

Introduction to Reading and Writing about Literature
Special Topic: Rhetoric

ENGL 1153, Sec. 2H1
MWF 11-11:50, BW 226

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Office Hours: MWF 10-10:50 and 12-12:50
and by appointment

This honors course is more than a composition course: it is also an intellectual history of the Western tradition. Examining seminal works from a rhetorical standpoint, we will trace the development of the liberal arts from their origins in classical Greece to the present. Rhetoric is the art of persuasion, and almost everything we say or write is rhetorical. We will be reading two secondary texts, one on the history of rhetoric, and the other on rhetoric in contemporary culture. The first will give you a historical overview, and the second will demonstrate that rhetoric is all around us in the present day. It will help you to use rhetoric for your own goals and make you more astute at recognizing rhetoric in everyday life, politics, advertising, etc. so that you will become a more critical thinker. In addition to these secondary sources, we will read and discuss primary texts on rhetoric and works renowned for their rhetorical excellence. In writing about these texts, you will improve your skills in critical thinking and essay-writing.

This course is interdisciplinary: we will concentrate on rhetoric in written texts, but we will also examine rhetoric in art, film, advertising, and the sciences. We will also discuss how the sciences became separated from the other liberal arts in the Western world, and the implications of that separation.

This course is based in large part on a ten-day summer seminar sponsored by the Association of Core Texts and Courses. This is the first time I am teaching the course, and I would greatly appreciate your feedback for possible revisions to the syllabus.

Course Schedule

I: Writing assessment and basics

- Jan. 18** Introduction
20 In-class assessment essay, not graded
Reading: Herrick, 1-6; Heinrichs, ch. 29
23 Targeted writing exercises
25 Targeted writing exercises
Reading: Herrick, 6-16; Heinrichs, ch.1-2

II: The Origins and Early History of Rhetoric

- 27** Reading, Herrick, 17-25; Heinrichs, ch. 6-7
30 Reading, Herrick 25-27; Heinrichs, ch. 8

- Writing: Response to Question 1
- Feb.** 1 Reading: Herrick, 27-30; Heinrichs, ch. 9
Writing: Response to Question 7
- 3 Reading: Herrick, 33-38; excerpt from Homer's *Iliad* (8th c. BCE):
Odysseus's speech to Achilles, Book 9, lines 223-306
- 6 Reading: Herrick, 38-49; Gorgias's *Encomium of Helen* (5th c. BCE)
- 8 Reading: Herrick, 49-52; Isocrates's *Antidosis* (4th c. BCE)
- 10 Herrick, 52-59; excerpt from Euripides's *Medea* (5th c. BCE), lines 214-265

III: Plato vs. The Sophists

- 13 Reading: Herrick, 63-73; excerpt from Plato's *Gorgias* (c. 380 BCE)
- 15 Reading: Herrick, 73-80; Plato's *Phaedrus* (c. 370 BCE), to section 237a
Writing: Analysis
- 17 Reading: *Phaedrus*, 237a-244a
Writing: Analysis
- 20 Reading: *Phaedrus*, 244a-257c
Writing: Analysis
- 22 Reading: *Phaedrus*, 257c-end
Writing: Analysis

IV: Aristotle

- 24 Reading: Herrick, 83-95; Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (4th c. BCE), 1.3, 2.1-2, 2.20;
Heinrichs, ch. 3
- 27 Reading: Herrick, 96-101; Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, 3.1, 3.2 (1404b), 3.4, 3.13-14,
3.19
- Mar.** 1 Reading: Heinrichs, ch. 4-5
- 3 Reading: Heinrichs, ch. 15
- 6 Reading: excerpt from Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* (5th c. BCE): Pericles's Funeral Oration
Writing: Analysis

V: Roman Rhetoric

- 8 Reading: Herrick, 102-18; Heindrichs, ch. 25
- 10 Reading: Cicero's *Pro Archia* (62 BCE)
Writing: Analysis
- 13-17 No Class**
- 22 Reading: Herrick, 122-26; Longinus's *On Great Writing* (1st c. CE)
- 24 Reading: *On Great Writing*, continued

VI: Christian Rhetoric

- 27 Reading: Herrick, 126-30; excerpts from Augustine's *Confessions* (400 CE)
Writing: Analysis

29 Reading: Herrick, 140-57; Catherine of Siena's *Letter 74: To Pope Gregory XI in Avignon* (1376)

Writing: Analysis

31 No Class

Apr. 3 Reading: Herrick, 163-70; excerpt from Christine de Pizan's *Book of the City of Ladies* (1405)

Writing: Analysis

VII: Rhetoric in The Renaissance and the Enlightenment

5 Reading: Herrick 171-77; Leon Battista Alberti's *On Painting* (1435)

7 No Class

10 Guest Speaker: Dr. Leimer on rhetoric in art

12 Reading: Herrick 189-95; Heinrichs, ch. 10-11; excerpt from Sir Francis Bacon's *The Great Instauration* (1620)

14 Reading: René Descartes, *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* (wr. 1628, pub. 1701)

17 Reading: David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, Part II* (1779)

Guest Speaker: Dr. Williams

19 Reading: Herrick 207-10; Maria Edgeworth, *An Essay on The Noble Science of Self-Justification* (1798)

Writing: Analysis

21 Group Presentations: Rhetorical Analyses

VIII: Rhetoric Since the Enlightenment

24 Reading: Herrick, 229-33; Heinrichs, ch. 12-16; excerpt from Charles Darwin *The Descent of Man* (1871)

Writing: Analysis

26 Guest Speaker: Dr. Nivens on contemporary rhetoric

Reading: Heinrichs, ch. 17-20

28 Guest Speaker: Dr. Dawes on film rhetoric

Reading: Heinrichs, ch. 21-25

May 1 Guest Speaker: Dr. Henschel on digital rhetoric

Final Project Proposal Due

3 Reading: Herrick, 290-91; Heinrichs, ch. 27-28

Writing: Analysis

5 Reading: Heinrichs, ch. 26; Barack Obama's *Keynote Address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention*

Writing: Analysis

8 Presentation of Final Projects, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

10 Final Paper Due

Course Requirements:

1. Participation (10%): Participation in class discussions will help you to understand and remember the material. It will also demonstrate that you have done the reading and improve

your critical thinking and verbal communication skills. I encourage you to speak with all of your classmates and respond to one another's ideas during discussion, rather than addressing your thoughts only to me. Please note that participation is different from attendance. Participation means talking in class.

2. Writing Responses (2% each; 30% in total): You will submit short essays (1-2 pages long) throughout the semester in hard copy in class. In writing rhetorical analyses, you should focus on one aspect of the text, or on one part of the text.

3. Group Presentation (15%): On April 21, you will give a presentation on one of the following texts, which will be assigned to your group:

Frederick Douglass, *What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?*
Martin Luther King, *Letter from Birmingham Jail*
Bobby Seale, *Speech Delivered at the Kaleidoscope Theater*

Each group member should speak for about five minutes, focusing on one aspect of the text. The presentation as a whole should be about fifteen minutes long. Everyone in the class should read all three of these texts.

4. Final Paper (20%): In consultation with me, you will revise and expand one of your short papers to 4-5 pages.

5. Final Project (25%): On March 8, you will present a final project, in which you will create a work of your own and explain how you have used the principles of rhetoric in the work. The work should pertain to your own discipline or interests. It may be an advertisement (presented either live or as an edited video), a speech, a play, a proposal arguing the importance of a research project (or a business proposal, or anything similar), a work of art, or anything else you might come up with. You may work on your project independently or collaborate with others in the class. The presentation of your project should be 10-15 minutes long, and your discussion of how you used rhetorical principles should be 3-5 minutes long. Other students will then ask questions and/or provide feedback. Please submit a short, informal project proposal by March 1 at the latest. You may do so by emailing me or speaking with me in class or in my office.

6. Attendance. You must attend class to help you master the material. You are permitted two unexcused absences. Absences will be excused on the basis of a note from a doctor, dean, military official, or coach. If you believe that your absence should be excused but you do not have a note, you must write to me to explain your absence. If you have COVID, have been exposed to someone who has COVID, or suspect you might have COVID, that counts as a legitimate excuse: Do not come to class. On the other hand, having to work does not constitute an excused absence. Communication is essential: if you do not explain your absence to me immediately before or after, it will not be excused. Your final grade will be lowered by one point for each unexcused absence in excess of the two permitted unexcused absences.

If you are late to class, see me after class to make sure you have not been marked absent. If you are absent, you are responsible for all material covered during that class section. Repeated lateness will also add up to absences: three “lates” will be counted as one absence. If you have a valid reason for frequently coming to class late, please inform me at the beginning of the semester.

Please check your grades online regularly and let me know if you have any questions.

Course Policies:

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism will not be tolerated, including on the daily assignments. If you deliberately plagiarize on any assignments or papers, or engage in any other form of academic dishonesty as defined by the MSU Student Handbook and the course Academic Dishonesty Policy (distributed in class and available on D2L), *you will get an F in the course and disciplinary proceedings will be initiated. There will be no second chances.* Other forms of academic dishonesty include, for instance, forging doctor’s notes and lying to the professor.

Cellphones and computers: Please do not use cellphones or computers in class. Exceptions: if you wish to consult an e-text on your device, please tell me ahead of time; in addition, if a question arises that we cannot answer, I may suggest you do a google search on your device. If you wish to take notes on your computer, please inform me at the beginning of the semester and show me your notes at my request.

Food and Beverages: You may bring beverages to class, but not food.

Full Attention: Please be alert and do not lay your head down on your desk during class, or I will mark you late or absent without warning.

Texts: Please bring the texts to class, either in hard copy or on your device, so that we may refer to them during discussion.

Class Dismissal: Please do not start to pack up your things or leave until I have dismissed the class. If you believe I have gone over the allotted time, please raise your hand and let me know.

Email Communication: I will communicate with you through D2L email. You should set it up to be delivered to your preferred email address. If you do not do so, you must check it on D2L. You are responsible for checking your email daily for any reminders, clarifications, or other communications from me.

Safe Zone Statement: This classroom is a “safe zone” in which all students will be treated and will treat one another equally, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Diversity of thought is encouraged.

Additional Information:

Office Hours: My office hours are given above, and I am always happy to help you with any questions you may have, whether they are about the texts we are reading, assignments, exams, absences, or anything else—or you may just come by to talk. If you can't make my office hours, we can make an appointment. You may also contact me by phone or email; email is much better, as I check it more often than phone messages.

Academic Accommodations: If you require special accommodations, please contact Disability Support Service, 168 Clark Student Center, 397-4140, at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Arrangements cannot be applied retroactively.

TASP's Learning Center (TLC): Located on the first floor of Moffett Library, TASP's Learning Center offers drop-in tutoring support for most general subject areas including but not limited to Writing, Math, Science, Business, and Foreign Languages. Students check in to work one-on-one with a tutor typically for an hour regarding specific concepts. To check the availability of tutors in a specific subject area, navigate to: <https://msutexas.edu/academics/tasp/on-campus.php>.

Required Books (at the bookstore and on reserve at the library):

Alberti, Leon Battista. *On Painting*. Penguin, 1991.

Heinrichs, Jay. *Thank You for Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson Can Teach Us About the Art of Persuasion*. 4th ed. Crown, 2020.

Herrick, James A. *The History and Theory of Rhetoric: An Introduction*. 6th ed. Routledge, 2017.

Longinus. *On Great Writing (On the Sublime)*. Hackett, 1991.

Plato, *Phaedrus*. 1st ed. Oxford World Classics, 2009.

All other texts will be available through D2L.