

**Dept. of English & Comparative Literature, SJSU**  
**MA Exam Reading List: Group 3**

**Rhetoric/Composition/Professional & Technical Writing/Pedagogy**

**Description:** As the name indicates, Rhetoric, Composition, Professional & Technical Writing, and Pedagogy covers a vast intellectual territory that draws on more than 3000 years of history and touches on every geographical area of the world. As such, this section of the MA exam is not intended as a comprehensive look at any of these sub-fields, but rather as an introduction to the most influential western texts, thinkers, ideas, and areas of inquiry that have been important in the field, writ large. The reading list is intended to act more as a tour of disciplinary possibilities than a definitive guide. It should give you a sense of methods of inquiry, common areas of concern, and historical context. We have chosen to group texts by sub-field in order to give you some sense of how people in the field tend to divide themselves, but there is significant overlap in theories, texts, and themes.

**RHETORIC**

1. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* (trans. George Kennedy)
2. Carol Berkenkotter and Tom Huckin, *Genre Knowledge in Disciplinary Communication: Cognition/Culture/Power*
3. Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation"
4. Pat Bizzell & Bruce Herzberg, *The Rhetorical Tradition* (overviews and selections)
5. Kenneth Burke, "The Rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle'"
6. Jim Corder, "Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love"
7. William Covino and David Jolliffe, "What is Rhetoric?"
8. Cheryl Glenn, *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity Through the Renaissance*
9. Carolyn Miller, "Genre as Social Action"
10. Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*
11. Plato, *Phaedrus*
12. Elaine Richardson and Ronald Jackson, *African American Rhetoric(s): Interdisciplinary Perspectives*
13. Jacqueline Jones Royster, *Traces of a Stream*

**COMPOSITION**

14. Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle, eds. *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*
15. Sharon Crowley, *Composition in the University*

16. Patricia Harkin and John Schilb, *Contending with Words: Composition and Rhetoric in a Postmodern Age*
17. Paul Matsuda, "The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity"
18. James J. Murphy, *A Short History of Writing Instruction: From Ancient Greece to Contemporary America*
19. Kelly Ritter and Paul Matsuda, *Exploring Composition Studies*
20. Patricia Sullivan & Jim Porter, *Opening Spaces: Writing Technologies and Critical Research Practices*
21. Joseph Williams, "The Phenomenology of Error"

#### **PROFESSIONAL/TECHNICAL WRITING**

22. Jo Allen, "The Case Against Defining Technical Writing"
23. Robert J. Connors, "The Rise of Technical Writing Instruction in America"
24. Katherine Durack, "Gender, Technology, and the History of Technical Communication"
25. Robert R. Johnson, *User-Centered Technology: A Rhetorical Theory for Computers and Other Mundane Artifacts*
26. Steven B. Katz, "The Ethic of Expediency: Classical Rhetoric, Technology, & the Holocaust"
27. Stuart Selber, *Multiliteracies for a Digital Age*

#### **PEDAGOGY**

28. Mike Rose, *Lives on the Boundary*
29. Gary Tate, *Oxford Guide to Composition Pedagogies*, 2nd ed.
30. bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*

**1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this question is to get you thinking about your experience and understanding of rhetorical history. There are many rhetorical histories that look at historical artifacts through different rhetorical perspectives. Different perspectives give us different insights, but they also each have limitations. No history is universal or comprehensive.

**TASK**

Drawing on your reading, identify two rhetorical histories that you find most compelling for your research interests, explain the benefits of their perspectives, and explain their limitations relative to other rhetorical perspectives.

**OUTCOME**

Your readers will be curious to understand how you make sense of different rhetorical histories—what different kinds of knowledge you can make for yourself and your readers using different historical/rhetorical perspectives.

**2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this question is to get you thinking about how your readings and experiences can be applied in practice. Rhetoric/Composition/Professional & Technical Writing/Pedagogy is a series of practical arts, so a central concern of specialists in these fields is how knowledge gets *used* in the world.

**TASK**

Drawing on your readings, coursework, and experiences as a student, make the case for two Rhetoric/Composition/Professional & Technical Writing/Pedagogy theories, histories, methods, or pedagogies—or combinations thereof—that you think could have practical implications *beyond academia*. For each, first describe the theory, history, method, or pedagogy, then make an argument for where it would be particularly applicable, how it could be applied, and why you think this is the case.

**OUTCOME**

Your readers will be curious to know how you would think about applying the scholarship of Rhetoric/Composition/Professional & Technical Writing/Pedagogy in a variety of situations.