

## **Comm 304: Rhetoric of the Cold War & War on Terror**

Instructor: Mark A. Pollock, Ph.D.

Office: LT 907

Office Hours: by appointment

### **Goals of the Course**

A mere decade after the Cold War ended, the U.S. embarked on the War on Terror, a war that some have warned may last even longer than the 40 years of the Cold War. Neither war is a traditional one. What can we learn about the War on Terror from an exploration of the rhetoric that characterized the Cold War? In what ways have we fallen back on ways of talking that we inherited from that earlier and different struggle? In this course, we will develop an understanding of the key generic features of Cold War rhetoric and of central lines of argument and areas of dispute; that will then be used as a basis for our study of the War on Terror, as we seek to identify continuities and discontinuities and reflect on what those offer us as a guide to understanding and judging contemporary foreign policy rhetoric. Students will be able to explain what it means to view a war as rhetorical construction and identify key discourse strategies related to the Cold War and 9/11.

### **Books**

H. W. Brands, *The devil we knew: Americans and the Cold War* (N.Y.: Oxford, 1993).

Other readings available via Sakai. *It is the obligation of the student to promptly notify me of any difficulty in accessing the site.*

### **Graded Course Components**

Exam on rhetoric of Cold War (due by **3/12 at 4pm**) 300

Exam on rhetoric of War on Terror (due by **4/30 at 6:45pm**) 300

Critical analysis paper (due by **4/23**) 300

Class participation 100

*Grading scale:* A=920+ A-=900+ B+=880+ B=840+ B-=800+

C+=770+ C=740+ C-=700+ D+=670+ D=640+

### **Note on the schedule of readings & assignments**

This course is examining a still-emergent set of rhetorical practices, cultural assumptions, and material conditions. Between now and the end of the semester, some or all of those things may have changed. For this reason, the reading schedule for the War on Terror portion of the course is not established firmly at the start of the semester. I have arranged reading materials on the site in the order in which I anticipate covering

them, and will, of course, notify you of when you are expected to be prepared to discuss them.

## **Rules**

Written assignments **must** be submitted via Sakai. Assignments are due by the start of class on the date indicated on the syllabus (unless adjusted by prior agreement with me). A letter grade will be deducted for each day it is late. The penalties for academic dishonesty are a grade of F for the course and notification of the dean's office. A detailed, updated statement of the School of Communication academic integrity policy can be found [here](#). All students must read this statement. A general rule of thumb is: always provide full citation information not only for direct quotations, but also when presenting the argument, interpretation, or claim of another, even if you are paraphrasing.