

Progymnasmata 1: Proverb

Your first progymnasmata is based on the "Proverb" exercise, which you can find on pages 82-87 of *ARCS*. As described there, you'll be taking a proverb or pithy saying, stating it, and then amplifying it.

The twist, given our course topic, is that the project should be undertaken ironically. There are a few ways to do this: You could (1) start with an ironic or paradoxical proverb, (2) start with an ironic twist on an earnest proverb, (3) start with an earnest proverb and then ironically undercut it in your amplification, etc. I'll leave things a little vague as part of the class is still about figuring out what counts as ironic. If you feel you miss the mark a bit, that is fine given the grading method of the course. Regarding the categories Crowley and Hawhee use in their example on pages 85-86, you are responsible for all of them except testimony. This is not to be cruel, but to force you to think about the way these sections function rhetorically.

All progymnasmata will be 300-400 words (roughly one double-spaced page) and are due in the appropriate wiki folder by the beginning of class on the day they're due. Everyone will read his or hers aloud in class on the day they're due. Make sure you have a version to read aloud, whether on paper or on a screen, and think about delivery: At the very least, read slowly and loudly enough for your audience to follow along.

This one is due Monday, Feb. 4.

Progymnasmata 2: Encomium and Invective

Your second progymnasmata is based on the "Encomium and Invective" exercise at the end of *ARCS*' seventh chapter. It's on pages 189-196, so start by reading there.

The twist for our course's purposes is this: You'll select a public figure (a musician, a politician, a noteworthy Austinite and/or Texan, an actor, another sort of celebrity, etc.) and compose either an *ironic* encomium or invective of that person. That means you can either seem to be praising someone while secretly chastising them (if you've ever seen a celebrity roast, this is something like that), or you can seem to be blaming them while actually honoring them. Note: If your classmates are likely to be unfamiliar with the person you select, do be prepared to take a quick moment to identify/set up your public figure. Think about your audience, in other words.

As with the first progymnasmata, this one should be 300-400 words, uploaded to the appropriate drop folder by the beginning of class the day it's due (Mon., Feb. 25), and you should also bring either a printed copy or portable digital copy to read aloud.

Progymnasmata 3: Imitation

Your third progymnasmata is based on the imitation exercises Crowley and Hawhee present at the end of their eleventh chapter. Start by reading there.

More specifically, your assignment is this: Pick a 300-400 word section in one of the theoretical readings that are on the table for Paper 2. (That's Kierkegaard, Booth, Wallace, and Fish. The section you choose doesn't have to be from the theoretical reading you end up using for Paper

2—though if you have a sense of which one you want to work with this could be a good chance to engage closely with that writer's argument and style.)

Then, keeping the exact syntax/sentence structure of that section, change out words (nouns for nouns, verbs for verbs, adjectives for adjectives) so that it becomes about a completely different topic—preferably, as we're in a class on irony, a silly or absurd topic that winks at the theoretical pretensions of the reading. As an example, here's a sentence from the original passage one of my former students selected:

But in order for the ironic formation to be perfectly developed, it is required that the subject also become conscious of his irony, feel negatively free as he passes judgment on the given actuality, and enjoy this negative freedom. (Kierkegaard 30)

And here's the corresponding line from that student's progymnasmata:

But in order for the ironic mustache to be perfectly developed, it is required that the subject first become conscious of his masculinity, feel directly challenged as he passes judgment on the given field of mustachioed men, and enjoy tedious maintenance.

Note that, though there are a few slight shifts ("field of mustachioed men" for "actuality"), the word order and general structure is almost entirely identical.

Progymnasmata 3 will be completed as an in-class exercise on Wed., Mar. 20. Do be sure to upload both a transcription of your selected passage *and* your reworked imitation to the appropriate wiki folder. You should be able to finish and submit this exercise by the end of class on the 20th, but the firm deadline for wiki submission is 5pm on Friday the 22nd.

Progymnasmata 4: Introduction of Law

Your fourth progymnasmata is based on the "Introduction of Law" exercise included at the end of the eighth chapter of *ARCS* (pages 217-221). As usual, then, start by reading there.

And the twist: You are to ironically propose a policy for adoption by UT-Austin. Your proposal should be ironic in that it should, like Swift's "A Modest Proposal," be an absurd proposal that you use to call attention to a preexistent absurdity in the way UT operates, whether that latter absurdity is the result of formal university policy or just commonplace attitudes among students, faculty, administrators, etc. You must (1) pick a specific audience (e.g. the student government, the board of regents—there are others, so you might do some quick research into the university hierarchy to select a particularly relevant audience), and (2) pick a UT-related issue that, though potentially silly and seemingly inconsequential, you see as worth addressing.

(As quick examples, I've had students argue that attending football games should be mandatory for students, that winter break should be cancelled to further condense the school year, etc.)

Be thoughtful and be relevant. Normal progymnasmata guidelines (length, submission practices, etc.) apply; the due date is Mon., Apr. 1 (which seems appropriate).

Progymnasmata 5: Thesis

Your final progymnasmata is based on the "Thesis" exercise at the end of chapter 9, so check out pages 245-249. The thesis exercise came near the end of classical rhetoric students' education. The idea was that, by this point, they'd had enough study and practice as rhetors to compose complex, abstract arguments. As Crowley and Hawhee note, these theses were either political or theoretical.

Here's the final twist: One of the things I hope this course has illustrated is how tricky and slippery language can be, how—as ironic arguments and misunderstandings of ironic arguments demonstrate—language can often have more than a single "meaning" and remain open to numerous interpretations. Instead of making a clear, masterful argument in support of a thesis, then, your final task is to change your mind—to let an argument get away from you. Practically speaking, this means you need to start your thesis by asserting one argument, but over the course of your composition slowly shift your argument to defend another position about that thesis. A few options: (1) Narrate an actual general issue you've changed your mind on at some point, perhaps since coming to UT. Narrate the change in viewpoints and commonplaces that led to the mind-change. (2) Take an ironic approach, starting with a direct assertion of the thesis then ironically undermine it. (3) Use questions, refutations, and counter-assertions to undermine your initially asserted thesis, pointing out all the assumptions and commonplaces it's founded on.

Normal progymnasmata rules apply; the due date is Wed., Apr. 17.