

**CMN 450: Gender and Rhetoric
Analysis and Criticism of Public Discourse
Spring 2012
MWF 1-1:50 pm
133 Communication Building**

Professor Cara Finnegan

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Moodle site: <https://learn.illinois.edu/course/view.php?id=67>

Note: For this course, I use Moodle primarily as an online file cabinet. It's the place to go if you need a copy of the syllabus or if you miss class on the day I hand out worksheets, info on assignments, etc. Nearly all course readings are in the textbook and course packet; those that aren't are marked on the syllabus and found on Moodle.

What is this course about?

Throughout American history, public actors have deliberated about the nature of American citizenship: What is the ideal citizen? Who gets to be a citizen? What are the rights and obligations of the citizen? These have never been neutral questions. Indeed, that practice of persuasion known as rhetoric always has been used to frame our roles as citizens in light of questions of race, class, sexuality, and gender. This course examines the rhetoric of citizenship through the lens of gender (with good attention to others in that list as well), considering how debates about the rights and obligations of male and female citizens historically have been constructed in and through rhetorical practice.

This is a course in rhetorical history. Rhetorical history differs from the more traditional practice of history as you may have engaged it in other courses. Where history treats documents primarily as evidence—as records of events, people, and places—rhetorical history studies persuasive texts as records of the broad themes and ideas of an era. Ernest Wraga, a rhetorical historian, wrote in 1947, “A speech is an agency of its time, one whose surviving record provides a repository of themes and their elaborations from which we may gain insight into the life of an era [. . .] From the study of speeches [. . .] it is possible to observe the reflections of prevailing social ideas and attitudes.” This semester, we will become rhetorical historians. We will study speeches and other texts of American history in order to understand how and in what ways citizenship in the American context has been *gendered*.

What will we read and study?

The following texts are your resources for the course (first 3 are also on reserve at Undergrad Library):

- Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America* (1997 edition). This text will serve as important background reading. It offers a broad overview of major events in American history, told through the lens of women's experiences. (REQUIRED)
- Finnegan, *Primary Source Documents in Gender and Rhetoric* (Notes 'n Quotes, John St.) This required packet contains the primary texts that we will be studying this semester. (REQUIRED)
- Gordon Harvey, *Writing With Sources* (2008). This brief text will serve as your primary guide on matters of citation and documentation for all of the research and writing you do for this course. Not at bookstore, but on reserve at Undergrad Library, or buy on your own. (OPTIONAL, but plan to buy/use if you elect to do paper assignments.)
- Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *Man Cannot Speak for Her, Vol. I* (1989). A critical study of U.S. women's rhetorical history (1830s to 1920). (Required of graduate students; OPTIONAL for all other students.)

Some advice on reading for this course

Virtually all of the reading we will do this semester comes from primary sources—speeches, texts, court cases, and the like. Working with primary sources, especially ones whose language is antiquated, can be challenging but also tremendously rewarding. We will read 2-3 rhetorical documents per week, plus a relevant chapter from Evans. As you prepare for each week's discussions, I recommend reading the Evans material first, because it will provide some context for the documents themselves. *It will be vital to keep up with the reading; our activities in class will be based upon my assumption that you have read and thought about the material.*

In order to help you place the rhetorical documents we read in context, Mondays will serve as "Context Day." Typically, your weekend assignment will be to read a chapter from Evans in addition to a primary source document. In class on Mondays, we will review relevant themes of the course in relation to the period/documents we are studying that week. In addition, you will receive information related to the rhetors featured in that week's readings. These activities will *not* serve as lecture on the Evans material, nor replace your reading in that text; they will supplement and elaborate that material based upon our goals in this course.

Use the following questions to help you read the primary source documents actively and analyze them carefully. Early in the semester I will ask you to respond in writing to these questions; later, they will simply become guides for your reading.

- (a) What did the speaker say? What were the major lines of argument?
- (b) What appeals and techniques of persuasion were used?
- (c) What assumptions does the text reveal about the speaker's beliefs, attitudes, values, world-view, audience?

- (d) For what reasons might the speaker have made the rhetorical choices you have located in the text?
- (e) Which themes of gender and citizenship does the text invoke? To what other texts might we compare this one in terms of those themes?
- (f) Finally, identify a short passage in the document that strikes you, surprises you, challenges you, confuses you, etc. Be prepared to share that passage in class.

How will you be graded?

CMN 450 is conducted on a *contract-grading* basis, which means that you will be responsible for selecting many of your assignments and allocating the relative weight of most of your grade. As you can imagine, this affords you a certain amount of flexibility to frame your experience in this course. You will be given a grading contract to fill out during the first two weeks of the semester. Once you have selected the assignments and weighted them, you will submit the contract, signed. I will sign the contract as well. Once the contract is signed, neither of us will be able to change either the selection of assignments or the weight of assignments.

Required Assignments

Final Exam. A two-hour, cumulative essay exam with questions designed to assess your grasp of ideas discussed in the course, your ability to integrate and synthesize these ideas, and your ability to apply them to specific rhetorical documents that we have read. There will be some choice among questions. *The final exam must count for a minimum of 25% of your final grade.*

Engagement. I reserve part of your final grade for evaluation of your citizenship in class in terms of engagement with the readings and active participation in classroom activities. See also “attendance” below. *Engagement will count for 10% of your final grade.*

“The Fourth Hour”. (Graduate students only.) Graduate students take this course for 4 hours, not the 3 that undergraduates register for. To complete the “fourth hour,” the graduate students in the course will meet together with me 4 additional times during the term, on days and times we collectively agree upon. During these meetings we will discuss research by rhetorical scholars on topics related to the course. Graduate students will collaborate to identify readings for those days and will be entirely responsible for leading the discussion. *The fourth hour counts for 0% of your final grade but is required; students cannot receive graduate credit without participating in the fourth hour.*

Optional Assignments (select a minimum of 1 of the following choices):

The remainder of the course grade will be composed as you individually select from among the options listed below. Any option you select must be weighted at least 5%, and you may use only multiples of 5 (10%, 15%, 20%, etc.). Although no maximum number of choices is

required, I *strongly caution you* against the risks of assigning too great a weight to any one option, or dividing your energy among too many options.

Midterm exam. A 50-minute, in-class essay exam with questions designed to assess your grasp of ideas covered in the first portion of the semester. There will be some choice among questions. The midterm is recommended for students who find exams useful in organizing their learning or for those who wish to practice test-taking prior to the final exam. For those not electing this option, a copy of the questions will be available when the exams are returned. *This option may be selected for a maximum of 40% of the course grade.*

Discovery Assignment: Gender & Rhetoric at the University of Illinois. For this assignment, you will do research in a campus archive to locate a rhetorical text originally written at or presented to the University of Illinois community. It might be an editorial, argumentative essay, speech, or other rhetorical document that relates to the issues of gender and citizenship we are engaging. Once you have made your “discovery,” you will then write an essay of 5-6 pages explaining the nature of the text, its historical context, and its significance in terms of the themes of our course. Evaluation of your work will depend both on the significance of the text you discover and the quality of the essay you write. After briefly meeting with CF to discuss your interests, you will then visit the University Archives (basement of Main Library), the Student Life Archive (1707 South Orchard Road), or suitable another local/regional/state archival site. Students who enjoy working independently and/or who are interested in doing archival research in historical sources should elect this assignment. This assignment may be turned in at any time up to or on April 13th. *This option may be selected for a maximum of 25% of the course grade.*

Book Review. For this assignment you will select (from a list prepared by CF, or something proposed by you and approved by CF) a scholarly book on a topic related to the themes of the course. After reading the book you will write a 5-page academic review of the book, being sure to include a specific assessment of how the book relates to themes of gender, rhetoric, and citizenship we have discussed in the course. Students interested in reading scholarly analyses of issues related to gender and rhetoric should elect this option. This assignment may be turned in at any time up to or on April 13th. *This option may be selected for a maximum of 25% of the course grade.*

Semester Project. The semester project is a substantial research project involving several REQUIRED phases: the selection of a suitable topic and its approval by me (by Fri., Feb. 24), preparation of an annotated bibliography of materials (by Wed., Mar. 28), and writing of a rough draft (by Mon., Apr. 23) and final draft of the project (by Wed., May 2). The exact nature of the project will be determined by you in consultation with me. Although you do not have to settle on the specifics of the project before you select this option in your grading contract, it helps to have a general idea of what you would like to do. *Because the projects require substantial time and effort, you will allocate a minimum of 40% of your grade to it and you should severely limit your selection of other assignment options.*

The options falling under this category are (select one):

- (1) Write a research paper. The paper (approximately 15 pages for undergrads, 20-25 pages for grads) should explore a topic of significance related to gender and rhetoric. Such a paper might trace the rhetorical history of an event, person, movement, or idea we have studied during the semester.
- (2) Write an essay of rhetorical criticism. Select a primary source text and describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate it in terms of the themes of the course (approximately 15 pages for undergrads, 20-25 pages for grads). *This option is only available to students who have taken CMN 423: Rhetorical Criticism or a similar course and are thus familiar with the process of executing such an essay. See CF to see if this option is right for you.*
- (3) Creative Work/Performance. Research of the type found in #1 or #2 but executed as a work of fiction, play, long poem, or other creative performance. The same expectations apply for this option as they do for options #1 and #2, in that you will be expected to do extensive research, turn in an annotated bibliography, and prepare draft and final versions of your work. This option may be attractive to students who enjoy working independently on a less traditional yet still substantial research project.
- (4) Teach a class. This option is available to *undergraduate students only*. Like options #1-3, this option requires you do to substantial research on a topic of interest to you and reflective of course themes. Like the other projects, you will prepare an annotated bibliography and prepare drafts and final versions of written work—in this case, a highly detailed lesson plan. Then, in consultation with me, you will be given 45 minutes of a class period near the end of the term in which you teach the class about the topic that you have selected. This option may be attractive to students who would enjoy communicating the results of their research in person in the classroom, or who want to give themselves the experience of preparing for and teaching a class.

Engagement

Each course I teach offers an opportunity to create an intellectual community. The more engaged we all are, the better that community will be. What does it mean to be “engaged”? Engaged students stay on top of what’s happening in class from day to day. They know that there’s a syllabus, and they routinely consult it. They come to class having read and thought about the assigned materials. During class, they participate in discussions, ask questions, and offer their ideas. Outside of class, engaged students take advantage of opportunities for feedback on their work. They take advantage of campus resources that may help them improve their performance in class (e.g., the library, the Writer’s Workshop). They use my office hours. They ask friends for notes if they happen to miss a class. In short, engaged students take

responsibility for their own experience as a student in the class and collaborate with me and their classmates to help create a strong intellectual community.

Attendance

You are expected to attend all class meetings and to be on time for class. You are allowed 3 “free” absences during the semester (= one week of class, or 7% of class sessions). Apart from University-sanctioned absences (University-recognized religious holidays, authorized participation in athletic events or other official University activities), I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. Anything over 3 absences will be considered “excessive absence.” *Every absence beyond the third absence will result in the reduction of your engagement grade by 3%* (Example: If your engagement grade is a 90% but you have 4 absences, your final grade will become 87%; that’s the difference between A- and a B). Make sure you keep track of your absences; I will. For more serious issues related to attendance, see the “Family and Medical Emergencies” policy below.

Late Work

You are expected to turn in all assignments no later than the day that they are due. Grades on late work will be reduced by a full letter grade for each working day an assignment is late. Late work will not be accepted at all past the fourth working day; any missing assignments after that point will be given a grade of zero. Anticipate problems in advance and communicate with me to avoid misunderstandings. For more serious issues related to late work, see the “Family and Medical Emergencies” policy below.

Technical problems (including but not limited to power outages, erased/lost work, viruses, unavailable systems and networks, inability to print, etc.) *do not in themselves constitute legitimate excuses for late or missing work*. Develop good habits now, like saving frequently, backing up your work on your computer or in the cloud (e.g., Dropbox, Netfiles), and keeping paper copies in a safe place. Save early drafts of your work so that if you lose it you will be able to reconstruct what you have lost.

Family/Medical Emergencies Policy

I recognize that in rare cases an extended illness or family emergency may inhibit a student’s ability to attend to normal student responsibilities and deadlines. Students with such emergencies should let me know immediately; otherwise, all normal course policies apply (see “attendance” and “late work” above). In such cases it is to your benefit to contact the Emergency Dean; the Emergency Dean will in turn contact your instructors with information about your situation. If I receive timely confirmation from the Emergency Dean about your situation, I will consider making reasonable accommodations for making up late work. Be aware, however, that Emergency Dean letters do *not* supersede faculty authority and responsibility for making decisions about how to handle specific student cases— for more info see <http://www.odos.uiuc.edu/emergency/>.

Academic Integrity

As a student at the University of Illinois, you are obligated to uphold the University's Academic Integrity policies as outlined in the *Student Code*. My ethical and professional obligations as a faculty member require me to investigate violations of academic integrity when I encounter them. Cheating will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, *the intentional or unintentional misrepresentation of someone else's work as your own*, likewise will not be tolerated. Students found to have plagiarized all or parts of assignments will receive severe penalties, ranging from (at minimum) a zero for the assignment to failure of the course.

Be warned: plagiarism is *not* only "copying" someone else's work word for word. There are actually two types of plagiarism: (1) *cheating*, which is the passing off of someone else's work as your own (whether that "someone else" is a classmate, friend, web site, or published author) and (2) *source misrepresentation*. This second type of plagiarism is often overlooked by students but is equally problematic. Examples of this type of plagiarism include failure to cite a paraphrased/quoted source or use quotation marks around exact quotations. A special warning about online sources: Although resources found in the library's databases and on the World Wide Web can be helpful and we will consult them frequently in this course, be aware of the pitfalls of using such sources. It can be tempting to cut and paste information you locate in an online source directly into your own work; however, without proper documentation, this constitutes plagiarism. The moral of the story? Be meticulous and careful about your use of sources.

If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, see me and consult the University's Academic Integrity policy (Part Four of the *Student Code*) at: http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/article1_part4_1-401.html. Ignorance of these policies is not an excuse for committing an act of academic dishonesty.

Accommodation Policy

If you feel that you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, feel free to contact me to discuss your specific needs.

Exam Policy

All students will take midterm and final exams on the day and time they are to be administered and *only* on that day and time. There will be no exceptions to this policy except in cases of severe emergency (e.g., loss of life or limb) or demonstrated conflict with another final exam time. For exam security reasons, students may not enter an exam more than 20 minutes after its start time; students who arrive after that 20 minute window will not be allowed to take the exam.

Technology and the Problem of Divided Attention

In recent years the saturation of cell phones, text messaging, and laptops has produced something I call *the problem of divided attention*. A March 25, 2008 article in the *New York Times* summarized recent studies of productivity in business settings. Researchers found that after responding to email or text messages, it took people *more than 15 minutes* to re-focus on the “serious mental tasks” they had been performing before the interruption. That’s almost 30% of our typical class period! Other research has shown that when people attempt to perform two tasks at once (e.g., following what’s happening in class while texting), the brain literally *cannot do it*. The brain has got to abandon one of the tasks in order effectively to accomplish the other.

Such research illustrates that attempts to multitask *weaken your performance as a student*. For this reason alone you should seek to avoid the problem of divided attention when you are in class. But there’s another, equally important reason: we technology users often lose our senses when it comes to norms of polite behavior, and the result is that perfectly lovely people become unbelievably rude.

For both of these reasons, please turn off your cellphones or set them on silent mode when you come to class; it is rude for our activities to be interrupted by a ringing cellphone. Similarly, smart phone distractions (Facebook, Twitter, email, web, text messaging, and the like) may seem quiet and unassuming, but they do distract me and others around you. You are welcome to bring your laptop to class and use it to take notes. You are *not* welcome to use such devices to perform non-class-related activities during class. As far as I am concerned, each student in the class is deputized to police technology distractions; it’s not just me who is bothered by them and I may not always notice. *If a student near you is distracting you with his/her technology use, you should feel free politely to ask that person to please stop or move to a space in the classroom where s/he will be less distracting to others*. Finally, I reserve the right to declare “screens down” at any time during class, for any reason.

Reading and Assignment Schedule
CMN 450
Spring 2012

Note: Evans=Evans, *Born for Liberty*
 CP=CMN 450 course packet
 KC=Campbell, *Man Cannot Speak for Her* (required of grads only)

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| W Jan. 19 | <u>Introduction to Course</u> Assignment for Next Time: Read syllabus thoroughly, paying special attention to grading and assignments |
| F Jan. 20 | <u>Discussion of course assignments, structure of the class</u> Assignment for Next Time: Read Evans, Introduction and Ch. 3; Read CP: Declaration of Independence and Constitution (plus amendments) |
| M Jan. 23 | <u>Revolutionary Era and the Early Republic</u> <i>"But what have I to do with politicks?"</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Adams letters |
| W Jan. 25 | <i>"Remember the Ladies"</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Sargent Murray, Mason, Harker |
| F Jan. 27 | <i>"Our high and mighty Lords have denied us the means of knowledge..."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read Evans Ch. 4; grads read KC Ch. 1-2; complete grading contract |
| M Jan. 30 | <u>Age of Association (1820-1845)</u> <i>"Let her not look away from her own little family circle."</i> Grading Contract due Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Frances Wright, Maria Stewart |
| W Feb. 1 | <i>"The child of every citizen, male or female, white or black, is entitled by right to a plain education."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Angelina Grimké, grads read KC Ch. 3 |
| F Feb. 3 | No Class |
| M Feb. 6 | <u>Age of Association (1820-1845), cont.</u> <i>"Cast out first the spirit of slavery from your own hearts."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Catharine Beecher |
| W Feb. 8 | <i>"Universally in this country, through every class of society, precedence is given to woman, in all the comforts, conveniences, and courtesies, of life."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Married Women's Property Act |
| F Feb. 10 | <i>"The real and personal property of any female who may hereafter marry...shall not be subject to the disposal of her husband nor be liable for his debts."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read Evans Ch. 5, grads read KC Ch. 4 |
| M Feb. 13 | <u>A Time of Division (1845-1865)</u> <i>"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men and women are created equal."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Declaration of Sentiments |

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| W Feb. 15 | <i>"We are to deal with the consciences of men."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Truth, Stanton |
| F Feb. 17 | <i>"Nobody ever helps me into carriages."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read Evans, Ch. 6, CP: 13 th , 14 th , 15 th amendments, grads read KC Ch. 5-6 |
| M Feb. 20 | <u>"The Gilded Age" (1865-1890)</u> <i>"All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Anthony 279-296; grads read KC Ch. 7 |
| W Feb. 22 | <i>"I not only committed no crime, but, instead, simply exercised my citizen's right."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read Anthony 296-end |
| F Feb. 24 | Topic selections for semester projects due no later than today Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Supreme Court opinion in Minor v. Happersett |
| M Feb. 27 | <u>"Gilded Age" 1865-1890, cont.</u> <i>"Our province is to decide what the law is, not to declare what it should be."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Woodhull, grads read KC Ch. 8 |
| W Feb. 29 | <i>"I anticipate criticism."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Willard |
| F Mar. 2 | <i>"Woman is becoming what God meant her to be."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read Evans, Ch. 7, grads read KC Ch. 9-10 |
| M Mar. 5 | <u>Modernity: 1890-1920</u> <i>"Threats of lynching were freely indulged."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Wells |
| W Mar. 7 | <i>"Nobody in the South believes the old thread bare lie that Negro men rape white women."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Grads read KC Ch. 11; work on annotated bibliography |
| F Mar. 9 | No Class (use as research day for semester projects and short papers) Review questions for midterm exam posted to Moodle |
| M Mar. 12 | <u>Modernity: 1890-1920, cont.</u> Assignment for Next Time: Begin exam review |
| W Mar. 14 | <u>Midterm Exam Review</u> (library day for non-midterm students) Assignment for After Spring Break: Read Evans, Ch's 8, 9, 10, grads KC Ch. 12 |
| F Mar. 16 | Midterm Exam (50 min.) |
| M Mar. 19 | No Class—Spring Break |
| W Mar. 21 | No Class—Spring Break |
| F Mar. 23 | No Class—Spring Break |
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| M Mar. 26 | <p><u>The Roaring 20s, the Depression, and WWII</u> <i>"What then, is 'the matter with women?'"</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Eleanor Roosevelt, "Women Must Learn to Play the Game"; "What Ten Million Women Want; "Women and the Vote"</p> |
| W Mar. 28 | <p><i>"I do not believe in a Woman's Party."</i> Annotated bibliographies for semester projects due no later than today Assignment for Next Time: Read CP, Roosevelt, "Defense and Girls"; "Woman's Place After the War"</p> |
| F Mar. 30 | <p><i>"The major occupation of a married woman in this country at the close of the war will be what it has always been—the care of the family as long as the family requires her care."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read Evans, Ch. 11</p> |
| M Apr. 2 | <p><u>The Cold War and the "Feminine Mystique" (1950-1960)</u> <i>"Women have many careers but only one vocation—Motherhood."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Betty Friedan</p> |
| W Apr. 4 | <p><i>"Is this all?"</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Civil Rights Act of 1964, NOW Bill of Rights</p> |
| F Apr. 6 | <p><i>"A vigorous movement with high purpose."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read Evans, Ch. 12; Read CP: NY Radical Women, Redstockings Manifesto</p> |
| M Apr. 9 | <p><u>Decade of Discovery (1960-1970)</u> <i>"The personal is political."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Murray</p> |
| W Apr. 11 | <p><i>"The dual burden."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Chavez, Woo</p> |
| F Apr. 13 | <p><i>"I would be fragmented...if I did not fight against racism & sexism together."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read Evans, Ch. 13 Discovery assignments and book reviews due no later than today</p> |
| M Apr. 16 | <p><u>The Politicization of Personal Life (1970-1980)</u> <i>"Sex prejudice cuts both ways."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Radicalesbians, Equal Rights Amendment, Chisholm</p> |
| W Apr. 18 | <p><i>"Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Schlafly</p> |
| F Apr. 20 | <p><i>"We don't wake up in the morning mad at anybody."</i> Assignment for Next Time: Read Evans, Ch. 14, Collins, "The New Millennium" (PDF on Moodle)</p> |
| M Apr. 23 | <p><u>The Nineties and the New Millennium</u> <i>"Did this make you as angry as it made me?"</i> Rough drafts for semester projects due no later than today Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Hill/Thomas or TBA</p> |

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| W Apr. 25 | TBA (Teach a Class project or Hill/Thomas) Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Sotomayor, Clinton or TBA |
| F Apr. 27 | TBA (Teach a Class project or Sotomayor and Clinton) Assignment for Next Time: Read CP: Sandberg or TBA |
| M Apr. 30 | TBA (Teach a Class project or Sandberg) Exam questions handed out today Assignment for Next Time: Begin exam review, finish semester projects |
| W May 2 | <u>Last Class Period</u> Exam Review Final drafts for semester projects due no later than today |
| F May 11 | Final Exam: 7-9 pm, 133 Comm. Building |

