

Field Examination
History of Rhetoric Theory

November 1994

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. Trace the development of invention through the Greek and Roman periods and relate this development to changes in the social institutions and practices of the times.

2. With reference to the works of Aristotle, Quintilian, and St. Augustine, discuss how and why concepts of ethos change from the ancient to the medieval period. You may add whatever other rhetoricians you wish to your discussion.

3. “During its infancy, Philosophy was taught a lesson by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. The lesson was this: Those individuals are noble and worthy of praise who can understand and communicate the truth such that others can live in accordance with it.”

Using this quotation as a basis, discuss how this “lesson” differs from any taught to Philosophy by the Sophists.

**CATEGORY 2: RENAISSANCE TO NINETEENTH-CENTURY
RHETORIC**

1. Contrast Vico's concept of rhetoric with that of any ONE of the following figures: Bacon, Descartes, Locke.

2. "The function of rhetoric ... is not only to reveal our psychic and moral balance (or lack of it) but also to develop our powers of communication, for the good of others."

Discuss this statement with reference to TWO rhetorical theorists, one from the Renaissance period and one from the Enlightenment.

3. "Rhetorical considerations of style become more pressing as large numbers of educated people require -- and thus seek to acquire -- the means to maintain and expand their social standing and influence."

Discuss this statement with reference to the treatises of at least TWO rhetorical theorists writing during this period.

CATEGORY 3: TWENTIETH-CENTURY RHETORIC

1. "Rhetoric of inquiry is needed precisely because facts themselves are mute. Whatever the facts, *we* do the speaking -- whether through them or for them."

Discuss this statement with reference to at least TWO twentieth-century theorists.

2. "A theory of rhetoric can be defined by what it chooses to ignore from the past, what it chooses to preserve from the past, and what it modifies from the past to its own purposes. Such choices can reveal its own rhetorical motivations."

Discuss this claim in light of the rhetorical theories advanced by ONE of the following theorists: Chaim Perelman, Kenneth Burke, Ernesto Grassi, Richard Weaver, Stephen Toulmin.

3. "The past decades have seen a growing interest in issues such as 'reader response,' 'the body,' 'desire and language' to name a few. In this sense, contemporary theorists -- such as Kristeva, Burke, Foucault, Cixous, among others -- are moving towards a theory of pathos."

Choosing at least TWO of the theorists named in the quotation, discuss what form a contemporary theory of pathos might take. What might be its assumptions and tenets? What issues and kinds of speech and/or writing might it address? How might it redress previous disciplinary imbalances?