

Syllabus for:
UCACCMET13: Introduction to Rhetoric

University College Utrecht

Spring 2024

1 Course information

Instructor	Dr. Natasha Korotkova
Contact	n.korotkova@uu.nl
Class meets	room Voltaire C, timeslot A1 (Monday 09:00–10:45, Wednesday 11:00–12:45)
Web	All and everything on Blackboard

I prefer to be addressed on a first name basis (Natasha), but if you're more comfortable with the last name, then go for it. My pronouns are she/her. If you want to use a formal title, use "Dr." and not "Ms." (but never, never address a woman using the outdated "Mrs.", a form designed to signal a woman's marital status).

2 Course description

Rhetoric, along with grammar and logic, is a traditional part of the liberal arts & sciences education, and is canonically understood as the art of persuasion. We are currently bombarded with information of various quality, sometimes even without realizing it. It is important to be able to see how certain rhetorical techniques are used to convince us to believe things that may not be true (think fake news), or to get us to do something that we may not otherwise want to (think propaganda). This class examines the roots of rhetoric as a field, analyzes its theoretical foundations and teaches you practical applications in academia and beyond. At its heart, rhetoric is about argumentation, so you will examine different types of reasoning, learn how to structure arguments, and gain practical skills to spot, and avoid, logical fallacies. However, unlike classical logic, rhetoric is about the dialectic in the real world, so we will also focus on persuasion and examine how you can present your own arguments in a better way, while also paying attention to manipulative uses of language. This class offers a mix of theory and practice, and you will have plenty of opportunities to argue, present and debate, both in writing and orally.

3 Texts

- Sinnott-Armstrong, W. & R. Fogelin. 2014. *Understanding Arguments: An Introduction to Informal Logic* (9th edition). Cengage Advantage Books.
- Crowley, S. & D. Hawnee. 2004. *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*. Pearson Education.
- There will be other readings!

4 Assessment

There will be different types of assignments in this class, each described in greater detail on Blackboard. See also class schedule for when the assignments are published and when they are due.

- Analytical pieces are written assignments. They comprise five rhetorical tasks (RTs) that you will write throughout the semester (one lowest grade dropped). Submitting more than 40% (two assignments) late will result in an automatic F.
- There will be two take-home exams based on the concepts studied and discussed in class.
- The graded public speech will take place closer to the end of the course. Before then you will have had opportunities to practice presenting arguments and receiving feedback. You are also encouraged to join the UCU debating society (even if it is only for this term) and also to seek out other avenues that will allow you to speak in public either in front of your fellow students or others in the Utrecht community. This is an area where practice can truly make perfect, and there is no substitute for it.

Note: all writing assignments must be submitted to Blackboard as .pdf files.

Final grade composition	
Participation	10%
5 analytical pieces (10% each; lowest grade dropped)	40%
Public speech	10%
Take-home test 1	20%
Take-home test 2	20%

5 Attendance, assessment, participation

	Strong performance	Good & Satisfactory	Needs improvement
Attendance	Attends virtually all class meetings and on time; misses no more than 3 hours of class and provides advance notice of absences	Consistently present and on time, missing no more than 6 hours of class; provides advance warning or acknowledgement of absence	Frequently arrives late, misses more than 6 hours of class time, or fails to provide advance warning or acknowledgement of absence; note that missing 25% of classes entails failure for a UCU course
Preparation	Consistently comes to class having completed assignment or assigned reading and having taken notes on the material; can demonstrate this with questions and contributions to discussion about the material	Consistently comes to class having completed assignments and assigned reading, but perhaps without having taken notes on the material	Appears in class regularly without having completed assignments or read the assigned material
Participation	Actively participates in an engaged fashion at appropriate times on a regular basis.	Participates appropriately and but may on occasion be less engaged in class activities.	Seldom participates or participates inappropriately, and is generally not engaged in class activities
Contribution	Contributions are relevant and move discussions forward	Contributions are usually relevant and occasionally advance discussions	Contributions are rare or not relevant, and either do not advance discussions or detract from them

6 Policies

- Do not miss class. We have 25 sessions total. If you miss more than 5 sessions (unless under special circumstances), you will get an F. Furthermore, for a practical class like this participation is key, as I'm sure your understand. Per UCU's policy, you have to notify me and your tutor in advance if you miss a class.
- Do communicate with me and your tutor if things come up, especially it is an emergency of any kind. We want you to succeed in this class (and your other classes!).
- Be aware of UCU's academic regulations and do follow them. This especially concerns academic integrity and plagiarism—all suspected violations will be reported and handled accordingly.
- No devices!

7 Schedule (subject to changes as the semester progresses, always check Blackboard before class)

Week 1		
Jan 29	Introduction	
Jan 31	Rhetoric basics: Three branches of oratory	Read: Crowley & Hawnee, Ch.1
Week 2		
Feb 5	Rhetoric basics: Persuasive appeals <u>Discussion group: Dialectical debates 1</u>	
Feb 7	Arguments: Intro	Read: Sinott-Armstrong & Fogelin, Ch.1
Week 3		
Feb 12	Language of arguments, pt.1	Read: Sinott-Armstrong & Fogelin, Ch.2
Feb 14	Language of arguments, pt.2	Read: Sinott-Armstrong & Fogelin, Ch.3 Assignment 1 posted
Week 4		
Feb 19	<u>Discussion group: Close analysis</u>	Read: Sinott-Armstrong & Fogelin, Ch.4
Feb 21	Fallacies	Read: Sinott-Armstrong & Fogelin, Ch.13–14 Assignment 1 due
Week 5		
Feb 26	Fallacies, cont'd	Read: Sinott-Armstrong & Fogelin, Ch.15–16
Feb 28	<u>Discussion group: Search for fallacies</u> (self-guided)	Assignment 2 posted

Week 6		
Mar 4	Refutation	Read: Sinott-Armstrong & Fogelin, Ch.17
Mar 6	NO CLASS	Take-home exam posted Assignment 2 due
Week 7		
Mar 11	NO CLASS: Work on the exam	
Mar 13	NO CLASS: Work on the exam	Exam due at 5 pm on March 14
Week 8: Inductive arguments		
Mar 18	Inductive arguments, pt.1	Read: Sinott-Armstrong & Fogelin, Ch.8–9
Mar 20	Inductive arguments, pt.2	Read: Sinott-Armstrong & Fogelin, Ch.10 Assignment 3 posted
March 25–29: NO CLASSES, spring break		
Week 9		
Apr 1	Easter Monday	
Apr 3	Self-guided session: Work on Assignment 3	
Week 10: Populism		
Apr 8	<u>Discussion group: Language of populism</u> Guest session with Erik Jacobs on the history of populism	Assignment 3 due
Apr 9 at 13:30	Politics of language Joint session with UCHUMHIS38 “The Truth: a political history of press and populism”	[Note the unusual date! Location TBA]
Apr 10	NO CLASS	

Week 11		
Apr 15	Appeal to pathos	Read: Crowley & Hawnee, Ch.7
Apr 17	<u>Discussion group: Presentations</u>	
Week 12		
Apr 22	Arrangement	Read: Crowley & Hawnee, Ch.10 Assignment 4 posted
Apr 24	<u>Discussion group: Presentations</u>	
Week 13		
Apr 29	Performance & delivery Guest session with Rich Hinam	Assignment 4 due Assignment 5 posted
May 1	<u>Discussion group: Dialectical debates 2</u>	
Week 14		
May 6	<u>Discussion group: Area of reasoning</u>	We'll choose one area together Assignment 5 due Exam posted
May 8	Speeches	
Week 15: Take-home exam		
May 15	NO CLASS	
May 17	NO CLASS	Exam due at 5 pm
END OF THE SEMESTER		