

CA 422/522: Rhetorical Theory

Dr. Brett Lunceford

T/R: 9.30-10.45AM

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.

Here is the policy set forth by the Department of Communication:

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the Student Academic Conduct Policy. By registering at the university, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Conduct Policy, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the code. Please see *The Lowdown* for the complete **Student Academic Conduct Policy**.

Each instance of academic dishonesty will be reported to the chair of the department. The student involved will receive written notification describing the alleged violation and the recommended penalty, along with a copy of the policy. The written notification will inform the student that if it is determined that previous incident(s) of Academic Misconduct have occurred, an additional or higher level charge may be brought.

The student involved has ten (10) Class days from receipt of the written notification to submit a written response to the instructor and request a conference with the department chair and the instructor.

Assignments: Undergraduate

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 8.** I will accept them earlier, but not later. We will discuss these papers in detail in class, specific to your life goals.

Participation: Participation is more than simply showing up. I expect that students will come to class prepared to discuss the readings and actively do so. If I get the sense that people are not coming to class prepared, I will simply use quizzes on the readings to assess participation points.

Final Exam (Undergraduate Students): There will be no final exam for the undergraduate students in this course; the final paper will serve that purpose.

Assignments: Graduate

Paper Proposal: In a brief 2-3 page paper, explain the theoretical construct that you wish to examine and how you plan to examine this. If you will be looking at a specific case that illustrates this issue, provide some background for the case as well. Discuss what theoretical touchstones you plan to use. **This paper will be due on Friday, September 2,** by email.

Context / Literature Review: In approximately 4-7 pages, discuss the existing literature surrounding the rhetorical construct you wish to examine. **This paper will be due on Friday, September 30,** by email.

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. Each student will meet with me early on to consider how rhetorical theory can inform your research agenda and agree on an appropriate topic for the final paper. Because this is a survey course, the class readings will serve mainly as a starting point. We will meet throughout the semester to discuss your research project and identify relevant outside sources. Because this assignment is highly individualized, students will plan to meet with me throughout the semester to discuss the progress of their projects. The final paper should be between 15-25 pages in length and of suitable quality for submission to a scholarly convention. **This paper is due December 8.**

Participation: Participation is more than simply showing up. I expect that students will come to class prepared to discuss the readings and actively do so. If I get the sense that people are not

coming to class prepared, I will simply use quizzes on the readings to assess participation points. Graduate students will lead a discussion on one of the scheduled topics.

Final Exam (Graduate Students): Because we no longer have comprehensive exams, you will have a comprehensive exam-like question that you will answer that stands in for that assessment. The exam is scheduled for 10:30am-12:30pm, Tuesday, December 13, but we may do it at another time.

Grading Scale

For the undergraduates, there are a total of 100 points available in this course:

Response papers: 40 points
Final Exam: 30 points
Participation: 30 points

For the graduate students, the breakdown is as follows:

Paper Proposal: 10
Context / Literature Review: 20
Final Paper: 35
Comprehensive Exam Question: 15
Participation: 20

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 have a specific disability that qualifies you for academic accommodations, please notify the instructor/professor and provide certification from Special Student Services. (OSSS is located in Room 270 of the Student Center (460-7212).

Keep in mind that OSSS prohibits me from making any retroactive accommodations, so if you will need special accommodations please talk to me as soon as possible. Moreover, I can make no accommodations unless you are registered with OSSS.

Statement on Diversity

The Department of Communication is committed to preparing students to work in a diverse society. As such, our classes will include lectures and activities which promote an awareness of and sensitivity towards differences of race, ethnicity, national origin, culture, sexual orientation, religion, age and disabilities. Such an environment will contribute to the growth and

development of each member of the class, as it will encourage students to embrace diversity as a positive aspect of learning and scholarship.

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

8/23 Introduction to the course: What is rhetoric?

8/25 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://ac-journal.org/journal/pubs/2008/Winter%2008%20-%20Talking%20a%20Good%20Game/Article_1.pdf.

Week 2 Ancient Greek Rhetoric, Continued

8/30 Isocrates: *Against the Sophists* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)
 Poulakos, John. “Toward a Sophistic Definition of Rhetoric.” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 16, no. 1 (1983): 35-48.

9/1 Plato: *Phaedrus* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)
Graduate Proposal due 9/2 by email.

Week 3 Aristotle

9/6 Aristotle: *Rhetoric* (pp. 179-212 in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Response Paper 1 due for weeks 1-2

9/8 Aristotle: *Rhetoric* (pp. 213-240 in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Week 4 Roman Rhetoric

9/13 Cicero: *De Oratore*, Book II-III (pp. 320-339 in Bizzell and Herzberg)

9/15 Quintilian: *Institutes of Oratory* (pp. 384-400, 412-418 in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Week 5 Medieval Rhetoric

9/20 Augustine: *On Christian Doctrine, Book IV* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Response Paper 2 due for weeks 3-4

9/22 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

9/27 Peter Ramus: *Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

9/29 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)

Graduate Context / Literature Review due 9/30 by email.

Week 7 Enlightenment Rhetoric

10/4 **Fall Break: No Class**

10/6 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

Week 8 Modern Rhetorical Theory

10/11 Thomas Sheridan: *A Course of Lectures on Elocution, Lecture IV* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)
Gilbert Austin: *Chironomia* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

10/13 Kenneth Burke: *A Rhetoric of Motives* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)
Kenneth Burke: *Language as Symbolic Action* (in Bizzell and Herzberg)

Week 9 Modern Rhetorical Theory, Continued

10/18 Bitzer, Lloyd. "The Rhetorical Situation." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968): 1-14.

Response Paper 4 due for weeks 7-8
We will review the first half of the readings in class.

10/20 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.

Week 10 Rhetorical Conceptions of the Audience

10/25 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.

10/27 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 11 Critical Rhetoric

11/1 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.

Response Paper 5 due for weeks 9-10

- 11/3 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 Feminist Rhetoric

- 11/8 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.
- 11/10 Foss, Sonja K., and Cindy L. Griffin. "Beyond Persuasion: A Proposal for an Invitational Rhetoric." *Communication Monographs* 62, no. 1 (1995): 2-18.
Gunn, Joshua. "For the Love of Rhetoric, with Continual Reference to Kenny and Dolly." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94, no. 2 (2008): 131-55.

Week 13 Social Movement Rhetoric

- 11/15 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.

Response Paper 6 due for weeks 11-12

- 11/17 **NCA Convention: TBA**

Week 14 Social Movement Rhetoric, Continued

- 11/22 Gregg, Richard B. "The Ego-Function of the Rhetoric of Protest." *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 4, no. 2 (1971): 71-91.
Simons, Herbert W. "Requirements, Problems, and Strategies: A Theory of Persuasion for Social Movements." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56, no. 1 (1970): 1-11.

- 11/24 **No Class: Thanksgiving Break**

Week 15 Postmodern Rhetorical Theory, Continued

- 11/29 Hariman, Robert. "Allegory and Democratic Public Culture in the Postmodern Era." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 35, no. 4 (2002): 267-96.
McGee, Michael Calvin. "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture." *Western Journal of Communication* 54, no. 3 (1990): 274-89.

Response Paper 7 due for weeks 13-14

- 12/1 Harold, Christine. "Pranking Rhetoric: 'Culture Jamming' as Media Activism." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 21, no. 3 (2004): 189-211.

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

Week 16 Conclusion

- 12/6 Grano, Daniel A., and Kenneth S. Zagacki. "Cleansing the Superdome: The Paradox of Purity and Post-Katrina Guilt." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 2 (2011): 201-23.

Response Paper 8: Is rhetoric important? How will you use the knowledge you have gained in this course?

- 12/8 **Last Day of Class:** What is rhetoric?

Final Papers Due (Graduate and Undergraduate)

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.