

LT315 Rhetoric

Module: Critical and Cultural Theory (Literature and Rhetoric)
Spring Term 2017
James Harker
Tuesdays 13:30-16:45
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 13:30-15:30 and by appointment

Course Description

Rhetoric, it can be argued, was the most important subject of study in classical times. In the medieval period, rhetoric was understood as one of the seven “liberal arts.” But today, rhetoric appears to occupy a most marginal position, likely to be thought, at best, a compendium of secret techniques of persuasion, at worst, a catalogue of empty ornamentation. In the first part of this course, we will trace the rise and fall of classical rhetoric, looking at its theory and practice as well as its alliances with or estrangements from philosophy and literature. In the latter part of the semester, we will explore the twentieth-century return to rhetoric in poststructuralist thinkers including Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man, and Judith Butler.

Requirements

Attendance

Attendance at all sessions of the course is required. After two absences for any reason (including minor health issues, unavoidable travel, appointments, etc.), the participation grade will be lowered one step (i.e. from A- to B+) per absence.

In accordance with the Student Handbook, a failing grade for the course will be given if absences reach 30% of the course meetings.

Arriving late to class will count as ½ of an absence.

Assessment

Assessment will be based on two papers, a presentation, and seminar participation. All requirements must be completed in order to pass the course.

Writing Assignments

Two essays are required: a Midterm Essay and a Final Essay. The Midterm Essay and Final Essay are each 2500-3500 words.

Presentations

Each participant will give a presentation. These presentations should be about 10-15 minutes.

Participation

A grade will be given for participation in seminar, which includes attendance and contributions to discussion. You are required to bring your own copy of the reading to class everyday as well as a notebook for taking notes. Laptops are not permitted unless you speak with me and make special arrangements. Not having the reading or a notebook in class will be marked the same as “absent.”

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

All written work must be submitted electronically and on time.

As specified in the Student Handbook, essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). The instructor is not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where the instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Grade Breakdown

Midterm Essay (2500-3500 words)	35%
Final Essay (2500-3500 words)	35%
Presentation	10%
Participation	20%

Required Texts

You will need to acquire the following books:

Longinus. *On the Sublime*
Michel Foucault. *The Archeology of Knowledge*
J.L. Austin. *How to Do Things with Words*
Judith Butler. *Bodies That Matter*

All other readings are available on Google Drive and as a Course Reader. You are required to bring a paper copy of all readings.

Schedule

W1: Jan 31 Introduction

Foundations of Classical Rhetoric

W2: Feb 7 Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, Book 1, Book 2 sections 1-17, Book 3 sections 1-3, 10-11 (pdf and hard copy handout))

W3: Feb 14 Longinus, *On the Sublime* (full text)

The “Old” Rhetoric and the “New” Human Sciences

- W4: Feb 21 Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, Book IV (CR)
 Tzvetan Todorov, “The Birth of Occidental Semiotics” (CR)
- W5: Feb 28 Roland Barthes, “The Old Rhetoric: An Aide-mémoire” “Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative” (CR)
- W6: Mar 7 Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge* (full text)
- W7: Mar 14 Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*

Expansions of Rhetoric: Performativity and Motive

- W8: Mar 21 J.L. Austin. *How to Do Things with Words* (full text)

Midterm Essay Due Friday, March 24 at 23:59.

- W9: Mar 28 Kenneth Burke. *A Rhetoric of Motives* (CR)

Rhetoric and Deconstruction

- W10: Apr 4 Paul de Man, “Semiology of Rhetoric” “Rhetoric of Tropes (Nietzsche)” “Rhetoric of Persuasion (Nietzsche)” *Allegories of Reading*. (CR)

SPRING BREAK

- W11: Apr 18 Jacques Derrida, “Signature, Event, Context” from *Limited, Inc.* (CR)

Rhetoric, Performativity, and Identity

- W12: Apr 25 Butler. *Bodies that Matter* (full text)
- W13: May 2 Butler, *Bodies that Matter*
- W14: May 9 Henry Louis Gates, Jr. “The Signifying Monkey and the Language of Signifyin(g): Rhetorical Difference and the Orders of Meaning” (CR)

Final Essay Due Friday, May 19 at 23:59.