The History of Rhetoric and Composition (ENG 492/592)

Winter 2022   Tuesdays and Thursdays 10-1120pm   254 STB
Prof. Crosswhite   Hours: T-Th 1145-1:15 and by appt.
Note: This syllabus may change. I will give you plenty of heads up for any changes. If we move to online at some point, I will keep the course very close to what it is now.

jcross@uoregon.edu

Rhetoric has been characterized as a power of leading the soul, as the universal form of communication, as the art of persuasion, as the way we reason and deliberate with one another in conditions of uncertainty, as the discourse of democracy, as the ability to find and create arguments, as the art of style, as the study of how literature affects readers, and as the metaphorical work of language. Rhetoric has also been understood, in its educational role, as a project of developing the essential communicative capabilities of human beings. For over two millennia, rhetoric played a central role in the liberal arts. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, it has begun to reclaim that role.

In this course, we will explore the history of the different ways rhetoric has been understood, with a focus on the way rhetoric has articulated goals for education and human development—especially in the way it has described essential rhetorical capabilities and the best ways of cultivating and strengthening them.

Readings will range from Plato and Aristotle all the way to contemporary rhetorical studies. Students will have the option of writing two shorter papers or one longer paper. The learning outcomes are for you to become more knowledgeable
about the history of rhetoric and to become able to think more clearly and to make more informed judgments about contemporary rhetoric and composition, including the teaching and learning of writing and reasoning, in the light of that background.

**Required Texts**

*Aristotle On Rhetoric.* Translated with introduction and notes by George Kennedy.

*Plato: Phaedrus.* Translation with notes and introductory essay by Stephen Scully.

These books were ordered through the bookstore. They are excellent editions of these classic works, and I recommend them very highly. You may be able to find simpler and less expensive editions elsewhere. I have posted one complete edition of the *Phaedrus* under Files.”

Other Readings will be available on CANVAS (C) under “Files.”

**Schedule (Tentative!)** I will be making changes in the readings and some of the short assignments through the end of the second week. After that I expect only minor changes to be made, and I will always give you plenty of time to adapt.

1


Th Jan 6 Plato: *Apology* (C) – and easily found online and in bookstores. Rhetoric and the problem of doxa.

2

T Jan 11 Plato: *Phaedrus.* Read through 258e (about halfway).
Th Jan 13 Plato: *Phaedrus*. Read to the end.

3

Th Jan 20 *Aristotle* on *Rhetoric* Books 2 and 3.

4
T Jan 25 Style and Figures: Figures (C)

Th Jan 27 Cicero: *De Oratore* and *Orator* (C)

5
T Feb 1 Quintilian: *Institutes of Oratory*
And David Fleming: “Rhetoric as a Course of Study.” (C)

Th Feb 3 Th Feb 10 Augustine: *On Christian Doctrine*

6
T Feb 8 **Optional First paper Due**

7
T Feb 15 Review. Brian Vickers: “The Main Processes of Rhetoric” (C)

Th Feb 17 Giambattista Vico: “On the Study Methods of our Time” (RT 862-878).
T Feb 22  Friedrich Nietzsche: “On Truth and Lies in a Non-moral Sense” (RT 1168-79)

Th Feb 24  The New Rhetoric: 1-62  (C)

9
T Mar 1  The New Rhetoric: 63-80, 115-141 (C)

Th Mar 3  The New Rhetoric: 261-292 (C)

10
T Mar 8  Rhetorical Capabilities and the future of Rhetoric  (C)

Th Mar 10  Special office hours 10-1130.

2nd or final paper due at scheduled time of final examination.

**Required Time**
From UO Catalog: “In planning a term’s studies, students should anticipate that each credit requires at least three hours a week for class meetings or homework.” This is a 4 credit course, so plan for 12 hours a week. That’s three in class and nine outside of class.

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**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN**

**Writing**
Two essays of 1000-1250 words each or one essay of 2000 to 2500 words. Short question and answer exercises.
I will provide instructions and a grading rubric for each of these assignments.

**Participation**

We will have reading each day of class that must be completed before class begins. Each day you come to class, (1) you should be able to say what you found most important in the reading, and (2) you should have one question about the reading that you would like to have addressed in the discussion or in group work. I will break you into groups or call on you for these ideas and questions.

Attendance is required. To cover illness or other events that make it impossible for you to attend, you are allowed two absences without penalty. Any additional absences each drop your final grade one step (.33). If you become ill, do not come to class as long as you are contagious. If illness forces you to miss more than one class, be sure to contact me as soon as you can—before the absence, if this is possible—so that we can agree on a course of action.

Being on time at 10am is also required. Lateness will affect your grade. So will good attendance.

**Grades**

Participation questions – 15%
Essay #1 – 40% of grade
Essay #2 – 45% of grade
Or: One longer essay = 85% of grade

**No Late Work.** Contact me if an emergency arises.

**COMPLETION OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**
Please include your name and the word count. 
Give your paper a title. 
The papers should be submitted through CANVAS by the deadlines to be announced.

**RESPECT, CONSIDERATION, AND PARTICIPATION**
This course requires your active involvement. Listen to others respectfully, and expect the same of them. And feel free to speak up. What you have to say is important and unique. One of our goals is Socratic midwifery—helping each other give birth to the ideas that we are forming. This requires respectful attention to each other--and perhaps some kindness as well.

**A LITTLE MORE**
If you have a condition that may affect your ability to participate in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements for your full access.

Please be aware also that the Tutoring and Academic Engagement Center provides support for all students. Contact is: engage.uoregon.edu. Click around to find the resource you need.

An “Incomplete” can be given only in cases when some minor but essential aspect of the course cannot be completed because of unforeseen circumstances beyond a student’s control.

All work submitted for this course must be your own and must be written exclusively for this course. If you plagiarize or cheat, the penalty will be an “F” in the course. The use of sources (for example, other people’s language or paraphrases of their language or ideas) must be properly documented. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources.