

University of Arkansas – Fort Smith
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General Syllabus

RHET 4303 The Art of the Essay

Credit Hours: 3

Lecture Hours: 3

Laboratory Hours: 0

Prerequisite: RHET 3513 Imaginative Writing or consent of instructor

Effective Catalog: 2019-2020

I. Course Information

A. Catalog Description

Instruction in the relationship between ideas, ideology, and rhetoric. Study of source documents from which major ideologies have originated and practice in critical response in essay form. Major writers may include Machiavelli, Jefferson, Thoreau, King, Freud, Jung, Gould, Eiseley, and others.

B. Additional Information

None.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Read comfortably and critically across a wide range of essay forms.
2. Assess and discuss the major features, tropes, and ideas of essays.
3. Explain and demonstrate, through discussion and written response, a sense of the historical import of the essay form, especially in regard to ideological perspective.
4. Write effective essays employing synthesis of ideas and sources.
5. Demonstrate facility with the common features, rhetoric, and commentary in classical essay form.
6. Effectively use primary and secondary sources in classical essay form.

B. University Learning Outcomes

This course enhances student abilities in the following areas:

Analytical Skills**Critical Thinking Skills**

Students will identify problems/issues and develop solutions/analysis. Students will analyze a variety of texts for their rhetorical and/or literary features, as well as analyze the rhetorical situation to which the texts they produce respond.

Communication Skills (written and oral)

Students will communicate proficiently. Students will practice communication skills through discussions, presentations, and a variety of required written assignments.

Ethical Decision Making

Students will model ethical decision-making processes. Students will practice critical response to the writing of others, responsible use of research materials and intellectual property, and the ethical use of persuasion.

Global & Cultural Perspectives

Students will reflect upon cultural differences and their implications for interacting with people from cultures other than their own. Students will analyze the rhetorical situation, produce texts for a variety of audiences, and avoid the use of biased language.

III. Major Course Topics

- A. History of the essay form
- B. Basic features of the classical essay
- C. Basic forms and content of the classical essay
- D. Use of rhetorical tropes in the essay
- E. Classical essayists such as Montaigne and Machiavelli, Jefferson and Franklin
- F. Ideological essayists such as Freud and Marx
- G. Contemporary essay