

History of Rhetoric: From Plato to Postmodernism

English 389R, Section 01A, Oxford College of Emory University

Spring 2014 — MWF, 1:15-2:20pm

Language Hall 102

Instructor: Joe Johnson

Office hours MWF, 3-5pm and by appointment, Branham Hall

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Description

This course focuses on the history of rhetoric as the democratic art of close listening to what other people have to say. Students will read widely in the rhetorical tradition from its origins in Ancient Greece to its revival in twentieth- and twenty-first centuries. We will pay special attention to the relationship between rhetoric, knowledge, ethics, and the history of education: our primary goal will be to consider how the rhetorical tradition continues to shape the way we think and write today. We will listen closely to what past thinkers and writers have said about the art of persuasive speaking and writing, in other words, and students will be encouraged to develop their own ideas and arguments in response. Students will learn what it takes to become successful college readers and writers and more active, engaged citizens of the world.

Students who complete this course will be invited to apply for a tutoring position at the Oxford College Writing Center. First and foremost, this job involves working knowledge of the rhetorical themes and concepts we will be discussing throughout the entire semester. For more details about working in the writing center, please see me!

Course Requirements

1. *Attendance & Participation*

This course is discussion based, which means I expect you to attend each class, to have done the reading in advance, and to come prepared to discuss the readings. Always bring the assigned readings with you, along with the notes you've taken. During the first third of most class periods, you will break up into small groups (or pairs) to answer questions on the assigned reading before we engage the material together. You will answer these questions in writing, and one member of your group will be required to briefly revise your answers and post them on Blackboard after class. These answers will help you and your classmates study for the midterm and final exams, which will be based on the questions we discuss in class. I expect you to *participate actively* in both small group and large group discussions. More than two unexcused absences from class will significantly lower your participation grade. Please do not be late for class. Lateness is extremely disruptive and your final grade will suffer if you persist.

Class participation forms an important part of your final grade (20%). You will get high marks if you attend every class *on-time* and participate *every day* in classroom discussions — in a way that shows you've read and thought deeply about the course readings.

2. *Presentations*

There will be three required classroom presentations. Your first presentation (due before spring break) will be 10 minutes in length and focus on a key term, theme, idea, or concept from the day's reading. You will be asked to identify passages in the assigned text that engage the term, theme, idea, or concept that you choose; your job is to summarize or explain its significance, as a way of leading the class into a larger discussion of the day's reading. Your second presentation (due after spring break) will also be 10 minutes in length but will focus on a theorist, text, or topic related to the history of rhetoric — that is, one that we've only touched upon or not had time to mention in class. You may choose to cover a rhetorician or thinker from Bizzell and Herzberg's *The Rhetorical Tradition*, that is, a thinker or writer not included on our syllabus. Or you may pursue a topic that interests you and relate your topic to the history of rhetoric. You will design this presentation in consultation with me during office hours. Finally, you will deliver a 15 minute portfolio presentation during the last week of the semester. We will discuss the details of your portfolio and accompanying presentation throughout the course of the term.

We will also discuss expectations and strategies for effective classroom presentations throughout the semester. Presentations will form 15% of your final course grade.

3. *Response Papers & Portfolio*

During the course of the term, you will be required to write a series of 2-3 page papers in response to specific reading assignments in Bizzell and Herzberg's *The Rhetorical Tradition*. These papers will be graded check, check plus, check minus, or zero. You will post them on Blackboard and bring a paper copy to class on the day they are due. You will receive extensive feedback on your response papers; they will provide the material for your final portfolio, which will include revised versions of your five best response papers, bracketed by an introduction of 1-2 pages and a brief conclusion. This final portfolio paper will be roughly 15 pages in length. It is designed to replace the traditional term or research paper; in your final portfolio paper, your original response papers should be reshaped to reflect what you have learned over the course of the semester. Your revised response papers should talk to one another — forming part of a coherent argument about the history of rhetoric. You can introduce new ideas in your final portfolio paper, repudiate earlier claims, or recast your work entirely.

Your portfolio (due on the day of the final exam) will reflect 40% of your final grade. Additional informal and in-class writing assignments will be required throughout the semester.

4. *Midterm & Final*

There will be a midterm and final examination, which will cover course readings and themes that emerge from our classroom discussion. The final exam will be cumulative.

Here's how each of these elements adds up to a final grade:

Attendance & Participation	15 %
Classroom Presentations	15%
Response Papers & Portfolio	40%

This is a rough formula to show that I will give more weight to some assignments. I won't be using a calculator, and I always consider improvement throughout the course of the semester.

Cell Phones & Personal Computers

The use of cell phones is prohibited in class. You may take notes on a computer or tablet, but personal web surfing, emailing, tweeting, Facebook posting, etc., is both academically and socially unacceptable in a learning community. This kind of behavior is extremely distracting and your participation grade will suffer if you persist.

Required Books

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

Joseph M. Williams and Joseph Bizup. *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. Eleventh Edition. Boston: Pearson Education, 2014.

Please make sure you acquire the editions listed above, so we're all on the same page.

Schedule of Classes

Week One

1/15 (W) Introductions and Expectations

1/17 (F) **"How I Write" Self-Assessment Essay Due**

Read: Williams and Bizup, *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, "Lesson 1: Understanding Style" (2-8) and "Lesson 2: Correctness" (9-25)

Week Two

1/20 (M) **"How I Read" Self-Assessment Essay Due**

Read: Williams and Bizup, *Style*, "Lesson 7: Motivation" (98-112) and "Lesson 8: Global Coherence" (113-124)

1/22 (W) Read: Stanley Fish, "Rhetoric" (1605-27)

1/24 (F) **"How I Speak" Self-Assessment Essay Due**

Read: Introduction to the Classical Period (19-39)

Week Three

1/27 (M) **Response Paper #1 Due: Stanley Fish**

In-class: Presentations TBA

1/29 (W) Read: Gorgias (42-46); Anon, "Dissoi Logoi" (47-55); Isocrates, "Against the Sophists" (67-75); Plato (80-86)

In-class: Presentations TBA

1/31 (F) Read: Plato, *Gorgias*, (87-109)
In-class: Presentations TBA

Week Four

2/3 (M) Read: Plato, *Phaedrus* (138-68); Williams and Bizup, *Style*, “Lesson 3: Actions” (28-45)
In-class: Presentations TBA

2/5 (W) Read: Williams and Bizup, *Style*, “Lesson 4: Characters” (46-65) and Plato, *Phaedrus* continued
In-class: Presentations TBA

2/7 (F) No Class

Week Five

2/10 (M) **Response Paper #2 Due: Plato’s *Phaedrus***
Read: Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book 1 (Sections I-IV, 179-88 and Section XV, 210-13); Williams and Bizup, *Style*, “Appendix II: Using Sources” (230-238)
In-class Presentations: TBA

2/12 (W) Read: Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book 2 (213-36) and Book 3 (236-40)
In-class Presentations: TBA

2/14 (F) Read: Williams and Bizup, *Style*, “Lesson 5: Cohesion and Coherence” (66-79) and Aristotle, *Rhetoric* continued
In-class Presentations: TBA

Week Six

2/17 (M) **Response Paper #3 Due: Aristotle’s *Rhetoric***
Read: Williams and Bizup, *Style*, “Lesson 6: Emphasis” (80-95) — and sign-up for Classroom Presentation #2
In-class Presentations: TBA

2/19 (W) Read: *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (241-42; browse 248-65, beginning with Section VIII; read 265-82 a little more closely, beginning with Section XXXI)
In-class Presentations: TBA

2/21 (F) Read: Cicero (283-88) and *De Oratore* (from Books II-III, 320-39)
In-class Presentations: TBA

Week Seven

2/24 (M) Read: Quintilian (359-63) and *Institutes of Oratory* (Chapters I-IV, 364-77; Chapters XV-VI, 385-91; Book X, Chapters II-III, 400-407; Book XII, Chapter I, 412-18)
In-class Presentations: TBA

2/26 (W) Review for Midterm and Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory* Continued

2/28 (F) **Response Paper #4 Due: *Institutes of Oratory* Due**

In-class Presentations: TBA

Week Eight

3/3 (M) Read: Introduction to Medieval Rhetoric (431-47); Augustine (450-54); *On Christian Doctrine* Book IV (read 456-60 closely; browse 461-82 to section 58; read closely 482, section 59 to page 485)

In-class Presentations: TBA

3/5 (W) Read: Anonymous [of Bologna], *The Principles of Letter Writing* (492-502)

In-class Presentations: TBA

3/7 (F) **Midterm Examination**

Spring Break

3/10 (M) – 3/14 (F)

Week Nine

3/17 (M) Read: Introduction to Renaissance Rhetoric (555-77); Erasmus (581-85); *Copia* (597-609; skim Bk II, 609-27)

In-class Presentations: TBA

3/19 (W) Read: Peter Ramus (674-80), “Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian” (681-97)

In-class Presentations: TBA

3/21 (F) **Response Paper #5 Due: “Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian**

Read: Thomas Wilson (698-701); *The Arte of Rhetorique* (702-09, 730-32)

In-class Presentations: TBA

Week Ten

3/24 (M) Read: Francis Bacon (736-39); *The Advancement of Learning/Novum Organum* (740-47); Introduction to Enlightenment Rhetoric (791-812)

In-class Presentations: TBA

3/26 (W) Read: John Locke, “An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,” (814-27); Williams and Bizup, *Style*, “Lesson 9: Concision” (126-142)

In-class Presentations: TBA

3/28 (F) Read: Giambattista Vico (862-64); “On the Study Methods of Our Time,” Section VII (871-75); Gilbert Austin (889-90), *Chironomia* (890-97)

In-class Presentations: TBA

Week Eleven

3/31 (M) Read: Hugh Blair (947-49); *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*: Browse Lecture II on “Taste” (954-61); read Lecture XXV (969-74); Introduction to

Nineteenth Century Rhetoric (983-98); Richard Whately (1000-02), from *Elements of Rhetoric* (1003-14)

In-class Presentations: TBA

4/2 (W) **Read:** Alexander Bain and Adams Sherman Hill (1141-44); Alexander Bain (1145-48); Adams Sherman Hill (1149-51); Williams and Bizup, *Style*, "Lesson 10: Shape" (143-167)

In-class Presentations: TBA

4/4 (F) **Response Paper #6 Due: Whately, Bain & Hill** — Discussion of final portfolio and presentation assignment

Week Twelve

4/7 (M) **Read:** Herbert Spencer (1152-54), from *The Philosophy of Style* (1154-67) and Williams and Bizup, *Style*, "Lesson 11: Elegance" (168-186)

In-class Presentations: TBA

4/9 (W) **Read:** Introduction to Modern & Postmodern Rhetoric (1183-1202); Kenneth Burke (1295-97); "Language as Symbolic Action" (1340-47)

In-class Presentations: TBA

4/11 (F) Richard Weaver (1348-49); "Language Is Sermonic" (1351-60)

In-class Presentations: TBA

Week Thirteen

4/14 (M) **Read:** Chaim Perelman (1372-74); from "The Realm of Rhetoric" (1379-83)

In-class Presentations: TBA

4/16 (W) Stephen Toulmin (1410-12); from "The Uses of Argument" (1417-23); Williams and Bizup, *Style*, "Lesson 12: The Ethics of Style" (188-205)

In-class Presentations: TBA

4/18 (F) Stanley Fish, "Rhetoric," again, (1605-27)

In-class Presentations: TBA

Week Fourteen

4/21 (M) Portfolio Presentations & Discussion (papers distributed beforehand)

4/23 (W) Portfolio Presentations & Discussion (papers distributed beforehand)

4/25 (F) Portfolio Presentations & Discussion (papers distributed beforehand)

Last Day of Class

4/28 (M) Portfolio Presentations & Discussion (papers distributed beforehand)

Portfolio Due on the Day of the Final Exam

Office of Disability Services

“Emory provides all persons an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and services afforded to others. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) assists qualified students in obtaining a variety of services (i.e., alternative testing, notetaking, interpreting, advocacy, mobility/transportation, etc.) and ensures that all matters of equal access, reasonable accommodation, and compliance are properly addressed. Qualified students and faculty/staff must register and request services — contact the Office of Disability Services at Emory University or Oxford College. Confidentiality is honored and maintained.”

<http://www.ods.emory.edu/>

Honor Code

“The responsibility for maintaining standards of unimpeachable honesty in all academic work and in campus judicial proceedings falls upon every individual who is a part of Oxford College of Emory University. The Honor Code is based on the fundamental expectations that every person in Oxford College will conduct his or her life according to the dictates of the Honor Code and will refuse to tolerate actions in others which would violate the Honor Code.”

http://oxford.emory.edu/audiences/current_students/Academic/academic-success/student-honor-code/

Counseling Services

“Counseling and Career Services (CCS) strives to be recognized and utilized as the mental health resource for the entire Oxford College community. Our first priority is to provide ethical and competent mental health and career guidance services to all Oxford students.

Students seeking our help may receive a variety of services, including: consultation, crisis intervention, individual psychotherapy, career counseling and assessment, psychiatric evaluation and medication management, and couples counseling. As needed, we provide referrals for psychological testing, inpatient and partial hospitalization, nutritional counseling, substance abuse evaluation and counseling, and/or long-term psychotherapy. We realize there are students in need who do not visit our facility.

To extend our expertise and services to the students who do not frequent Counseling and Career Services, we offer outreach programs on a variety of issues related to career exploration, academic success and emotional health/wellness.”

<http://oxford.emory.edu/counseling/>

Note: This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion. All changes will be announced during class.