



DEFENSE AGAINST THE DARK RHETORICAL ARTS

FRT 101-04
FALL 2024
TUTH 9:45-11AM
FAC 206

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Appointments: <https://calendly.com/profdrury> or scan this QR code:



Course Description

Are you prepared to defend against the sinister forces that will try to manipulate your thoughts and actions? In arenas such as social media, advertising, and election campaigns, you will face a variety of dark rhetorical arts (DRA) from disinformation and propaganda to demagoguery and trolling. This course will study the strategies and tactics of these DRA and equip you with practical tools to defend against them. We will also consider the ethical principles of public discourse that we can employ in our own lives.

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Required Materials

van der Linden, Sander. *Foolproof: Why Misinformation Infects Our Minds and How to Build Immunity*. W. W. Norton, 2023.

Williams, James. *Stand out of our Light: Freedom and Resistance in the Attention Economy*. Cambridge University Press, 2018. **(copy provided to you)**

Additional course materials are linked on our FRT 101 Canvas site. You **must** have access to readings in class and I strongly recommend you print them.

Student Learning Outcomes

Freshman Tutorials ensure the first-year student's participation in small group discussions that challenge them intellectually and provide an experience characteristic of the liberal arts. Instructors select topics of critical importance to them, judged to be pertinent to student interests and concerns. The student need not have had previous experience in the particular field in order to participate.

Students who successfully complete Freshman Tutorial will be able to:

1. read actively to identify the main ideas and claims within a text;
2. craft a thesis and clearly communicate and support that thesis through writing;
3. communicate orally to express ideas clearly, advance discussion of issues, and build common understanding.

CREATING AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

I am committed to your success in the class and to fostering an inclusive space. Here are some ways we can collaboratively make this a reality:

1. My door is open so please drop by if I can do anything to help you thrive in this course. Come talk to me if you're having trouble with the readings, wrestling with how to take notes, or want to generally discuss how to maximize your learning. If there are circumstances that affect your performance in this class—be they personal, health, family, or other—please let me know as soon as possible so that we can collaboratively determine how to proceed. Direct, open communication is often the only way that I know I need you need help.
2. Wabash College is dedicated to full access for all qualified students, as am I. Students with disabilities (apparent or invisible) are invited to confidentially discuss their situation with the disability coordinator, Heather Thrush, Associate Dean for Student Engagement and Success (Center Hall 112A, x6347, thrushh@wabash.edu). If a student wishes to receive an academic accommodation, it is required that his documentation of the disability be on file with Dean Thrush, who can, in confidence, provide information and guidance.
3. This course will require you to set forth your own ideas that reflect your biases and are not necessarily agreeable to everyone else. As gentlemen, you should carefully consider the effects your rhetoric may have and refrain from hostile or disrespectful comments seeking to shut down or "win" arguments. Additionally, you should strive to use inclusive language that considers numerous viewpoints and experiences. And you should respect the privacy of your peers and make the classroom a welcome space for you & others to feel comfortable sharing without fear that things will be repeated beyond the classroom walls. Defending against the dark rhetorical arts means we avoid using those tactics ourselves.

Course Assignments

You will complete the following assignments (we will discuss them in more depth in class):

Participation and Scholarly Conduct (75 pts., 15%): Participation and scholarly conduct are crucial to the course objectives. My hope is that the class is an engaging environment where we all demonstrate intellectual curiosity and an earnest desire to learn from one another (isn't this partially why you chose Wabash over other schools?). To facilitate this environment, it is your responsibility to attend class and actively participate. Beyond just showing up, scholarly conduct involves taking your work seriously and seeking help *before* rather than *after* assignments are due. It also includes having completed the assigned material, being prepared by having the readings and notes about them with you, and ethically engaging in lively discussion.

While I recognize that not everyone is comfortable participating in class discussion, this course is a chance to work on these skills. You will earn at best a "C" for this portion of your grade if you consistently attend class and pay attention but get involved only occasionally. You will fail this portion of your grade if you consistently attend class but are doing other things (e.g. texting, playing games on your laptop or tablet, sending Instagram updates, napping).

Arriving late or leaving early count as half an absence. Each absence beyond 2 will result in a 5 pt. reduction of your grade in addition to the points you lose for participation. More than nine absences—excused or not—*may result in failure of the course*. If you will miss class for College-sanctioned events, please let me know as soon as possible and arrange for what you will miss.

Daily Dark Arts Discussion: To encourage you to connect course content to the world around you, we will start class with a few minutes of Daily Dark Arts Discussion in which you bring examples of dark rhetorical arts you come across in your daily life. This is factored into your attendance and scholarly conduct grade so be sure to stay alert to the rhetoric around you!

Reading & 4th Hour Responses (50 pts., 10%): I expect that you approach course content with an open mind and put in your best effort to engage it, even if it poses a challenge to you. As part of this process, you should get in the habit of marking up the material and generating questions prompted by it. For each day when there is assigned content, you will be required to submit a post by 9am the day of class. On most days, it will involve addressing one of the following: (a) a muddy/confusing point in the assigned material and what you think it means; (b) an illuminating point and how it connects to our class; (c) a discussion question prompted by the reading and why it would make for productive discussion. On some days, it will be a more directed question or submission relevant to class for that day. You will also submit short Canvas assignments for all 4th hour activities approximately 48 hours after you complete the activity. *Late submissions will receive a zero if submitted late but I will drop your three lowest scores at the end of the semester.*

Dark Rhetorical Arts Inventory (50 pts., 10%): For one week, you will catalogue the dark rhetorical arts you encounter and present the results of your inventory in class.

Bachelor Campaign (75 pts., 15%): You and two of your classmates will jointly write an article for *The Bachelor* exploring how to defend against one dark rhetorical art.

Disinformation Design (70 pts., 14%): You will work with a group to generate and present a disinformation campaign using course material in response to a scenario I assign you.

Dark Arts Defense (150 pts., 30%): You will study and/or design a campaign to defend against a dark rhetorical art. We will discuss options for this assignment in class. You will create a draft and engage in peer review before presenting and submitting a final version of your project.

Writing Center & Revision (20 pts., 4%): You will take one paper to the Writing Center and use the feedback there to improve it.

Syllabus Quiz (10 pts., 2%): You will complete a syllabus quiz early in the semester.

COURSE GRADING SCALE					
Grade	Points	Percent	Grade	Points	Percent
A	465-500	93%-100%	C+	385-399	77%-79.9%
A-	450-464	90%-92.9%	C	365-384	73%-76.9%
B+	435-449	87%-89.9%	C-	350-364	70%-72.9%
B	415-434	83%-86.9%	D	300-349	60%-69.9%
B-	400-414	80%-82.9%	F	<300	<60%

Policies and Expectations

Course Meetings and Assignments

- To succeed in FRT 101, you should keep up with the assigned readings. *Class meetings will largely build on and discuss the readings, not summarize them.* You’ll notice that readings for Tuesday class sessions tend to be longer than readings for Thursday class sessions because you will have more time between classes to prepare. If you struggle with keeping up, please come talk to me!
- Late written assignments are penalized 5% per 24-hours they are late (max. 50%).
- Late policy does not apply to Reading & 4th Hour Responses, which receive zero if late.

Written Assignment Guidelines

- Papers should be typed, double-spaced, using 11- or 12-pt font.
- Must be submitted in .doc or .pdf format through Canvas, not via email.
- Be sure to proofread written work (and use the Writing Center) before submitting.

Assignment Feedback

- I will provide detailed written feedback in response to your written work meant to prompt your continued reflection on and engagement with the material.
- Use the feedback to help you improve future assignments. I hope that you will find this helpful as you progress through the course and keep in mind the quantity of feedback alone (i.e., getting a lot of comments) in no way speaks to the quality of your work.

Professor Communication

- Apart from face-to-face interaction through office hours, my preferred mode of communication with you is e-mail.
- Please check your official Wabash e-mail once a day and I will do the same.
- Emails to me can expect a response within 24 hours (turnaround may be longer on weekends). E-mails after 9pm should expect a response the following day.

The Gentleman's Rule

The Gentleman's Rule should guide your academic honesty in this course. This means:

- All work is your own original work, not "borrowed" from someone/somewhere else, recycled from other courses, generated through AI technologies, or completed with others (unless unmistakably permitted).
- All work drawing upon other sources must **explicitly** reference those sources using proper MLA format.

At my discretion, cases of misconduct may be reported to the Dean of Students and/or result in failing the assignment or course. Refer to the [Academic Honesty Guide](#) (also available on the "Student Resources" tab of MyBash) for more information.

Writing Center

You are required to take at least one paper draft to the writing center. The Wabash Writing Center (second floor of the Lilly Library) is able to help with all facets of paper writing from outlining and drafting to researching and proofreading. Schedule an appointment here: <https://www.wabash.edu/ace/writing>.

The Office of Student Enrichment

If you have questions about how to make everything fit into your schedule, how to study more efficiently, how to take better notes, or any other college skills, you can arrange a one-on-one meeting with Dr. Koppelman: <https://www.wabash.edu/ace/office>.

Emergency Procedures

- **FIRE:** Proceed down one floor to nearest exit and cross Grant Street. Join me and your classmates there to make sure everyone got out of the building.
- **TORNADO:** Proceed down the south stair two floors to the basement and shelter in place.

Wabash College Academic Credit Policy

FRT 101 complies with the [Wabash College Academic Credit Policy](#). Students are required to commit 12 hours per week to this course. This includes three hours of institutionally scheduled class time plus an additional 9 hours of preparation for class. An average of one additional hour per week of direct instruction will occur through extended orientation sessions (5 hours), attendance of campus events (3 hours), information literacy modules (3 hours), a dark rhetorical arts inventory (2 hours), and a required writing center visit (1 hour). The remaining hours (approx. 7-8 per week) are dedicated to preparing for class and fourth hour assessment activities.

I look forward to working with all of you and am excited to learn alongside you!

Course Schedule

This schedule is tentative. Readings, assignments, and due dates are subject to change. You should complete reading assignments prior to the class date for which they are assigned.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic/Assignment</u>
Week 1	
Th, Aug. 22	Course Introduction & Summer Reading Bring Williams, <i>Stand out of our Light</i> and responses to Reading Guide
Week 2	
T, Aug. 27	Summer Reading & Discussion Guidelines Bring Williams, <i>Stand out of our Light</i> , responses to Reading Guide, and guidelines we should follow in our class discussions Start reading (for Thurs.) Caroline Jack, "Lexicon of Lies" DUE: SYLLABUS QUIZ
11am: Extended Orientation—Professional Development (Salter Hall) [4th Hour]	
Th, Aug. 29	What are the (Dark) Rhetorical Arts? Read Caroline Jack, "Lexicon of Lies"
7:30pm: HAZE (Baxter 101) [4th Hour]	
F, Aug. 30	Begin Dark Rhetorical Arts Inventory [4th Hour]
Week 3	
T, Sept. 3	Why Do We Need this Class? Read Kenneth Burke, "The Rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle'"
Th, Sept. 5	How Can I Make a Difference? Class Guest: <i>Bachelor</i> Editor-in-Chief Sam Benedict Read Kenneth Rystrom, "Nine Steps to Editorial Writing"
F, Sept. 6	Finish Dark Rhetorical Arts Inventory [4th Hour]
Week 4	
T, Sept. 10	Dark Art 1: Disinformation Read Sander van der Linden, <i>Foolproof</i> , Prologue & Chs. 1 & 2 (pp. 1-45)
11am: Extended Orientation—Time Management (Salter Hall) [4th Hour]	
Th, Sept. 12	Present Dark Rhetorical Arts Inventories DUE: DARK RHETORICAL ARTS INVENTORY
Week 5	
Canvas Modules: Searching for Info. Online & Evaluating Sources [4th Hour]	
T, Sept. 17	Dark Art 2: Propaganda Read Garth Jowett & Victoria O'Donnell, "What is Propaganda, and How Does It Differ from Persuasion?" pp. 1-37, 48-54

- Th, Sept. 19 Dark Art 2: Propaganda
Read [David Karpf "On Digital Disinformation and Democratic Myths"](#); Sander van der Linden, *Foolproof*, ch. 7 pp. 159-66
- Week 6** **["How to Read a Journal Article"](#) & Canvas Module: Scholarly Articles [4th Hour]**
- T, Sept. 24 Dark Art 3: Demagoguery
Read [Justin Gustainis, "Demagoguery and Political Rhetoric"](#); [Huey Long, "Every Man a King"](#)
- 11am: Extended Orientation—Co-Curricular Programs (Salter Hall) [4th Hour]**
- Th, Sept. 26 Dark Art 3: Demagoguery
Read [J. Michael Hogan and Glen Williams, "Huey P. Long, 'Every Man a King,' New York, NY \(23 February 1934\)"](#)
- Week 7**
- T, Oct. 1 Dark Art 4: Trolling
Read [Jason Hannan, "Trolling Ourselves to Death"](#)
- 11am: Extended Orientation—Mental Health Dialogues (Knowing) [4th Hour]**
- Th, Oct. 3 Dark Art 4: Trolling
Watch *Troll, Inc.* (with ads on [Tubi](#) or [Pluto TV](#))
- F, Oct. 4** **12:10pm: PSC 211 Presentation about Polling (FAC 206) [4th Hour]**
- Week 8** **Canvas Module: Understanding Plagiarism & Citing Sources [4th Hour]**
- T, Oct. 8 Dark Art 5: Conspiracy
Read Sander van der Linden, *Foolproof*, Ch. 3 (pp. 46-62)
- Th, Oct. 10 **NO CLASS-FALL BREAK**
- Week 9**
- T, Oct. 15 Dark Art 5: Conspiracy
Research one conspiracy theory that is not related to COVID-19 or vaccines more generally and post RR
- Th, Oct. 17 Revisiting Dis/Misinformation & Propaganda: How & Why They Spread
Read Sander van der Linden, *Foolproof*, Ch. 5 (pp. 83-102); Play [Bad News](#) and write down score (can also skim *Foolproof*, ch. 9)
- Week 10**
- T, Oct. 22 Defending Against Dis/Misinformation & Propaganda
Read Sander van der Linden, *Foolproof*, Ch. 8 (pp. 169-94)
- Th, Oct. 24 Defending Against Dis/Misinformation & Propaganda
Read Sander van der Linden, *Foolproof*, Ch. 11 & Epilogue (pp. 255-78)

Week 11

T, Oct. 29 Disinformation Design Work Day

Th, Oct. 31 Disinformation Design Presentations

Week 12

T, Nov. 5 Learning from COVID-19 Dark Rhetorical Arts

Read [Hamel et al., "KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor: Media and Misinformation"](#); listen to [PBS News Hour, "Why Coronavirus Misinformation is So Hard to Fight"](#)

Optional: Play [Go Viral!](#) (a COVID-19 misinformation game designed by the same *Bad News* people)

ELECTION DAY!

Th, Nov. 7 Learning from COVID-19 Dark Rhetorical Arts

Read [UNICEF, "Vaccine Misinformation Management Field Guide," pp. 17-32, 43-49](#)

Week 13

T, Nov. 12 Dark Arts Defense
Read TBA

Th, Nov. 14 Dark Arts Defense
Read TBA

Week 14

T, Nov. 19 Dark Arts Defense Peer Review
Bring draft or complete outline of your Dark Arts Defense assignment

Th, Nov. 21 Dark Arts Defense Work Day
DUE: DARK ARTS DEFENSE DRAFT BY 11AM

DUE: CHAPEL TALK ANALYSIS [4th Hour]

Nov. 24-30 ***NO CLASS-THANKSGIVING BREAK***

Week 15

T, Dec. 3 Dark Arts Defense Presentations

Th, Dec. 5 Dark Arts Defense Presentations

DUE: WRITING CENTER CONFIRMATION [4th Hour]**Finals Week**

M, Dec. 9 **DUE: DARK ARTS DEFENSE BY NOON**