Busienss Rhetoric

Rationale of the Course

rhetoric and communication studies traces its origins to classical rhetoric, which evolved into a prominent component of the seven liberal arts of the medieval schools. “The ability to speak clearly, eloquently, and effectively has been recognized as the hallmark of an educated person since the beginning of recorded history . . . . Both areas investigate similar questions about human interaction, but they vary in the methods used to answer these questions. Rhetoric scholars utilize humanistic methods and communication studies scholars utilize social-scientific methods. Together, they pursue the study and practice of human communication.

Rhetoric and Communication Studies scholars explore the creation of social realities, the nature of verbal and nonverbal signs and symbols, and the role of communicative behavior in a variety of social contexts (including personal relationships, organizations, intercultural encounters, political and legal debates, and beyond).

As specific areas of study, rhetoric and persuasion emphasize communication in the contexts of debate, public address and discourse, political and legal communication, and even social influence attempts in sales, personal relationships, and work relationships. Interpersonal and intercultural communication recognize the role of communication in the development, maintenance, and deterioration of relationships, including personal, work, and stranger relationships, and relationships across cultures. Organizational and group communication is the study of information flow within an organization, between the organization and the external environment, and among groups.

Most academic training in the area of speech communication takes the perspective that successful communication is partly a learned skill. Most people are born with the physical abilities to acquire necessary communication tools, but such potential does not guarantee that they will learn to communicate effectively. Language, rhetorical strategies, listening skills, and a lexicon of verbal and nonverbal meanings are developed in various ways. It is theorized that people gain their communication skills by having them modeled by persons in their environment, by being taught specific techniques through the educational process, and by practicing their abilities and having them evaluated.

The course fosters the study and practice of rhetoric to help students better understand the centrality of rhetoric and the effects of discourse on the development of individuals, groups, institutions, and cultures and to influence students to become effective, ethical, and reflective communicators in their academic, professional, personal and civic lives.

Learning Outcomes

Students taking up this course will:

1. be able to critically examine communication theory and research;
2. demonstrate oral communication skills in a variety of contexts;
3. become knowledgeable about multicultural perspectives in communication; and
4. experience individual growth and develop connections with different stakeholders.

**References**

Donsbach, Wolfgang. *International Encyclopedia of Communication*. Wiley and Blackwell, 2008/

A prevailing notion is that all language use is rhetorical and that our knowledge of reality is formed by rhetoric. This type of epistemology has been called the rhetorical turn in social science and humanities. It calls for studies of the constituting effect of rhetoric (Charland, 1987). Despite the fact that material structures exist, we do need rhetoric to mediate this knowledge. While rhetoric is epistemic in this sense, the relationship with the ontological might be comprehended more fruitfully when it is perceived as a dialectic relationship (Ihlen, 2010). Rhetoric deals in opinions (doxa), rather than certain knowledge. While Plato held doxa in disregard, as “mere opinion,” Aristotle recognized its usefulness, building on the contrast between what is certain and what is probable (Herrick, 2011). Since we cannot have certain knowledge, rhetoric deals with the contingent, the probable, or in other words, doxa. In essence, the knowledge of today might look different tomorrow. Still, if something is established as a fact, this must necessarily happen through rhetoric.