

Professor Information

Professor: Dr. Erika M. Sparby **Email**:

Zoom Room: Zoom Hours:



Required Readings

Make America Meme Again (Heather Suzanne Woods and Leslie Hahner)

Other readings are linked on ReggieNet. You will need epub and pdf readers to access them.

Course Description and Objectives

Memetic Rhetorics provides a comprehensive look at memes: what are they, how do they work, why do we love them? Through examining rhetorical concepts through the lens of memetics, this course will examine your favorite (and not so favorite) memes to understand the rhetorical skills necessary to produce and circulate successful memes with particular attention to how to do so ethically, focusing on representations of identity, privacy and consent, misinformation and propaganda, activism, and politics. Most importantly, you will make a lot of memes. The goals for this course are



- 1. Understand in rhetorical terms what memes are;
- 2. Recognize memes as cultural texts with recursive worldbuilding power;
- 3. Examine how memes can be used for good or for ill in politics, activism, information or dis/misinformation campaigns, and corporate branding and marketing;
- 4. Reveal and combat aggressive and hostile memetic discourses;
- 5. Learn to produce and circulate memes ethically.

Grading Scale

A	100-90
B	89-90
С	79-70
D	69-60
F	59 or below

Grade Distribution

Attendance/Participation	20 points
Class Facilitation	15 points
Meme Analysis	15 points
Countermeme Project	20 points
Meme Wiki	30 points

Brief Project Descriptions

The projects in this course are designed to meet the course objectives outlined above. Below are brief descriptions; full prompts can be viewed on Reggienet.



Attendance/Participation

You are expected to arrive to class on time. Complete all readings and homework beforehand and be prepared to discuss them in class. Engage in all discussions and activities.

Meme Analysis

In this project, you will choose a meme and analyze it using rhetorical concepts learned in this course or beyond. Deliverable is a 2-page, single-spaced memo that includes the meme.

Class Facilitation

Once during the semester, each of you will lead a class facilitation on the readings at hand for ~60 minutes. Introduce key texts, making connections and asking questions to engage classmates in discussions.

Countermeme Project

In this project, you will choose at least two aggressive memes and subvert them through countermeming. Deliverable will be examples of each countermeme as well as a 2-page, singlespaced memo that strategizes circulation.

Meme Wiki

In this class-wide project, you will work with your peers to create a meme wiki. Each of you will contribute an entry that analyzes the meme, including its rhetorical foundations, circulation history, and ethical implications. You and your classmates will also collaborate on building and designing the meme wiki.



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Course Policies

The policies in this syllabus are considered contractual at ISU. If you remain in the class after day one, you have agreed to all that is required. I reserve the right to change the day-by-day schedule (with advanced notice), but not the requirements outlined above in the course description and below in the policies.

Professionalism

During class discussions and in your writing, you are expected to treat others with respect. This pertains to all class members, the professor, and the audiences you write for and people you write about. I do not tolerate intolerant discourses. If a student engages in disrespectful or hateful speech, we will discuss conduct; if it happens a second time, the offender will be removed from the course altogether. You are expected to produce professional, high-quality documents that are appropriate for specific writing situations.

All ISU students are responsible for upholding the <u>Code of Student Conduct</u> available online.

Accessibility

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact SAAS (Student Access and Accommodation Services).

Location: 350 Fell Hall Phone: (309) 438-5853 TTY: (309) 438-8620 Website: http://studentaccess.illinoisstate.edu Email: ableisu@ilstu.edu

If your accommodation needs are not being met by SAAS or if you prefer not to interface with them, please also know that you can talk to me confidentially and we can work together to ensure that your needs are met to be successful in the course.

Homework Submission

- All coursework will be submitted by the start of class on the date the prompt lists.
- Late work is accepted for two days after the due date, but you will lose points from the final grade if no extension has been granted.
- Technological mishaps are not accepted as excuses for late work.

Campus Safety and Security

ISU is committed to maintaining a safe environment for the University community. Please take a few moments to ensure you are signed up for <u>ISU Emergency Alerts</u>.

Also, note the information posted in each classroom about emergency shelters and evacuation assembly areas (indicated in classrooms).

Additional safety information is available on the <u>Campus Safety and Security website</u>.

Mental Health

Things kind of suck right now, so if you need mental health support, don't hesitate to get it. If you're feeling stressed, overwhelmed, lost, anxious, depressed, or are struggling with personal issues, call or visit Student Counseling Services (SCS). These services are free and completely confidential.

Location: 320 Student Services Building Phone: (309) 438-3655