

## English 471 Classical Rhetorics and American Movies

Course: English 471  
Time: M W F 11:15A - 12:05P  
Location: 109 Boucke  
Phone: (814) 863-0595

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Office: 118 Burrowes  
Office hours: MWF 10-11A or by appointment  
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### Course Description

This class first surveys rhetorical theories and practices in both ancient Greece and ancient China. Then we examine how rhetorical concepts and theories developed in those traditions remain powerful tools for us to understand American popular culture, particularly American movies. Students will read both primary and secondary texts to develop a firm grasp of concepts in the two traditions. Then together we will apply those concepts to examine a few movies. In the second half of the semester, students will examine movies of their choice, lead class discussions on those movies, and then write research papers on rhetoric and movies.

Course assignments include readings, research notes, a semester-long rhetorical project on an American movie of your choice, and a group presentation. You need to complete required readings before class. For the research notes, you will choose or be assigned a certain rhetorical topic, and you focus on this topic while you read classical texts and watch movies. You prepare your research notes for class discussions. For the group presentation, you will work in groups to study a movie of your choice and then present your analysis of the movie to the class at the end of the semester. The group can analyze the movie from one or more than one rhetorical traditions. For the research project, you will first prepare a research proposal (about 500 words), then a preliminary research paper, and finally a final research paper. Ideally your research paper will focus on a certain rhetorical aspect of the movie studied in your group. Please use the standards set by *Young Scholars in Writing: Undergraduate Research in Writing and Rhetoric* in your own research and writing.

Grades will be assigned as follows,

Research notes - 35 points  
Group presentation - 25 points  
Research proposal - 10 points  
Preliminary research paper - 10 points  
Final research paper - 20 points

### Required Texts

The following texts are required. They are available in both Penn State Bookstore and Student Bookstore. The rest of the readings will be available on Angel.

Aristotle. *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Trans. George A. Kennedy. Oxford University Press, 2007.  
Combs, Steven C. *The Dao of Rhetoric*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2005.  
Confucius. *The Analects of Confucius*. Trans. Arthur Waley. Vintage, 1989.  
Lao Tzu. *Tao Te Ching*. Trans. Gia-Fu Feng and Jane English. Vintage, 1997.  
Plato. *Phaedrus*. Trans. Robin Waterfield. Oxford University Press, 2003.

## Course Schedule

1/12 Monday	Introduction
1/14 Wednesday	Hubbard - "It Takes a Rhetorical Village"
1/16 Friday	Simon - "Seeing More in Cabinets and Blockbusters"
1/21 Wednesday	Kennedy - "Rhetoric in Greece and Rome"
1/23 Friday	Plato - <i>Phaedrus</i> (Introduction)
1/26 Monday	Plato - <i>Phaedrus</i>
1/28 Wednesday	Aristotle - <i>On Rhetoric</i> (Introduction; Book 1: Chapter 1-3 )
1/30 Friday	Aristotle - <i>On Rhetoric</i> (Book 1: Chapter 4-7, 9-11)
2/2 Monday	Aristotle - <i>On Rhetoric</i> (Book 2: Chapter 1-2, 12-13, 18-22; Book 3: Chapter 1-3, 13)
2/4 Wednesday	Jost - "Sweating the Little Things in Sidney Lumet's <i>12 Angry Men</i> "
2/6 Friday	Movie No. 1 - <i>12 Angry Men</i>
2/9 Monday	Movie No. 1 - <i>12 Angry Men</i>
2/11 Wednesday	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> (Chapter 1-40)
2/13 Friday	Combs - <i>The Dao of Rhetoric</i> (Chapter 1-2)
2/16 Monday	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> (Chapter 41-40)
2/18 Wednesday	Combs - <i>The Dao of Rhetoric</i> (Chapter 5-6)
2/20 Friday	Due: Research proposal
	Combs - <i>The Dao of Rhetoric</i> (Chapter 7)
2/23 Monday	Combs - <i>The Dao of Rhetoric</i> (Chapter 8)
2/25 Wednesday	<b>Conference on research proposal</b>
2/27 Friday	Movie No. 2 - <i>Charlotte's Web</i>
3/2 Monday	Movie No. 2 - <i>Charlotte's Web</i>
3/4 Wednesday	Movie No. 2 - <i>Charlotte's Web</i>
3/6 Friday	Confucius - <i>The Analects</i> (Introduction)
3/16 Monday	Lu - "Conceptualization of Yan and Ming Bian"
3/18 Wednesday	Confucius - <i>The Analects</i> (Book 1-10)
3/20 Friday	Mao - "What's in a Name?"
3/23 Monday	Confucius - <i>The Analects</i> (Book 11-20)
3/25 Wednesday	You - "The Way, Multimodality of Ritual Symbols, and Social Change"
3/27 Friday	Movie No. 3 - <i>Broken Arrows</i>
3/30 Monday	Movie No. 3 - <i>Broken Arrows</i>
4/1 Wednesday	Movie No. 3 - <i>Broken Arrows</i>
4/3 Friday	Due: Preliminary research paper
	Movie No. 4 - <i>Lean on Me</i>
4/6 Monday	Movie No. 4 - <i>Lean on Me</i>
4/8 Wednesday	Movie No. 4 - <i>Lean on Me</i>
4/10 Friday	<b>Conference on preliminary research paper</b>
4/13 Monday	Group presentation No. 1
4/15 Wednesday	Group presentation No. 1
4/17 Friday	Group presentation No. 1
4/20 Monday	Group presentation No. 2
4/22 Wednesday	Group presentation No. 2
4/24 Friday	Group presentation No. 2
4/27 Monday	Group presentation No. 3
4/29 Wednesday	Group presentation No. 3
5/1 Friday	Group presentation No. 3
5/8 Friday	<b>Due: Final research paper</b>

## Rhetorical Issues

### 1. Contexts and the Initiation of Discourse

What specific rhetorical contexts are addressed? How is rhetorical exigency handled?  
What initiates the discursive act? *Kairos*? How is this defined?  
Is there an art for initiating discourse? *Stasis*? *Status*? How is this defined?  
Does the text discuss a disagreement over these aspects?

### 2. Topics

Is there an art of *topoi* or topics? What kinds of topics are presented (general, specific?)  
Are topics theorized? Exemplified? List topics and their categories.  
What are the purposes of the topics? To arrive at judgment, to find material to support judgments already in hand, to adapt discourse to audience?  
Does the text discuss a disagreement over this aspect?

### 3. Rhetorical Reasoning

What is the nature of rhetorical reasoning (e.g., dialogic, *dissoi logoi*, enthymemic)  
Is this reasoning theorized? Exemplified?  
What kind of epistemology (e.g., probability, certainty) does rhetoric employ?  
What kinds of claims are made for rhetoric's relation to "truth"?  
What relationship is suggested between language and "thought"?  
Does the text discuss a disagreement over this aspect?

### 4. Province of Rhetoric: Subject Matters, Borders

How is "matter" of rhetoric characterized? Is rhetoric restricted to particular domains?  
What is rhetoric's relationship to other types of study and inquiry or other disciplines: (poetics, philosophy, law, science, theology, homiletics, politics etc.)?  
What is rhetoric' relationship to the political, social, and economic conditions?  
Does the text discuss disagreement over these aspects?

### 5. The Rhetor and *Ethos*

What are the subject positions of the rhetor? Who can speak, who is marginalized?  
What is the nature and relative importance of *ethos* (in relation to *logos* and *pathos*)?  
Is there an art of *ethos*: Strategies for achieving it?  
What is the relationship between *ethos* and ethics, if any?  
Does the text discuss a disagreement over this aspect?

### 6. The Audience and *Pathos*

How does the text characterize the audiences for discourse?  
What is the nature and relative importance of emotion (in relation to *logos* and *ethos*)?  
Is there an art of *pathos*: strategies for achieving it?  
Does the text discuss a disagreement over these aspects?

### 7. Genres and Style

What are rhetoric's genres or discourse classifications?  
Are they theorized? Exemplified?  
What are the features of these genres?  
What types of styles are theorized or exemplified?  
Does the text discuss disagreements over these aspects?

### 8. The education of the Rhetor and Rhetoric as an Art

Is rhetoric characterized as 1) a set of rules (craft), 2) a set of theoretical principles of transferable strategies capable of reflecting or guiding practice and being adapted to specific contexts (art), or 3) the product of genius and/or a mysterious function of language?  
What is the role and definition of an art (*techné*) per se?  
What relationships are suggested among art, talent (nature), practice, and imitation in the development of the rhetor? Are they equal in importance?  
What is the character of the relationship between the "teacher" and the "student"?

## Submission Guidelines

*SUBMISSIONS FOR VOLUME 7 WILL BE ACCEPTED BEGINNING JANUARY 30, 2009. PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT YOUR WORK FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING FEATURES BEFORE JANUARY 30, 2009.*

### GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR ADVANCED UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

*Young Scholars in Writing: Undergraduate Research in Writing and Rhetoric* is a refereed journal dedicated to publishing research articles written by undergraduates in a wide variety of disciplines associated with rhetoric and writing. It is guided by these central beliefs: (1) that research can and should be a crucial component of rhetorical education and (2) that undergraduates engaged in research about writing and rhetoric should have opportunities to share their work with a broader audience of students, scholars, and teachers through national publication.

*Young Scholars in Writing* seeks theory-driven and/or research-based submissions from undergraduates on the following topics: writing, *rhetoric*, composition, professional writing, technical writing, business writing, discourse analysis, writing technologies, peer tutoring in writing, writing process, writing in the disciplines, and related topics. Submissions to this refereed journal should be 10-25 double-spaced pages in MLA format. Essays exceeding 25 pages will not be considered.

Please submit an electronic copy of manuscript in Microsoft Word to the editor, to Dr. Laurie Grobman, at [leg8@psu.edu](mailto:leg8@psu.edu).

- Author's name must not appear on the manuscript.
- Send a separate file which includes author's name, address, institutional affiliation, email address, and phone number.
- All submissions must be accompanied by a professor's note that the essay was written by the student. The professor should email this note to Dr. Laurie Grobman at [leg8@psu.edu](mailto:leg8@psu.edu).