

Rhetoric in the Western World

Instructor: Dr. Rya Butterfield

Email: butterfi@purdue.edu

Office Location:

Office Hours:

Course Description

This course focuses on major theoretical issues and philosophical concepts in the history of rhetoric. Relationships between rhetoric and a variety of historical, cultural, political, intellectual, and interpersonal circumstances will be explored. Classical, medieval, modern, and contemporary authors will be read and discussed.

Required Texts (available at the University bookstores and on reserve at the HSSE library):

- John Durham Peters, Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
- Samuel McCormick, Letters to Power: Public Advocacy Without Public Intellectuals (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011).
- Robert Hariman, Political Style: The Artistry of Power (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

Supplementary Readings

Plato, *Phaedrus* (259e-277a)

Jesus, “Parable of the Sower” (Matthew 13)

Cicero, *Orator* (§§43-74)

Cicero, *Of Oratory* (Book 1, Chapters I-XII)

Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (excerpts from Book III)

Kant, “An Answer to the Question: ‘What is Enlightenment?’”

Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, pp. 9-21

Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* (pp. 72-80) Kierkegaard,

Two Ages (pp. 90-107)

Kafka, “My Neighbor”

Kafka, “Before the Law”

Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., “The Path of Law”

Kracauer, “Boredom”

McLuhan, “Co-Education”

McLuhan, “Freedom to Listen – Freedom to Look”

McLuhan, “The Mechanical Bride”

Assignments and Grading

Unit Quizzes (50 total points; 25% of your final grade): There will be five (5) quizzes this semester—roughly one quiz for each unit of the course. Each quiz will be worth 10 points or 5% of your final grade. The quizzes will be comprised of multiple choice questions. Finally, all quizzes will be taken during recitation sections and cover only materials assigned and discussed since the previous quiz or exam.

Midterm Exam (50 points; 25% of your final grade): The midterm will cover material from the first half of the semester and will be comprised of multiple-choice questions.

Final Exam (50 points; 25% of your final grade): The final will cover material from the second half of the semester and will be comprised of multiple-choice questions.

Participation (50 points; 25% of your final grade): Attendance will not be taken during the course lectures. However, attendance will be taken during recitation sections. In addition to your attendance, the frequency, productivity, and considerateness of your contributions to class discussions and activities will determine your participation grade.