

Field Examination
History of Rhetorical Theory
May 2009

INSTRUCTIONS:

You have four hours to complete this examination.

You must answer **THREE (3)** questions.

You may **NOT** answer more than **TWO** questions from any one category.

CATEGORY 1: CLASSICAL AND MEDIEVAL RHETORIC

1. Cicero's De Oratore (On the Making of an Orator) models itself upon Plato's Phaedrus. Taking De Oratore as your point of departure, discuss the appropriation of Greek rhetorical theory in Cicero, Quintilian, and Augustine.
2. "What is becoming to a speech is truth," writes the sophist Gorgias in "Encomium of Helen." Drawing on at least Gorgias, Plato, and Aristotle, discuss the conflict between rhetoric and philosophy in Classical Greece.
3. Thomas Conley identifies two complementary thrusts from the late Classical period that define the major themes of argumentation scholarship in the Middle Ages: the Augustinian trajectory (which gives rhetoric priority over dialectic) and the Boethian trajectory (which gives dialectic priority over rhetoric). Discuss this tension with respect to at least THREE Medieval scholars.

CATEGORY 2: RENAISSANCE TO NINETEENTH-CENTURY RHETORIC

1. The rediscovery of Cicero and Quintilian, both materially and conceptually, was one of the decisive events of the European Renaissance. Discuss the legacy of Roman rhetoric in Renaissance humanism, drawing on at least THREE of the following authors: George of Trebizond, Lorenzo Valla, Desiderius Erasmus, Rudolphus Agricola, Petrus Ramus, and Christine di Pizan.
2. As eighteenth-century rhetoricians such as Hugh Blair and George Campbell use psychology to explain human interaction, rhetoric becomes less concerned with outward actions than with inner states. Discuss the consequences of this development for rhetorical theory, drawing on these theorists and at least one additional rhetorical theorist of the period.
3. How did the rise of epistemology (the study of knowledge) during the Renaissance and/or Enlightenment change the foundations and goals of rhetorical theory? Refer to the work of at least THREE of the following: Francis Bacon, John Locke, Rene Descartes, Giambattista Vico.

CATEGORY 3: TWENTIETH-CENTURY RHETORIC

1. Referring to at least THREE authors from the Twentieth-Century Rhetoric and/or Rhetorical Criticism sections of the reading list, explain what is meant by the important 20th-century idea that rhetoric is epistemic.
2. Several twentieth century rhetoricians developed approaches to rhetoric that saw *identification* as the key term of a 'new rhetoric'. What if anything is new about identification, and how does it relate to key terms of classical rhetoric such as *persuasion* and *ethos*? Draw on at least THREE rhetorical theorists of the period.
3. One recurrent term in 20th-century rhetorical theory is "action". Drawing on at least THREE rhetorical theorists of the period, discuss the role of action in a rhetorical situation or process.