

English 379/579
Fall 2020
TR 3:30-4:45
CCC 240

Dr. Wade Mahon
Office: CCC 443
346-4327
wmahon@uwsp.edu
Office hrs: 10-12 TR

Syllabus

- Required Texts:
- Herrick. *The History and Theory of Rhetoric*. 6th ed.
 - Plato. *Phaedrus*. Trans. by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff.
 - Shakespeare. *Julius Caesar*.

Rhetoric is concerned with the strategic use of language and knowledge as well as the contexts in which our words and ideas are put to use. This course will explore some of the major theories about what rhetoric is and how it should be used, emphasizing classic texts and theories by Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian and their influence on modern thought. Rhetoric is relevant to both spoken as well as written forms of communication, but in this course we will primarily concentrate on how it applies to written communication.

Because of its concern with the art of communication, Rhetoric has been the cornerstone of a liberal arts education for at least 2000 years. Rhetorical theory, by classical Greek and Roman authorities as well as by contemporary scholars continues to provide useful strategies for teachers, literature scholars, philosophers, and anyone engaged in writing or public speaking.

Requirements: You will be expected to complete all reading assignments by the day they are due and be prepared to participate in class discussions. “Cohorts” will take turns preparing questions, observations, and key passages for in-class discussion. Readings, including specific titles and page numbers, will be posted in Canvas prior to the day they are due. Handouts and other materials will be available on Canvas.

Participation: (100 points total, 25 per section)

Individual contributions to online discussion forum. You will need to post at least 1 100+ word response to questions posted by me or classmates for each class period. Each response is worth 2 points, but one point may be deducted from any response that doesn’t meet minimum requirements (too short, off topic, inappropriate, etc.).

Attendance. You will receive 2 points per day for attendance. *If you are in an online cohort and you are unable to meet live via Zoom, you may complete an additional 100+ word discussion response for each day you are unable to attend.*

If you are in a face-to-face cohort, you can make up 2 points per day by completing an additional discussion response.

Quizzes: (200 points total, 25 each)

There are 4 main sections of the course (see calendar) and in each section you will complete 2 quizzes. That is a total of 8 for the semester. By the end of the day assigned for each quiz, you will need to complete an online quiz that tests your familiarity with the assigned readings, lectures, and concepts brought up in online or in-class discussions since the last quiz. The majority of questions will focus on content from lectures and reading assignments.

Annotated Bibliography. (120 points total, 20 for proposal, 100 for final paper). You will turn in an annotated bibliography (3-5 sources) on a specific concept/theorist brought up in the course.

Rhetorical Analysis. (240 points total, 10 for proposal, 10 for draft submitted on time for peer review, and 10 ea. for responses to two classmates’ drafts). This will be a 5-page (min.) rhetorical analysis of a text of your choice. This analysis will apply some aspect of rhetorical theory.

Your final grade average will be computed in the following manner:

Participation	100
Weekly Quizzes	200
ECCO Report	120
Term Paper	<u>240</u>
Total	660 points

Zoom meetings. To manage attendance during this unusual semester, we will all stick to our regularly scheduled time slot and meet “live” only during those times. This means that only one cohort at a time (5 students max) will be able to meet in person in the classroom (CCC 240) and the rest will join us in a Zoom meeting. This way everyone will be able to meet together at the same time, as in a regular semester. But since I think Zoom meetings that last longer than 30 minutes or so are not ideal, I plan to keep these in-person experiences to around 30 minutes and focused on interactive discussion and Q&A. I will be available to work with people one-on-one and in small groups during the remainder of each live class period. The online portion of the course will involve recorded video lectures (again, I’ll try to keep these to no more than 30 min), quizzes, and online discussions.

Covid-19 stuff. Masks are required in all classrooms. We are not allowed to hold class unless everyone is wearing a mask. If you are feeling any flu-like symptoms, please stay home. Wash your hands and follow the appropriate social distancing guidelines. Please be patient with everyone, because we’re all trying to figure this thing out. For more information on this, please refer to the UWSP Covid-19 website: <https://www.uwsp.edu/coronavirus/Pages/default.aspx>.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand the basic conceptual framework of classical rhetorical theory, including the foundational elements of persuasive discourse and the contributions of major theorists.

Course elements: reading assignments/quizzes, class discussion, exams, annotated bibliography

2. Apply your understanding of rhetorical theory in insightful rhetorical analyses of a variety of literary and/or non-literary texts.

Course elements: rhetorical analysis paper, annotated bibliography, group presentation

Semester Calendar
(readings in brackets)

Part 1	<i>Sophists vs. Plato: The Philosophy of Rhetoric</i>
Sept. 3—Course Introduction	(cohort 1)
Sept. 8—The Rhetorical Situation: <i>kairos</i> [ch. 10, 247-49; Bitzer]	(cohort 2)
Sept.10—Greek Rhetoric: The Sophists & <i>dissoi logoi</i> [ch. 2]	(cohort 1)
	Quiz 1
Sept.15—Philosophy vs. Sophistry: Plato [ch.3]	(cohort 2)
Sept.17—Plato, <i>Phaedrus</i> , part 1	(cohort 1)
Sept.22—Plato, <i>Phaedrus</i> , part 2	(cohort 2)
	Quiz 2
Part 2	<i>Aristotle and contemporary Aristotelians: The Theory of Rhetoric</i>
Sept.24—Aristotle: Rhetoric and Dialectic [ch. 4]	(cohort 1)
Sept.29—Aristotle: <i>pathos</i> , evoking emotion [Perelman]	(cohort 2)
Oct. 1—Aristotle: <i>ethos</i> , persuading through character [Haidt]	(cohort 1)
	Quiz 3
Oct. 6—Aristotle: <i>logos</i> , persuading through reason [<i>topoi</i> vs. fallacies, ch. 4]	(cohort 2)
Oct. 8—Aristotle: structuring arguments [enthymemes & syllogisms, ch. 4]	(cohort 1)
Oct. 13—Burke: Resources of ambiguity [ch. 10, Burke]	(cohort 2)
	Quiz 4
Part 3	<i>Cicero and the Romans: The Art of Rhetoric</i>
Oct. 15—The Canons of Rhetoric: Invention, Arrangement [ch. 5; <i>Rhetorica ad Herennium</i>] (cohort 1)	
Oct. 20—Shakespeare, <i>Julius Caesar</i> , I-II	(cohort 2)
Oct. 22—Shakespeare, <i>Julius Caesar</i> , III-V	(cohort 1)
	Quiz 5
Oct. 27—Style: Decorum [<i>Rhet. Ad Her.</i> , Cicero, Longinus]	(cohort 2)
Oct. 29—Style: Figures of Speech [<i>Rhet. Ad Her.</i>]	(cohort 1)
Nov. 3— Memory and Delivery	(cohort 2)
	Quiz 6
Part 4	<i>Communication Media and Education: The Contexts of Rhetoric</i>
Nov. 5—Classical education and manuscript culture in medieval Europe [ch. 6]	(cohort 1)
Nov.10—Renaissance education and print culture [ch. 7]	(cohort 2)
Nov.12—Early modern education and Print culture: elocution [ch. 8; Sheridan]	(cohort 1)
	Quiz 7
Nov.17—Early modern education and Print culture: literature [ch. 8; Blair]	(cohort 2)
Nov.19—Contemporary education and digital culture [Baron, Welch, Porter]	(cohort 1)
	Quiz 8
Nov.24— Annotated Bibliography due	
Nov 26—THANKSGIVING	
Dec. 1—Rhetorical Analysis proposal	
Dec. 3—TBA	
Dec. 8—Rhetorical Analysis draft due	
Dec. 10—Peer Review	
Dec. 15— Rhetorical Analysis due	

