

Rhetoric: Past and Futures

ENG 691 Composition Theory
Fall 2019 James Crosswhite
Tuesdays 2-5pm 448 PLC
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Hours W 12-3 258 PLC

This seminar will examine the idea and the substance of the rhetorical tradition. We will study a careful selection of some of the main texts of that tradition—from the ancients to the moderns—and we will try to imagine what possible futures could belong to it. That is, we will ask about the future of the tradition in a way that is informed by our knowledge of how that tradition has found ways of changing and renewing itself in the past. We will keep a close eye on rhetoric's connection with processes of democratization; its potential for serving as the core of a liberal arts curriculum; its power to inform the teaching of writing and speaking; its ability to describe how people reason and persuade one another in conditions of uncertainty; and its connection with a theory of reason as a kind of justice. The rhetorical tradition and much rhetorical theory envision the goals of a rhetorical education as cultivating, over time, a certain kind of person with certain habits of mind, powers of judgment, and higher skills who can speak and write well in various situations and for various purposes, so we will also pay close attention to the nature of these capabilities and the kind of person who has them. Although we will mostly stay within what is called the Western or European tradition of rhetoric, we will also raise lots of questions about what that or any tradition might actually be, and we will explore some of the historiographical questions that attend the very notion of the history of rhetoric.

Texts

On Canvas

TBA in Class

Requirements: Regular attendance. Reading all assigned work before class. Informed and respectful participation in seminar discussions. Three written substantive questions for discussion brought to each seminar meeting. One in-class presentation. One short (300-500 word) proposal for final paper. One 12-15 page final paper.

Schedule

1. October 1 Introductions. Beginnings. Protagoras, Isocrates, Aeschylus. The mythic origins of political rhetoric. Rhetorical Capabilities. Post-class readings (very short): Bizzell on Conley and Conley Response to Bizzell.

2. October 8 Plato

Apology, Gorgias, and Phaedrus

Ruth Amossy: "Introduction to the Study of Doxa."

3. October 15 Aristotle

Aristotle: *On Rhetoric*

Eugene Garver: "Aristotle on the Kinds of Rhetoric."

Doxtader, Haskins, Foley, and Lundberg: "Forum...Aristotle's *Rhetoric* 1355b."

Supplemental/Recommended: Martha Nussbaum: "Aristotle on Emotions and Rational Persuasion."

4. October 22 Cicero and Quintilian

Cicero: *De Oratore* and from *Orator*.

Quintilian: "Institutes of Oratory."

Brian Vickers: *In Defence of Rhetoric*: "An Outline of Classical Rhetoric"

David Fleming: "Rhetoric as a Course of Study."

5. October 29 Augustine

Of Christian Doctrine

Other readings TBA

6. November 5 Modern Rhetoric

Thomas Hobbes: *A Brief of the Art of Rhetoric*

Joseph Campbell: Selection from *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*

7. November 12: The New Rhetoric – 20th C.

Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca. *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*.

James Crosswhite. "Reason and Justice: The Deep Rhetorical Dimensions of the New Rhetoric Project." From *Deep Rhetoric: Philosophy, Reason, Violence, Justice, Wisdom*.

8. November 19: Contemporary Uptake

Danielle Allen. "Rhetoric, A Good Thing." From *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of Education*. "Reconceiving Public Sphere: The Flow Dynamics Model." From *Understanding Citizenship in a Digital Age*.

9. November 26 Proposals due.

Discussions of Proposals.

Readings in cognitive science and behavioral economics as contemporary rhetorical thinking.

10. December 3

TBA