911B MODERN RHETORIC

Address: Dr. Ronald Lee
Department of Communication Studies
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Hours: 10:30 – 11:30 MW or by appointment

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Blackboard course website: https://my.unl.edu

Department Mission Statement

The role and mission of the faculty and students of the Department of Communication Studies are to examine human symbolic activity as it shapes and is shaped by relationships, institutions, and societies. This work concerns the creation, analysis, and critique of messages. The department's research, teaching, and service devote particular attention to understanding the ways in which communication erodes and sustains collaboration within and among local, national, and global communities.

Books (key primary sources)

Arnauld, Antoine, & Nicole, Pierre. (1662). *The art of thinking* (Port-Royal logic).

Bacon, Francis. (1603). *Advancement of learning*.

Blair, Hugh. (1783). *Lectures on rhetoric and belle lettres*.

Campbell, George. (1776). *The philosophy of rhetoric*.

De Quincey, Thomas. (1828-1858). *Selected essays on rhetoric*.

Descartes, Rene. (1637). *Discourse on method*.

Fenelon, François. (1717). *Dialogues on eloquence*.


Pascal, Blaise. (1658). “The mind of the geometrician” and “The art of persuasion.”
Smith, Adam. (1763). *Lectures on rhetoric and belles lettres*.


Whately, Richard. (1846). *Elements of rhetoric* (7th ed.).

**Books (key secondary sources)**


Davidson, Hugh. (1965). *Audience, words and art*.


Wallace, Karl. (1943). *Francis Bacon on communication and rhetoric*.

**Requirements**

*Read:* Above everything else, you must read diligently and carefully. During each class meeting, you must be prepared to discuss specific questions about the readings.

*Presentations:* During the course of the semester, you will be asked to make concise presentations on various readings as a preface to our discussion.

*Critical Essays:* During the course of the semester, you will be asked to write short 4-8 page think pieces over some issue/theme in modern rhetorical theory that has been suggested by the readings and discussion. These are not research papers but the fleshing out of an argument. You will present your essays orally to other members of the seminar. We will then engage in close questioning of your argument. (25 points each)

*Final Paper:* You may take one of your critical essays or develop another course theme into a fully developed scholarly essay that is suitable for conference presentation and potential publication. (100 points)

**Course Policies**

*Evaluation of student work:* A written evaluation will accompany my evaluation of your written work. If you disagree with the evaluation, feel free to come and speak with me. Please do this within a day or two of the time you receive your evaluation. I am not
defensive about my grading and you should feel no apprehension about discussing the evaluation of your work. On occasion I have been persuaded to change a grade.

**Completion of assignments:** All major assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. If a student fails to turn in an essay, complete an oral presentation, or misses an examination, the student will receive an F for the final course grade regardless of the quality of other work.

**Late work and excused absences:** Extensions will be granted only where the student is able to document special circumstances and provide the instructor with prior notification. All other work will be penalized one letter grade for every 24 hours past the due date.

**Checking grades:** Grades will be posted on Blackboard. Written evaluations will be sent by email.

**Academic misconduct:** Violations of academic integrity are very serious matters and will result in automatic failure of the class, and referral to the proper university officials. The work a student submits in a class is expected to be the student’s own work and must be completed for that particular class and assignment. Academic dishonesty includes: handing in another’s work or part of another’s work as your own, turning in one of your old papers for a current class, turning in the same or similar past or current paper for two different classes, presenting a group project as your work solely, purchasing or otherwise obtaining research or papers written by another and turning that work in as your own. Using unauthorized notes or other study aids or otherwise obtaining another’s answers for an examination also represents a breach of academic integrity. Sanctions are applied whether the violation was intentional or not. You must keep all your original data for projects (i.e. articles, questionnaires, interview audio tapes) and be prepared to present them to the professor when asked.

Plagiarism means intentionally or knowingly representing the words of ideas of another as one’s own. Plagiarism includes quoting or paraphrasing from other sources without acknowledging/citing the source of your information or presenting quoted material as your own words. You must be very clear about attribution of sources and you must know how to cite sources in a paper. Students who are unfamiliar with how to cite sources should purchase a style manual such as the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Claiming lack of knowledge about standards for writing is not an acceptable excuse for committing plagiarism. Come to a faculty member for help if you are at all unsure about any of these issues or seek help at the UNL Writing Assistance Center (472-8803, Andrews Hall 129). No one wants to see you have these kinds of problems with your work, so please start assignments early and seek help when you need it.
Macro Schedule (Provisional)

M 8/22  Introduction
Classical vs. Modern
Medieval rhetoric

M 8/29  Francis Bacon

M 9/5   Labor Day recess

M 9/12  Rene Descartes and the Port-Royalists

M 9/19  Blaise Pascal

M 9/26  Essay I

M 10/3  John Locke and Thomas Sprat

M 10/10 Francois Fenelon

M 10/17 Fall break

M 10/24 Adam Smith

M 10/31 George Campbell

M 11/7  Essay II

M 11/14 Hugh Blair

M 11/21 Richard Whately

M 11/28 Thomas De Quincey

M 12/3  Essay III

M 12/10 Presentation of final papers

Micro Schedule

1. Beyond the key texts, we are going to be reading a fairly voluminous secondary literature on modern rhetoric. Each week I will publish a list of readings that will be covered during the next class meeting. Seminar participants will often be assigned a reading to characterize concisely and then begin class discussion over key themes. The readings will be uploaded onto Blackboard under “Readings.”
2. I will also, for a lack of a better term, distribute a “Roadmap” for each meeting of the seminar. These roadmaps will consist of questions we will take up in our discussion and readings.