

**Field Examination**  
**History of Rhetorical Theory**  
**Spring 2003**

**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. “What is becoming to a speech is truth,” writes the sophist Gorgias in “Encomium of Helen.” With reference to Gorgias, Plato, and Aristotle, discuss the conflict between rhetoric and philosophy in Classical Greece.
2. 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.
3. In On Christian Doctrine, Saint Augustine confesses that he loves Cicero’s “tongue” but not his “heart.” Drawing on Augustine and at least two other authors, discuss the Christian appropriation of pagan rhetoric in the Middle Ages.

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

1. In what ways can Humanism be characterized as a reaction to Scholasticism, and what does that reaction have to do with the antagonistic symbiosis between rhetoric and dialectic?
2. The rise of empiricism in the Enlightenment had profound consequences for rhetoric. Referring to Petrus Ramus, Francis Bacon, and George Campbell, discuss those consequences.
3. Relate the notion of ethos inherited by the nineteenth century to both the Elocutionary and the Belletristic movements, drawing on Kames, Blair, and Sheridan.

### **CATEGORY 3: TWENTIETH-CENTURY RHETORIC**

1. According to the literary critic Jean Genette, rhetoric is at once “triumphant and moribund” in the modern world. Drawing on at least three authors, discuss both sides of Genette’s observation: how is rhetoric triumphant? How is it moribund?
2. I. A. Richards said in 1936 that “rhetoric is, or should be, the study of misunderstanding and its remedies.” How does this observation set the tone for twentieth century rhetoric, or does it?
3. What moral, aesthetic and/or political values do the work of the Bakhtin Circle and the Postmodernists share, and in what way are these values related to rhetoric?