

# Rhetorics, Communication, and Information Design (RCID)

## About RCID



**Rhetorics, Communication, and Information Design** is an academic-professional PhD degree that prepares students to conduct research and disseminate their findings through university teaching, professional/industry settings, and publishing in professional and popular journals. RCID prepares students, through research, to be professionals in traditional and emerging economies and to work with industry, government, and nonprofit organizations. In an ever-emerging attention economy for undergraduate and graduate education, alumni of our RCID program are uniquely suited to become faculty members in colleges of liberal arts and humanities, specifically in departments of humanities, English, rhetorics, composition/writing, communication studies, and digital/new media—and other innovative academic departments and writing/learning centers whose names and definitions remain emergent. Many of our students are also already in or are preparing for jobs in non-academic professional fields, including social media, information design, data visualization, UX design, and other markets that value digital expertise and creativity.



## "Rhetorics"

The first word of the name of the program, "**Rhetorics**," intentionally appears in plural form. For some readers, this might seem peculiar, but this form of the word acknowledges that there is more than one rhetoric, for there is more than one culture. Rhetoric(s)—in all of their singular-plural possibilities—establish the conditions for how we discover not only the available means but also innovative forms of living, working, and playing with others across a multitude of cultures. Through rhetoric(s) we not only build cultures but also construct multiple linkages among them. All rhetorics, therefore, are the cultural means of producing and realizing the everyday cultural business of

- **determining** public policies for tomorrow's actions (in the parliamentary system, deliberative discourses),
- **assessing** yesterday's actions (in the legal system, judiciary-forensic discourses), and
- **memorializing** our dead today (in ceremonial systems, through epideictic discourses).

**Rhetorics, accordingly, provide us opportunities** to live our lives as a future and a past in the present. The RCID program is culturally bound, acknowledging a multiplicity of cultures and preparing academics to live across those cultures.

**In seminars, studios, colloquia, and archives, RCID students learn theories and practices of**

- rhetorical traditions and histories;
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- oral, print, and digital communication;
- social-science and cultural research methodologies;
- ethical and critical examinations of rhetorical and communicative exchanges; and
- pedagogical approaches to multimodal information design and electronic communications.

**The RCID program attempts more.** It seeks an overall balance of ecologies in rhetorics and communications. It features a cross-cultural, transdisciplinary curriculum with a conceptual emphasis on **Aristotle's triad of knowing, doing, and making**, through theoretical, practical-pedagogical, and productive approaches to knowledge. Communication is not simply speaking and writing. The RCID curriculum emphasizes the study and multimodal production of language-communication apparatuses such as pictographic and alphabetic rhetorics. More specifically, it explores gestural, silent, oral, aural, temporal-spatial, visual, written, and digital rhetorics.

**Faculty expertise and University infrastructure combine to provide RCID students with varied and abundant opportunities to study and apply their knowledge.** Through cognate and elective seminars, colloquia, and independent study with faculty, students prepare themselves to work in such areas as writing and communication across the curriculum; visual communication; editing and production of digital publications; old and new media; critical theory; social media analytics; open source and intellectual property; audio and video cultures; feminist rhetorics; intersectionality; serious computer games; social justice networks; literature and performing arts; science and technology; information and user-experience design; film; the study of global rhetorics, propaganda and misinformation; and other emerging areas.

