

ENGL / COMM 7/8350
Rhetorical Theory
Brad McAdon
Thurs 5:30-8:30
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Course Description

This engaging course will cover rhetorical texts and concepts that span almost 2,000 years—from Alcidas (5th century BCE) to Erasmus (16th century CE), a bus tour of sorts, with several fascinating stops along the way. Because, in some respects, we are doing history, we will begin with a few necessary historiographical and methodological considerations, and then begin reading, in chronological order, Alcidas, Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle and develop historical, political, philosophical, rhetorical, and educational contexts within which these texts and the rhetorical concepts within them emerged. We will then move on to excerpts from the anonymous *ad Herennium*, a few selections from Quintilian's *Institutes*, emerging early Christian rhetorical and editorial practices, Libanius' school of rhetoric, Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine*, and, time permitting, rhetorical practices within the early Renaissance. We will also follow two threads: one is *mimesis* / *imitatio* (imitation) and the extent to which ancient authors and speakers relied upon this rhetorical device from (at least) Isocrates through the Renaissance, and the second is how teachers taught and how students learned and practiced rhetorical and compositional concepts in antiquity.

Proposed Texts

Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*. Trans. George Kennedy, 2 ed. New York: Oxford, 2007. ISBN 9780195305098
Augustine. *On Christian Doctrine*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. ISBN 0192832328
Cribiore, Raffaella. *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. ISBN 9691122520
Murphy, James J. *Quintilian: On the Teaching of Speaking and Writing: Translation from Books One, Two, and Ten of the Institutio oratoria*. Carbondale: SIUP, 1987. ISBN 0809313782
Plato. *Phaedrus*. Trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1995. ISBN 0872202208
_____. *Gorgias*. Trans. Joe Sachs. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2009. ISBN 9781-585102990

Additional course materials will be provided.

Course requirements in addition to the readings and class discussions:

- Five bi-weekly summary / responses on the assigned readings
- A semester research paper with annotated bibliography
- Lead one class discussion on an assigned text relevant to the course material