

Syllabus 7966

SEMINAR IN CLASSICAL RHETORIC

COMMUNICATION STUDIES DEPT. CMST 7966

WHERE? 101 AUDUBON HALL 101

WHEN? THURSDAY //// 3 TO 6 PM

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Office: Coates 136b

Office Hours: T,Th 10:30-12:00 —others by appointment. . . .

CLASSICAL Rhetoric or Classical Rhetoric(s) as the revisionists now say is the theory and practice of rhetoric in the period from 500 B.C.E. to 1400 A.D. This class will cover the theories, practitioners, and critics of this long epic. The greatest share of attention will be given to the Greeks and Romans but a few medieval figures such as Boethius, Alcuin, Peter of Spain and Anonymous of Bologna will also be examined to show the long hardihood of the tradition. We will carry forward to the time of Peter Ramus who according to Richard Murphy "struck the discipline a blow from which it took several centuries to recover." Of course the discipline continues alongside several more modern rhetorics and we shall touch upon its relationship with these more modern traditions.

The Texts are incredibly rich! Unfortunately the bookstore was only able to secure three of them. The others you will need to find elsewhere in the many available formats and cheap editions.

Required: John Tapia, Centers of Power in the Greco-Roman World (Rowan Pub)

Cicero, Selected Political Speeches (trans. By Michael Grant) Penguin Books Pub.

San benadeto, The Rehtoric of Morality and Philosophy (University of Chicago Press)

Aristotle. The Rhetoric

Plato, The Gorgias

Also Recommended for your perusal or future study.

Crowley, Ancient Rhetorics

Hadot. Philosophy As A Way of Life.

H.D.F. Kitto, The Greeks (Penguin PB)

The Papers:

The pulsing heart of any seminar is the creative drumbeat of its papers. Everyone will write two. These will be assigned at the second meeting. In brief, the first will be a biography of a rhetorical theorist or practitioner. The second will be an exploration of a controversy or a concept. Examples are Cicero ON STYLE or LONGINUS ON THE SUBLIME or the more ambitious PLATO VS. ARISTOTLE ON IMITATION. or the still more ambitious A REAPPRAISAL OF THE SECOND SOPHISTIC or an even more reckless THE LIMITATIONS OF ANCIENT INVENTION.

Because this is a seminar there will be no written exam. However, there will be a last meeting that includes a free and frank evaluation of the future of classical rhetoric as discipline. During the last three weeks of the course we will read four articles that contain the main arguments for and

against abandoning classical rhetoric as a useful base of 21st century Rhetoric.

Assignment for next week: Get hold of a copy of *The Gorgias* and read it. It is a story of intellectual struggle between Socrates and the Leading Rhetor of his time. It is told by Plato who loved his old teacher and tried to do the Sophists in by presenting them as unethical self serving almost farcically empty careerists while Socrates was noble, dedicated and a lover of wisdom and truth.

Lecture for Today:

Forerunners of Civic Rhetoric in the Egyptian Court

The Polis as cradle of Classical Rhetoric

Plato's attitude toward Rhetoric

Socrates and the Dialectic

The Background of **The Gorgias**.

The lives of the Sophists and their apologists.

By January 30, 2014 –that is two weeks from today please have read the Introduction and Books One and Two of **Aristotle's Rhetoric**. Also get hold of The Phaedrus of Plato and read that as well.

CLASSICAL RHETORIC SEMINAR *First Brief Paper*

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What? A brief biography of a classical rhetorician that includes life, works, contributions (if any) and practices. See the 2000 Encyclopedia of Rhetoric or look for many of the rhetoric resources and dictionaries to get started. Don't neglect the anti-rhetoricians like Lucian. This will be done as an oral report to give us a sense of breadth and then turned in later as a paper.

Report Due: Two weeks from today, Feb 7. This will be a day like any other day filled with events that alter and illuminate our time.

At that prepare a brief document with your name, title of report, and a brief outline for seminar members.

The report should be a little like an epideictic oration where one praises the individual, the parents, the city, the mentors, and the special opportunities (“gifts of our watchful Athena”) You need not praise but you should identify these things. Be sure to highlight what the ancients refer to as “happy reversals of fortune” and perhaps humor us with a little speculation about ancient careers (i.e., Cicero makes Antonius say: “Some have said that nature alone produces eloquence; others have long argued that a proper nurture can turn a harelip into a promising orator. And then there are those who have averred that intensive training under a great teacher can overcome all defects of nature and errors of upbringing Which of these opinions is the right one I shall tell you very shortly.”)

But to avoid what Helen North has named “Quintus Notorious Effect” one needs to pay some attention to the person’s practices, ideas and influence as well. Helen North once ridiculed a paper on Theophrastus that spent most of its energy on retailing ancient rumors about his penchant for exotic food and his manner of walking about the Academy with weighted sandals and a weighted stick to improve his bodily vigor. Thus it is important and interesting to hear that Cicero prepared for his court cases by smashing his hand against the concrete face of the Rostrum, but his ideas about what an orator might adopt from observing the best Roman actors ought to be given still greater attention.

The report can be done within ten minutes giving the class a bit of time to chew on its meaning within the larger frame of the rhetorical tradition. The class period after the report (Valentine’s Day) you should have the two to four page paper typed and ready to turn in.

Aristotle's Rhetoric **Classical Rhetoric Seminar**

1. **When did the corpus emerge?**
2. **Related to Aristotle's Topics.**
3. **Books I and II and the two tripartite divisions.**
4. **Rhetoric as an answer to Plato's criticism**

A Philosophical Definition

A Counterpart to Dialectic

**As a techne: Grounded in an investigation of those things
that are persuasive and those things that are not?**

Rhetoric can be abused but so can all good things, except virtue.

5. **Why we need Rhetoric?**

The nature of truth

The Charles Atlas argument.

6. **Aristotle sets the standard for Rhetorical Treatises: Savage the Competition**

7. **Aristotle's blaming the audience/**

8. **The Three Means of Persuasion.**

Ethos: Rendering the Speaker worthy of credence.

Pathos: Finding the emotional core of the audience

Logos: Inductive and Deductive Modes.

9. Aristotle's popular logic: The Enthymeme

Concept

Formal Requirements

Enthymemes as Dialectical Arguments (The dreaded Doxa or even worse, the hated endoxa)

The Brevity of the Enthymeme and why that Brevity is more powerful than Plato's epichireme.

10. The Topoi

The famous lists

Material concerning subjects of the three species of public speech

11. A Definition of a Topos

12. The Function of a Topos

13. Style and its virtues

Making a metaphor (the master trope, the pleasure of metaphor, as a short argument, metaphor as the "bud" of a new idea. old age as the evening of life. The nature of simile. The golden mean. Style not only decoration but also cognition and perspective