launching of Freshman English in 1874 begins a division between Literacy Studies and Rhetoric and Composition, as well as initiating a change in focus from speech to writing in rhetoric courses (see Berlin's *Rhetoric and Reality*); this may also mark the turn toward the subjugation of speech to writing, a subjugation which would invariably contribute to the need for a Communication Studies "revolution" (or split) from its English brethren.
4. Lyotard writes, "A case of differend between two parties takes place when the 'regulation' of the conflict that opposes them is done in the idiom of one of the parties while the wrong suffered by the other is not signified in that idiom" (9, section 12). The *differend* occurs as a result of one party being forced to operate within the other's system.
5. Fleury's approach to *liberal education* is not without precursors, as developing this kind of engaged (critical) agency in students can be traced back to Aristotle, Cicero, and so on—teachers who prepared students for civic discourse and communication in/with the polis. Working relatively more recently, as a sample, we can see reflections of this *liberal education* in Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, James Berlin's "citizen rhetors" in *Rhetorics, Poetics, and Cultures*, or even Greg Ulmer's EmerAgents in *Electronic Monuments*, but what all of these do, on some level, is to ask students to *question* and *critically/creatively engage* (if not resist/subvert) established conventions. But resisting/subverting disciplinary conventions takes more than just writing or speaking, it requires (if wanting to be successful) fairly sophisticated rhetorical skills and abilities, where students not only utilize rhetorical strategies to resist but where they operate from varying rhetorics and perspectives, finding the best possible means to persuasion (via Aristotle).
6. See McLeod, "Writing Across the Curriculum."
7. We might see any contrary views as lingering effects of the "infection" into the septinium, as Vitanza discusses.
8. Kress and Van Leeuwen identify *synaesthesia* as "multimedia meaning, meaning which can be materially realised and recognised in different media" (67).
9. Student 1 was a Graphics Communication major; Student 2 was a Management major.
10. For example, the Group Forum assignment from *Public Speaking* easily evolved into the oral presentation and discussion forum for the Group Project Deliverables from *Business Writing* (students presented projects to a public audience in a group presentation/forum hybrid). Nearly all the course work could be cited as examples of this enfolding—connecting across assignments and courses.

11. The PRO may be more viable (across universities, long term) as a collaborative approach because locating two instructors from across disciplines willing to work together may be easier than finding one instructor who meets qualifications for teaching both courses. Plus, a collaborative approach does not encounter pay split issues (being paid from two different departments). Instead, most issues revolve around a cooperative navigation and linking of course efforts.
12. Despite initial enthusiasm and interest in my project from individuals in the CBBS, I was unable to make any significant headway. My “bottom-up” approach of contacting student advisors sort of got moored. But with some help from an Associate Dean in the Graduate School, things began moving forward. Sometimes these projects require a little more “weight” to move up priority lists, and that “weight” is tough to develop as a doctoral student.
13. Students could do peer review, discuss comments or suggested revisions, work on those, and still have time to solicit additional feedback/clarification. Or I could provide specific instruction on using Microsoft Publisher to create brochures or using Audacity for audio-based projects (i.e., podcasts) and have time to provide basic instruction on the technology, to allow students opportunities to work with the technology, and still have time for reviewing and discussing creations/processes, all within a single day.

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SYLLABUS

Professional Rhetorics: Bridging the Gap Between Writing, Speaking, & Digital Media

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Course Objectives

The main purpose of this course is to prepare you for the demands of writing, speaking, and creating (digitally/visually) within professional environments. As such, you will write a variety of documents for a variety of audiences in order to practice composing for professional situations; you will craft, practice, deliver, and critically examine a variety of speeches to develop, hone, and gain experience with public speaking for diverse settings; and you will learn to create (and compose) various digital media as stand alone compositions, as companion pieces to various written/print-based documents, and as aids/supports for verbal presentation. This course is designed to help you develop into effective rhetors for today's professional environments, and it will do so by exploring numerous rhetorical strategies associated with oral, written, and multimedia discourses.

Required Texts

Students are required to purchase these two texts for the course (the first can be found at the university book store, the book store downtown, or various online outlets; the second is tailored for Clemson and can only be found at the university book store):

Harty, Kevin J. (2005). *Strategies for Business and Technical Writing* 5th Edition. New York: Pearson/Longman.

Osborn, S. and Osborn, M. (2006). *Public speaking*. Custom edition. 7th ed. Houghton Mifflin Companion Website: http://www.pearsoncustom.com/sc/cu_comm/

Additional Texts/Readings

There will be several supplemental readings for this course, which will be provided to you via print handouts, library e-reserve, pdfs located in Blackboard/WebCT, web address, and so on. As readings will vary depending on

course needs, it is tough to include a comprehensive list, but the following three will undoubtedly be included:

- Bitzer, Lloyd F. "The Rhetorical Situation." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* Supplementary Issue (1992): 1-14.
- DeKosky, Allison. "Group Projects: Preparation for Work in the Real World, or a Lesson in Tolerance." 24 June 1997. *The Digital Collegian*. 3 Sept. 2007. <http://www.collegian.psu.edu/archive/1996_jan-dec/04/04-24-96tdc/04-24-96d07-005.htm>
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Additional Resources

- **Internet Archives** <<http://www.archive.org/>>. Site description: "The Internet Archive is building a digital library of Internet sites and other cultural artifacts in digital form. Like a paper Library, we provide free access to researchers, historians, scholars, and the general public." There is a variety of information available in this digital repository: audio, video, texts, internet sources (old and new), and so on.
- **Creative Commons** <<http://creativecommons.org/>>. Site description: "Creative Commons provides free tools that let authors, scientists, artists, and educators easily mark their creative work with the freedoms they want it to carry. You can use CC to change your copyright terms from 'All Rights Reserved' to 'Some Rights Reserved.'" Audio, video, visual/image, and textual creations that use the CC license can be found here. The CC license, depending on the restrictions, allows you to borrow, build from, add to, modify, and so on (be sure to review the licensing - <<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>>).
- **Purdue Owl** <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>>. This is an online writing lab that is an extremely useful resource for this class. In addition to providing online reference information for MLA or APA citation styles (both of which we will use), it also has entries/references on addressing grammatical issues, stylistic concerns, content issues, getting started, crafting theses, and so on.
- **YouTube** <<http://www.youtube.com/>>. Aside from its plethora of other value, which we will also explore, YouTube houses a variety of user-generated "how to" videos for using various technologies. Not all are of exceptional quality, but the instructions are generally decent enough to help address minor issues in relation to programs we may encounter in this course: like Microsoft Word, Publisher, or Movie Maker, or shareware/open source options like Audacity, Gimp, Nvu—not to mention Mac possibilities like imovie or Garage Band.

Course Goals

At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to

- understand the importance of effective rhetorics (written/oral/digital) in the workplace.
- apply problem-solving principles to/through/for various forms of communication.
- analyze audience, purpose, and context of complex rhetorical situations.
- use appropriate writing, speaking, and design strategies to adapt to complex situations.
- compose common professional genres such as letters, reports, proposals, etc.
- craft and deliver speeches for core styles (to inform, persuade, entertain).
- contribute to a team learning how to write, speak, and create collaboratively.
- choose and use appropriate technologies to facilitate purposes necessitated by varying rhetorical situations.

General Education Competencies

Business Writing

(Dept. issued syllabus statement; competencies from CU Undergraduate Announcements) If you do well on the assignments in this course, you will fulfill all four of the general education competencies associated with this course (located under Communication skills competency):

C1: Demonstrate effective communication skills appropriate for topic, audience, and occasion.

C2: Write coherent, well-supported, and carefully edited essays and reports suitable for a range of different audiences and purposes.

C3: Employ the full range of the writing process, from rough draft to edited product.

C4: Incorporate both print and electronic resources into speeches, presentations, and written documents.

Save your best work, include it in your e-portfolio, and be sure to tag it as fulfilling the communication competencies.

Public Speaking

(Dept. issues syllabus statement) This course will address communication competence in two contexts: group and public. Such communication competence would include the student's:

Ability to Adapt to the Communication Environment

1. Communicate in a manner appropriate to the context.
2. Recognize when it is appropriate to communicate.
3. Recognize and adapt to the needs and responses of the intended audiences.

Ability to Think and Reason Critically

1. Be able to locate appropriate supporting materials.
2. Recognize and use basic reasoning.
3. Identify supporting information relevant to their communication goals.
4. Support claims with relevant and adequate evidence.

Ability to Develop Messages Effectively

1. Establish communication goals.
2. Organize thoughts effectively.
3. Answer questions thoroughly.

Ability to Communicate Ethically

1. Communicate candidly.
2. Accept responsibility for his/her own communication behaviors.
3. Communicate with open minds.
4. Demonstrate credibility.
5. Rely on responsible knowledge when communicating.

Ability to Speak Effectively

1. Speak clearly and expressively.
2. Use grammatically correct language.
3. Use unbiased language.
4. Present ideas in a manner appropriate to the context.

Ability to Listen Effectively

1. Listen attentively.
2. Listen with open minds.
3. Paraphrase accurately.
4. Ask appropriate follow-up questions.

Ability to Use Appropriate Presentation Aids

1. Create audio-visual aids that reinforce and support the message.
2. Integrate audio-visual aids or presentation technologies fluently into the delivery of the speech.

Required Course Work

While this is an integrated approach, there are still two sets of course work to be accomplished. As such, below you will find a table indicating each assignment required in this pilot project. Assignments that have light gray shading behind them have a linked component (e.g., the first assignment in *Business Writing* is crafting a memorandum exploring your name and its possible meaning; the first assignment in *Public Speaking* is a speech to the class on the same content [your name]—more details will be provided via discussion and handouts). Assignments that have dark gray shading are single assignments that count for grades in both courses (e.g., Video Brief assignment). Assignments without gray shading, have no cross course counterpart and only influence one course’s grade. We will more fully discuss grading criteria and the specifics of each of these assignments in-class as assignments arise.

Business Writing		Public Speaking	
<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Memorandum	50	“My Name” Presentation	20
Resume & Cover Letter	100	Mock Interview Response	30
Instruction Paper	100		
Informative Report	125	Informative Speech	150
		• Speech Presentation (100)	
		• Working Outline/Lab (Req.)	
		• Formal Outline w/Ref (25)	
		• Self-Critique (25)	
Proposal (Individual)	150	Persuasive Speech	210
		• Speech Presentation (150)	
		• Working Outline/Lab (Req.)	
		• Formal Outline w/Ref (30)	
		• Self-Critique (30)	
		Ceremonial Speech	75
		• Speech Presentation (60)	
		• Formal Outline (15)	
		• Self-Viewing (Req.)	
		Instr. Choice Speech	50
		(Group)	
Project Proposal (Group)	150		
Proj. Deliverables (Group)	200	Group Project	140
		• Forum Presentation (100)	
Group Process Paper	25	• Group Process Paper (25)	
		• Agenda w/References (15)	
Video Briefs	60	Video Briefs	60
		Speech Analysis	25
		Exams	200
		• Midterm Exam (100)	
		• Final Exam (100)	
Participation	40	Participation	40
<i>Total</i>	<i>1000</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>1000</i>

Grading Scale

Grades for each course are calculated according to the following 1000 point scale (note: they do not round up):

900 – 1000 points	(90% - 100%)	A
800 – 899 points	(80% - 89.9%)	B
700 – 799 points	(70% - 79.9%)	C
600 – 699 points	(60% - 69.9%)	D
599 points or fewer	(59.9% or below)	F

Calendar

The following is an anticipated weekly calendar. It is subject to change as the course develops and as the course needs to take us into more specific directions. Any schedule changes will be indicated at least one week in advance (including reading not currently in calendar). Potential changes needing to occur within that time limit will be subject to class discussion and student/instructor negotiation, seeking an agreeable plan/option.

All readings are to be read before the class day for which they are listed (minus the first class meeting). Reading listed under the *Public Speaking* column refers to the Osborne & Osborne text. Under *Business Writing*, SBTW is the abbreviation for the Hardy text. Note: additional readings **will be** added to the calendar (some planned, but many on an as needed basis).

To read the daily calendar: Under “Day,” the first number is the number of the week during the semester; the second number is the day of the week (1 represents Tuesday, 2 represents Thursday). Entries in light gray are unified days, meaning we will spend both 75 minute periods on one unified focus; on other days, time will be divided as needed.

Day	Business Writing	Public Speaking
1.2	Course Introduction. “Conducting Name/Identity” Exercises. <i>Assign Memo</i> (See SBTW 127-130)	<i>Assign “My Name” Presentation.</i>
2.1	Collect Memo. Assign Resume & Cover Letter. Read SBTW 7-25	“My Name” Presentations. <i>Assign Self-Introduction Speech.</i> Read: Chapter 1
2.2	Read SBTW 263-308. Bring in Job Advertisement/Description.	Read: Chapter 2 & 3
3.1	Workshop Resume & Cover Letter. <i>Assign Instruction Paper.</i>	Read: Appendix A and Dekosky.
3.2	Resume & Cover Letter Due. Group Project Topics: Discuss Course Project and Project Deliverables.	Self-Introduction Speech. <i>Assign Instructor’s Choice Speech.</i>
4.1	“Tying our shoes” exercise. Read McCloud. <i>Assign Informative Report</i>	<i>Assign Informative Speech</i>
4.2	Workshop Instruction Paper	Read: Chapter 6, 7, 8, & 14

5.1	Instruction Paper Due. Discuss Project Topics.	Instructor's Choice Speech (Course Project Topic)
5.2	Read: SBTW 187-194 & 200-206. <i>Assign Group Proposals.</i>	Read: Chapter 9 & 10
6.1	Audacity: Creating/Making/Playing with Sound	
6.2	Audacity Projects. Read Bitzer.	Read: Chapter 5
7.1	Workshop Informative Reports. Read: SBTW 64-71.	Read: Chapter 4
7.2	Informative Speeches & Informative Reports Due. <i>Assign Persuasive Speeches</i> <i>Assign Individual Proposals</i>	
8.1	Read: SBTW 233-262	Read: Chapter 15 & 16
8.2	Video Editing: Some Basics for making video	
9.1	Video Projects.	Read: Chapter 11, 12, & 13
9.2	Making Web Pages (Publisher) and PowerPoint	
10.1	Workshop Individual Proposals	Exam Review
10.2	Individual Proposal Due	Mid-term Exam
11	Spring Break – No Class	
12.1	Video Briefs: Topics, Problems, etc.	Persuasive Speeches (6 will go)
12.2	Persuasive Speeches (13 will go)	<i>Assign Ceremonial Speech</i>
13.1	Group Work Day (focus on Proposal)	Read: Chapter 17
13.2	Out of Class work day (we will not meet as I will be presenting/attending CCCC)	
14.1	Video Briefs and other Digital Projects: Studio Day. Looking at YouTube.	
14.2	Ceremonial Speeches (3/4 of time). Group Proposal Workshop (1/4 of time).	
15.1	Group Proposal Due. Group Work Day: focus on presentation & presentation agenda.	
15.2	Group Work Day: focus on deliverables, refine presentation.	
16.1	Show Video Briefs.	Final Exam Review.
16.2	Group Work Day: focus on deliverables. Course Evaluation	Final Exam Review. Course Evaluation.
17	Final Exam Slot Project Deliverables Due Group Process Paper Due	Final Exam Slot Take Final Exam Location (TBA)

Editorial Note: sections on original course syllabus removed for this publication include: Laboratory Requirement, Attendance Policy (and Tardiness Policy), Grade Discussion Policy, Electronic Grade Inquiry, Make-up Policy, Late Work Policy, Time Outside of Class, Workshops/Peer Review, Exam Conflict Policy, Academic Integrity, Authenticity Policy, Civility Statement, and Documentation Formats & Source Citation Policies.