

CA 422/522: Rhetorical Theory

Dr. Brett Lunceford

T/R: 11.00-12.15PM

University Commons 1263

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Course Description

This course presents a broad survey of the Western rhetorical tradition, beginning with the Ancients and concluding with contemporary rhetorical theory. Some of the questions that we will consider in the course include: What is rhetoric? What is rhetorical theory? What can we learn from the Ancients? Can we observe these theories in our world today? How does rhetoric apply to me?

There are three main goals for this course:

- Students will be able to discuss and explain various rhetorical theories.
- Students will be able to apply rhetorical theory to their own lives.
- Students will be able to synthesize rhetorical theory.

Students will gain an understanding of the rhetorical tradition through the readings and in-class discussions. They will also gain a greater understanding of rhetoric as they apply rhetorical theory to current events and their own lives in their response papers and in-class discussions. Assessment will come through response papers and a final paper.

This course is reading intensive but manageable. I expect that each student will come to class prepared to discuss the readings for the day. According to the University of South Alabama's Academic Policies and Procedures, "Each hour of lecture usually requires two hours of outside preparation. Thus, a student carrying sixteen semester hours should be prepared to spend at least 48 hours in class and study per week."

Required Text

Bizzell, Patricia, and Bruce Herzberg, eds. *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001.

Other readings will be available through the library's online course reserves.

Class Climate

The questions that we will grapple with have no easy answers. There will be points where you may disagree with someone else. This is appropriate and, to some degree, desirable. However,

respect for others in the class is an essential component of this class. Arguments should be made in a spirit of inquiry rather than as a personal attack.

Attendance Policy

This is a senior level course, so I assume that by now you recognize the value of regular class attendance. This course relies heavily on in-class discussion. Excessive absences will negatively impact your participation grade in this course. If you are not present, you are not able to participate and it is impossible to make up the discussion. You get three absences free—no questions asked. However, after these absences, each absence will decrease your final grade by 5 points (half a letter grade), so use them wisely. In addition, there may be in-class activities, such as the opportunity to lead the discussion, that are impossible to make up. If you are absent, please do not email me asking, “What did I miss?” You missed 75 minutes of discussion and perhaps an assignment. Make friends with your classmates and get the notes from them and/or come to my office hours.

Academic Honesty

From the Student Academic Conduct Policies: “Any dishonesty related to academic work or records constitutes academic misconduct including, but not limited to, activities such as giving or receiving unauthorized aid in tests and examinations, improperly obtaining a copy of an examination, plagiarism, misrepresentation of information, or altering transcripts or university records. . . . Penalties may range from the loss of credit for a particular assignment to dismissal from the University” (*The Lowdown*, p. 249). In short, don’t do it. I don’t like to bust students for plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty but I will. It isn’t fair to others and it isn’t fair to yourself. If you have any questions on what constitutes plagiarism, see <http://www.southalabama.edu/univlib/sauer/plagiarismforstudents.html>.

Assignments

Response Papers: During the course, you will be assigned eight response papers, worth 5 points each. In them, you will be asked a question to relate to the readings of the week. Late response papers will receive half credit at the most and will only be accepted by the next scheduled class. No papers will be accepted one week past the original due date. If you know that you will be absent when a response paper is due, have a classmate bring it to class or bring it to my office before the class period on which it is due. I will not accept papers by email.

Final Paper: The final paper is an opportunity to synthesize some of the ideas in the course. In this paper, you will discuss what people in your chosen profession should know about rhetorical theory. The key here is synthesis; do not simply give a bulleted list of ideas that would be useful for your profession. Papers are due December 4th before 5 p.m. I will accept them earlier, but not later. We will discuss these papers in detail in class, specific to your life goals.

Final Paper (Graduate Students): Because you are taking a rhetorical theory course, I assume that you have at least some interest in integrating rhetorical methods into your scholarship. To that end, your final paper will consist of a literature review suitable for inclusion in your thesis.

In essence, you will turn in the introduction to your thesis as the final paper in this course. Consider how rhetorical theory informs your research project and draw on other sources that are not in the assigned readings. I expect that the readings that we have in class are only a starting point. We will meet throughout the semester to discuss your research project and I will help you identify relevant outside sources. Because this assignment is highly individualized, we will meet to discuss the specific requirements.

Participation: Participation is more than simply showing up. I expect that students will come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Graduate students will also lead at least one discussion.

Grading Scale

There are a total of 100 points available in this course:

Response papers: 40 points

Final Exam: 30 points

Participation: 30 points

A=90-100; B=80-89.99; C=70-79.99; D=60-69.99; F=below 60

Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, students with bona fide disabilities will be afforded reasonable accommodation. The Office of Special Student Services will certify a disability and advise faculty members of reasonable accommodations.

If you will need special accommodations please talk to me as soon as possible.

A Note on my Teaching Philosophy

I believe that every student in my class has the ability to succeed in this course. My goal is to create a comfortable environment in which you can explore and improve your ability to think critically and skillfully present your ideas to an audience. I do not “give” grades; students earn grades—no one is entitled to get an “A” in a class unless they earn it. I cannot grade on effort—I must grade what you actually do. My job is to push students to do their best and to then exceed that standard. I recognize that this is futile unless I also provide the support and assistance that each student needs to excel. Therefore, I provide office hours and expect students to use them and am generally available through email. I assume that attaining a university degree is your first priority. If this is not the case, it is less likely that you will excel. Some of you are here because you want to get a better job. I believe that education should do much more than job training, but if you see it as job training, at least take it seriously. Recognize that you will probably be required to work 40 hours a week (or more) from 8am until 5pm. If you are chronically late, they fire you. If you do not do your work, they fire you. If you drop the ball, you probably will not get a raise, they may fire you, and in some cases legal action may be taken against you. Bottom line—you do your part to excel and I will be there to help you reach that goal.

Course Schedule

Week 1 Ancient Greek Rhetoric

8/18 Introduction to the course: What is rhetoric?

8/20 Gorgias: *Encomium of Helen* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Segal, Charles P. "Gorgias and the Psychology of the Logos." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 66 (1962): 99-155.

Lunceford, Brett. "A Practical Approach to Teaching Rhetorical Theory." *American Communication Journal*, 10, no. 4 (2008): http://acjournal.org/holdings/vol10/04_Winter/articles/lunceford.php.

Week 2 Ancient Greek Rhetoric, Continued

8/25 Isocrates: *Against the Sophists* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Poulakos, John. "Toward a Sophistic Definition of Rhetoric." *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 16, no. 1 (1983): 35-48.

Schiappa, Edward. "Neo-Sophistic Rhetorical Criticism or the Historical Reconstruction of Sophistic Doctrines?" *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 23, no. 3 (1990): 192-217.

8/27 Plato: *Phaedrus* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Week 3 Aristotle

9/1 Aristotle: *Rhetoric* (pp. 179-212 in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Response Paper 1 due for weeks 1-2

9/3 Aristotle: *Rhetoric* (pp. 213-240 in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Week 4 Roman Rhetoric

9/8 Cicero: *De Oratore*, Book II-III (pp. 320-339 in Bizzell and Herzberg)

9/10 Quintilian: *Institutes of Oratory* (pp. 384-400, 412-418 in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Week 5 Medieval Rhetoric

9/15 Augustine: *On Christian Doctrine, Book IV* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Response Paper 2 due for weeks 3-4

9/17 Boethius: *An Overview of the Structure of Rhetoric* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Christine de Pizan: *The Book of the City of Ladies* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Christine de Pizan: *From The Treasure of the City of Ladies* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Week 6 Renaissance Rhetoric

9/22 Peter Ramus: *Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

9/24 Madeleine de Scudéry: *Of Conversation* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Madeleine de Scudéry: *Of Speaking Too Much or Too Little. And How We Ought to Speak* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Week 7 Enlightenment Rhetoric

9/29 Mary Astell: *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Giambattista Vico: *On the Study Methods of Our Time* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Response Paper 3 due for weeks 5-6

10/1 Thomas Sheridan: *A Course of Lectures on Elocution, Lecture IV* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Gilbert Austin: *Chironomia* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Week 8 Modern Rhetorical Theory

10/6 Kenneth Burke: *A Rhetoric of Motives* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Kenneth Burke: *Language as Symbolic Action* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

10/8 Bitzer, Lloyd. "The Rhetorical Situation." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968): 1-14.

We will review the first half of the readings in class.

Week 9 Modern Rhetorical Theory, Continued

10/13 Fisher, Walter R. "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument." *Communication Monographs* 51, no. 1 (1984): 1-22.

McGee, Michael Calvin. "The 'Ideograph': A Link between Rhetoric and Ideology." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66, no. 1 (1980): 1-16.

Response Paper 4 due for weeks 7-8

10/15 Gunn, Joshua. "For the Love of Rhetoric, with Continual Reference to Kenny and Dolly." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94, no. 2 (2008): 131-55.

Phillips, Kendall R. "The Spaces of Public Dissension: Reconsidering the Public Sphere." *Communication Monographs* 63, no. 3 (1996): 231-48.

Week 10 Social Movement Rhetoric

10/20 Gregg, Richard B. "The Ego-Function of the Rhetoric of Protest." *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 4, no. 2 (1971): 71-91.

Griffin, Leland M. "The Rhetoric of Historical Movements." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 38, no. 2 (1952): 184-88.

Simons, Herbert W. "Requirements, Problems, and Strategies: A Theory of Persuasion for Social Movements." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56, no. 1 (1970): 1-11.

Response Paper 5 due for week 9

10/22 Bosmajian, Haig A. "Obscenity and Protest." *Today's Speech* 18 (1970): 9-14.

DeLuca, Kevin Michael. "Unruly Arguments: The Body Rhetoric of Earth First!, ACT UP, and Queer Nation." *Argumentation & Advocacy* 36, no. 1 (1999): 9-21.

Haiman, Franklyn S. "The Rhetoric of the Streets: Some Legal and Ethical Considerations." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 53, no. 2 (1967): 99-114.

Week 11 Critical Rhetoric

- 10/27 Brummett, Barry. "Rhetorical Theory as Heuristic and Moral: A Pedagogical Justification." *Communication Education* 33, no. 2 (1984): 97-107.
- McKerrow, Raymie E. "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis." *Communication Monographs* 56, no. 2 (1989): 91-111.
- 10/29 Charland, M. "Finding a Horizon and Telos: The Challenge to Critical Rhetoric." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (1991): 71-74.
- Hariman, R. "Critical Rhetoric and Postmodern Theory." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77, no. 1 (1991): 67-70.
- McKerrow, Raymie E. "Critical Rhetoric in a Postmodern World." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (1991): 75-78.

Week 12 Rhetorical Conceptions of the Audience

- 11/3 Black, Edwin. "The Second Persona." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56 (1970): 109-19.
- Charland, Maurice. "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the *Peuple Quebecois*." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73, no. 2 (1987): 133-50.

Response Paper 6 due for weeks 10-11

- 11/5 Benson, Thomas W. "Rhetoric as a Way of Being." In *American Rhetoric: Context and Criticism*, edited by Thomas W. Benson, 293-322. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989.
- McGee, Michael Calvin. "In Search of 'the People': A Rhetorical Alternative." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 61 (1975): 235-49.

Week 13 Feminist Rhetoric

- 11/10 Hélène Cixous: *The Laugh of the Medusa* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)
- Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs. "Stanton's 'The Solitude of Self': A Rationale for Feminism." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66, no. 3 (1980): 304-12.

Response Paper 7 due for week 12

- 11/12 **NCA Convention: TBA**

Week 14 Feminist and Postmodern Rhetorical Theory

11/17 Blair, Carole, Julie R. Brown, and Leslie A. Baxter. "Disciplining the Feminine." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80 (1994): 383-409.

Foss, Sonja K., and Cindy L. Griffin. "Beyond Persuasion: A Proposal for an Invitational Rhetoric." *Communication Monographs* 62, no. 1 (1995): 2-18.

11/19 Harold, Christine. "Pranking Rhetoric: 'Culture Jamming' as Media Activism." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 21, no. 3 (2004): 189-211.

McGee, Michael Calvin. "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture." *Western Journal of Communication* 54, no. 3 (1990): 274-89.

Week 15 Postmodern Rhetorical Theory, Continued

11/24 Hariman, Robert. "Allegory and Democratic Public Culture in the Postmodern Era." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 35, no. 4 (2002): 267-96.

Response Paper 8 due for weeks 13-14

We will review the second half of the readings today.

11/26 **No Class: Thanksgiving Break**

Week 16 Conclusion

12/1 **Last Day of Class: What is rhetoric?**

12/4 **Final Papers Due**

Regarding Changes in Course Requirements

Since all classes do not progress at the same rate, the instructor may wish to modify the above requirements or their timing as circumstances dictate. For example, the instructor may wish to change the number and frequency of exams, or the number and sequence of assignments. However, the students must be given adequate notification. Moreover, there may be non-typical classes for which these requirements are not strictly applicable in each instance and may need modification. If such modification is needed, it must be in writing and conform to the spirit of this policy statement.