What is rhetoric and how do you live rhetorically? These are questions that people have been trying to answer since the sophists of ancient Athens. Rhetoric is one of those phrases that does not have a concrete definition but rather an understood meaning with those who study it. However, this paper is not just about the term rhetoric but what it means to live rhetorically, by way of being, knowing and doing. I have taken two classes based on rhetoric, CAS 411 Rhetorical Criticism and currently CAS 201, Introduction to Rhetorical Theory, and I will pull out what I have learned in both classes to try to give my definition of what it means to live rhetorically. I will start by trying to give my definition of what rhetoric is.

When people ask me what my major is and I tell them that it is Communication, Arts and Sciences, the first thing they say is, “So you learn how to give speeches.” I usually follow that up by saying no it involves more than that, I have learned why people communicate certain ways in different situations, the best way to communicate to people including newer technological ways and that I have studied quite a bit in rhetoric. Then, when I mention rhetoric, most people usually assume that it just means that I learn how to persuade people. This is followed by me explaining that persuasion is only part of rhetoric and it consists of more than that. So after thinking about these conversations and studying in class I think that I have come up with my definition of rhetoric. Rhetoric is not one thing but encompasses many different aspects and to understand them you need to study, teach and communicate. You do these actions so that you can use your brains and your voice to teach, explain and yes to persuade. This section also covers much of what I believe it means to live rhetorically by means of knowing. When we talk about living rhetorically by means of knowing, I believe that it means you have an understanding and appreciation for rhetoric and you continue to follow my three
aspects of rhetoric. The aspect of studying is simple; you need to always read both classical
speeches as well as reading present reports in communication magazines and keep up with
current speeches to keep up with our changing world. The reason for doing this is so you can try
to find the best way to use rhetoric to your advantage, however I mean this in a good way and I
do not think that rhetoric should be used in a bad way. Unlike the Sophists, where they would
argue either side of an argument, I think that rhetoric should be used for the truth not just for
personal gain. The aspect of teaching just means that if you know rhetoric you should help
others to understand what it encompasses and how it should be used. Finally, the aspect of
communicate, which means that if you know and study rhetoric then you should use your
voice. By this I mean that you should do whatever you can to get your voice heard, whether it is
writing articles for journals and magazines or trying to get a job in a field such as politics where
you can reach many people because I believe that people who study rhetoric correctly can help
improve our world through good communication.

Living rhetorically by means of being, to me, means that you do a lot of the things that I
previously outlined. My idea of being rhetorical is that you continue to study rhetoric even after
your initial training in the subject. To get better at anything you need to constantly train and
hone your skills in that subject and the same is true for rhetoric. To become a better rhetorician
you need to constantly read others works such as speeches and public addresses. By reading
and viewing these things and seeing how they affected their target audiences, by doing this you
can find the best ways to use rhetoric to accomplish your goals, whatever they are.
So after you get your knowledge on rhetoric and start to live rhetorically by being you should start living rhetorically by doing. Doing involves taking all of your knowledge and putting it to use. From what I have heard and understand, rhetorical people do not communicate as much as they should. As a person who lives rhetorically not only do you have to try to put yourself out in the world where you can make speeches and address that have rhetorical influences from your learning, but you need to just sit down and talk to other people or small groups of people. When talking with other people, especially if they do not have a good sense of rhetoric, you should not talk at them but lead them in a discussion to get them to start thinking and acting rhetorically. This is part of my teaching aspect of rhetoric where you help others to learn rhetoric. By doing you live an active life in the rhetorical community but also outside of it teaching others much like Aristotle’s Allegory of the Cave a person who truly lives a rhetorical life should help others to also learn rhetoric.

The reason I believe rhetoric is so important is because it can help the greater good of society. Even though some people might not agree with my opinions it is ok because that is part of rhetoric, looking at others pieces and critiquing them. In my opinion if more people know about rhetoric and study and use it then our world would be much more communicated and therefore a lot of our problems could be more fixed in a more civil manner. One thing I want to stress though is that rhetoric should be used for the truth otherwise it will take a negative manner and nothing in our will get accomplished.