According to Ernest Renan, the French historian of religion, inventing the art of rhetoric was the "only mistake the Greeks made." One of the central aims of this introductory survey of ancient Greek and Roman rhetoric is to reveal the injustice of Renan's charge. In an effort to situate the emergence of rhetoric in its social and historical context, the first part of the course will explore the relationship between rhetoric and Greek law, science, theatre, politics and medicine. With this context in mind, we will then examine the role of rhetoric in the legal, political, and educational life of the ancient Romans, who viewed the pursuit of oratory as the loftiest ideal of human existence -- and the means to a "world-empire" (Cicero). By the end of the course it will become apparent that the invention of rhetoric by the Older Sophists, far from being a "mistake," represents one of the Prometheus achievements of Western intellectual history.

Texts
Sophists, Fragments; Gorgias, "Encomium of Helen"; Anonymous, "Dissoi Logoi"; Plato, Phaedrus; Sophocles, Antigone; Aristophanes, Clouds; Isocrates, "Antidosis," "Against the Sophists"; Aristotle, Rhetoric; Cicero, Of Oratory; Quintilian, Institutes of Oratory

Requirements
- 60% written responses to assigned readings (8x2pp.)
- 40% final essay
- attendance, of course, is mandatory

Format
- lecture
- question and discussion
- summaries and readings of weekly responses

Syllabus

January
7 Introduction
14 Gorgias, "Encomium of Helen"; Anonymous, "Dissoi Logoi"
21 Plato, Phaedrus 1
28 Sophocles, Antigone 2

February
4 Aristophanes, Clouds 3
11 Isocrates, "Against the Sophists," "Antidosis" assignment 4
19 Break
25 Aristotle, Rhetoric 5

March
4 Cicero, "Excerpts" from Of Oratory 6
11 Quintilian, Institutes of Oratory assignment 7
18 Shakespeare, Julius Caesar assignment 8
25 Conclusions