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| English 379/579  TR 11-12:15  CCC 240 |  | Dr. Wade Mahon  Office: CCC 443  346-4327  wmahon@uwsp.edu |

Office hrs: MW 11-12, TR 2-3and by appt.

# Syllabus

Required Texts: • Herrick. *The History and Theory of Rhetoric*. 3nd 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.

Grades: ● *Quizzes*: You will take 7 short quizzes, one for each of the 7 sections of the course. These will help you prepare for the longer exams. If you are absent the day of a quiz, you can make it up prior to the next class meeting.

● *Exams*: You will have 3 exams that will test your familiarity with and understanding of the readings and class discussions. These exams will contain multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer questions. The final exam will be semi-comprehensive (some questions will cover material that was on the previous two exams).

● *Annotated bibliography:* You will turn in an annotated bibliography (3-5 sources) on a specific concept/theorist we will discuss this semester.

● *Paper*. You will write one 3-page (minimum) paper on a topic related to the course, ideally a topic related to one of the annotated bibliographies.

● *Term Paper / Group Presentation*: You will have the option to do one of the following: a 5-page (minimum) term paper that can either be a revision of the 3-page paper or a new paper on a different topic, or a group presentation (15-20 minutes ea.) that applies a key theoretical concept to a specific situation. For the group presentation option, each group member must turn in an individual written report (~1page) in addition to the in-class presentation. The annotated bibliographies are designed to provide resources for you to draw upon for your presentations / term papers. Presentations will be spread out over the last three weeks of class and the final exam period.

● *Participation*: You are expected to attend class regularly and make constructive contributions to class discussions. Missing class will make it difficult for you and your classmates to benefit from the work we will be doing in class. It is your responsibility to obtain a copy of the assignments or handouts if you are unable to attend class. You are expected to read all assigned readings before class.

The final grade will be computed as follows:

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| Final Grade: | Quizzes (7)  Exams (3) | 15%  30% |
|  | Annotated Bibliography  Paper  Group presentation /Term paper | 10%  15%  20% |
|  | Participation | 10% |
|  |  | 100% |

Semester Calendar

(exams and in **bold**, readings in brackets)

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| Sept. 6—Course Introduction | *Means of persuasion* |
| Sept. 8—The Rhetorical Situation [Bitzer; ch. 10, 230-32]  Sept.13—Rhetoric and Dialectic [Aristotle I; ch. 4] | *Kairos*: seizing the opportunity  “This is *your* time. Go out and take it.” |
| Sept.15—Rhetoric vs. Sophistry [Gorgias; ch.2-3; Aristotle, on ethos]  Sept.20—Plato, *Phaedrus,* part 1  Sept.22— Plato, *Phaedrus*, part 2 | *Ethos:* demonstrating character  “Who loves ya, baby?” |
| Sept.27—Motives & emotions [Aristotle III; ch. 4]  Sept.29—Evoking *pathos* [Perelman]  Oct. 4—Grammar/Rhetoric of motives [Burke] | *Pathos*: understanding your audience’s frame of mind  “Tell me what you want,  what you really, really want” |
| Oct. 6—Resources of Ambiguity [Burke; *Dissoi Logoi*]  Oct. 11—Topics vs. Fallacies [Aristotle II; ch. 4]  Oct. 13—Argumentation and Persuasion [Toulmin, ch. 9, 205-07] | *Logos*: appealing to reason  “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks,  because it’s illegal and  you’ll go to jail” |
| Oct. 18—**Exam 1, Annotated Bibliography** | |
| Oct. 20—Invention [ch. 5]  Oct. 25—Arrangement [*ad Her.;* ch. 5]  Oct. 27—Style: Decorum [*ad Her.*, Cicero; ch. 5]  Nov. 1—Style: Figures of Speech [*ad Her.*; ch.5]  Nov. 3—Memory and Delivery [Plato; Porter]  Nov. 8—Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar I-II*  Nov.10—Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar III-V* | *Eloquence*: successful composition and performance.  “True wit is Nature to advantage dressed,  What oft was thought but ne’er so well expressed”  \*\*\*\*\*\*\*  True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,  Those move easiest who have learned to dance.” |
| Nov.15—**Exam 2, Paper** | |
| Nov.17—Rhetorical Education [Isocrates, Quintilian, Erasmus; ch. 5]  Nov.22—Intro. to Modern rhetorical theory [ch. 6]  Nov.24— NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING  Nov.29— Early Modern revisions [Ramus, Bacon, Locke; ch. 7]  Dec. 1—Terministic Screens [Burke; ch. 10], narratives | *Authority*: establishing legitimacy within a community of discourse  “Fine word, ‘legitimacy’” |
| Dec. 6—Literacy and Delivery [Sheridan, ch. 8]  Dec. 8—Literacy and Literature [Blair; ch. 8]  Dec. 13—Technology and communication [Baron, Gee]  Dec. 15—Multimodal rhetoric [Kress, Hill] | *Connectivity*: exploiting available technologies to connect with your audience  “Speak, hands, for me!” |
| Dec. 19—**Final** 2:45-4:45**, Final Paper / Group Presentations** | |