



ENGL 6801/7801

History of Rhetoric: Ancient – Renaissance

Wed. | 4:30 – 7:30 p.m. | Peck 325

3 Credit Hours

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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Office Phone: 615-898-2585

Office Hours: 4 – 5 p.m. on Mon., 12 – 2 p.m. on Wed., and by appointment

COURSE INFORMATION

Description

Whether defined as an art, a theory, or a practice, rhetoric has been a central part of Western education and politics for at least 2500 years. In this course, we will trace rhetoric's shifting legacy from ancient sophists to writers and teachers in the sixteenth century. Because so much in the history of rhetoric grows out of the Greek concept of *rhētorikē*, we will spend a lot amount of time on ancient Athens and subsequent thinkers inspired by Greek rhetoric. We will also consider traditions and cultures that, though they may not have operated under the name of "rhetoric," can enrich our understanding of how persuasion and argumentation operated in various spots across the world prior to the 1600s.

Objectives

- Via primary and secondary texts, introduce students to the rich rhetorical traditions that operated through the Renaissance and continue to shape English studies and other disciplines today,
- prepare students to work and write with the academic conventions of contemporary rhetorical scholarship,

- help graduate students develop new strategies for incorporating rhetorical theories and concepts into their pedagogical and professional practices.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Textbook

Kennerly, Michele, and Damien Smith Pfister. *Ancient Rhetorics and Digital Networks*. U of Alabama P, 2018.

Other readings available online and/or as PDFs. These will all be available either (a) in a Dropbox folder I will share with students enrolled in the course or (b) as links in the calendar at the end of this syllabus.

Supplementary Materials

There are no other supplementary materials for this course. That said, if you are particularly invested in any particular course content, let me know. I can recommend print versions of various course texts we'll be reading selections from this semester, and I can recommend some useful books that provide overviews of the period(s) we'll be covering in this course.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Grading Procedure

Grades in this course will be broken down as follows:

- Discussion Posts (20%): Responses to course readings. Some kind of post is due by noon on the day of most class meetings. We will discuss potential options for these discussions during our first class meeting.
- One-Pagers (30%): Two one-page papers in which you summarize a work or rhetorician we've encountered in class, then use it to analyze an artifact you'll choose during the first week of class. These papers must be single-spaced, no more than a single page, and use a font between 10-12 points. We will look at some examples during the second week of the course. Each one-pager may be revised and resubmitted up to two additional times after the initial submission. You will read these aloud in class on the days they're due (though I'm happy to talk about alternatives if reading aloud is an untenable option for you).
- Book Review (20%): A review (1250-1750 words) of a book you'll select from a list I'll provide during early in the course. You will give informal presentations on your books in class.
- Final Project (30%): A piece of rhetorical scholarship related to at least one of the periods and traditions covered in this course. For MA students, this piece should be roughly the length of a conference presentation (2750 – 3250 words). For PhD students, it should be the length of a short journal article (4000 – 5000 words).

Grading Scale

A: 90-100 B+: 87-89 B: 83-86 B-: 80-82	C+: 77-79 C: 73-76 C-: 70-72 D+: 67-69	D: 63-66 D-: 60-62 F: 59 and under
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Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades are given rarely and only in extenuating circumstances. Page 56 of the [MTSU Undergraduate Catalog](#) states: "The grade I indicates that the student has not completed all course requirements because of illness or other uncontrollable circumstances, especially those which occur toward the end of the term. Mere failure to make up work or turn in required work on time does not provide the basis for the grade of "I" unless extenuating circumstances noted above are present for reasons acceptable to the instructor." Please refer to the Undergraduate catalog for the complete Incomplete Grade Policy.

Feedback

I will provide detailed feedback on all course projects (with the exception of the discussion posts) no more than two weeks after you submit the project. I will also update grades in a D2L gradebook, which we'll talk about more in the coming weeks. If there are cases where there's an issue with an assignment you've submitted (it doesn't meet the assignment requirements, the file won't open for me, etc.), I will typically use the comments feature in the gradebook to let you know, so check for comments if there's ever a mismatch between the grade you got on something and the grade you think you should have gotten.

Deadlines and Late Work

All deadlines are listed in the calendar at the end of this syllabus. I know this will be a particularly chaotic semester, so just let me know if you ever anticipate needing an extension on a piece of coursework. In most cases, I'm happy to oblige.

PARTICIPATION

Attendance

Most semesters, I ask that students in a course of this nature miss no more than two class meetings. However, attendance is especially complicated this semester because of the ongoing pandemic. I still ask that if possible, you don't miss more than two classes, but if you get sick with COVID-19, are exposed and have to quarantine, experience a family health emergency or tragedy, I am more than willing to work with you and will not penalize additional absences. Also, if you have to quarantine but aren't experiencing significant symptoms, I can easily arrange for you to attend course meetings via Zoom.

I am vaccinated, but on the off-chance that I am exposed to or contract COVID and have to quarantine during the semester, the course will go remote during my quarantine period. If that happens, I'll provide an extensive update via email.

Masking

Due to the ongoing pandemic, everyone must be masked indoors. Students who cannot wear a mask for medical reasons must have a written accommodation from the Disability and Access Center. For other information on MTSU's COVID response and policies, visit this website:

<https://www.mtsu.edu/coronavirus/index.php>.

Office Hours

As noted at the beginning of this syllabus, my office hours this semester will be 4 – 5 p.m. on Mondays and 12 – 2 p.m. on Wednesdays. Because of COVID, I will be holding my office hours outdoors until it gets too cold to do so. I'll be located at one of the picnic tables in the courtyard under Peck Hall. Once it gets too cold, I'll assess the state of COVID on campus and will let you know where my new office hours location will be. During my office hours, I am also happy to meet via Zoom. If you want to meet via Zoom, you will need to email or talk to me advance so I can send you a link and make sure I have the meeting open at the right time. If my regular office hours don't fit your schedule, I'm happy to find another time to meet, either in person or via Zoom. Again, just email me or talk to me and we can figure something out.

Academic Integrity/Misconduct

Please review MTSU's policy on [Academic Integrity and Misconduct](#). As graduate students, I assume you are familiar with plagiarism and how to avoid it. But just in case, plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- submitting someone else's work (papers, reports, drawings, laboratory notes, computer programs, etc.) as if it's your own;
- knowingly assisting another student in obtaining or using materials they attempt to pass off as their own work (this does *not* include collaborating with each other while you're working on a writing project, which I encourage you to do);
- submitting assignments previously used in other courses where you received credit for the work; and
- improperly crediting or not crediting another author's work.

Ultimately, the consequences for plagiarism are my call. If you repeatedly and intentionally plagiarize assignments in this course, possible disciplinary sanctions (including expulsion from the university) may be imposed through the regular institutional procedures for addressing academic misconduct. I have the option of not giving you credit for plagiarized assignments until they're redone or of giving you an F/N for the course. Students guilty of plagiarism may be reported to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.

Email

If you need to get in touch with me outside of class or office hours, my MTMail address is the best way to do so: eric.detweiler@mtsu.edu. In most cases, I'll reply to any email I receive before 5 p.m. on a weekday by the end of the day. If it's during the workweek and you email me after 5, I usually reply the next day. I do sometimes reply to emails during the weekend, but don't depend on it. If you have a pressing question or concern and the weekend is coming up, make sure to email me before 5 p.m. on Friday.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Students with Disabilities

Middle Tennessee State University is committed to campus access in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Any student interested in reasonable accommodations can consult the [Disability & Access Center \(DAC\)](#) website and/or contact the DAC for assistance at 615-898-2783 or [DAC Email](#).

I know that the remote nature of this course as well as the mental and emotional stress of COVID-19 may present additional accessibility challenges that extend beyond what is officially documented by the DAC. If I can assist with any additional accommodations or accessibility needs, please don't hesitate to get in touch. I'm happy to help.

University Writing Center

The University Writing Center is a great resource for both remote and on-campus students. Its physical location is room 362 of the James E. Walker Library, and it's online at www.mtsu.edu/uwc. The UWC offers students valuable one-on-one assistance with their writing, and they offer virtual appointments. You can make an appointment for a conference using their website or by calling (615) 904-8237.

Grade Appeals

[University Policy 313, Student Grade Appeals](#), provides an avenue for MTSU students to appeal a final course grade in cases in which the student alleges that unethical or unprofessional actions by the instructor and/or grading inequities improperly impacted the final grade.

Title IX

Students who believe they have been harassed, discriminated against or been the victim of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking should contact a Title IX/Deputy Coordinator at 615-898- 2185 or 615-898-2750 for assistance or review [MTSU's Title IX website](#) for resources.

MTSU faculty are concerned about the well-being and development of our students and are legally obligated to share reports of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking with the University's Title IX coordinator to help ensure student's safety and welfare. Please refer to [MTSU's Title IX website](#) or contact information and details.

COURSE CALENDAR

With the exception of *Ancient Rhetorics and Digital Networks* (abbreviated as *ARDM*), readings are available as PDFs or as open-access texts online. If a reading is available as a PDF in the Dropbox folder, I've included "(PDF)" after the title. Online readings are hyperlinked. You should come to class prepared to discuss the readings on the day they're listed on the calendar. If you have any questions about this schedule, let me know.

Week 1	
Aug. 25	Introduction to the Course What is this Rhetoric Thing? Discuss Prompt for One-Pagers and Discussion Posts
Week 2	
Sept. 1	Studying of the History of Rhetoric Readings: • Sharon Crowley, "Let Me Get This Straight" (PDF) • Jeffrey Walker, "What Difference a Definition Makes, or, William Dean Howells and the Sophist's Shoes" (PDF) • Lois Agnew et al., "Octalog III" (PDF) • Anne Melfi, Nicole Khoury, and Tarez Samra Graban, "An Annotated Bibliography of Global and Non-Western Rhetorics: Sources for Comparative Rhetorical Studies" (read sections I – V then skim the rest, spending extra time with one of the sections listed under "Navigation" that is of particular interest to you)
Week 3	
Sept. 8	Archaic Rhetorics Readings: • Michele Kennerly and Damien Smith Pfister, Introduction (<i>ARDM</i>) • Mari Lee Mifsud, "On Network" (<i>ARDM</i>) • Kermit Campbell, "Rhetoric from the Ruins of African Antiquity" (PDF) • Protagoras, Fragments (PDF) • Aspasia, Selections (PDF)
Week 4	
Sept. 15	The Older Sophists Readings: • E. Johanna Hartelius, "Big Data and Global Knowledge" (<i>ARDM</i>) • Gorgias, "Fragments" (PDF) • Nathan Crick, "On Fear and Longing" (<i>ARDM</i>)
Week 5	

Sept. 22	Socrates and Isocrates (Heads Up: This is a fairly heavy reading week, and not one I'd suggest skipping. I'd start on this reading early if you can.) Readings: • Plato, <i>Phaedrus</i> • Isocrates, <i>Against the Sophists</i> and <i>Antidosis</i> (PDF) • Rosa A. Eberly and Jeremy David Johnson, "Isocratean <i>Tropos</i> and Mediated Multiplicity" (<i>ARDM</i>) • Ekaterina V. Haskins and Gaines S. Hubbell, "Plato's <i>Phaedrus</i> and the Ideology of Immersion" (PDF)
Week 6	
Sept. 29	Aristotle Readings: • George A. Kennedy, Introduction to <i>On Rhetoric</i> (PDF) • Aristotle, <i>Rhetoric</i> (PDF) ◦ Book 1, Chapters 1 – 3 ◦ Book 2, Chapter 1 & Chapters 18 – 26 ◦ Book 3, Chapter 1 & Chapters 13 – 19 • Carolyn Miller, "Genre in Ancient and Networked Media" (PDF)
Week 7	
Oct. 6	One-Pager 1
Week 8	
Oct. 13	Roman Rhetoric Readings: • Cicero, Selections (PDF) • Quintilian, Selections (PDF)
Week 9	
Oct. 20	From the Ancients to the Middle Ages Readings: • Augustine, Selections (PDF) • Al-Fārābī, <i>Book of Rhetoric</i> (PDF) • Geoffrey of Vinsauf, Selections (PDF) • Christine de Pizan, Selections (PDF)
Week 10	
Oct. 27	Renaissance Overview Reading: • Peter Ramus, Selections (PDF) • Erasmus, Selections (PDF)

	• Margaret Fell, Selections (PDF)
Week 11	
Nov. 3	TBD (Flex Week in Case of Class Cancellations/Schedule Readjustment)
Week 12	
Nov. 10	Rhetorical Education in Medieval and Renaissance England Readings: • Aphthonious the Sophist, <i>Progymnasmata</i> (PDF) • Marjorie Curry Woods, "Boys Will Be Women" (PDF) • Lynn Enterline, Selections from <i>Shakespeare's Schoolroom</i> (PDF) • Scott Haden Church, "Remix, <i>Śūnyatā</i>, and <i>Prosōpopoeia</i>" (ARDN)
Week 13	
Nov. 17	Book Review Presentations
Week 14	
Nov. 24	<i>Thanksgiving Break – No Class</i>
Week 15	
Dec. 1	Workshop Final Project Ideas One-Pager 2
Finals	
Dec. 8	Book Review & Final Project (due by 11:59 p.m. Central Time)