Eastern Illinois University  
New Course Proposal  
CMN 3250, Rhetoric, Democracy, and the Public Sphere

1. Catalogue Description  
   a. Course Number: CMN 3250  
   b. Course Title: Rhetoric, Democracy, and the Public Sphere  
   c. Credit (3-0-3)  
   d. Term to be offered: On Demand  
   e. Short Title: Publics  
   f. Course Description: This course will examine the relationship between rhetoric, publics, and counterpublics in a diverse democracy. Students will examine rhetorical theories of argumentative spheres (private, technical, and public spheres) and critique public and counterpublic discourses.  
   g. Prerequisites: There are no prerequisites for this course.  
   h. Initial Term of Course Offering: Fall 2007

2. Objectives and Evaluation  
   a. Objectives of the course: Students will  
      i. Identify the terms, theories, and general critiques of “public spheres” (exams, discussion questions).  
      ii. Compare and contrast the grounding of rhetorical practices in publics and counterpublics in a discursive democracy (exams, response papers, in-class activities).  
      iii. Analyze the role of rhetoric in a robust democracy marked by tensions between multiple and competing publics (exams, response papers).  
      iv. Evaluate the two primary ways in which contemporary rhetorical scholars address “the public”: as rhetorical scene and as rhetorical agent (response papers, exams).  
   b. Sample Assessment. Student assessment will be comprised of the following:

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<th>In Class Assignments (10%)</th>
<th>Daily Discussion Questions (10%)</th>
<th>Five Response Papers (50%)</th>
<th>Two Exams (30%)</th>
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c. This course is not technology delivered.
d. This course is not numbered between 4750-4999 and is not offered for graduate credit.
e. This course is writing-intensive; written papers and daily discussion questions allow for frequent writing activities designed to help students master course content and improve their writing. At least 35% will come from writing assignments and students will be provided the opportunity to revise at least one writing assignment.

3. Sample course outline

Week 1 Introduction to the course and basic course concepts
- Basic course introduction
- Lecture on public spheres and rhetorical inquiry

Week 2 “Public” as rhetorical agent
- Lloyd Bitzer, “Rhetoric and Public Knowledge”
- Michael Calvin McGee, “In Search of ‘the People’: A Rhetorical Alternative”

Week 3 “Public” as rhetorical scene
- Gerard A. Hauser & Carole Blair, “Rhetorical Antecedents to the Public”

Week 4 The American public (Dewey)
- John Dewey, “Search for the Public”
- John Dewey, “Discovery of the State” and “The Democratic State”

Week 5 The American public (Dewey)
- John Dewey, “Eclipse of the Public” and “Search for the Great Community”

Week 6 Habermas and the public sphere (Calhoun)
- Craig Calhoun, “Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere”
- Jürgen Habermas, “Further Reflections on the Public Sphere”

Week 7 Challenging the Habermasian public sphere (Calhoun)
- Michael Schudson, “Was There Ever a Public Sphere? If So, When? Reflections on the American Case”
- Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy”

Week 8 Challenging the Habermasian public sphere (Calhoun)
- Nicholas Garnham, “The Media and the Public Sphere”
- Benjamin Lee, “Textuality, Mediation, and Public Discourse”
Week 9  Reconfiguring the Public Sphere
- Robert Asen and Daniel C. Brouwer, “Introduction: Reconfigurations of the Public Sphere”
- Brouwer, “ACT-ing UP in Congressional Hearings” and Asen, “Representing the State in South Central Los Angeles”

Week 10  Publics and counterpublics (Warner)
- Michael Warner, “Introduction” and “Public and Private” (21-43)
- Warner, “Public and Private” (44-64)

Week 11  Publics and counterpublics (Warner)
- Warner, “Publics and Counterpublics”

Week 12  Sexuality and publics (Warner)
- Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, “Sex in Public”
- Warner, “Something Queer About the Nation-State”

Week 13  Race and publics
- Ronald N. Jacobs, “Race, Media and Civil Society”

Week 14  Gender and publics
- Phaedra C. Pezzullo, “Resisting ‘National Breast Cancer Awareness Month’: The Rhetoric of Counterpublics and their Cultural Performances”
- Melissa Deem, “Stranger Sociability, Public Hope, and the Limits of Political Transformation”

Week 15  Summary and review
- Class discussion on publics and counterpublics
- Review of course themes and review for final exam

4. **Rationale**
   a. This course allows students to gain a specialized knowledge about rhetorical theories of publics and counterpublics. Understanding theories behind “publics” is central to contemporary rhetorical studies.
   b. This course will require extensive reading of challenging material and demand that students apply theory to the analysis and evaluation of concrete discursive situations.
   c. This course does not duplicate existing courses within the university.
   d. This course will supplement the available course offerings for students in public communication.
5. Implementation
   a. Faculty members to whom this course may be assigned: Angela Aguayo, Suzanne Enck-Wanzer, or Shane Miller.
   b. Texts:
      v. Course Reader/E-Reserves
   c. Term to first be offered: Fall 2007

6. A community college course will not be judged equivalent to this course.

7. Date approved by the department: 11/04/05

8. Date approved by CAHCC: 4/5/06

9. Date approved by CAA: 4/27/06