A Rhetoric of Ordinary Objects (ENGL 1410 / Spring 2019)

Instructor info
Nate Siebert
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Office hours
Columbine 1024
Tuesday / Thursday
8 – 9 / 12:15 – 1:15

Meeting times & locations
- Section 006 Tuesday/Thursday Centennial 245 9:25 – 10:40
- Section 046 Tuesday/Thursday Centennial 245 10:50 – 12:05
- Section 010 Tuesday/Thursday Centennial 275 1:40 – 2:55
- Section 004 Tuesday/Thursday Centennial 275 3:05 – 4:20

Overview
“Things,” write Scot Barnett and Casey Boyle, “provoke thought, incite feeling, circulate affects, and arouse in us a sense of wonder. But things are more than what they mean or do for us. They are also vibrant actors, enacting effects that exceed (and are sometimes in direct conflict with) human agency and intentionality. Things are rhetorical, in other words.” “But,” asks Martin Heidegger, “what is a thing?” A Rhetoric of Ordinary Objects is a study in object-oriented rhetoric, a study of the ways in which things are persuasive, the ways in which objects make arguments, the ways in which material moves us. Students each conduct a semester-long research project on an ordinary object of their choosing, using a deep investigation of an ordinary object to reveal patterns of historical change, to shed light on political conflict, to say something about social life.

Things you'll need
A composition book, a pen, a copy of Writing Arguments (brief 10th edition), a copy of any book in the Object Lessons series (available at objectsobjectsobjects.com/books), a university email account, imagination, curiosity, a high tolerance for chaos.
Coursework

- **Rhetorical analysis** (10%). A close reading of any book in the *Object Lessons* series (available at objectsobjectsobjects.com/books), and an opening experiment in thinking about what a deep investigation of ordinary objects can reveal about history, economy, environment, politics, and social life. Due February 12.

- **Research Project Proposal** (10%). A description of the object you plan to research, why you're curious about that object, and what you think you might learn, plus a list of books, articles, essays, or films that might help you begin. Due March 5.

- **Literature Review** (20%). A synthesis of the sources you've found in your research on the object, with a focus on the object’s composition, its history and impacts, its relationship with value systems, and proposals and predictions about its future. Due April 2.

- **Research Paper** (25%). The story of your research project, from the initial spark of curiosity, to an argument about what the object reveals about history, economy, environment, politics, or social life. Due week 15 at Writing Conference.

- **Gathering Book** (10%). A sort-of catch-all composition book, a space for collecting quotes, references, newspaper clippings, photographs, rants, sketches, and freewriting. Due week 15 at Writing Conference.

- **Writing Conference** (10%). A one-on-one meeting between you and me to read and discuss your Research Paper and your Gathering Book. Week 15 (schedule TBD).

- **Pop-up Museum** (15%). A temporary installation of the objects of our research, designed and curated collaboratively for a space and audience of our choosing. Open week 16.

We'll discuss additional details for each assignment throughout the semester.

**Final grade scale**

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**Schedule** [Assignments and readings to complete before class are listed in brackets.]

**Week 1**
- January 24. *Proof of Purchase*. Intro to the Gathering Book / Intro to the garbage list. [Bring *Object Lesson* proof of purchase and composition book to class.]

**Week 2**
- January 29: *10 Cars*. Freewriting from images of ordinary objects.
- January 31: *Archaeology of Garbage*. Listing, classifying, patterning / Discussion of Rhetorical Analysis assignment. [Bring garbage list to class. Read WA ch. 8, plus pages 32-38, before class.]

**Week 3**
- February 5: *How Not to Destroy a Bird Text*. Close reading and analysis. [Bring your *Object Lesson* to class, fully read and thoroughly marked.]
- February 7: *Movies of the Mind (1)*. Rhetorical Analysis workshop / Discussion of Research Project Proposal assignment. [Bring a draft of your Rhetorical Analysis to class.]

**Week 4**
- February 12: *Objects and Bodies*. A field trip to GOCA. (Meet at the Ent Center for the Arts.) [Rhetorical Analysis due.]
- February 14: *Library as Museum*. A first foray into the library (Meet at the west entrance to the library.)

**Week 5**
- February 19: Library tutorial #1. [Read WA ch. 15 before class.]

**Week 6**
- February 26: Library tutorial #2.
- February 28: *Movies of the Mind (2)*. Research Project Proposal workshop / Discussion of Lit Review assignment. [Bring a draft of your Research Project Proposal to class.]
Schedule (continued)

Week 7

- March 5: Cupholder. Intro to stasis.
  [Research Project Proposal due / Read “Cupholders are Everywhere” & WA ch. 10 before class]
- March 7: Glitter. Intro to arguments of definition.
  [Read “What is Glitter?” & WA ch. 11 before class.]

Week 8

- March 12: Yearbook. Intro to arguments of cause.
  [Read “Why Do People Sign Yearbooks?” & WA ch. 12 before class.]
- March 14: Hot Air Balloon. Intro to arguments of evaluation.
  [Read “Hot Air Balloons are Useless” & WA ch. 13 before class.]

Week 9

- March 19: Children’s Art. Intro to arguments of proposal/prediction.
  [Read “Throw Your Children’s Art Away” & WA ch. 14 before class.]
  [Bring draft of Lit Review to class.]

Week 10

- March 26 & 28: Spring Break. No class.
Schedule (continued)

Week 11

- April 2: Beginning Again. Museum construction as a design principle for research writing. [Lit Review due / Read “How to Make a Pop-Up Museum” before class.]
- April 4: Designing. Building the museum (1) / Planning the Research Paper.

Week 12

- April 9: Collecting. Building the museum (2) / Writing the argument
- April 11: Curating. Building the museum (3) / Writing the argument (continued)

Week 13

- April 16: Interpreting. Building the museum (4) / Writing the conclusion
- April 18: Installing. Building the museum (5) / Putting it all together

Week 14


Week 15

- April 30: Final Conferences. Schedule TBD. [Research Paper and Gathering Book due at conference.]
- May 2: Loose ends. FCQ’s, Program Surveys, and final museum prep

Week 16

- May 7: Pop-up museum. Location and schedule TBD.
- May 9: Pop-up museum. Location and schedule TBD.

Week 17

- May 14 & 16: Finals week. No class.
Appendix to syllabus for *A Rhetoric of Ordinary Objects*:
Required statements on policies, resources, and outcomes

**Student conduct**
“Students and faculty both share responsibility for maintaining a positive educational environment. Faculty have a responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity, and respect. Faculty also have the right and the authority to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which students express opinions. Disruptive students in the academic setting hinder the educational environment. Students who fail to adhere to such reasonable limits shall be subject to disciplinary action(s). ‘Disruption,’ as applied to the academic setting, means verbal and other behavior in the classroom that a faculty member judges as interfering with normal academic functions. Disruptive student conduct is prohibited by Regent Laws, the UCCS Student Code of Conduct and the Student Classroom/Course-Related Behavior Policy. For more information go to the Office of the Dean of Students website at [http://www.uccs.edu/dos/student-conduct/student-code-of-conduct.html](http://www.uccs.edu/dos/student-conduct/student-code-of-conduct.html).”

**Academic ethics**
“All the work that you do for this course must be your own. Intentional and unintentional plagiarism, ranging from turning in someone else’s work as your own to failing to correctly cite and document material borrowed from outside sources, will affect your grade. In some cases, plagiarism can result in receiving a grade of zero on an assignment, and in others, it can result in failing a course. More information is available at [http://catalog.uccs.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=749#Acad_Honor_Code](http://catalog.uccs.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=749#Acad_Honor_Code).”

**Information for students with disabilities**
“If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to register with Disability Services and provide them with documentation of your disability. They will work with you to determine what accommodations are appropriate for your situation. To avoid any delay, you should contact Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and disability accommodations cannot be provided until a Faculty Accommodation Letter has been given to the instructor. Please contact Disability Services for more information at Main Hall room 105, 719-255-3354 or dservice@uccs.edu.”

**SaVE Act: Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act**
“UCCS does not tolerate any act of protected class harassment/discrimination, sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking (on or off campus). We are committed to maintaining a safe and productive educational environment that is free from violence, threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior. The instructor of this course will report incidents of violence in these forms shared by students to the Office of the Dean of Students. If you have experienced violence in any of these forms, you can contact the Office of the Dean of Students for support (719-255-3838, in Main Hall 322). You can also receive support through the University Counseling Center (719-255-3265, in Main Hall 324), the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (719-255-4324, in AOB 528), and campus Public Safety (719-255-3111, in the parking garage across from Columbine Hall).”

**Information for students affiliated with the military**
“The Office of Military and Student Affairs can support veterans and active duty military with information about resources on campus and off, counseling, and support to facilitate your success in this class and others. Contact them at military@uccs.edu. Phone: 719-255-3253, 719-255-3606, or 1-800-990-UCCS. Offices are located in Gateway Hall.” “Military students who have the potential to
participate in military activities including training and deployment should consult with faculty prior to registration for any course, but no later than the end of the first week of classes."

FYRW Program Learning Outcomes
“Students who complete courses in the First-Year Rhetoric and Writing Program will achieve the following learning outcomes:

- **Rhetorical Knowledge:** Students will learn and apply key rhetorical concepts by analyzing and composing a variety of texts and responding to and recognizing diverse rhetorical situations and purposes for a range of audiences; students will consider constraints that are inherent to different environments and acquire the ability to transfer rhetorical concepts to contexts beyond the classroom.
- **Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing:** Students will develop strategies for critical thinking, analytical reading, academic research, and rhetorically informed writing.
- **Processes:** Students will employ rhetorical knowledge to develop a recursive, transferable writing process suited to academic aims; this process may include reading, inventing, drafting, collaborating, reflecting, and revising.
- **Knowledge of Conventions:** Students will develop knowledge of genre conventions, syntactical structures, and commonly accepted citation and format styles for rhetorical impact and to protect intellectual property.
- **Habits of Mind:** Students will name and value habits of mind that help them flourish in a variety of disciplines and contexts. Students will practice curiosity, creativity, persistence, and metacognition.
- **Multimodal Composition:** Students will be able to strategically compose and rhetorically analyze a range of texts that could include print, electronic, visual, verbal, and aural texts such as presentations, essays, webpages, videos, podcasts, and/or other formats.”

**Compass Curriculum learning outcomes**
“ENGL 1310 (or 1300 + 1305) is the first core writing course across the university. ENGL 1410, ENGL 2080, ENGL 2090, or INOV 2100 are the second writing course options across the university. Writing Program courses help you learn about the Compass Goal Evaluate and Create:

- Critical and creative thinking
- Qualitative reasoning
- Communication (in the written form)

**Essential Learning Outcomes:**

- Gather, critically analyze and evaluate qualitative information within relevant disciplinary contexts.
- Apply and integrate knowledge from a range of disciplines, including interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary research.
- Communicate through reading and/or writing to receive, comprehend, and convey information.
- Demonstrate the core ethical principles and responsible methods of your discipline.”

**GT Pathways information for ENGL 1410**
“The Colorado Commission on Higher Education has approved ENGL 1410 for inclusion in the Guaranteed Transfer (GT) Pathways program in the GT-CO2 category. For transferring students, successful completion with a minimum C- grade guarantees transfer and application of credit in this GT Pathways category. For more information on the GT Pathways program, go to http://highered.colorado.gov/academics/transfers/gtpathways/curriculum.html
The content of a GT Pathways Written Communication [GT-CO2] course shall be designed to:

1. **Deepen Rhetorical Knowledge**
   a. Focus on rhetorical situation, audience, and purpose.
   b. Use voice, tone, format, and structure appropriately, deepening understanding of relationships between form and content in writing.
   c. Write and read texts written in several genres, for specified discourse communities. These communities may include professional or disciplinary discourse communities.
   d. Practice reflective strategies.

2. **Deepen Experience in Writing**
   a. Develop recursive strategies for generating ideas, revising, editing, and proofreading for extensive, in-depth, and/or collaborative projects.
   b. Critique one’s own and other’s work.

3. **Deepen Critical and Creative Thinking**
   a. Evaluate the relevance of context.
   b. Synthesize other points of view within one’s own position.
   c. Reflect on the implications and consequences of the stated conclusion.

4. **Use Sources and Evidence**
   a. Select and evaluate appropriate sources and evidence.
   b. Evaluate the relevance of sources to the research question.

5. **Deepen Application of Composing Conventions**
   a. Apply genre conventions including structure, paragraphing, tone, mechanics, syntax, and style to more extensive or in-depth writing projects.
   b. Use specialized vocabulary, format, and documentation appropriately.

**Written Communication Competency**

Competency in written communication is a student’s ability to write and express ideas across a variety of genres and styles. Written communication abilities develop over time through layered, interactive, and continual processes and experiences across the curriculum.

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)**

Students should be able to:

1. **Employ Rhetorical Knowledge**
   a. Exhibit a thorough understanding of audience, purpose, genre, and context that is responsive to the situation.

2. **Develop Content**
   a. Create and develop ideas within the context of the situation and the assigned task(s).

3. **Apply Genre and Disciplinary Conventions**
   a. Apply formal and informal conventions of writing, including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices, in particular forms and/or fields.

4. **Use Sources and Evidence**
   a. Critically read, evaluate, apply, and synthesize evidence and/or sources in support of a claim.
   b. Follow an appropriate documentation system.

5. **Control Syntax and Mechanics**
   a. Demonstrate proficiency with conventions, including spellings, grammar, mechanics, and word choice appropriate to the writing task.”