



ENGL 257: SEMINAR IN THE HISTORY OF RHETORIC

WHAT'S LEFT TO SAY ABOUT THE HISTORY OF RHETORIC?

SPRING 2017
SECTION: 27093
PROFESSOR: SKINNELL



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Office Hours: Th 2:00-4:00pm, and by appt.
Class Days/Times: Th 4:00-6:45pm
Class Location: Sweeney Hall 444
Prerequisites: Classified standing or instructor consent

This is the showing forth of the Inquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassos so that neither the deeds of men may be forgotten by lapse of time, nor the works great and marvelous, which may have been produced by Hellenes and some by Barbarians, may lose their renown; and especially that the causes may be remembered for which these waged war with one another. ~ **Herodotus**, *The Histories*, 440 BCE

[I]t is an act of supreme malice to put on a false show of good humour and frankness which baffles detection. And this is exactly what Herodotus does. ~ **Plutarch**, *Moralia*, v. 11, c. 105-125 CE

[M]y habit has been to make the speakers say what was in my opinion demanded of them by the various occasions, of course adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said.
~ **Thucydides**, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, c. 431-411 BCE

THE COURSE

Rhetoric is one of the longest lasting and furthest ranging subjects in Western culture, dating back more than 2500 years. History, in more ways than one, predates it. It would seem by now that these two so-called “meta-disciplines” would be relatively settled. Fortunately for us, they are not. In this class, therefore, we will study the history of rhetoric by studying the ongoing disagreements about what “rhetoric” is and how best to study its history. Taking our cue from the historians cited above, we will try to understand what some of the historical and historiographical disagreements are, what is at stake in these disagreements, why they matter, why they continue, why we should care, what we can learn, and what we might contribute.

REQUIRED TEXTS (please bring texts to class when we are reading and discussing them)

Thomas Conley, *Rhetoric in the European Tradition*
Victor J. Vitanza, *Writing Histories of Rhetoric*
Michelle Ballif, *Theorizing Histories of Rhetoric*
Plato, *Gorgias*
Additional readings (available on Canvas)

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1) to develop an introductory understanding of rhetoric as a discipline
- 2) to develop an understanding of some of the major issues in the history of rhetoric
- 3) to situate rhetoric within cultural and historical contexts
- 4) to practice modes of academic inquiry
- 5) to apply some of the basic principles of rhetorical history to contemporary situations

MA PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1) Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, & rhetoric.
- 2) Students will demonstrate high-level proficiency in literary research & in the synthesis of research.
- 3) Students will demonstrate critical & analytical skills in interpretation & evaluation of literary texts.
- 4) Students will demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to a) organize and present material in a cogent fashion, b) formulate and defend original arguments, c) employ effectively the language of their discipline and d) write under time constraints.

MFA PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 3) Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of knowledge of literary history, literary theory, & craft & theory of creative writing.
- 4) Students will demonstrate critical & analytical skills in evaluation & interpretation of literary texts.
- 5) Students will demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to: a) organize and present material in a cogent fashion; b) formulate and defend original arguments; c) employ effectively the language of their discipline; d) write under time constraints.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

For information regarding the following policies, please see syllabus information web page at: <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>

General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student
 Course Requirements and Assignments
 Attendance and Participation
 Accommodation to Students' Religious Holidays
 Dropping and Adding
 Academic integrity

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material
 Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act
 Student Technology Resources
 SJSU Peer Connections
 SJSU Writing Center
 SJSU Counseling & Psychological Services

PROCEDURES

This course will be demanding. The reading load is heavy, the material is often challenging, and course requirements are substantial. During most class periods, we will discuss readings and responses and do group activities.

GRADING POLICY

All work must be submitted on time. Unexcused late work will be graded down a **full letter grade** for every day it is late. If there is a reason you cannot make a deadline, contact me BEFORE THE DEADLINE. You must turn in all assignments to pass the class.

Course grades will be calculated using the following scale:

93% - 100% = A	80% - 82% = B-	67% - 69% = D+
90% - 92% = A-	77% - 79% = C+	63% - 66% = D
87% - 89% = B+	73% - 76% = C	60% - 62% = D-
83% - 86% = B	70% - 72% = C-	0% - 59% = F

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

1. Final paper, including proposal & draft(s) = 25%
2. Final Exam = 25%
3. Midterm = 20%
4. Definitions = 20%
5. Class participation = 10%

Please note: sometimes projects and class discussions will include material of a sensitive nature. In this course, students may encounter materials that differ from and perhaps challenge their understanding of reality, their ideas, and their beliefs. Students are encouraged to discuss issues that may arise from such material with the instructor.

Please ALSO note: If you have special needs or accommodations requests, see me as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in forfeiting accommodations to which you're entitled.

THE ASSIGNMENTS

FINAL PAPER

In the final paper, you will study a figure, concept, or term that we've *studied or overlooked* during the term and make a researched argument for why it is valuable or important for understanding rhetorical history and/or rhetorical theory. In other words, you will be making an argument about how a particular kind of history helps us understand the present moment and why it is important. You will need to make a short proposal before beginning your research and you will produce drafts before the final paper is due. We will discuss the paper in more detail in class, and I **strongly** encourage you to meet with me to discuss it.

FINAL EXAM

The final exam will consist primarily of concept identification, including providing basic definition(s) of terms from the course and explaining their significance within the context of the course. There may be a short answer portion to the final exam. The final is cumulative.

MIDTERM EXAM

The midterm will consist primarily of concept identification, including providing basic definition(s) of terms from the course and explaining their significance within the context of the course. There will also be a short answer portion to the midterm.

DEFINITIONS

During the course, we will assemble a list of concepts that inform our understanding of rhetoric and rhetorical history. Each student will be responsible for choosing four (4) concepts during the semester and writing definitions, which draw from and cite the readings to explain and contextualize the concepts. These definitions will be compiled to make up the study guides for the midterm and final.

PARTICIPATION

For a class like this one, much of the learning happens in class. Therefore, it is imperative that you be in class every day and participate in class activities and discussions. Class participation entails: (1) demonstrating that you've completed the readings/assignments, (2) contributing to class discussions, and (3) completing in-class assignments.

Tentative Course Calendar (subject to change)**READINGS** listed should be read BEFORE class

Additional readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available on Canvas

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Jan 26	Introduction to the course / What is Rhetoric? What is History? Where am I? What are we doing here? Roberts-Miller*
2	Feb 2	Taking it all the way back Read Hinks* Megill and McCloskey* Conley, Ch. 1
3	Feb 9	Rhetrickery Read Conley, Chs. 2-4
4	Feb 16 NOTE: ALTERNATE LOCATION	Visiting Speaker: Kelly Wisecup (Schiro Rm., MLK 550) Read Wisecup* Conley, Chs. 5-7
5	Feb 23	How to fit 2500 years in just 5 weeks Read Conley, Chs. 8-10
6	Mar 2	Which historiography this way comes? Read Vitanza, Preface, Chs. 1, 2, 8
7	Mar 9	Gearing up to go downhill DUE (on Canvas): Midterm definitions Read Vitanza, Chs. 4, 6, 9
8	Mar 16	MIDTERM!
9	Mar 23	Every which way but up Read Vitanza, Chs. 7, 10, 11
10	Mar 30	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS
11	Apr 6	Welcome, welcome, please come in Special Guest: KENDALL GERDES! Read Vitanza, Ch. 5 Plato (alternative version available on Canvas) Gorgias*

12	Apr 13	Do we know anything yet? – Proposal Workshop DUE (in class): Paper Proposal (1-2 pages – what are you planning to write about? Why? What [SPECIFIC] sources do you propose to use?) Read Ballif, Introduction, Chs. 3, 4, 5
13	Apr 20	No. Please keep arms and legs inside the car at all times. Read Ballif, Chs. 7, 8, 9
14	Apr 27	Pterodactyl!!!! Read Vitanza, Ch. 12 Ballif, Ch. 11
15	May 4	Whenceforth Read Ballif, Ch. 10 and Afterword Powell*
16	May 11	We've only just begun – Draft Workshop DUE (on Canvas): Definitions for final Due (in class): 2 copies of paper draft
Final	May 22	FINAL EXAM (2:45-5:00pm) Due: Final Paper

Midterm/Final Terms:

(subject to revision, suggestions welcome)

1. Rhetoric
2. Tisias and Corax
3. *Hellenistic/Roman rhetoric(s)*
4. Classical rhetoric(s)
5. Modern rhetoric(s)
6. History/historiography
7. Traditional historiography
8. Revisionist/revisionary historiography
9. Sub/versive historiography
10. Sophists
11. Gorgias/Isocrates
12. *Dissoi logoi*
13. Philosophy/Rhetoric
14. Plato/Aristotle
15. Cicero/Quintilian
16. *Canon*
17. Doxa
18. *Polis*
19. Invention
20. The excluded third
21. History of the Present
22. Friedrich Nietzsche
23. The Scientific Revolution
24. Ethics in/of history
25. Audience
26. Ethos/Pathos/Logos
27. Kairos
28. Method vs. Methodology
29. Objectivity/subjectivity
30. Politics of historiography