

Teaching Portfolio:  
Spencer Todd Bennington

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# Teaching Philosophy: Spencer Todd Bennington

The first classroom I ever taught in didn't have desks, a whiteboard to write on, or a projector for PowerPoint presentations. My first classrooms were dusty gym mats on the hardwood floors of community centers and church basements. Because, before I ever taught college writing, I taught Tae Kwon Do. Not just a system of flashy acrobatics or an activity to keep children busy after school, Tae Kwon Do is an art of *becoming*--a philosophy of life-long, critical self-reflection informed by a deep, bodily sense of praxis. My research of embodied rhetorics led me to understand this process as what Hawhee (2004) calls *phusiopoiesis*, the ancient Greek pedagogical belief that students can be shaped or molded--that they can transform. I see this transformation everyday in my martial arts students, and, as a result, I strive to facilitate that same growth in my writing classrooms by teaching mindfulness techniques, designing experiential learning opportunities, and encouraging a critically reflexive mindset.

## Mindfulness of the Body, Mindfulness of the Self

Despite having designed multiple curricula and written my fair share of student learning outcomes, I don't see higher education as something with finite objectives or end goals. Instead, I teach students to embrace a continuous improvement model of learning, one underpinned by mindfulness techniques designed to foster habitual reflection and engender critical reflexivity. I start this training on the first day of class by introducing the concept of arrival/departure exercises, something I make a part of every class. The arrival exercise is simply one minute of meditative silence designed to help students transition from whatever class or job they're coming from, whatever stress they may have been shouldering, and into a state of mind conducive to learning. To achieve this, I always ask students *not* to try to clear their mind, but, instead, to focus intensely on the last aspect of our class that they can remember. This could be a concept, an activity, a question they meant to ask--as long as it's rooted in our work. Focusing in such a way makes it much more difficult for their minds to wander and helps position them more firmly in the present space of the writing classroom. Similarly, departure exercises usually work as a type of "sprint review" for the content covered in that class period. It's an opportunity for students to share something they learned, ask questions, or give feedback on exercises they found problematic or especially helpful. These mindfulness techniques, and others like them, help transform the classroom space into a contemplative place, one where students can take a moment to consider their whole body as it fits into their educational experience, and how that experience is just one component of their larger, more complex life.

## More Than Brains Wired to Laptops

I understand my students to be human beings, ones who each represent a different set of needs when it comes to experiential learning. This understanding helps me design pedagogical opportunities which allow for students to engage with course content on multiple levels. For

example, in my professional writing class, one of my favorite activities involves students creating a set of directions to help a differently-abled user navigate campus. The class ends with me taking on the role of the user and letting my students follow behind me as I try to get from point A to point B. Not only does this engage their bodies in a different way than listening to a lecture, but it offers physical applications for theoretical discussions involving usability, accessibility and ethics in technical communication (especially if they have to write the instructions while I'm teaching on crutches!) The same can be said of other activities like role-playing to demonstrate solutions to common issues when working with a team or even mini-presentations students give to help teach a concept to their peers. To facilitate this kind of experiential learning, I make sure that my students are moving around, talking to each other, writing on the board, or completing some kind of visual or haptic based task at least once per class and never sitting to listen to a lecture for longer than twenty minutes.

## Toward Critically Reflexive Teaching and Learning

It's the combination of these more active, experiential learning exercises and mindfulness techniques, however, that allow for students to move away from simple guided reflection tasks toward developing habits of critical reflexivity. To encourage this transition throughout the course of the semester, I provide students with a heuristic featuring eight intrapersonal skills to track as we move through our assignments. These include invention, enthusiasm, curiosity, confidence, non-action, adaptability, persistence, and receptiveness. So, for example, if a student felt uncomfortable completing the instruction/navigation activity described above, they can reflect on and write about how components of that activity may have made them feel less than *confident* or perhaps *unenthusiastic*. Over time and with practice, instead of simply reflecting, students develop strategies for iteration by isolating what intimidated or challenged them and using that knowledge to become more *adaptable* or *persistent* in the future. Employing a fixed heuristic that allows for students to continuously examine their own embodied learning experience in specific terms trains the kind of habitual critical reflexivity necessary for transformation.

Just as this heuristic for critical reflexivity helps my students construct their own natures, to transform into the educated, working professionals they want to become, it helps me constantly evolve as an instructor. Not only do I use reflexive student writing to help me improve my classroom activities and assignments, I also reflect on these eight intrapersonal skills to challenge myself as a teacher. When analyzing my lesson plans I'll often question whether or not the material will inspire multiple forms of *invention* or pique my students' *curiosity* in different ways. Additionally, I consult these eight principles when evaluating my own classroom performance by asking if I resisted the energy of my students too much, if I need to perform more *non-action* or become more *receptive*. I do this because, ultimately, I believe *phusiopoiesis* to be a process best modeled for students, one that they can eventually accept as an attitude to adopt instead of simply a series of tasks to complete for a grade. It's my hope that if I'm transparent about my own desires to improve and change, that my students will transfer what they've seen and practiced in my class to their future learning and working environments, that they will never become complacent, and that they will keep striving to *become*.

## Summary of Sample Syllabi

I have included two sample syllabi for your review. The first is a graduate syllabus for a history of rhetoric course. The second is a mid-level undergraduate writing course examining online discourse communities, particularly those that discuss the body.

### **E. 387R Fall 2020 Graduate Syllabus**

#### **Rhetorical History: A Survey of Human Rhetorics**

This course is designed to present multiple rhetorical histories in the tradition of human rhetorics. As such, the required readings are extensive and survey not only vastly different historical eras, but multiple cultural contexts as well. One of the biggest challenges in the study of ancient rhetorics has been the slow shift in presenting alternative traditions alongside the Greco-Roman classics as serious sites of study. This course aims to incorporate a wide diversity of traditions to allow students to pursue areas of research important to them. Similarly, this course is designed to be flexible based on the students needs. By the end of the semester, students will have had the opportunity to professionalize by analyzing scholarly journals, responding to CFPs or writing book reviews, they will have collaborated to create a bank of annotations and digital learning tools for future exams, teaching, or scholarship, and they will have produced writing useful for them dependent on their position in the program.

### **E. 379C Fall 2020 Undergraduate Syllabus**

#### **Advanced Topics in Rhetoric and Writing: Bodily Discourse Communities**

This course focuses primarily on analyzing, participating, and fostering inclusion in online discourse communities specific to discussions of the body. Throughout the semester, students will read widely about theoretical and applied bodily conversations all while locating their own examples in digital landscapes. Students should emerge from this class with a better understanding of why some discourse “goes viral” and why other conversations remain hidden. They will also better understand how to communicate effectively in particular communities by understanding the rhetorical nuances of specified discourse. Finally, students will have the opportunity to present their findings and contextualize the connections between digital and physical spaces

where discussions of the body transition to bodily discussion and what this means in terms of understanding rhetoric in the 21st century.

### **E. 387R Fall 2020 Graduate Syllabus**

#### **Rhetorical History: A Survey of Human Rhetorics**

(3 credit hours)

University of Texas at Austin

<b>Instructor: Spencer Bennington</b>	<b>Email: spencerbennington@gmail.com</b>
<b>Course Location:TBA</b>	<b>Course Time:TBA</b>
<b>Office Location:</b>	<b>Course Section:</b>

**Note:** This syllabus is a living document subject to change. All changes will appear in Canvas and you will be notified via email.

#### **Course Description:**

Welcome! This course is a survey of what Xing Lu lovingly refers to as “human rhetorics.” This term implies that the art of communicating effectively or truly connecting with others in meaningful ways is something inherent in our species, not something necessarily unique to a particular culture or society. As such, in order to understand the history of rhetoric, one must travel through space and time to investigate many different societal contexts and a diversity of civilizations. This course will examine rhetorical histories extending from not only the Greco-Roman and European tradition, but from the Ancient Near East, Mesopotamia, India, the Far East, the African Diaspora, as well as the early Americas. Students will be asked to think critically not only about the geographical and cultural contexts of these rhetorical traditions, but how these rhetorics are materialized, embodied, or performed by different cultures. Finally, students will move toward an understanding of how studying histories of rhetoric impacts contemporary scholarship, theory, and pedagogy.

#### **Required Texts:**

*The Rhetorical Tradition*, Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg 2nd edition  
*Rhetoric Before and Beyond the Greeks*, Roberta Binkley and Carol S. Lipson 2004

*Ancient Non-Greek Rhetorics*, Roberta Binkley and Carol S. Lipson 2009

## **Recommended Texts**

*Rhetoric Retold : Regendering the Tradition From Antiquity Through the Renaissance*, Cheryl Glenn 1997

*Rhetoric in Ancient China: 5th-3rd Century BCE*, Xing Lu 1998

*Understanding African American Rhetoric*, Ronald L. Jackson II and Elaine B. Richardson 2003

*American Indian Rhetorics of Survivance*, Ernest Stromberg 2006

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

- Understand rhetoric as a human enterprise, one that takes many forms dependent on culture, context, and time period.
- Describe key components of multiple rhetorical traditions in regular class presentations.
- Analyze primary historical texts as well as contemporary scholarship in the history of rhetoric
- Compose weekly annotations and other instructive documents for use by interested audiences outside of the class
- Create visually engaging materials to effectively communicate the importance of studying the history of rhetoric and its many facets.
- Collaborate with other scholars in designing cumulative digital projects representative of the major topics covered in the course.

## **Major Assignments**

To accomplish these outcomes, all students will be asked to complete the following assignments:

### 1. **Class Participation** (10% of Final Grade)

Show up on time. Do the work. Do it to the best of your ability. These are the three things I ask. If, for any reason, you have trouble with any of these three things, you should contact me directly as soon as possible so we can discuss solutions. This is a graduate level course with graduate level expectations.

### 2. **Weekly Annotations and Collaborative Bibliography** (10% of Final Grade)

Every week you should be writing two annotations around a page-length for two different primary source readings. These will help you get a handle on the major points in that reading as well as connect it to other schools of thought, rhetorical traditions, or scholarly articles. These annotations will all be stored in a shared digital space (like Google Drive) and by the end of the semester you will collaborate with your classmates to create a unified bibliography covering most of the material for the semester. This document can be valuable for you in the future when taking exams, planning a thesis/dissertation, or when writing a literature review for an academic article. This bibliography will, in its final form, be publicized to help other students interested in the history of rhetoric.

### 3. **Student Led Discussions of Readings** (15% of Final Grade)

Every week, students will be asked to present an article to the class. Most of these have been selected for you but, toward the end of the semester, you will have to bring in readings of your choosing. These presentations are designed to help facilitate discussion, so try to use this 10-15 minutes like you would in your own classroom. Have questions prepared, maybe some visual element like a handout, maybe some kind of short activity--this is a space for you to practice your teaching skills.

### 4. **Scholarly Journal Analysis** (15% of Final Grade)

To help you better familiarize yourself with the field, you will be assigned a scholarly journal focused on the history of rhetoric to analyze. You must create a spreadsheet for a two year period listing the published articles, authors, and general thesis for each. This assignment is designed to help expose you to more scholarship and also make you aware of the changing trends in the contemporary study of ancient rhetorics should you want to publish in this field.

## 5. Digital Visualization Project (20% of Final Grade)

Since we will be covering so much material this semester, it's important to take time to focus on a particular tradition, culture, or concept and show its nuances. For this project, I want you to make something electronically (so it's easier to distribute) with a clear visual design (so it engages audiences outside this classroom.) What you make is up to you--maybe you are interested in timelines or maps and the chrono-spatial elements of history, maybe you're interested in photo albums and the archival elements, maybe you want to film a documentary about the many ways people embody a particular rhetorical concept--this is up to you. This project may take some time to complete so I'm happy to allow you to collaborate with another student. **Note:** Any students participating in a collaborative assignment must complete a team member assessment for all group members.

## 6. Seminar Paper OR Final Portfolio (30% of Final Grade)

Most graduate seminars culminate in a seminar paper\*. This can be good if you are decidedly interested in the history of rhetoric and plan to pursue that as a researcher/teacher. But, if you are a newer student, you may choose to complete a Final Portfolio of alternate materials instead. This portfolio can be different for each student and can include any number of documents including book reviews for texts we didn't explore in this class\*\*, proposals for conferences, blog posts for public audiences, teaching materials like assignments or syllabi, etc. Any student who wants to turn in a portfolio must draft a grading contract and have me sign it by week 10 so I can approve the work you plan to do.

\*If you wish to collaborate with another student on the seminar paper, I will allow it.

**Note:** Any students participating in a collaborative assignment must complete a team member assessment for all group members.

\*\*Some texts that you may consider for book reviews include:

*Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie* –LuMing Mao

*Rhetorics of the Americas: 3114 BCE to 2012 CE* –Damian Baca

*Survivance, Sovereignty, and Story: Teaching American Indian*

*Rhetorics*--Lisa King

**Note:** There are many others, these are just a few that I wanted to work into the syllabus but ran out of space for.

## Course Calendar

Week	In Class Topics	Due Before Class
<b>Week 1</b>	<p>What is “rhetoric” and where did it come from?</p> <p>Why study the history of rhetoric?</p> <p>How this class works (student discussions, assignment expectations, course policies)</p>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Royster, “Disciplinary Landscaping”</li> <li>● Bizzell and Herzeberg “General Introduction”</li> <li>● “Introduction” to Rhetoric Before and Beyond the Greeks</li> <li>● “Introduction” to Ancient Non-Greek Rhetorics</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2</b>	<p>The Greeks and their predecessors in the Ancient Near East</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● “The Birth of Rhetoric”</li> <li>● “The Rhetoric of Origins and the Other”</li> <li>● “Rhetoric and Identity: A Study of Egyptian Non Royal Tombs and Tomb Autobiographies”</li> </ul>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Part 1 of Bizzell and Herzeberg (through Aristotle)</li> <li>● Glenn 1997, Chapter one</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annotations for at least two of the selected primary source readings</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b>	<p>The Romans and the Formalization of Rhetorical Education in the West</p> <p>A continued discussion of the Ancient Near East and Biblical rhetoric</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● “Nommo, Kawaida, and communicative practice: bringing good into the world”</li> <li>● “Ancient Egyptian Rhetoric: It All Comes Down to Maat”</li> <li>● “The Hebrew Bible as another Jewish Sophistic”</li> </ul>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Part 1 of Bizzell and Herzeberg (Anonymous through Quintillian)</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annotations for at least two of the selected primary source readings</li> </ul>

<p><b>Week 4</b></p>	<p>The Ancient Far East: Confucian, Daoist, and Shinto rhetorical traditions</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● “The Use of Eloquence: The Confucian Perspective”</li> <li>● “Reading the Heavenly Mandate”</li> <li>● “The Right Use of True Words”</li> </ul>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lu, 1998 “Conceptualization of Yan and Ming Bian: The School of Confucianism”</li> <li>● Lu, 1998 “Conceptualization of Yan and Ming Bian: The School of Daoism”</li> <li>● Combs, 2006 <i>The Dao of Rhetoric</i> (first 3 chapters)</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annotation for at least one of the readings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 5</b></p>	<p>Re-viewing Classical Rhetoric: Ancient Rhetorics Embodied and In Situ</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● “Performing Embodiable Topoi”</li> <li>● “Reading Augustan Rome: Materiality as Rhetoric In Situ”</li> <li>● “Metis, Metis, Mestiza, Medussa: Rhetorical Bodies across Rhetorical Traditions”</li> </ul>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hawhee, 2004 selected chapters</li> <li>● RSQ 2006 special issue on performing ancient rhetorics</li> <li>● Advances in the History of Rhetoric 2017 special issue rhetoric in situ</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annotations for at least Hawhee and one article from each journal</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 6</b></p>	<p>Embodied Non-Western Rhetorics?</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● “Storytelling as Soul-Tuning”</li> <li>● “Argument in Classical Indian Philosophy”</li> <li>● “Dance and Martial Arts in Timor Leste: The Performance of Resilience in a Post-Conflict Environment”</li> </ul>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wenger, 2015 selected chapters</li> <li>● Kroll, 2013 selected chapters</li> <li>● Tuckett, 2016 “Kendo: Between ‘Religion’ and ‘nationalism.’”</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annotations for at two of the readings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 7</b></p>	<p>Going Medieval on that Rhetoric</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bizzell and Herzeberg Part 2: Medieval Rhetoric</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● “Orality, Magic, and Myth in Ancient Irish Rhetoric”</li> <li>● Borrowman 2008 “The Islamization of Rhetoric”</li> <li>● Copeland 2014 “Living with Uncertainty: Reactions to Aristotle’s Rhetoric in the Later Middle Ages”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Loveridge 2019 “Arabic Interpretations of Aristotle’s Rhetoric in 13th Century Europe” hosted on ashhr.org</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annotations for at least two of the selected primary source readings</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b>	<p>The Renaissance: Part 1</p> <p>Shifting gears toward bringing in your own articles to discuss</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Glenn 1997 Chapter Three (2 students can work together)</li> </ul>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bizzell and Herzeberg Part 3 : Renaissance Rhetoric (intro-Thomas Wilson)</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annotations for at least two of the selected primary source readings</li> </ul>
<b>Week 9</b>	<p>The Renaissance: Part 2</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Glenn 1997 Chapter Four (2 students can work together)</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> For the remainder of the course, you will read and be prepared to discuss an article of your choosing related to the readings for the week OR an area of interest in the history of rhetoric</p>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bizzell and Herzeberg Part 3 : Renaissance Rhetoric (finish reading)</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annotations for at least two of the selected primary source readings</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10</b>	<p>Enlightenment Rhetoric</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student selected articles</li> </ul> <p>Discussion of major assignments due by the end of the course. <b>Note:</b> during this class I expect you to be able to tell me what your topic is if you are doing a seminar paper, or what your plan is if you are doing an alternate assignment sequence.</p>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bizzell and Herzeberg Part 4 : Enlightenment Rhetoric</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annotations for at least two of the selected primary source readings</li> <li>● <b>Scholarly Journal Analysis due</b></li> </ul>

<b>Week 11</b>	<p>19th Century Rhetoric</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student selected articles</li> <li>● “Every man fights for his freedom : the rhetoric of African American resistance in the mid-nineteenth century”</li> <li>● “Resistance and Mediation: The Rhetoric of Irony in Indian Boarding School Narratives”</li> </ul>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bizzell and Herzeberg Part 5: 19t Century Rhetoric</li> <li>● Stromberg, 2006 “Rhetoric and American Indians: An Introduction”</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annotations for at least two of the selected primary source readings</li> </ul>
<b>Week 12</b>	<p>Modern and Postmodern Rhetoric: Part 1</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student selected articles</li> <li>● "The duty of the civilized is to civilize the uncivilized': tropes of Black nationalism in the messages of Five Percent rappers</li> <li>● “Death narratives from the killing fields” narrative criticism and the case of Tupac Shakur”</li> </ul>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bizzell and Herzeberg Part 6: Modern and Postmodern Rhetoric (intro-Burke)</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annotations for at least two of the selected primary source readings</li> </ul>
<b>Week 13</b>	<p>Modern and Postmodern Rhetoric: Part 2</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student selected articles</li> <li>● “Lauryn Hill as lyricist and womanist”</li> <li>● An Afrocentric rhetorical analysis of Johnnie Cochran's closing argument in the O.J. Simpson trial</li> </ul>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bizzell and Herzeberg Part 6: Modern and Postmodern Rhetoric (Burke-conclusion)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 14</b>	<p>Flex Week: We do <b>not</b> need to meet as a class</p> <p>I can do whatever helps you best finish the semester. This includes things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Individual meetings</li> <li>● Workshopping drafts</li> <li>● Recommending resources</li> </ul>	<p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Catch up on your sleep</li> <li>● Prepare for final presentations</li> </ul>

<b>Week 15</b>	Final presentations and advice for moving forward as a scholar/teacher	Assignments-- <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Final Presentation of <b>Digital Visualization Project</b></li><li>● Turn in <b>Final Seminar Paper or Portfolio</b></li></ul>
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## E. 379C Fall 2020 Undergraduate Syllabus

### Advanced Topics in Rhetoric and Writing: Bodily Discourse Communities

(3 credit hours)

University of Texas at Austin

<b>Instructor: Spencer Bennington</b>	<b>Email: spencerbennington@gmail.com</b>
<b>Course Location: TBA</b>	<b>Course Time: TBA</b>
<b>Office Location:</b>	<b>Course Section:</b>

**Note:** This syllabus is a living document subject to change. All changes will appear in Canvas and you will be notified via email.

### Course Description:

In this course, students will learn how to analyze and ethically participate in a specific discipline, profession, or online discourse community, either formal or informal. Students will analyze and learn to compose in the language, style, genre conventions, and technological modalities that characterize the discourse community and its rhetorical situation. Students will consider how to effectively and responsibly participate in the given discourse community and professional discourse communities, in general. The course emphasizes participation in professional discourse communities and the production of professional discourse.

For this section, students will be asked to focus specifically on a discourse community concerned with “the body” in some form or another. These communities could be interested in public policy surrounding the body (dietary restrictions, laws about smoking, women’s health, medical insurance, etc.) , they could be practitioners of a particular bodily art or practice (dance, martial arts, yoga, etc.) or they could simply share some beliefs about bodily aesthetics (tattoos, fashion, makeup, etc.). The point is that despite the “body” being something all humans understand/have/inhabit/use, it takes on multiple different meanings depending on the group discussing it. Your job is to analyze a particular bodily discourse community well enough that you can then participate in those discussions effectively in order to present a strategy to the “uninitiated” for how to succeed in becoming part of such a community.

## **Required Texts\*:**

*The Body*, edited by Fraser and Greco 2005 Routledge

*The Body Reader*, Kosut and Moore 2010 NYU Press

**\*Note:** I will distribute many of the readings from these texts as .pdfs and some are available free to read online through our library. We will be engaging thoroughly with this material, but if the cost of purchasing this is prohibitive, please let me know so we can come up with a solution.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

- Understand the body as rhetorically invented and dynamically defined across multiple discourse communities
- Describe discourse communities fairly and objectively to better understand how they operate, grow, sustain, and shape conversations about the body.
- Analyze excerpts from theoretical texts as well as contemporary scholarship about the body and how different discourse communities understand it.
- Compose weekly annotations and other instructive documents to help you develop a theoretical understanding of different bodily discourse communities
- Create visually engaging materials to effectively communicate how an “uninitiated” participant might successfully engage with a discourse community
- Collaborate with other students in designing a cumulative report and presentation applying the major topics covered in the course.

## **Major Assignments**

To accomplish these outcomes, all students will be asked to complete the following assignments:

### **1. Class Participation (10% of Final Grade)**

Show up on time. Do the work. Do it to the best of your ability. These are the three things I ask. If, for any reason, you have trouble with any of these three things, you should contact me directly as soon as possible so we can discuss solutions. There are a lot of small group activities and discussions planned for

this course, so attending every class is the only way to fully keep up with the material.

## **2. Weekly Annotations and Collaborative Bibliography** (10% of Final Grade)

Every week you should be writing a one page annotation a focused on our major readings. These annotations should 1) summarize the key concepts of what you read, 2) put those concepts in conversation with the introductory material you read or the discussions we've had in class, 3) relate these concepts to examples you've found in your selected discourse communities or other scholarly readings. You will be expected to upload your weekly annotations to a discussion board on Canvas so we can refer to them in our class discussions.

## **3. Student Led Discussions of Readings** (10% of Final Grade)

Every week, students will be asked to present an article to the class. You can sign up to present any two readings from *The Body Reader*. Your goal is to facilitate a class discussion so come prepared with questions to ask your classmates and/or some kind of handout or visual aide to help you keep their attention. Anything you can do to help us better understand the material is appreciated--plan on leading the discussion for about 10-15 minutes.

## **4. Rhetorical Analysis of Discourse** (15% of Final Grade)

Students will analyze the rhetorical and stylistic conventions of a specific discourse community. After the first few weeks of the class, I expect you to have identified a particular online discourse community that focuses specifically on some conversation pertaining to the body. After this time, you will write a rhetorical analysis report describing your findings. You may analyze any or all of the following artifacts:

- Observations of the online discourse circulated in the community
- Professional documents related to or circulated within their chosen field or community
- Policy documents related to the field or community
- Academic articles discussing the field or community and/or its discourse
- Historical facts and trends that have shaped the community over time and/or in various contexts

## 5. Circulating Discourse (15% of Final Grade)

All students will compose discourse for circulation within their chosen community. To do this, you have to first understand the ways in which the members of your discourse communities talk to one another. You will discuss these discourse conventions in terms of important social and ethical consequences--e.g., who's looped in and who's left out. Your final report for this project should include a log of weekly postings that you have made to members in your discourse community. Then, answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

- What was posted (i.e., the discourse circulated)?
- Why was the discourse posted (i.e., what was the exigence and/or goal of the post)?
- How did other community members respond?
- What did you learn about the community and/or yourself as a community member from the interaction with the community?

## 6. Final Report/Presentation of Discourse Community Findings

Your final project asks you to collaborate with 2-3 classmates on deliverables that accomplish two purposes:

- Generate a report that presents conclusions about participation in bodily discourse communities using evidence from their specific communities to support their claims
- Create a "field guide" for an uninitiated audience that presents the group's conclusions to orient new participants to the community

Students will work in groups of two to four people. Groups may be formed based on similar interests and/or similar discourse communities or any other criteria. In these groups students will discuss their experiences and work, to include revisiting their rhetorical analyses, and identify general trends, similarities and differences between and among communities that would help characterize the communities for a member of the public just beginning to participate. Topics covered should include conventions of participation and their rhetorical, as well as ethical implications.

Deliverables include the following:

- A collaboratively written report that synthesizes students' individual experiences and identifies trends and insights that impact participation in the group's general community (i.e., profession, discipline, field, etc.) and offers recommendations for productive discourse, to include any ethical issues of which members became aware during the course of participating
- A deliverable in a non-textual medium (i.e., an infographic, series of memes, website, slide presentation, video, etc.) that would serve to initiate a new member **or** addresses a problem or issue observed during participation to which new member should be sensitized
- A presentation that addresses the material covered in the report and also presents the group's non-textual deliverables
- A rhetorical analysis from each member (individual) that discusses how and why the deliverables were made and also summarizes what each student has learned about participation in professional discourse communities (Critical reflection on the assignment and the course)

## Course Calendar

Week	In Class Topics	Due Before Class
<b>Week 1</b>	<p>What is "discourse" and how does it form communities?</p> <p>What is a body and who's talking about it?</p> <p>How this class works (student discussions, assignment expectations, course policies)</p>	
<b>Week 2</b>	<p>Understanding Discourse Communities</p> <p>Locating examples of different bodily discourse communities</p> <p>Discuss expectations of student-led discussions</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "The Body's Problems with Illness"</li> <li>• "Laboring Now"</li> </ul>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swales, J. M. (2017). Reflections on the Concept of Discourse Community. <i>Composition Forum</i>, 37.</li> <li>• McDonald, What is Discourse?</li> <li>• Introduction to <i>The Body Reader</i></li> </ul>

		Assignments-- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annotate the Swales reading and post in our discussion board</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b>	Defining the body historically and in different disciplines.  How different communities think about the body.  Student-led discussions of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Am I good Enough for my Family"</li> <li>"Assume the Position"</li> </ul>	Readings-- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part 1 of <i>The Body</i>: What is a body? (students will be split into groups and assigned different excerpts to focus on)</li> </ul> Assignments-- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annotate primary source for discussion board</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b>	Selecting your own discourse communities for analysis  Student-led discussions of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"The Phenomenology of Death, Embodiment, and Organ Transplantation"</li> <li>"Chemically Reactive Bodies, Knowledge, and Society"</li> </ul>	Readings-- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The Body</i> Part 2 assigned sections</li> </ul> Assignments-- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annotation of primary source for discussion board</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5</b>	How to write a rhetorical analysis of a discourse community.  Student-led discussions of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Made by work"</li> <li>"Embodied Capitalism and the Meth Economy"</li> </ul>	Readings-- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The Body</i> Part 3 assigned sections</li> </ul> Assignments-- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annotation of primary source for discussion board</li> <li><b>Rhetorical Analysis draft due</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b>	Collective Feedback on Rhetorical Analysis Drafts	Readings-- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collective feedback file for revision</li> </ul> Assignments-- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise draft and submit <b>final rhetorical analysis</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 7</b>	Learning to participate effectively in	Readings--

	<p>discourse communities</p> <p>Begin circulating discourse and logging your online activity</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Extreme bodies, extreme culture”</li> <li>• “The Racial Nose”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Body Part 4</i> assigned sections</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annotation of primary source for discussion board</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b>	<p>Evaluating your own discourse and trying to go “viral.”</p> <p>Creating a draft plan for circulating discourse assignment</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “To Die For: The Semiotic Seductive Power of the Tanned Body”</li> <li>• “The Naked Self: Being a Body in Televideo Cyber Sex”</li> </ul>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Body Part 5</i> assigned sections</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annotation of primary source for discussion board</li> <li>• <b>Draft of Circulating Discourse</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 9</b>	<p>Collective Feedback on Rhetorical Analysis Drafts</p>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collective feedback file for revision</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise draft and submit <b>final circulating discourse project</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 10</b>	<p>Putting it all together: writing a field-guide for those wishing to enter a new discourse community</p> <p>Establish teams for final project and discourse communities of focus</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Manscaping: The Tangle of Nature, Culture, and Male Body Hair”</li> <li>• “Incongruent Bodies: Teaching While Leaking”</li> </ul>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Body Part 6</i> assigned sections</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annotation of primary source for discussion board</li> </ul>

<b>Week 11</b>	<p>Outlining major deliverables for final project, establishing team roles, creating work plans</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Envisioning the body in relation: Finding Sex, Changing Sex.</li> <li>• “Scars”</li> </ul>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Body</i> Part 7 assigned sections</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annotation of primary source for discussion board</li> </ul>
<b>Week 12</b>	<p>Drafting collaborative reports in class. Discussion of visual rhetoric for final project.</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Slippery Slopes: Media, Disability, and Adaptive Sports”</li> <li>• “Hey Girl, am I More than my Hair?”</li> </ul>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Body</i> Part 8 assigned</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annotation of primary source for discussion board</li> </ul>
<b>Week 13</b>	<p>Wrapping up major discussions and preparing for final presentations.</p> <p>Student-led discussions of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Fighting Abjection: Representing Fat Women”</li> <li>• “Images of Addiction”</li> <li>• “The Ana Sanctuary”</li> </ul>	<p>Readings--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please re-read any material that may be useful in framing your final reports</li> </ul> <p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Collaborative Report Draft Due</b></li> </ul>
<b>Week 14</b>	<p>Group conferences: Your team will schedule a time to meet with me during our normally scheduled class time to discuss the final project</p>	<p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise draft of discourse community findings</li> <li>• Prepare final presentation</li> </ul>
<b>Week 15</b>	<p>Final presentations and assessment of instructor, course, and teammates.</p>	<p>Assignments--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Presentation of <b>Discourse Community Findings</b></li> <li>• Turn in <b>Final Report and</b></li> </ul>

		<b>Critical Reflection of Assignment and Course</b>
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# Summary of Teaching Evaluations: Spencer Todd Bennington

## Introduction: The Bias of Evaluations

Student evaluations of teaching are a flawed assessment instrument in a number of ways. To utilize these documents as serious evidence for tenure, promotion, or hiring is a discriminatory practice. I say this because of the many well-documented studies of gender and racial bias in such evaluations (for example, Mengel, Sauerrman and Zolitz 2018). With this in mind, however, I've always told my students to take these evaluations seriously so that I can learn from them and take steps to actively improve my pedagogy. Still though, when I read effusively positive comments about my teaching persona, I wonder how my positionality as a fairly extroverted, straight white male effects my students understanding of my teaching.

For example, a student in my spring professional writing course wrote:

*Mr B is one of the coolest professors I've ever had while still being an excellent teacher. He teaches information effectively and gets everyone in class involved. He can be professional and personable which is something a lot of professors can't do. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting him and working with him on various projects in and outside of class. Give this man a raise.*

## Locating Points of Improvement

Because I'm aware of my privilege as an instructor, I actively encourage my students to give me critical feedback on what they would like to see changed. So, besides the comments about me being a "cool" or "personable" teacher deserving of a raise, I also receive feedback like this:

*I liked how students got to turn in a draft first, in order to get feedback and improve their score. In the future, however, I think it would be beneficial to have the guidelines of each project more specified before the draft, so that students can get a better idea of how the project should look.*

What the student seems to want is clear assignment guidelines before they compose a draft and possibly even an example of the kind of document they are to produce. I pedagogically disagree with this because I want the students to work through the invention phase on their own. So, how do I help them feel like they have more initial guidance without telling them exactly what to do? I decided to start creating rubrics with my students as a class before the draft was due to help them think through the most important elements of the assignment.

When I did, students responded with a positive critique by saying:

*While making the rubric with the whole class was a great idea, I feel that it should have been done more regularly and clearer. This would have helped a lot in the completion of the independent assignments.*

This lets me know that I'm on the right track but that I have some tuning to do to make this practice better for my next class. And that's the part of evaluations that I find particularly useful, the dialogue between teacher and student.

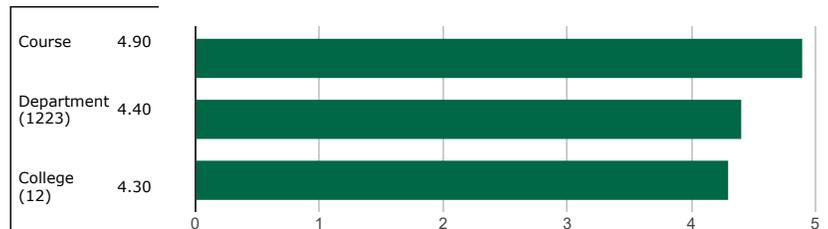
## Comparative Quantitative Data from Most Recent Teaching Evaluations

## Section 2. Comparative Section

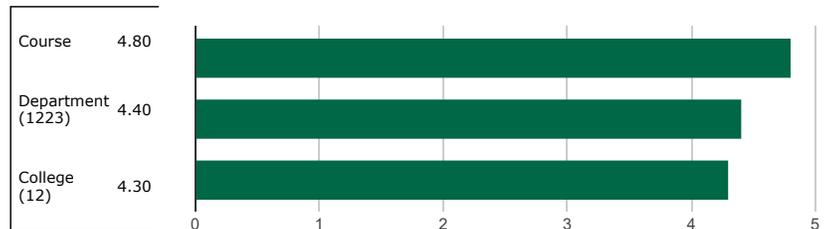
The charts below compare how the students in your course rated you as compared to all of the instructors in the department, and all of the instructors in the college.

Select your rating of the following statements as pertaining to **Spencer Bennington**

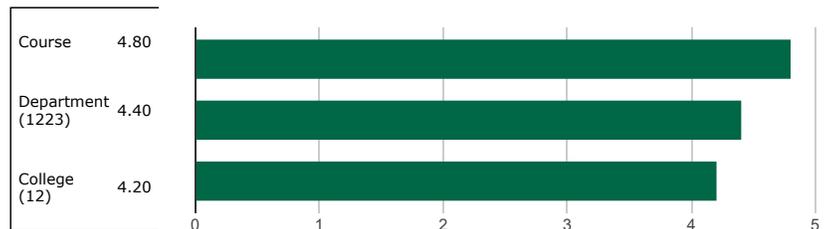
### Overall



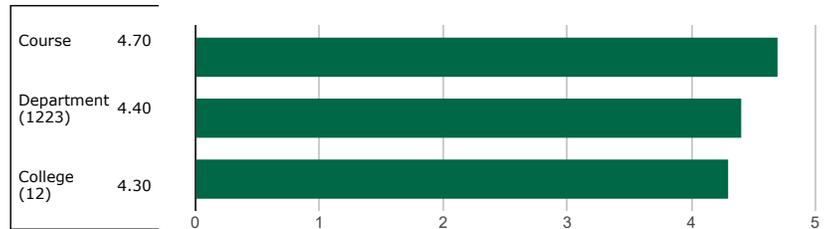
### 1. Description of Course Objectives & Assignments



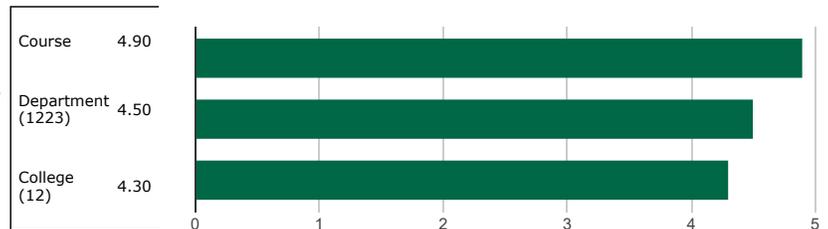
### 2. Communication of Ideas and Information



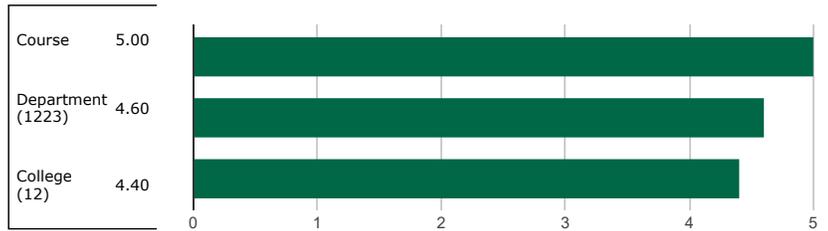
### 3. Expression of Expectations for Performance



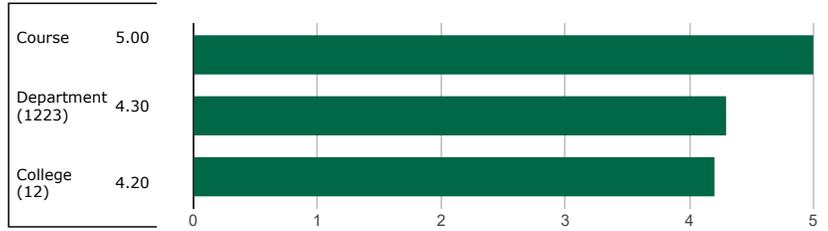
### 4. Availability to Assist Students In or Out of Class



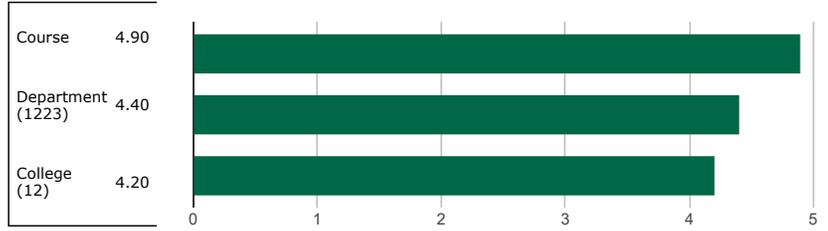
5. Respect and Concern for the Students



6. Stimulation of Interest in the Course



7. Facilitation of Learning



8. Overall Rating of the Instructor

