

Dare to Be Wise:

An Introduction to Dr. Ryan Cheek

Dr. Ryan Cheek joined the ETC department as an assistant professor of technical communication in Fall 2022. During his first semester, he taught ENGL/TCH COM 2560 Technical Marketing Communication and TCH COM 5620 Research Methods in Technical Communication. This semester, he is teaching a brand-new course, TCH COM 3001 Video Design and Editing, which he is helping to develop for the department.

Originally from Salt Lake City, Cheek earned his Ph.D. in Technical Communication and Rhetoric from Utah State University. His research has been focused on political communication technologies, techne of gender, and the technical rhetoric of apocalypse. “A big part of my training was as a debate coach,” he said. “It led me to academia, research, and teaching.” His love of forensics partly explains his fascination with rhetoric. The young scholar’s interest in political communication technologies was inspired by the innovative campaigns of folks like Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio Cortez. This interest is evident in his publications such as “Political Technical Communication and Ideographic Communication Design in a Pre-Digital Congressional Campaign” (2020) and “Making a Case for Political Technical Communication” (2022).

A humanitarian at heart, Cheek is looking forward to continuing research that will improve the human condition. Guided by personal and institutional ethics, he hopes to collaborate with students on research projects related to politics, gender, and apocalyptic rhetoric in technical communication. Apocalyptic rhetoric is the appeal to the end of days, so prevalent in current political communication.

Cheek is thrilled to be a part of the S&T community. So far, he is incredibly happy with his home department. “The people in this department are awesome. There’s a really friendly, caring vibe, but also a rigorous intellectual vibe.” He and his family have been exploring the area. Rolla’s welcoming community and Missouri’s natural beauty have helped his family settle into their new home.

Cheek's favorite quotation is "Sapere aude." He picked it up from Kant who was quoting Horace. It can be translated loosely as "Dare to be wise."

