Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

Instructor: DiCaglio, J  
Course: 354  
Title: Modern Rhetorical Theory

Description: Our lives are saturated by language designed to persuade us--to get us to do things, say things, or be things. The study of rhetoric, as the study of persuasion, is to dive into these persuasions, to begin to understand their structure and form so that we can more carefully and intelligently navigate the complex cultural landscape we are forced to live within. This course will focus on the major theoretical texts of the twentieth century reflecting on language, propaganda, semiotics, media, and culture. We will focus primarily on this question of how to understand and work with persuasive influences in an age overburdened with information. In doing so, we will cultivate a new perspective of the role of language and its power in our lives, geared towards opening ourselves to the variability of persuasions rather than confining ourselves to pre-set opinions and beliefs. Along the way, we are likely to encounter discussions about technology, science, globalization, new medias, the environment, war, politics, and even spirituality--but all with an eye towards cultivating a greater sensitivity to how arguments function and a generosity for our collective struggle with our own linguistic structures.