



## Applied Rhetoric Syllabus

Term: 2011-2012

Teacher: Mr. Thomas G. Wilkes  
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**Course description:** This course focuses on Classical rhetorical theory and practice and how this ancient art of rhetoric may be useful in addressing contemporary issues, and is designed primarily to engage students in reading carefully and analytically in a variety of periods, genres, and rhetorical contexts while asking them to argue and to write, employing what they have learned. The course is dedicated to the proposition that the art of ancient rhetoric is both a foundational concept in Western discourse as well as a process of inquiry and persuasion that moves human beings to action. The scope and application of the study of rhetoric includes the recognition of how rhetoric can be used to develop or invent alternative ways of understanding contentious and divisive issues, and how rhetorical arguments can make seemingly simple phenomena in the world more complex, and in turn, subject to interrogation and revision.

The goal is to provide students with the tools they need to improve their ability to argue and explain, to read closely and to analyze what they read, to write and to give sound oral argument, to tell a story imaginatively, to describe in such a way as to elicit a desired response, to illustrate broad themes by use of example, to draw clear comparisons and contrasts, to explain a processes, to explore causes and effects, and to make good arguments of various kinds, logical, ethical, and pathetic, appealing to authority or to emotion, with sober purpose or with satire, and to write prose of sufficient richness and complexity to communicate well and with style about what they have read or heard. They will analyze the power of prose and speech, and strive to emulate it, exposing themselves to the persuasiveness of appeals to authority such as Biblical allusions and references to great men, and to the rhetorical and stylistic devices of Cicero and the masters of rhetoric in the ancient world. The most important vehicle for that preparation lies in the reading and analysis of those ancient authors, but also modern ones, primarily essays but also sermons, speeches, and editorials, and historical documents.

### Required Texts:

*Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*, Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee, Pearson Education, 2004.

*Stunning Sentences*, Bruce Ross-Larson, W.W. Norton & Comoany, 1999.

### Required Supplies:

A 3-ring notebook is suggested for the numerous handouts, but it is not required.

All papers, major or minor, must be written in blue or black ink.

### **Evaluation:**

Major Tests, Papers, Oral Presentations	40%
Minor quizzes, papers, oral presentations	40%
Homework/Participation	20%

*Note: In lieu of a continual barrage of reading quizzes, students are required to submit each adequate written outlines of the textbook's reading assigned to them. Written exercises in the text, or via handouts, will be assigned every week.*

*The Senior Thesis is required of each student in this class, and will bear a relation to it.*

### **Course of Study:**

#### Week

- 1-2 Introduction to the theory and practice of rhetoric; the history of ancient rhetoric and its practitioners; differences between ancient and modern thought.
- 3-4 The Greek concept of *Kairos*, understanding the time, place and circumstances of rhetorical situations.
- 5-6 The theory of *Stasis*, asking the right questions
- 7-8 Aristotle's topical system, understanding topics of Invention, the whole concept of *Invention*; American political arguments.
- 9-10 Logical Proofs: Reasoning in Rhetoric; the concept of *Logos*; Deductive and Inductive Reasoning
- 11-12 Ethical Proofs; Arguments from Character; the concept of *Ethos*,
- 13-14 Pathetic Proofs: making passionate arguments and appeals from emotion or from tradition; the importance of audiences; the concept of *Pathos*
- 15-16 Extrinsic Proofs: Arguments waiting to be used; community authorities

#### ***First Semester Exam***

- 17-18 The Sophistic Topics: Define, Divide, and Conquer: the concept of Definition
- 19-21 Arrangement: the second pillar in the five canons of Aristotle; Confirmation and Refutation; the importance of composition
- 22-25 Style: the third pillar in the five canons of Aristotle; the use of language

26-27 Memory: the fourth pillar in the five canons of Aristotle

28-31 Delivery: Attending to the Eyes and Ears; Oral Discourse; Written discourse, the importance of grammar: speeches

32-35 Intensive Argumentative Writing

36 Review

***Final Exam***