

ENGL 6805/7805 (87024/87025)
History of Rhetoric: Early Modern to Contemporary

Mondays & Wednesdays | 12:40 – 2:05 p.m. | Peck 327

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Office Hours:
Mondays & Wednesdays, 2:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.
Fridays, 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
& by appointment

Course Description

In this course, we'll be surveying the history of rhetoric, mostly from the seventeenth century to the present. More specifically, we'll be focusing on the relation between rhetoric and violence, which has been a major concern for many rhetors and rhetoricians writing during or currently studying these centuries. Consider this quotation from Wayne Booth, which is prominently featured in *Everyone's an Author*, MTSU's ENGL 1010 textbook: "The only real alternative to war is rhetoric." Consider also that rhetoric has played a powerful role in inciting various kinds of violence that lead to and are a part of war.

Much of the course will thus focus on questions like the following: What is the relation between rhetoric and violence? To what extent can rhetoric offer an alternative to violence? In what ways has rhetoric been used to foment and justify violence? How and when does rhetoric constitute a form of epistemic or symbolic violence? And in what ways has rhetorical education been implicated in or provided shelter from the pervasive violence of the last few centuries?

That said, there is plenty of rhetorical work from this swath of history that is not explicitly concerned with such questions, but is still worth engaging for practical disciplinary reasons. For that reason, our primary focus on rhetoric and violence will wax and wane a bit from week to week.

A couple final notes: Historically speaking, this course is structured a little oddly. Survey courses tend to move in a relatively straight line from the more distant past toward the present. We'll be jumping around more than that. I want you to get a sense of what present-day rhetoricians do with the kinds of historical materials we'll be reading in this class, so we'll begin by spending some time with fairly recent pieces of scholarship by rhetoricians and scholars in related fields. Only then will we start jumping in to the historical materials themselves, and we'll occasionally duck back into recent work as the semester continues. There are also a few places we'll go out of historical sequence for the sake of clustering readings thematically.

Course Objectives

- Via primary and secondary texts, introduce students to a diverse array of rich rhetorical traditions that have operated and developed over the past 500 years,
- 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 Texts

Required

Burke, Kenneth. *The War of Words*. Edited by Anthony Burke, Kyle Jensen, and Jack Selzer, U of California P, 2018.

Haynes, Cynthia. *The Homesick Phone Book: Addressing Rhetorics in the Age of Perpetual Conflict*. Southern Illinois UP, 2016.

Ore, Ersula. *Lynching: Violence, Rhetoric, and American Identity*. UP of Mississippi, 2019.

Selected articles available online and/or as PDFs.

Optional

Bizzell, Patricia, and Bruce Herzberg, editors. *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. 2nd ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001.

Roberts-Miller, Patricia. *Demagoguery and Democracy*. The Experiment, 2017.

Coursework

I will provide more detailed guidelines for the one-pagers and final project during the first few weeks of class.

- Slack Posts (25%): I've set up a [Slack](https://historyofrhet.slack.com) team (historyofrhet.slack.com) for this course. I'll walk you through Slack in class. The main thing you'll use Slack for is posting informal written responses to course readings. A post will be due by 11:00 a.m. the morning of most class meetings (this gives me some time to read over and consider the posts before class). To get full credit, you must have at least 20 posts of at least 250 words apiece by the end of the course. Each student will also select two days for which they will be the class's resident superposter. For those days, instead of your usual post, you'll need to create a multi-page document (uploaded to the appropriate Slack channel as a PDF or Word document) in which you summarize and overview all of those days' assigned readings. Think of it as a combination annotated bibliography/book review that will help you and your classmates recollect the substance of your assigned days' readings as you all work on your final projects. It counts as one of your required posts.
- One-Pagers (3 papers, 15% apiece): Three one-page papers in which you summarize a reading we've encountered in class, then use it to analyze an artifact you'll choose during the first weeks of class. These papers must be single-spaced, no more than a single page, use a font between 10-12 points, and have no more than 1" margins. We will look at some examples in class. 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 day they're due—or, alternatively, play an audio recording of you reading them. In part, these are meant to help prepare

you for your final project. That is, you can borrow liberally from the one-pagers as you're composing your final.

- **Final Project (30%):** You have two options for your final project in this class. Both will be accompanied by a short (~500 words) piece of reflective writing in which you introduce, contextualize, and reflect on your project. The two options are as follows:
 1. For MA students, a paper the length of a short conference presentation (2750-3250 words) related to the course. For PhD students, a paper the length of a short article (5000+ words) related to the course.

or

 2. A piece of digital scholarship, discussed with and approved by me by—at the very latest—the beginning of Thanksgiving break.

Grading Scale

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

Attendance

You are allowed to miss a maximum of three days of class. If you anticipate missing more for any reason, you are responsible for letting me know in advance, preferably via a face-to-face conversation during office hours. In rare cases, I am willing to make alternate arrangements involving additional coursework, but that is not guaranteed.

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 dacemail@mtsu.edu.

If I can provide or assist with any accommodations related specifically to this course, let me know. I would be glad to help.

Course Calendar

With the exception of the books by Burke, Haynes, and Ore, all readings will be available as PDFs or open-access webtexts.

You should come to class prepared to discuss the readings on the day they're listed on the calendar. Bring copies of the readings with you to class. The assignments in the right-hand column should be submitted to the corresponding Slack channel by the beginning of class on the day they're due.

	Readings	Assignments Due
Aug. 26	Syllabus	
Aug. 28	Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation" Richard Vatz, "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation" Barbara Biesecker, "Reframing the Rhetorical Situation through the Thematic of <i>Differánce</i> " Jenny Edbauer Rice, "Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation to Rhetorical Ecologies"	
Sep. 2	Labor Day	
Sep. 4	Foucault, "The Discourse on Language" Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"	
Sep. 9	Barbara Biesecker, "Coming to Terms with Recent Attempts to Write Women into the History of Rhetoric" Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Biesecker Cannot Speak for Her Either" S. Noble Frank, "Feminist Historiography As <i>If</i> : Performativity and Representation in Feminist Histories of Rhetoric"	
Sep. 11	Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, "Renaissance Rhetoric: Introduction" Peter Ramus, From <i>Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian</i>	
Sep. 16	Damián Baca, " <i>te-ixtli</i> : The 'Other Face' of the Americas" (feel free to skip chapter summaries) Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, From <i>The Poet's Answer to the Most Illustrious Sister Filotea de la Cruz</i> Rocío Quispe-Agnoli, "Spanish Scripts Colonize the Image: Inca Visual Rhetorics"	

Sep. 18	Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, “Enlightenment Rhetoric: Introduction” Giambattista Vico, From <i>On the Study Methods of Our Time</i> Mary Astell, From <i>A Serious Proposal to the Ladies</i>	
Sep. 23	David Hume, <i>Of the Standard of Taste</i> George Campbell, From <i>The Philosophy of Rhetoric</i> and/or Hugh Blair, From <i>Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres</i>	
Sep. 25		One-Pager 1
Sep. 30	Lisa King, Rose Gubele, and Joyce Rain Anderson, “Careful with the Stories We Tell” Qwo-Li Driskill, “Decolonial Skillshares” Jason Edward Black, “Native Resistive Rhetoric and the Decolonization of American Indian Removal Discourse” Tecumseh, “Sleep No Longer, O Choctaws and Chickasaws” Andrew Jackson, “Second Annual Message to Congress”	
Oct. 2	Patricia Roberts-Miller, Introduction and “The Sweet Waters of Concord and Union” Frederick Douglass, Select Readings Sarah Grimké, <i>Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman</i> , <i>Letters III, IV, and XIV</i>	
Oct. 7	<i>The 1619 Project</i> Ersula Ore, <i>Lynching</i> , pp. xiii-54	
Oct. 9	Ersula Ore, <i>Lynching</i> , pp. 55-142	
Oct. 14	Fall Break	
Oct. 16		One-Pager 2
Oct. 21	Alexander Bain and Adams Sherman Hill, Select Readings Zitkala-Ša, “The School Days of an Indian Girl” Ryan Skinnell, “Conceding Composition to Create a New Normal”	
Oct. 23	Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, “Modern and Postmodern Rhetoric: Introduction”	

	Phoebe Palmer, <i>The Promise of the Father, Chapter 1</i> and <i>Tongue of Fire on the Daughters of the Lord</i> and/or Frances Willard, <i>From Woman in the Pulpit</i> and <i>From Woman and Temperance</i> Virginia Woolf, Select Readings	
Oct. 28	Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense</i> I. A. Richards, <i>From The Philosophy of Rhetoric</i>	
Oct. 30	Guest Speaker: Joel Overall Kenneth Burke, Select Readings	
Nov. 4	Kenneth Burke, <i>The War of Words</i> , pp. 1-168	
Nov. 6	Kenneth Burke, <i>The War of Words</i> , pp. 169-257	
Nov. 11	Georganne Nordstrom, "Rhetoric and Resistance in Hawai'i: How Silenced Voices Speak Out in Colonial Contexts" Wayne Booth, <i>From Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent</i>	
Nov. 13	Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, <i>From The New Rhetoric</i>	
Nov. 18	Stephen Toulmin, <i>From The Uses of Argument</i>	
Nov. 20	Damián Baca, "Rhetoric, Interrupted: <i>La Malinche</i> and <i>Nepantlisme</i> " Hélène Cixous, <i>The Laugh of the Medusa</i> Gloria Anzaldúa, <i>From Borderlands/La Frontera</i>	
Nov. 25	Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context"	
Nov. 27	Thanksgiving Break	
Dec. 2		One-Pager 3
Dec. 4	Cynthia Haynes, <i>The Homesick Phone Book</i>	
Dec. 9		Presentations on Final Projects 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
Dec. 11		Final Projects due by 11:59 p.m.