English 309A
Rhetoric: Principles and Practices I
Winter 2002

Nadine Gingrich
Office: HH 250
Ext.: 2448
e-mail: nadinemg@rogers.com
Office Hours: 2-3:30, M, W or by appointment

Course Description

In this course we will survey the key concepts and issues in Classical Rhetoric and place them in a contemporary context for both analytical and productive purposes. We will learn to identify and critique the use of rhetorical techniques in texts and to use rhetorical techniques in our own writing. Because of the emphasis on practice in this course, you are required to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings and to participate in the analysis of texts that we will do in small groups.

Texts


Course Reader

Course Assignments

Progymnasmata Assignments 20% (total) (see schedule for dates)

This series of three short assignments will ask you to perform specific writing tasks. We will discuss the concept of the progymnasmata in the second class at which time you will get more detailed instructions about the assignments.

Presentation 20%

The in-class presentation will allow us to examine some of the scholarly work in Classical Rhetoric. In groups, you will present to the class a précis of an assigned article, discuss the ways in which it contributes to our understanding of the primary texts, and prepare three questions to generate class discussion. Your group will hand in a paper of no more than 5 pages on your presentation; please include your questions with the paper.

Final Exam 30%

The final exam will cover material from the entire course.
Term Project 30% due April 5

You can do an academic essay or a "change-the-world" project. The academic essay will be 8-10 pages (2000-2500 words) and will give you a chance to do some research on the historical or theoretical aspects of Classical Rhetoric, or to examine a concept such as ethos in a text or texts. The "change-the-world" project will give you an opportunity to examine rhetoric as a way of making a difference.

The Academic Essay
There are two kinds of essay you can do, a critical analysis or a conceptual paper. For the critical analysis you will start with a concept (ethos, stasis, the enthymeme), do some research on it (there are many excellent journals in the library dedicated to the study of rhetoric), and write a paper that demonstrates the significance of that concept. For example, you might want to discuss the importance of ethos by examining Jean Chretien's image as "the Teflon man"; or, you might want to discuss the need for stasis in a controversial issue such as standardized testing in schools. The conceptual paper will allow you to examine broader issues in Classical Rhetoric, such as the connection between dialectic and rhetoric or the arguments between Plato and the Sophists on the very nature of rhetoric itself. In either case you will need to read primary texts and do some secondary research on the issues or concepts.
I will evaluate the academic essay for the sophistication and cogency of its arguments and the strength and appropriateness of the examples and evidence.

The Change-the-World Project
This project will take the form of a report. Choose a topic that is manageable—you can't bring about world peace in twelve weeks—and one that will make use of the skills and knowledge you have acquired in the course. For example, you might want to report on the success (or failure) of an attempt to get a vegan entrée included in the residence menu; the attempt to convince a bank that their records are incorrect; the attempt to convince a developer not to build on a certain parcel of land; or the attempt to prevent a group from recruiting on campus.
I will evaluate the report on the scope of the project and the cogency and sophistication of the report. It should include a discussion of the problem; the method used to try to change the problem; the narration (what you did, what "they" did, what you did then, what "they" did then . . .); an analysis of the effectiveness of the rhetoric on both sides; and all the relevant documentation (copies of letters, posters, web sites, transcripts of speeches) in appendices. The method, narration, and analysis sections should demonstrate an understanding and awareness of the rhetorical principles we have explored in the course. The length of your report will vary, but the analysis and descriptive sections should be 5-10 pages (1250-2500 words).

Course Policies
All assignments are due in class on the date specified; the final project is due at 4:30 on April 5 in my mailbox in HH 229 (please have a secretary sign and date it). You must arrange with me in advance for an extension. Papers handed in late without prior permission will be penalized one full grade (i.e. an A will become a B, an A- a B- etc.). I will not accept any papers after the others have been handed back to the class.
Schedule of Classes and Readings*

Jan. 7    introduction to course
Jan. 9    “Progymnasmata”
Jan. 14   the Sophists
Jan. 16   Gorgias, “Encomium of Helen,” Kennedy 283-88
Jan. 21   Isocrates, “Against the Sophists” (CR) 1st Progymnasmata

Assignment

Jan. 23   Isocrates, “Antidosis” (CR) presentation
Jan. 28   Plato, Gorgias (CR)
Jan. 30   Plato, Gorgias presentation
Feb. 4    Plato, Phaedrus (CR)
Feb. 6    Plato, Phaedrus presentation
Feb. 11   Aristotle 2nd Progymnasmata Assignment
Feb. 13   Aristotle, On Rhetoric Book I presentation
Feb. 18, 20  Reading Week
Feb. 25   Aristotle, Book II
Feb. 27   Aristotle, Book II presentation
March 4   Aristotle, Book III
March 6   Aristotle presentations
March 11  Roman Rhetoric: stasis (Smith, CR)
March 13  Cicero (CR)
March 18  Cicero (CR) presentation
March 20  Quintilian (CR) 3rd Progymnasmata Assignment
March 25  Quintilian (CR)
March 27  Roman Rhetoric: style (Corbett CR) presentation
April 1   Christian Rhetoric: Augustine (CR) presentation
April 5   term project due

*This schedule is a guide only; while we will attempt to adhere to it, we may have to be flexible.
English 309A  
Winter 2002  
Progymnasmata Assignments

You will do three short writing assignments based on the progymnasmata set of exercises discussed in your course reader. Each assignment will be graded and the total for the three will comprise 20% of your final grade for the course.

1. Write a fable, narrative (anecdote), chreia, or amplification of a proverb, based on the information and examples in the text. If you do the chreia or the amplification of a proverb, please use the headings given in the text. This assignment is short; one page (250 words) will be more than adequate for the fable or anecdote, and should be enough for the others as well. Due Jan. 21.

2. Write a confirmation or refutation, a commonplace, an encomium or invective, a comparison, a character, or a description, again according to the examples and information in the text. Include a brief discussion (one sentence will do) of the reason for, and context of, the text, as well as an indication of the intended audience. This assignment should be about one and a half pages in length (about 350 words). Due Feb. 11.

3. Write a two-page (500 word) thesis or introduction of law following the examples in the text. Be sure to state your thesis clearly. Due March 20.

Please refer to the notice about Academic Offenses on your course outline and be aware of the penalties for them.
Presentation Schedule and Titles
