

COM 331: The Rhetorical Tradition in Western Thought

Meeting Times: Mondays and Wednesdays 12:30-2:20 in SMI 307
Required Textbook: James Herrick, *The History and Theory of Rhetoric* (3rd Edition).

Instructor: Matt McGarrity

Email: mcgarrit@u.washington.edu

Anonymous Course email: <https://catalyst.washington.edu/webtools2/umail/index.cgi?owner=mcgarrit&id=1769> (please let me know that this is for the 331 course)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:30-4:30 in CMU in 325
Wednesdays 2:30-3:30 in CMU 143

→ **Course Website:** <http://faculty.washington.edu/mcgarrit/COM331/>

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The study of rhetoric has played an essential role in the development of Western thought. Often positioned alongside or against the study of philosophy, thinkers from Plato onward have written about what students should know about the process of persuading others. While we may operate with the contemporary derogatory meaning of the word rhetoric, this was not the case for generations of thinkers and political leaders who saw the mastery of rhetoric as the crowing achievement of a well educated person. Rhetoric has alternately been viewed as an empowering art that can benefit the person and the community and as a deceptive trick used to beguile the ignorant masses. In fact, we can point to historic episodes and find evidence for both beliefs. Yet, this class is not a study of the uses of rhetoric over time. Rather, this class investigates how rhetoric has been theorized and taught over the centuries. This course seeks to provide students with a sense of how rhetoric was understood in different historical societies and how the beliefs about rhetoric have changed over time. While we don't have time to cover all of the history of rhetoric in one course (or even in one lifetime), we will address some of the major theorists that have significantly shaped rhetorical theory and pedagogy.

There are four main learning goals for this course. By the end of the quarter, students should be able to:

- explain the major theories and theorists in the history of rhetoric
- explain how rhetoric functioned within its historical context
- generate a well thought out definition of rhetoric
- interpret contemporary events in terms of classical rhetorical theory

"Wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric, and wherever there is rhetoric, there is meaning."
---Kenneth Burke

"[Rhetoric,] that powerful instrument of error and deceit."
---John Locke

ASSIGNMENTS

Exams

There are two exams in this course. The midterm exam will cover the history of rhetoric up to the late Roman empire. The final exam is a comprehensive exam covering all of the course material. The exams will cover information from the readings, the lectures, and the in-class discussion. You must be in class in order to be prepared for the exams. You cannot simply read the material (or simply come to class) and hope to do well on the exams.

Quizzes

Periodically, there will be quizzes on the lecture material and the readings. These quizzes may be announced ahead of time or they may be pop quizzes. You should always come to class prepared to take a quiz on the lecture material and recent course readings. There will be eight quizzes, and your lowest three quiz grades will be dropped from the calculation of your final grade. **THERE ARE NO MAKE-UP QUIZZES. IF YOU MISS CLASS ON A DAY OF A QUIZ, YOU RECEIVE A 0 FOR THAT QUIZ.** Do not email me ahead of time asking if there will be a quiz in class on a certain day.

Book Review

This class can only barely scratch the surface of the study of the history of rhetorical theory and pedagogy. As such, you will read a scholarly book exploring some specific aspect of the rhetorical tradition. Your paper must summarize the book you read and provide some critical evaluation of the book. I will provide a list of recommended books in class. I will also provide a full assignment description and a sample review. You can also select some other book not listed (though you should consult with me). The book review should be 5-6 pages double-spaced times (12 point Times New Roman font or approximately 1250-1500 words) My goals for this assignment are to provide you with the opportunity to pursue some aspect of the rhetorical tradition in greater depth and to evaluate a work of historical research.

Homeworks

Reading about rhetorical theory in historical periods can quickly feel foreign and detached. The homeworks for this class seek to help you understand the period and the material by responding to the works and/or performing some of the rhetorical exercises that were being used in classrooms at that time. All homeworks will be posted on the class website. You need to read the homework assignment and bring the completed homework to class on the assigned day. These homeworks will vary in length, but will not exceed one page single spaced.

NOTE: ALL HOMEWORKS MUST BE TYPED. IN ORDER TO RECEIVE CREDIT, A HOMEOWRK MUST BE TURNED IN ON THE DAY IT IS DUE. IF YOU ARE ABSENT, YOU NEED TO TURN IN THE ASSIGNMENT BEFORE CLASS.

All homeworks will be graded on a $\sqrt{}$ - system. The distribution system is as follows:

- 7 completed ($\sqrt{}$) homeworks = 20 points
- 6 completed ($\sqrt{}$) homeworks = 17 points
- 5 completed ($\sqrt{}$) homeworks = 14 points
- 4 completed ($\sqrt{}$) homeworks = 11 points
- 3 completed ($\sqrt{}$) homeworks = 7 points
- 2 completed ($\sqrt{}$) homeworks = 4 points
- 1 completed ($\sqrt{}$) homeworks = 1 point
- 0 completed ($\sqrt{}$) homeworks = 0 points

GRADING SYSTEM

There are 200 possible points in this class.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Point Value</u>	<u>Percentage of the final grade</u>
Midterm Exam	60	30%
Final Exam	60	30%
Quizzes	30	15%
Book Review	30	15%
Homeworks	20	10%
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Total:	200 points	100%

Grades will be assigned based on your final number of accumulated points. For a discussion of the grade ranges, please consult your student handbook or visit: http://www.washington.edu/students/genclat/front/Grading_Sys.html

A Range (90-100%)	B Range (80-89%)	C Range (70-79%)	D Range (62-69%)
100% = 4.0	89% = 3.4	79% = 2.4	69% = 1.4
99% = 4.0	88% = 3.3	78% = 2.3	68% = 1.3
98% = 4.0	87% = 3.2	77% = 2.2	67% = 1.2
97% = 4.0	86% = 3.1	76% = 2.1	66% = 1.1
96% = 4.0	85% = 3.0	75% = 2.0	65% = 1.0
95% = 4.0	84% = 2.9	74% = 1.9	64% = .9
94% = 3.9	83% = 2.8	73% = 1.8	63% = .8
93% = 3.8	82% = 2.7	72% = 1.7	62% = .7
92% = 3.7	81% = 2.6	71% = 1.6	
91% = 3.6	80% = 2.5	70% = 1.5	
90% = 3.5			Below .6 is failing grade

POLICIES

First Week of Class: Students who are enrolled in this course but do not attend all regularly scheduled class meetings during the first week of the quarter are subject to being dropped from the course. Students should contact me if they must be absent any day during the first week of the quarter. Students must not assume that not attending class will automatically result in their being dropped. Students themselves are responsible for officially dropping courses.

Make up Exams: Early exams or make-up exams rarely will be given, and only to students who have unavoidable conflicts (that can be documented) with the exam time. Students will receive a study guide approximately a week prior to the exams.

Late Assignments: For purposes of equity and fairness for all students, you will be given a reasonable amount of time to complete all assignments. An assignment is on time when it is delivered to the teacher at the beginning of the class session on the day it is due. Homeworks must be turned in on time to receive credit. Book reviews that are turned in later will receive a 10% grade reduction for each day they are late.

Attendance: Each class meeting is an opportunity to participate in lectures and discussions. By being present and on time, reading the assigned material, making study notes, and participating in discussions, you'll increase your opportunities to learn the course material. Active participation is critical to learning; passive learning is quickly forgotten. As trite as it sounds, the more you devote to this course the more you will benefit from this course. I assume that when you enter the class, you are an intellectual and will act as such. This means that you will turn off your cell phone, abstain from browsing the internet, be awake, and avoid from chatting. We will spend a significant portion of our time discussing the course concepts, but you should address the entire group and not simply chat with a friend.

Special Needs: To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz, 543-8924 (V), 543-8925 (TTY), or uwdss@u.washington.edu. Please present me with your letter from DSS indicating that you have a disability that requires academic accommodations so we can discuss the accommodations you might need for the class.

Grievance Policy: If you have any concerns about the course or me, please see me about these concerns as soon as possible. If you are not comfortable talking with me or you are not satisfied with the response that you receive, you may contact the Chair of the Department of Communication, Gerald Baldasty, at 543-2662.

Academic Integrity: The University's definitions of academic and personal misconduct are outlined in the *Student Conduct Code* (available in your University of Washington Student Planner pages 97-103 and online at <http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html>). It is your responsibility to read and understand the University's expectations in this regard. Until you have read the *Code*, do not assume that you know what this University defines as cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct.

Plagiarism is a significant violation of the *Student Conduct Code* and will be dealt with severely in this class. It is important for you to know that plagiarism is any representation of another person's words or ideas in a manner that makes it seem as if they were your own, in either oral or written form. This means that you may not copy another person's paper or speech. But it also means that you should not use another person's unique phrases or organizational schemes without making it clear to your audience where those words or ideas originated. Your work should be entirely your own. If it becomes evident that you have collaborated with another student and/or plagiarized work, the matter will be turned over to the University's Committee on Academic Conduct. For more on plagiarism, including a review of proper and improper paraphrasing practices, see <http://depts.washington.edu/grading/issue1/honesty.htm>.

OFFICE HOURS

Educational research has shown that a student's grades are directly correlated to her/his level of engagement in a class. Discussing the class concepts with the teacher and/or your peers leads to higher levels of engagement. So, meet with me during my office hours.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The assigned readings are to be completed by the day assigned, as they will inform our in-class discussion. You must complete all the assigned readings for the day.

Week One

Wednesday, 1/4 **Course orientation**

Week Two

Monday, 1/9 **Defining and studying rhetoric as a pedagogical tradition—Homework #1 Due**

Reading: Herrick, Chapter 1

Wednesday, 1/11 **Origins of Rhetoric in Greece**

Reading: Herrick, Chapter 2
 Website, Gorgias, *Encomium of Helen*

Week Three

Monday, 1/16 **NO CLASS—MLK DAY**

Wednesday, 1/18 **Greek rhetoric**

Reading: Website, Isocrates, Selections from *Against the Sophists*

Week Four

Monday, 1/23 **Greek rhetoric—Homework #2 Due**

Reading: Herrick, 3
 Website, Plato, Selections from *Phaedrus*

Wednesday, 1/25 **Greek rhetoric**

Reading: Herrick, 4
 Website, Aristotle, Selections from *Rhetoric*

Week Five

Monday, 1/30 **Roman rhetoric**

Reading: Herrick, 5 (93-106)
 Website, Cicero, Selections from *On the Orator*

Wednesday, 2/1 **Roman rhetoric—Homework #3 Due**

Reading: Herrick, 5 (107-116)
 Website, Quintilian, Selections from *Institutes of Oratory*

Week Six

Monday, 2/6 **MIDTERM EXAM**

Wednesday, 2/8 **Medieval rhetoric**

Reading: Herrick, 6 (122-129)
 Website, Augustine, Selections from *On Christian Doctrine*

Week Seven

Monday, 2/13 **Medieval rhetoric—Homework #4 Due**

Reading: Herrick, 6 (130-142)
 Website, Anonymous, Selections from *The Principles of Letter Writing*

Wednesday, 2/15 **Renaissance rhetoric—Homework #5 Due**

Reading: Herrick, 7 (147-165)
 Website, Erasmus, *A Short Rule for Copiousness*

Week Eight

Monday, 2/20 **NO CLASS—PRESIDENTS DAY**

Wednesday, 2/22

Renaissance rhetoric

Reading: Herrick, 7 (165-168)
 Website, Bacon, Selections from *The Advancement of Learning*

Week Nine

Monday, 2/27 **Enlightenment rhetoric—Homework #6 Due**

Reading: Herrick, Chapter 8 (174-179)
 Website, Locke, Selections from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*

Wednesday, 3/1

Enlightenment rhetoric

Reading: Herrick, Chapter 8 (179-193)
 Website, Austin, Selections from *Chironomia*

Week Ten

Monday, 3/6 **Early American rhetorical pedagogy**

Reading: Website, D.J. Hill, Selections from *The Science of Rhetoric*
 Website, Adams Sherman Hill, Selections from *Principles of Rhetoric*
 Website, Nilsen, Selections from *Speech Communication at the University of Washington*

Wednesday, 3/8

Conclusion and review—FINAL QUIZ—Homework #7 Due

Week Eleven

FINAL EXAM 8:30-10:20 a.m. Thursday, Mar. 16, 2006