

Sean Zdenek

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Technical Communication & Rhetoric
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Education

Ph.D., Rhetoric, Department of English, Carnegie Mellon University, 2001. Dissertation: *Passing for Human: Rhetoric, Software Agency, and Communicatively Competent Machines*. Chair: Barbara Johnstone.

M.A., Rhetoric and Teaching Writing, Department of English, California State University, Stanislaus, 1999. Thesis: *The Costs of Being Certain: Rhetoric in Software Agent Design*.

B.A., English, University of California, Berkeley, 1994. Summa Cum Laude in English and Magna Cum Laude in General Scholarship. Honors thesis. 3.80 GPA overall. 3.90 GPA in major. Phi Beta Kappa.

Professional experience

Current

Associate Professor of Technical Communication & Rhetoric. Department of English. Texas Tech University. Lubbock, Texas. 2009–present. Tenured: 2009.

Previous

Assistant Professor of Technical Communication & Rhetoric. Department of English. Texas Tech University. Lubbock, Texas. 2003–2009.

Assistant Professor of Electronic Media. Department of Communication. The University of Texas, San Antonio. 2001–2003.

Graduate Student Instructor. Department of English. Carnegie Mellon University. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. 1996–2001.

Graduate Student Instructor. Department of English. The California State University, Stanislaus. Turlock, California. 1995–1996.

Research interests

Disability Studies, Deaf Studies, Web Accessibility, Sound Studies, Rhetorical Criticism, Discourse and Technology.

Specifically: The rhetoric of closed captioning, the rhetoric of cochlear implants, sound studies, visual rhetorics of disability, methods of rhetorical and textual criticism, critical discourse analysis, gender and technology.

Publications

Journal Articles

2011. Which Sounds Are Significant? Towards a Rhetoric of Closed Captioning. *Disability Studies Quarterly* 31.3. Special issue on Disability and Rhetoric. <http://www.dsquds.org/article/view/1667/1604>.

2009. Accessible Podcasting: College Students on the Margins in the New Media Classroom. *Computers & Composition Online*. http://seanzdenek.com/?page_id=22.

2009. Charting a Course Between Methodological Formalism and Eclecticism: Pedagogical Tensions in Three Rhetorical Analysis Textbooks. *The Review of Communication* 9.2: 188-211.

2007. "Just Roll Your Mouse Over Me": Designing Virtual Women for Customer Service on the Web. *Technical Communication Quarterly* 16.4: 397-430.

2004. Demonstrating a Web Design Technique in a Distance Learning Environment. *Communication Teacher* 18.1: 33-35.

Reprinted in Lucas, S. E., ed. (2007) *Selections from the Communication Teacher, 2002-2005*. Instructor supplement to *The Art of Public Speaking*. 9th Ed. McGraw-Hill.

2003. Artificial Intelligence as a Discursive Practice: The Case of Embodied Software Agent Systems, *AI & Society* 17.3/4: 340-363.

2001. Passing Loebner's Turing Test: A Case of Conflicting Discourse Functions, *Minds & Machines: Journal for Artificial Intelligence, Philosophy, and Cognitive Science* 11.1: 53-76.

Reprinted in J. Moor, ed. (2003) *The Turing Test: The Elusive Standard of Artificial Intelligence*. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers. pp. 121-144.

1999. Rising Up From the MUD: Inscribing Gender in Software Design, *Discourse & Society* 10.3: 379-409.

Book Chapters

2011. Personal Reflections on the Educational Potential and Future of Closed Captioning on the Web. In J. Aitken, J. Pedego Fairley, and J. K. Carlson (eds) *Communication Technology for Students in Special Education or Gifted Programs* (pp. 221-229). Hershey, PA: IGI Global. <http://tinyurl.com/future-of-cc>

2008. Muted Voices: Cochlear Implants, News Discourse, and the Public Fascination with Curing Deafness. In B. Johnstone & C. Eisenhart (eds) *Rhetoric in Detail: Discourse Analytic Approaches to Rhetorical Talk and Text*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. pp. 147-171.

2008. First author (with Barbara Johnstone). Studying Style and Legitimation: Critical Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis. In B. Johnstone & C. Eisenhart (eds) *Rhetoric in Detail: Discourse Analytic Approach to Rhetorical Talk and Text*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. pp. 25-31.

2002. Scripting Sylvie: Language, Gender, and Humanness in Public Discourse About Software Agents. In S. Benor, M. Rose, D. Sharma, J. Sweetland, Q. Zhang (eds) *Gendered Practices in Language*. Stanford, CA: CSLI Press. pp. 255-273.

Book Reviews

2006. Review of R. Wodak & P. Chilton (eds) *A New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis*. *Language in Society* 35.4: 613-616.

2000. Review of J. J. O'Donnell, *Avatars of the Word: From Papyrus to Cyberspace*. *Computers and Society* 30.1: 29-31.

1998. Review of A. G. Gross & W. M. Keith (eds) *Rhetorical Hermeneutics: Invention and Interpretation in the Age of Science*. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 12.4: 495-499.

Published Proceedings

2007. Frozen Ecstasy: Visualizing Hearing in Marketing Materials for Cochlear Implants. Proceedings of the 25th ACM International Conference on Design of Communication (SIGDOC '07). El Paso, TX, 22-24 October. 241-248.

Teaching experience

Graduate Courses

Rhetorical Analysis

ENGL 5362: F04, Sum05*, Spr06, Spr07*, Spr08, F08*, Spr11, Spr11*

Artificial Intelligence, Gendered Interfaces, and Discourse Studies

ENGL 5365 [special topic]: Spr04

Foundations of Technical Communication

ENGL 5371: F05, F06*, F09*

Document Design

ENGL 5375: Spr05, Sum06⁺, Sum07⁺, Spr09, F09*

Sonic Literacies: Rhetorics of Sound

ENGL 5377 [special topic]: Sum11*

Accessible Rhetoric: Web Accessibility and Disability Studies

ENGL 5386 [Discourse & Social Issues]: Sum07*, F08, Sum09*, Sum10*, Spr12, Sum12*

Writing for Publication

ENGL 5390: Spr12

* Taught online

⁺ Taught onsite as a "May Seminar" course for online PhD students

Undergraduate Courses

Rhetorical Criticism

ENGL 3362: Spr06, Spr10, F11*

*New course proposed by me and approved by the College in F07
Piloted in Spr06 as ENGL 4365: Special Topic.*

Professional Report Writing

ENGL 3365: Taught regularly – 10 sections through F10

Style

ENGL 3366: Spr11*

Information Design

ENGL 3369: Spr08, Spr09

Developing Instructional Materials

ENGL 4367: F10

Capstone: Professional Issues in Technical Communication
ENGL 4380: Spr04, Spr07

Intro to Communication Technologies
COMM 2733: 5 sections from Sum01-Spr03

Rhetorical Communication Analysis
COMM 3253: Spr02, F02

Professional Presentation
COMM 3633: F01, F02

Gender, Communication & Technology
COMM 4433: Spr03

The Cyberpunk Movement
ENGL 76-270: Sum00

Freshman Composition
ENGL 76-101: 1996-2001

Writers Workshop (pre-freshmen level)
ENGL 0111: 1995

* *Taught online*

PhD Dissertation Committees (Texas Tech TCR program)

PhD Committee Chair

Diane Allen, PhD 2011

Dissertation Title: "Now I can hear the fish swim: The rhetorical construction of cochlear implant technology"

Glenn Dayley, PhD 2011

Dissertation Title: "American dreams: Ideograph and metaphor on the campaign trail"

Todd Rasberry, PhD 2011

Dissertation Title: "No magic, just rhetoric: Understanding major gift fundraising as a rhetorical genre"

Emil Towner, PhD 2010

Dissertation Title: "Placing (and shaping) genocide on the public record: A rhetorical analysis of apologetic exchanges in Rwanda's gacaca trials"

Cris Broyles (in progress)

Kim Elmore (in progress)

Melissa Helquist (in progress)

Sue Henson (ABD, 9/11)

Steve Morrison (in progress)
Danielle Saad (in progress)
Charity Tran (in progress)

PhD Committee Member

Lora Arduser, PhD 2011
Christiana Christofides, PhD 2011
Jen Osborne, PhD 2011
Chris Ryan, PhD 2011
Gregory Zobel, PhD 2011
Cynthia McPherson, PhD 2010
Scott Mogull, PhD 2010
Ritu Raju, PhD 2010
Ryan Hoover, PhD 2009
Nicole St. Germaine-Madison, PhD 2007
Dave Yeats, PhD 2006

Debra Burleson (ABD, 3/11)
Deborah Fontaine (in progress)
Marc Di Maggio (ABD, 3/09)
Letitia Harding (ABD, 6/10)
Alec Hosterman (ABD, 5/09)
Anne Papworth (ABD, 8/11)
Mark Ranario (in progress)

Other student committees (Texas Tech)

Portfolio Committee Member, Alison Porter (MA, Rhetoric & Composition), 2007.

Outside Member, Cam Stone, College of Mass Comm., in progress (ABD).

Independent studies (Texas Tech)

Kenneth Burke. Jeannie Bennett. PhD student. Fall 2011.

The Rhetoric of Assistive Technology. Cris Broyles. PhD student. Summer 2011.

Honors & Awards

Nominated for The Chancellor's Council Distinguished Teaching Award. Texas Tech University, 2011.

Giant Eagle Dissertation Fellowship. Awarded annually to one Ph.D. student in Rhetoric at Carnegie Mellon University, 2000-1.

Phi Kappa Phi, Carnegie Mellon chapter, 2000.

National Science Foundation Travel Grants, 1998-9.

Summa Cum Laude in English. Magna Cum Laude in General Scholarship. University of California, Berkeley, 1994.

Phi Beta Kappa, University of California, Berkeley chapter, 1994.

H. Hill Scholarship. Department of English. University of California, Berkeley, 1994.

Wheeler Scholarship. University of California, Berkeley, 1993.

Professional & Technical Writing Experience

Senior Technical Writer and Web Designer. Software Agents Group. Robotics Institute. Carnegie Mellon University, 1999 (Feb-Dec).

Content Developer and Web Designer. Ph.D. in Rhetoric website. Carnegie Mellon University, 1999.

Professional Service and Committees

Texas Tech University

Member, Graduate Studies Committee, 2011-13
Member, MATC Portfolio Committee, 2009-10
Member, Faculty Recruitment Committee, 2007-9
Member, Faculty Awards Committee, 2006-7
Member, Faculty Incentive Grant Review Panel (TLTC), 2005-6
Member, Faculty Merit Committee, 2004-6
Member, MATC Qualifying Exam Committee, F2003, F2004
Member, Technology Committee, 2004-6

The University of Texas, San Antonio

Chair, Departmental Faculty Advisory Committee, 2002-3
Member, Academic Policy & Curriculum Committee, 2002-3
Member, Recruitment and Admissions Sub-Committee, 2002
Reviewer, Web For Faculty Demo System, 2002
Member, Honors & Scholarship Committee, 2001-2
Member, Two hiring committees. Intercultural communication, 2001-2

National Service

Member. Panel of Experts/Stakeholders working in consultation with the CCCC Committee for Best Practices in Online Writing Instruction (OWI). 2011-12.

Area Chair. Rhetoric and Technical Communication. Southwest Texas Popular Culture and American Culture Association. 2012-present.

Peer Reviewer. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 2008-present.

Peer Reviewer. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 2010.

Scientific Committee Member. *Presence 2008*. Pre-conference workshop (The ethics of presence and social presence technologies).

Reviewer. *Interacting with Computers* 20.3 (May 2008). Special issue on the abuse and misuse of social agents.

Program Committee member. *SIGDOC 2007, 2009*.

Reviewer. *CHI 2008*.

Reviewer. *CHI 2006 Workshop* (Misuse and abuse of interactive technologies).

Presentations

Invited

Which Sounds are Significant? Towards a Rhetoric of Closed Captioning. Lecture followed by Captioning Workshop. The Ohio State University. 20 February 2012. Sponsored by The Literacy Studies Program, The Digital Media Studies Program, The Digital Union, and The Disability Studies Program.

Workshop Coordinator

Closed Captioning Web Videos: Basic Workshop (2 hours). Co-leader with Gregory Zobel. Sponsored by STC Chapter of Texas Tech University. 16 October 2009.

Closed Captioning Web Videos: Advanced Workshop (2 hours). Co-leader with Gregory Zobel. Sponsored by STC Chapter of Texas Tech University. 30 October 2009.

Departmental presentations

Bearing Witness to a Miracle: Cochlear Implants, News Discourse, and the Public Fascination with Curing Deafness. Fall Colloquium. Department of English. Texas Tech University. 30 November 2005.

Virtual Faces, Interfaceless Interfaces, and the Rhetoric of Designing "Digital Beauties." Fall Colloquium. Department of English. Texas Tech University. 3 November 2004.

Academic Conferences

Sonic Allusions, Captioned Silences, and Dramatic Irony in Closed Captioning. Annual Meeting of the SW/TX Popular Culture and American Culture Associations. Rhetoric and Technical Communication Area. Albuquerque, NM. 8-11 February 2012.

The Anatomy of a Sound Description: A Study of Non-Speech Information (NSI) in Closed Captioned Films. Annual Meeting of the SW/TX Popular Culture and American Culture Associations. Technical Communication Area. San Antonio, TX. 20-23 April 2011.

An Ethic of Ability: Hearing Culture and Technical Communication. Annual Meeting of the SW/TX Popular Culture and American Culture Associations. Technical Communication Area. Albuquerque, NM. 10-13 February 2010.

Frozen Ecstasy: Visualizing Hearing in Marketing Materials for Cochlear Implants. ACM's Special Interest Group on Design of Communication (SIGDOC '07). El Paso, TX. 22-24 October 2007.

"Just Roll Your Mouse Over Me": Designing Virtual Women for Customer Service on the Web. Annual Meeting of the SW/TX Popular Culture and American Culture Associations. Gender and Technology Area. Albuquerque, NM. 14-17 February 2007. *Invited paper.*

Visualizing the Cochlear Implant as a Miracle Cure for Deafness (presented with Kevin Garrison). International Visual Literacy Association Annual Conference. Ft. Worth, TX. 6-10 October 2006.

Down from the Pedestal: Towards Greater Accountability in Agent-based Research. CHI 2006 workshop on Misuse and Abuse of Interactive Technologies. Montreal, Quebec, Canada. 22 April 2006.

Bearing Witness to a Miracle: Cochlear Implants, News Discourse, and the Public Fascination with Curing Deafness. Federation Rhetoric Symposium. Denton, TX. 26 February 2006.

Another Reason Why Animated Interface Agents are Both Wrong and Evil. Conference on College Composition and Communication. San Francisco, CA. 16-19 March 2005.

Virtual Faces, Interfaceless Interfaces, and the Rhetoric of Designing "Digital Beauties" (co-presented with Sheryl Brahn). Society for Literature and Science Annual Convention. Durham, North Carolina. 14-17 October 2004.

Utopia, Prophecy, and the Rhetoric of Artificial Intelligence. Rhetoric Society of America Biennial Conference. Austin, Texas. 28-31 May 2004.

The Future is Inevitable: The Rhetorical Engines of Prophecy in Artificial Intelligence. Society for Literature and Science Annual Convention. Austin, Texas. 23-26 October 2003.

Challenging Belief Bias and Fostering Critical Thinking About the Internet. South Central Modern Language Association Annual Convention. Austin, Texas. 31 October-2 November 2002.

Artificial Intelligence as a Discursive Practice: The Case of Embodied Software Agent Systems, Humanities and Technology Association Conference (Terre Haute, Indiana), 24-26 October 2002.

Two Rhetorics of AI. Rhetoric Society of America Biennial Conference. Las Vegas, Nevada. 23-26 May 2002.

Challenging Belief Bias: Critical Thinking in the Communication Technologies Course. Conference on College Composition and Communication. Chicago, Illinois. 20-23 March 2002.

Governed by Rules: Conversation and Interactivity in an Embodied Software System. American Association for Rhetoric of Science and Technology. National Communication Association Preconference. Atlanta, Georgia. 31 October 2001.

Scripting Sylvie: Language, Gender, and Humanness in Public Discourse About Software Agents. First International Gender and Language Association Conference. Stanford University. Palo Alto, California. 5-7 May 2000.

Passing Loebner's Turing Test: A Case of Conflicting Discourse Functions. The Future of the Turing Test: The Next Fifty Years. Dartmouth College. Hanover, New Hampshire. 28-30 January 2000.

Stoned Machines and Very Human Humans: The Politics of Passing and Outing in the Loebner Competition. Society for Social Studies of Science. San Diego, California. 28-30 October 1999.

Passing for (Non)Human: Gender, Technology, and the Turing Test, Rhetoric Colloquium. Department of English. Carnegie Mellon University. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. 1 April 1999. *Invited talk.*

Under the Illusion of Understanding: A Rhetorical Approach to the Public Understanding of Science. American Association for Rhetoric of Science and Technology. National Communication Association Preconference. New York City, NY. 20 November 1998. *Competitive panel on Science and the Public Sphere.*

Rising Up From the MUD: Inscribing Gender in Software Design. Society for Social Studies of Science Annual Conference. Halifax, Nova Scotia. 28 October-1 November 1998.

The Costs of Being Certain: Rhetoric in Software Agent Design. Society for Social Studies of Science Annual Conference. Tucson, Arizona. 22-26 October 1997.