

**ENG G111 RHETORIC\***  
**NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY • FALL 2004 • TUESDAYS 4-6 P.M.**

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**Course Description**

“Rhetoric is back.” — William Covino (*The Art of Wondering: A Revisionist Return to the History of Rhetoric*)

How do humans persuade others to change their minds or take action? What is the relationship among language, truth, and knowledge? How does language help to shape identity and culture (and vice versa)? These questions, central to rhetoric since antiquity, continue to animate the discipline. In this course, we'll examine how theorists from the fifth century BCE to the present day grapple with these questions. While not a comprehensive survey, this course historicizes the texts, figures, and issues central to the Western rhetorical tradition.

Upon successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- Articulate a range of definitions for rhetoric and discuss the historical contexts and implications of these definitions
- Identify the enduring elements and concerns of rhetoric, as well as the central tensions and conflicts
- Evaluate rhetorical theories by examining their underlying assumptions

Note: This course is a work in progress. If you have issues or concerns about the course, please do not wait until the end of the semester to voice them, as I may be able to address them immediately. Please talk with me, send me e-mail, or leave a note (signed or anonymous) for me in the English department office.

**Required Texts and Materials**

All texts (except the packet of readings) are available at the NU bookstore and are on two-hour reserve at Snell Library.

Aristotle. *Aristotle on Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse* (ca. 333 B.C.E.). Ed. and trans. George A. Kennedy. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991.

Bizzell, Patricia, and Bruce Herzberg, eds. *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. 2nd ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001.

<sup>†</sup>Glenn, Cheryl. *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity Through the Renaissance*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1997.

<sup>†</sup>Jarratt, Susan. *Rereading the Sophists: Classical Rhetoric Refigured*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1991.

Packet of readings, available at Gnomon Copy on Huntington Avenue.

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\* This syllabus is subject to change. You will be informed during class of any changes to the syllabus. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed, including any changes to the syllabus.

<sup>†</sup> Glenn and Jarratt are listed as recommended at the bookstore so that you can decide for yourself whether to buy them. Although not required for purchase, these texts are required secondary reading for the course. As with the other texts, copies have been placed on reserve in Snell Library.

Online texts, listed under "Course Documents" on our Blackboard site (<http://blackboard.neu.edu>).

A MyNEU account, along with access to the World Wide Web (for participation on Blackboard). You can log in to Blackboard one day after setting up a MyNEU account. To apply for an account, go to <http://myneu.neu.edu/>.

**Supplementary Texts  
(Snell Reference, noncirculating)**

Moran, Michael G., and Michelle Ballif, eds. *Twentieth-century Rhetorics and Rhetoricians: Critical Studies and Sources*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2000.

Sloane, Thomas O., ed. *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*. New York: Oxford UP, 2001.

**Requirements and Grading**

Your final grade will be based on the following:

Short essays (3 @ 20% each)	60 %
Group-led review for the final exam	5 %
Participation	5 %
Final exam	30 %
Extra credit for contributing to weekly Blackboard discussions	≤5 points

**Daily Schedule**

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Due
1	9/7	Introduction		
2	9/14	Overview of major concepts	Primary: BH 1-16; Jasinki (packet); Hart (packet); Covino and Jolliffe (packet)	
3	9/21	The Older Sophists	Primary: BH 19-25; Gorgias (BH 42-46); <i>Dissoi Logoi</i> (BH 47-55) Secondary: Jarratt, Intro, ch. 1 & 2; Glenn, ch. 2; Schiappa (packet)	
4	9/28	Responses to sophistic rhetoric	Primary: BH 25-30; Isocrates (BH 67-79); Plato, <i>Gorgias</i> , editor's introduction only (BH 80-86); Plato, <i>Phaedrus</i> (BH 138-168) Secondary: Black (packet); Kauffman (packet)	
5	10/5	Aristotelian rhetoric	Primary: BH 30-32, 169-178; Aristotle (through page 118) Secondary: Miller (online); Conley (packet); Kinneavy (packet)	
6	10/12	Aristotelian rhetoric (cont'd)	Primary: Aristotle (119-282; 299-312) Secondary: Fortenbaugh (packet); Brock, Scott, and Chesebro (packet)	
7	10/19	Medieval rhetoric	Primary: BH 431-449; Augustine (BH 450-485); From <i>The Principles of Letter Writing</i> (BH 492-502); de Pizan (BH 540-551) Secondary: Glenn, ch. 3; Redfern (packet); Murphy (packet)	Essay 1
8	10/26	Renaissance rhetoric	Primary: BH 555-580; Ramus (BH 674-697); Bacon (BH 736-747); Fell (BH 748-760) Secondary: Glenn, ch. 4; O'Rourke, et al. (packet); Gardiner (packet)	
9	11/2	Enlightenment rhetoric	Primary: BH 791-813; Locke (BH 814-826); Campbell (BH 898-946) Secondary: Walzer (packet); Howell (packet)	

10	11 / 9	19th C. rhetoric	Primary: BH 983-998; Grimke (BH 1045-1060); Douglass (BH 1061-1070; plus additional reading online); Bain and Hill (BH 1141-1151); Nietzsche (BH 1168-1179)  Secondary: Lucaites (packet); Whitson and Poulakos (packet); Vonnegut (packet)	Essay 2
11	11 / 16	20th C. rhetoric	Primary: BH 1183-1205; Burke (BH 1295-1324)  Secondary: Warnock (packet); Brummett (packet); Crable (packet)	
12	11 / 23	20th C. rhetoric (cont'd)	Primary: Foucault (BH 1432-1460)  Secondary: Blair (packet); Foss and Gill (packet); Frank (packet)	
13	11 / 30	20th C. rhetoric (cont'd)	Primary: Haraway (packet)  Secondary: Olson (online); Bartsch, DiPalma, and Sells (packet)	
14	12 / 7	Prospects for rhetoric / review / evaluations	Primary: Bizzell and Jarratt (packet); Clark (packet); Hauser (packet); Zarefsky (packet)  Group discussions (final exam review)	
	12 / 8			Essay 3 due by 1 pm
15	12 / 14 Time TBD	Final exam	Exam held in English department computer lab	

BH=Bizzell and Herzberg

Online=See "Course Documents" on Blackboard site

### Description of Assignments

1. **Short essays** (three, each 1500-1800 words or about 4-5 pages, double-spaced in Times 12 point). These essays are designed to help you think through the central questions of the course, which are in turn designed to cut a manageable path through the enormous quantity of reading involved in any survey of rhetoric. For each primary text that we read, we will ask [most of] the following questions:
  - What is the definition or purpose of rhetoric (either stated or implied)?
  - What is the scope of rhetoric? That is, what does it include and exclude?
  - Who can speak?
  - What is the relationship between rhetoric and knowledge?
  - What is the relationship between rhetoric and reality?

Each of your three essays should explore **one** of these questions for **one** of the primary readings by connecting it to some other important concept or key term in the text. For example, you might write about the relationship between Aristotle's definition of rhetoric and the enthymeme. I encourage you to explore concepts or ideas that you find intriguing or complex. You may choose the theorists to focus on, within these constraints:

- Essay 1 must focus on a text discussed during weeks 3-6
- Essay 2 must focus on a text discussed during weeks 7-9
- Essay 3 must focus on a text discussed during weeks 10-13

Papers should be well organized, well articulated explorations with narrow, identifiable arguments supported by textual evidence and discussion. Papers that are particularly insightful and sophisticated will receive As, while those that are competent but not excellent will receive Bs. Papers that exhibit understanding of the assignment and the material but are not focused or well supported will receive Cs; those that do not respond to the assignment or display an understanding of the concepts covered will receive Ds. Please limit your discussion to the texts we have read in class, use MLA-style documentation, and *stay within the length requirements*. Papers that are significantly shorter or longer (i.e., by more than one page), do not properly document sources, or exhibit grammatical or surface-level problems will receive lower grades.

2. **Group review for final exam.** We'll spend most of the last class reviewing for the final exam. In small groups, you will synthesize material from the course and present it to your colleagues. Your presentation should include a handout that condenses your presentation and that provides page references to the texts we've read in class. I will assign topics early in the semester. A good starting point for your preparation is the Reference area at Snell Library. (See Supplementary Texts, above.)
3. **Participation.** Participation is expected and includes having read the day's assigned materials, contributing to class discussion, and respectfully engaging with the ideas of your colleagues. It also includes preparing for each class according to individual assignments made the previous week. At the end of each class, I will ask individual students to look for particular things in next week's readings. One goal of this activity is to be able to quickly locate textual evidence during class discussion. Another goal is to compile resources for you and your colleagues to draw on when writing essays and preparing for the final exam.
4. **Final exam.** The final, in-class exam is designed to test your mastery of the range of material in the course and to give you practice for the comprehensives. You will have two and a half hours to answer two essay questions, at least one of which will require moving across time periods. You will have some choice about which questions to answer. Unlike the comprehensive exams, which are graded on a pass/fail basis, final exams in this course will receive letter grades. An A or B on the final exam would be considered a passing grade on the comprehensives; a C or D would be considered failing.
5. **Blackboard.** I've created a Blackboard site for this class so that you have a space to continue talking after the class is over. Use the discussion board to follow up on ideas brought up in class, to discuss readings in more depth, to clarify contributions made in class, or for any other purpose related to the course. While using the discussion board is not mandatory, students who regularly contribute will receive up to 5 extra credit points.

The Blackboard site has links to some of our secondary readings as well as web resources. In addition, I will set up group areas that you can use for communicating with your partners in the final exam review.

### **Policies**

**Readings** – This course requires a lot of reading. Pay closest attention to the primary texts. If pressed for time when reading secondary sources, familiarize yourself with all of them by skim-reading. Then select one secondary source each week to consult more closely. Secondary texts are not optional.

**Attendance** – Attendance is required. Missing more than two classes will affect your final grade and may prevent you from passing the course.

**Deadlines, extensions, and incompletes** – Written papers must be submitted on the day that they are due. Late papers will be penalized by one full letter grade for each day they are late (e.g., an A will become a B). I will assign the grade of incomplete for the course only under extraordinary circumstances. In order to receive this grade, you must have completed most of the work for the course and have encountered an emergency (for example, serious illness or a death in the family) that prevents you from finishing one or two assignments. If you find yourself in this situation toward the end of the semester, talk to me as soon as possible before the last assignments are due. Please do not ask for an incomplete if you are having trouble completing work because of time commitments at work or in other classes.

**Academic honesty** – I encourage you to bounce ideas off each other, offer each other suggestions, and seek other opinions about your work. When you use the citable work of someone else, though, document your source. If you use someone else's words or ideas without acknowledging the source, if you do not place quotation marks around (or set off from the body of the text) the directly quoted words of someone else, or if you submit work that you have completed in another context, then you have committed plagiarism, a serious breach of academic and professional conduct. Plagiarism is not only illegal; it is professional suicide. If you have questions about crediting the work of others as you complete your assignments, ask me.