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 order to situate the origins of rhetoric in its social and historical context, we will begin by exploring the complex relationship between rhetoric and culture in Classical Greece (law, science, politics, theatre, and philosophy). With this context in mind, we will then examine the appropriation of Greek rhetorical theory by the Romans, who viewed the pursuit of rhetoric as the loftiest ideal of human existence -- and as the means to a "world-empire" (Cicero). By the end of the course it will become apparent that the invention of rhetoric, far from being a "mistake," represents one of the Prometheus achievements of Western intellectual history.

**Texts**


**January**

5 Introduction
12 Gorgias, "Encomium of Helen"
19 Aristophanes, Clouds
26 Aristophanes, Lysistrata

**February**

2 No Class
9 Plato, Phaedrus
16 Reading Break
23 Aristotle, Rhetoric; Isocrates, "Against the Sophists," "Antidosis"; Anonymous, "Dissoi Logoi"

**March**

1 Cicero, Of Oratory
8 Shakespeare, Antony and Cleopatra
15 Shakespeare, Othello
22 Quintilian, Institutes of Oratory
29 Conclusions...
Requirements

15% Weekly Responses and Participation
Write a paragraph in which you offer three reasons why the text under discussion is important to the study of rhetoric (1.25 margins; 12 point type). Be prepared to read and/or discuss your paragraph in class. Please submit responses at the end of each class. Late submissions will not be accepted. Responses will be read but not graded (you will receive credit for completing the assignment).

30% Class Presentation (4pp.)
Write an essay in which you explain the significance of your text for the study of rhetoric (1.25 margins; 12 point). Do not summarize the text. Instead, offer an interpretation of the text and assess its contribution to the field of rhetorical studies. Be sure to support your argument with relevant citations from the text. Since you will be reading your essay like a conference paper, strive for a formal but accessible style of presentation. Please submit your presentation the day it is read in class.

55% Final essay (10 pp.)
Compare and contrast any two texts on the syllabus (1.25 margins; 12 point).

Attendance
Attendance, or course, is mandatory