

English 6389.795
Summer II, 2022
June 28-Aug. 12

Rhetoric of Religion: Teaching, Not Preaching



Free photo "Diverse Beliefs" from KJacobs at Pixabay

"The subject of religion falls under the head of rhetoric in the sense that rhetoric is the art of persuasion and religious cosmogonies are designed, in the last analysis, as exceptionally thoroughgoing modes of persuasion.

—Kenneth Burke, *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology*, 1981

Syllabus

Basic Information

- **Instructor Name: Dr. Myra Tatum Salcedo**



OFFICE: Mesa Building, Room 4134

PHONE: Via Microsoft TEAMS, **14322270041**

E-MAIL: Be certain to use Canvas email. If it is not accessible, use salcedo_m@utpb.edu.

OFFICE HOURS: TBA in accordance with student schedules. Office hours will include in-person, virtual, and by appointment. I will likely be in the course every day, seven days per week. However, I begin early in the morning and tend to shut down by 5 or 6 p.m. each day.

This course is a Web Course and is conducted within Canvas

<http://utpb.instructure.com>

NOTE: The due dates and times for the activities will adhere to the Central Time Zone. The format of this course is Modern Language Association (MLA) style 9th edition.

This course introduces graduate students to an emerging argument in contemporary scholarship that concerns applying rhetorical appeals in order to write on the topic of religion—and other contested topics of the day—in a civil manner. It also negotiates the rhetorical strategies that can fail or succeed in healing breaches of contested topics through thoroughly understanding language, and the power of specific words that are used to persuade in both positive and manipulate applications.

- **Measurable Learning Outcomes:**
- **Target: Students will compose reading, writing and interpretation strategies in order to make appropriate selections from scholarship and**

different forms of written discourse for a variety of audiences and purposes, and to assess the effectiveness of their products in analyzing scholarship. This will result in a 10-12-page paper with additional Works Cited page(s) and a 250-300-word abstracts that meet academic conference/publication requirements.

Course Objectives:

- Synthesize quotations from various theories in Analytical Discussion Boards,
- Produce 20 pages of writing in the course (Analytical Discussion Board initial posts count towards the total course page count, as does the Individual Class Lecture presentation).
- Complete the final paper project through presenting the gist of the paper in a 10-minute video and participating in a discussion board peer review (brainstorming, offering constructive feedback and receiving feedback) prior to completing the final draft.
- Evidence a mastery of employing style, voice (including the use of choices in sentence structure and word choice) evidencing rhetorical skills.
- Analyze varying perspectives of rhetoric and religions in assignments.

Prerequisites:

Good standing in the MA or other graduate course, or special permission from the instructor. Knowledge of Microsoft Word, and Modern Language Association (MLA) style.

Materials

- **Required Materials to purchase/acquire in print or electronically (3):**

Bayne, Tim. *Philosophy of Religion: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford UP, 2018.

Diamond, Miriam Rosalyn. *Encountering Faith in the Classroom: Turning Difficult Discussions into Constructive Engagement*. 1st edition. Sterling, VA: Stylus Pub., 2008.

McCutcheon, Russell T. *Critics Not Caretakers: Redescribing the Public Study of Religion*. State U of New York P, 2001.

- **Free-Access Course Materials:**

Anderson, Chris. *The Description of an Embarrassment: When Students Write About Religion*.

This is available from several electronic sources but is also available as a pdf. in the course.

DePalma, Michael-John, and Jeffery M. Ringer. *Mapping Christian Rhetorics: Connecting Conversations, Charting New Territories*. Taylor and Francis, 2014.

Doi:10.4324/978135769912.

Monaghan, Patricia. "Physics and Grief." *Fourth Genre*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2003 pp. 24-38.

Optional Readings: Recommended in accordance with your interests. These articles can provide sources for final papers or class presentations:

Dixon, Peter (1971). *Rhetoric* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.utpb.edu/10.4324/9781315388861>

Rereading the Sophists: Classical Rhetoric Reconfigured, available as an electronic book in the UTPB online library (a couple of chapters). This is a fairly new take on the Sophists as having been marginalized, a bit of a feminist viewpoint should your interest be in writing about the various perspectives of the Sophists as long as you take a stance.

Porrovecchio, Mark J. *Reengaging the Prospects of Rhetoric Current Conversations and Contemporary Challenges*. Routledge, 2010. This is available electronically in the UTPB Library databases and describes classical rhetoric and varying viewpoints on modern rhetoric.

- **Other materials: Access to a computer with a microphone, web camera, Microsoft TEAMS, and Outlook 365.**

Important Academic Dates

UTPB [Academic Calendar](#)

Course Overview

Course Description: This course immerses graduate-level students to an emerging argument in contemporary scholarship that concerns the rhetorical usages of religion in secular spaces. It also offers techniques of conducting civil discourse of contested topics.

Weighted Grades/Percentages

Mid-Term Exam: 10

Assignments: 15

Individual Video Class Lecture: 15

Analytical Discussion Boards: 20

Final Paper with Abstract: 20

Presentation/Video and Responses: 20

- **Grading:**

Course Activity	Points	Percentage of Total Grade
Assignments (5)	150	15
Final Paper & Abstract	200	20
Mid-Term Exam	100	10
Video Class Presentation	150	15
Video Peer Review and Responses for Final Paper	200	20
Analytic Discussion Boards Topic # 1	200	20

Course Activity	Points	Percentage of Total Grade
Topic # 2 Topic # 3 Topic # 4		
Total	1000	100

- **Grading Scale:**

Grade Range	Letter Grade
90 and above	A
80 to 89	B
70 to 79	C
60 to 69	D
Less than 60	F

**Unless otherwise stated, all materials, activities, and assessments are required and are not optional.*

- **Communication, Grading & Feedback:**

My preferred method of contact is through Canvas email and/or Microsoft TEAMS live conferences. I will likely be available every day from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and will try to respond to emails promptly the day that they are sent. Please do not wait until late in the evening—especially when an assignment is due—to try to contact me. Since this is a short, intense course, I will grade assignments on Sundays and Mondays. Feedback will include rubrics and comments in your feedback box that is included with each assignment. Early submissions of the final paper will receive extra credit, 5 points added to the total paper grade.

Submission of Course Assessment Activities: Please save your documents in .docx or .doc. Do not submit files in .rtf or .pages format. **Do not submit Google Docs.** Also, it is wise to paste your main discussion posts in MS Word and save them to your computer

first, before clicking on the Submit button in Canvas. This way, in case of an internet problem, you will have your materials backed up. You will submit your drafts and final papers to drop boxes on the Modules pages.

- **Time Management:**

A student should expect to spend three hours on preparation and learning assignments for every semester credit hour. If a class is a 3-semester credit hour class, it is expected that a student should spend about 9 hours out of class on assignments in addition to 3 hours of in-class time for a total of about 12 hours per week to obtain an "A" in a class. It is important to develop a Time Management Plan to be successful.

Policies

- **Analytical Discussion Boards**

Discussion Boards are primarily for discussing course related topics and issues. An analytical discussion board requires more critical analysis to be included in your main post. A more detailed page and rubric further explain the schema for the initial post in Module One.

Best practices include:

- Read all message postings in online discussion.
- Respond to the prompt directly.
- Reply to a minimum of two other student posts.
- Use a person's name in the body of your message when you reply to their message.
- Avoid postings that are limited to 'I agree' or 'great idea', etc.
- Ensure responses to questions are meaningful, reflective.
- Support statements with concepts from course readings, refer to personal experience, examples, quotations from the readings and even quotations from fellow students.
- Follow **Rules of Behavior (below)**.

- **Rules of Behavior**

Discussion areas are public to every student in this class (including your instructor) who will see what you write. Please pay attention to the language you use and adhere to the following guidelines:

- Do not post anything too personal.
- Do not use language that is inappropriate for a classroom setting or prejudicial in gender, race, or ethnicity or religious ideas.

- Do not use all caps in the message box unless you are emphasizing (it is considered shouting).
- Be courteous and respectful to other people on the list.
- Do not overuse acronyms like you would use in text messaging. Some of the list participants may not be familiar with acronyms.
- Use line breaks and paragraphs in long responses.
- Write your full name at the end of the posting.
- Be careful with sarcasm and subtle humor; one person's joke is another person's insult.

Make-Up/Late Submission Policy

All course activities must be submitted before or on set due dates and times. If the student is unable to abide by the due dates and times, it is her/his responsibility to contact the instructor immediately. In a seven-week course there is little time to extend due dates. Please advise as soon as a problem arises.

- **Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism/Cheating**

The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. Any suspicion of academic dishonesty will be reported and investigated. A student who engages in scholastic dishonesty that includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, and collusion will receive an "F" for the course.

All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. For complete information on UTPB student conduct and discipline procedures consult the [University's Handbook:Scholastic Dishonesty](#).

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor, or the attempt to commit such acts.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to the appropriation of, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, other expression

and media, and presenting that material as one's own academic work being offered for credit.

- **Attendance and Class Participation**

Regular and active participation is an essential, unmistakably important aspect of this online course. Students will log on a minimum of three times every seven days. All students are expected to do the work assigned, notify the instructor when emergencies arise.

- **Tracking**

Learning management systems have tracking features. Statistics are collected that quantifies how often and when students are active in the course and provides information if the student has accessed different pages of the course.

- **Absenteeism**

All the course activities have set dates to be completed and submitted. After the due dates the activities will not be available for the students. Not logging into an online course is considered absenteeism. Contact instructor immediately in case of emergency medical situation.

Course Incomplete/Withdrawal/Grade Appeal

All students are required to complete the course within the semester they are signed up. Incomplete grades for the course are rarely given, will only be granted if the student provides a valid, documented excuse for not being able to complete the course on time, and has contacted the instructor prior to the scheduled last class to request an extension. The student signs a contract that includes the incomplete course activities and the new due dates.

Find information and dates regarding drops and withdrawals consult the University Handbook: [Drops and Withdrawals](#) and [Appeal Process](#).

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Students with Disabilities: The University of Texas Permian Basin in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act provides “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities. Only those students, who an Instructor has received an official Letter of Accommodation (LOA) sent by the Office of ADA for Students, will be provided ADA academic accommodations.

ADA Officer for Students: Mr. Paul Leverington

Address: Mesa Building 4242/4901 E. University, Odessa, Texas 79762

Voice Telephone: 432-552-4696
Email: ada@utpb.edu

For the accessibility and privacy statements of external tools used within courses, go to [Accessibility and Privacy Statements](#).

Computer Skills, Technical & Software Requirements

This course is designed as a web-based class, which necessitates specific computer expertise on the part of the student, specific computer equipment or programs, and a commitment on the part of the student beyond that of most other courses.) Student will need to create word processing documents, save files, submit files.

Computer Skills, Technical & Software Requirements

To effectively complete the requirements of the course, you must have the following:

- An e-mail address linked to Canvas (checked daily).
- Daily access to your UTPB Canvas account.
- A working computer and Internet connection, which will allow you to receive all course materials.

Please visit the following page for computer technical requirements: [Technical Requirements](#).

You will find:

1. Requirements
2. Plug-In Helper
3. Set up Information
4. Links to 24/7 Help Desk

I will review your postings, and sometimes respond. Note that I do not allow late responses or make-up assignments for the Discussion Board unless you have a documented emergency. I will grade your assignments based on three criteria: 1) meeting the length requirements and deadlines; 2) writing a coherent and thoughtful response to the prompts; 3) using standardized sentence grammar and a clear, concise style.

Guidelines for Posting Videos. For the Class Lecture Video, and Peer Review of Your Final Paper Video and Discussion Board, you will be required to submit a short (10-15-minute) videos. These presentations will be assessed somewhat differently than your usual discussion board posts. In addition to the usual rubric (meeting the length and deadline requirements; writing a

coherent and thoughtful response; and using standardized sentence grammar and a clear, concise style), I will also grade your video presentations according to their use of graphics, sound quality, and body language.

Additional Technical Information: UTPB provides all students with a UTPB email address upon enrollment into classes. Microsoft Office 365 is the email software which delivers a cloud productivity suite of tools to UTPB students. Access Office 365 information and UTPB email at UTPB Office 365 Page. Also, if you live near to campus you are welcome to use the UTPB computer labs (Student Success Center, Science and Technology Lab, Dunagan Library computers). Most of these computers have webcams installed. Hey, you've paid the fees, why not take advantage of them? If you don't have a web cam installed on your computer, you might also check if your cellular phone can record video, or your digital camera. Also, certain handheld video cameras can be transmitted to a digital environment. One word of caution, though: before you begin to record your video with one of these devices, make sure you can upload these videos to your computer first.

Often public libraries have some of these things available for use; also, you might know of friends who can help you out.

- **Guidelines for Making a Video:** First, check to make sure your webcam (video, microphone, etc.) is working properly. Make a test video before recording your answer. Be sure your microphone is set loud enough that others can hear it. Your message should be between 10-15 minutes long. Anything less won't do justice to the topic; anything more will be too overwhelming for the listener. I strongly recommend before you record your video, you write out an outline of your presentation first, rather than recording on the fly. As someone who tends to ramble on video, I have found it much easier and less stressful to have something written out before I make my recording. Do not merely read your message, however; make eye contact with the reader and avoid a monotone voice. Now, with that said, we do need to accommodate students in the class who have hearing impairments. So, when you are done recording your video, you need to write a transcript for your video, which transcribes word for word what you have done. You can then upload your transcript to Canvas or YouTube (see below and this link for help). Make sure you know where the video is saved on your computer once you are through recording. I find it easiest to save my video to my desktop, so it will be easy to locate later, when I go to upload it. While you are welcome to include graphics and flash files in your video, you are not required to do so, and should avoid distractions from the main message of your video.
- **Uploading your video:** Bear in mind that large files take some time to upload to the UTPB server. The easiest way to record and upload will be to use the Canvas video tool. For help recording videos in Canvas Discussions, see this link: [How do I record a video using the Rich Content Editor as an instructor?](#) UTPB Office 365 provides a video recorder in Stream to upload and share your recordings. Use your UTPB email to access Office 365 Video at Office 365. You can share the link to your video from there. You are also welcome to upload your video to YouTube and then copy the URL link to the DB forum. You will need to create a free account, or login with your Google account, if you

have one, to upload a video to YouTube. Please make sure to make your privacy setting "unlisted" - this way only those of us with the link to the video will be able to access your video, rather than using YouTube's search engine.

- **Concluding Remarks on Multimedia:** In an online environment, the human element is often lost. We hope that with video presentations on the discussion boards, we will get to know you a little better, to hear you and see you, to see how your personality informs your responses to these texts. It is also vitally important that you learn how to manipulate online video tools now, so you will be prepared to use them in your future pursuits. I know this is a lot to digest, and it might freak you out, particularly if you're not a tech-savvy person. Don't worry – help is available.
- In this course, you will be asked to do some research using online databases. As a student of this class, you have access to many of the digital databases provided by the UTPB Online Library (see the tab J. Conrad Dunagan Library at the top of your screen once you log into Canvas). Depending on the network you are using, you might or might not have access to the following databases:
 - Academic Host Complete/EbscoHost
 - E-books EbscoHost
 - Jstor

If you cannot access the links above, it is recommended that you talk to your professor or network administrator to make them aware of this. Network settings (especially for public areas such as schools or places or work) may need to be adjusted to allow access to the links above.

Students can use cloud version of Word, PowerPoint and other Microsoft products through use of their UTPB Outlook 365 and UTPB email address. For more information refer to [UTPB Office 365 Page](#).

For the accessibility and privacy statements of external tools used within courses, go to [Accessibility and Privacy Statements](#).

MS Teams

During this course, it may be a good idea to utilize MS Teams, especially if you need to set up a meeting between classmates.

Use the [Microsoft Teams Meetings in Canvas Instruction Sheet](#) and scroll down to the **Sign into Microsoft** and **Create Meeting** section. This should provide you with instructions for creating Teams meetings in Canvas. You will need to sign into Microsoft, which requires a free download of MS Office 365.

- **Computer Technical Requirements**

See [Technical Requirements](#).

- **Online Student Authentication**

UTPB requires that each student who registers for an online course is the same student who participates in, completes, and receives credit for the course. UTPB's Distance Education Policy requires faculty members to employ at least two methods of verification to ensure student identities. To access online courses students must login to the UTPB learning management system using their unique personal identifying username and secure password. UTPB's Distance Education Policy requires at least one additional student identification method within the course that has been determined and approved by the faculty or academic program. This course satisfies the second method of student authentication by: Proctored exams using an approved photo ID*.

- Presentation of approved photo ID* through a web cam and video recording.
- Synchronous or asynchronous video activities using an approved photo ID*.

*Approved up-to-date photo identifications are: passports, government issued identification, driver's licenses, military ID from DoD. Dual credit and early college high school students use school district identifications.

Preparation for Emergencies

- **Computer Crash**

Not having a working computer or a crashed computer during the semester will NOT be considered as an acceptable reason for not completing course activities at a scheduled time. NOTE: Identify a second computer before the semester begins, that you can use when/if your personal computer crashes.

- **Complete Loss of Contact**

If you lose contact with course connectivity completely (i.e. you cannot contact me via Canvas or email), you need to call instructor, and leave message regarding connectivity loss and contact information.

- **Lost/Corrupt/Missing Files**

You must keep/save a copy of every project/assignment on an external drive, UTPB Outlook 365 OneDrive, or personal computer. In the event of any kind of failure (e.g. virus infection, student's own computer crashes, loss of files in cyberspace, etc.) or any contradictions/problems, you may be required to resubmit the files.

End-of-Course Evaluation & Instructor Evaluation

Every student is encouraged to complete an end of course evaluation survey provided by UTPB. During the last two weeks of class, there will be an announcement in Canvas, an email, and a button in your course navigation that will take you to any available surveys.

The survey is anonymous, and your responses are confidential. Your feedback is critical to us and to your instructor as we strive to improve our offerings, and our support of you, the students.

Student Support Services

SERVICE	CONTACT
ADA Accommodation/Support	Services for Students with Disabilities (432) 552-4696
Testing Services	Testing Services & Academic Accommodations Department (432) 552-2630
Advising	(432) 552-2661 UTPB Academic Advising Center
Bookstore	UTPB Campus Bookstore (432) 552-0220
Email, Office 365, my.utpb.edu	Information Technology
Financial Aid and Scholarship	UTPB Financial Aid (432) 552-2620
Library	The J. Conrad Dunagan Library Online at (432) 552-2370
Registrar	UTPB Registrar (432) 552-2635

SERVICE	CONTACT
Student Services	Student Services (432) 552-2600
Technical Support	Canvas 1-866-437-0867
Tutoring & Learning Resources	If you are taking courses through UTPB the following links provide services: Smarthinking Online Tutoring (provides tutoring services), SmarterMeasure (measures learner readiness for online course).

- **Disclaimer & Rights**

Information contained in this syllabus was to the best knowledge of the instructor considered correct and complete when distributed for use in the beginning of the semester. However, the instructor reserves the right, acting within the policies and procedures of UTPB to make changes in the course content or instructional techniques without notice or obligation. The students will be informed about the changes, if any.

- **Copyright Statement**

Many of the materials that are posted within UTPB courses are protected by copyright law. These materials are only for the use of students enrolled in the course and only for the purpose of the course. They may not be further retained or disseminated.

Schedule

DATE	Assignments/Activities/Topics	Due Date
Week One	<p>Introductions/Rhetoric. Read: Rhetoric lecture, “The Description of an Embarrassment: When Students Write about Religion,” (pdf. file), “When Faith and Science Collide” in <i>Encountering Faith</i>, and “Jesus Christ or Frankenstein.”</p> <p>Complete Discussion Board Introductions, Authentication ID, and available hours for live videoconferences/office hours.</p>	
Week Two	<p>Negotiating Identity and/or Beliefs with Rhetoric.</p> <p>Complete Readings: “<i>Dissoi Logoi</i>,” “<i>Encomium of Helen</i>,” and “The Consequences of Integrating Faith into Academic Writing: Casuistic Stretching and Biblical Citation.” “When Faith and Science Collide” in <i>Encountering Faith</i>, and “Jesus Christ or Frankenstein.”</p> <p>Watch the video and take the interactive quizzes. These will not be graded. However, they can lead to fodder for another belief that you might want to learn about and can later present to the class.</p> <p>Discussion Board Two: <i>Dissoi Logoi</i> (Opposing Arguments).</p>	
Week Three	<p>Theory: Critics</p> <p>Read (some chapters) of <i>Critics Not Caretakers: Redescribing the Public Study of Religion</i>. Read “Part One,” Chapters 1, 2, 7 and 8.</p> <p>Analytical DB Three. (double points) on “Critics Chapters.”</p>	
Week Four	<p>Philosophy and Religion. <i>Philosophy of Religion: A Very Short Introduction</i> (A couple of chapters).</p> <p>Mid-Term Exam.</p>	
Week Five	<p>Individual Class Presentations</p> <p>Individual 10–15-minute video presentations of an article, belief, non-belief, religion, rhetoric, or concept not addressed in the course. If the video does not include closed captioning, please include a transcript. These videos will be placed into a discussion board format. No comments are required but are encouraged—especially if you have questions for the presenter. Presenter will need to respond to any queries, comments, as long as such discussion items are submitted by July 29.</p>	

DATE	Assignments/Activities/Topics	Due Date
	Completed Discussion Board 4: Presenters	
Week Six	Ten-minute video of your proposal for your final paper. Post videos to a discussion board format by Aug. 3. Respond to EVERYONE in the course with one thing that you like, and a constructive/helpful suggestion.	
Week Seven	<p>NOTE: This is a short week. Final paper and 250-300 Word Abstract Due. No more than 300 words.</p> <p>Five points extra credit available to be added onto the total paper grade for submissions by Aug. 10.</p>	

Sample Syllabus