

# RHETORIC

The Rhetoric Department is dedicated to teaching the history, principles, and theories of rhetoric to students who desire to pry deeply into the workings of our symbolic universe. We define rhetoric as the ethical study and use of symbols (verbal and nonverbal) to publicly address controversial issues. We offer coursework devoted to the rhetoric utilized in legal, political, sports, religious, and media contexts as well as in classical and contemporary time periods. We also sponsor co-curricular opportunities where students put the theoretical principles behind argumentation and deliberation into practice on- and off-campus. Studying rhetoric helps students become effective speakers, listeners, and writers; understand their roles as ethical actors and citizens; and analyze how a variety of texts function persuasively. Such preparation leads students into productive careers in legal, political, professional, and academic contexts.

## Introductory Level Courses (100)

Introductory courses focus on effective, valid, and ethical message creation and presentation in public contexts. Students become competent in a variety of effective communication techniques, learn to cope with communication apprehension, engage difference humanely, and develop and exercise skills in critical thinking, argument formation, and argument analysis. Students also understand the role of rhetoric in the productive functioning of democracy and the practices of citizenship and civic engagement.

## Intermediate Level Courses (200)

Intermediate level courses focus on concepts and theories of rhetoric. This study includes the history, theoretical development, and pragmatic uses of the concepts and theories in a variety of settings. Students develop the ability to evaluate, compare, and critique these concepts and theories. Students also apply these concepts and theories through the analysis and production of rhetoric.

## Advanced Level Courses (300)

Advanced level courses focus on academic research and public scholarship. Students learn to engage primary source material in theory and criticism and to produce new insights. Papers and projects will be of high quality, explore rhetorical studies literature, utilize theoretical approaches and rhetorical methods, and illustrate an awareness of the historical and social roles of rhetoric.

## Capstone Course (497)

The capstone course for rhetoric majors focuses on an original and extended research project. Students will produce a high-quality work that applies theoretical approaches to provide novel insights into texts, possesses a substantial literature review, and involves significant revision. In the process, students read and discuss relevant texts and journal articles as a class. This course also provides senior majors a forum for the investigation and discussion of the responsibilities they have as social actors.

## Student Learning Goals

**Rhetoric as a Liberal Art:** Students will explain the historical and contemporary role of the field of rhetoric in the liberal arts.

**Critical Thinking:** Students will apply abilities in analytical reasoning, argumentation, problem solving, and critical decision making.

**Written and Oral Expression:** Students will develop the facile written and oral skills needed to communicate effectively and ethically.

**The Methodologies of Rhetorical Studies:** Students will use rhetorical concepts and methods to analyze public discourse.

**Rhetoric and Democratic Practices:** Students will analyze the role of rhetoric in the productive functioning of democracy and the practices of citizenship and civic engagement.

**Intellectual Inquiry:** Students will engage in independent intellectual inquiry that applies advanced research skills in rhetorical studies and demonstrates an ability to understand, evaluate, and synthesize relevant information.

**Engaging Difference Humanely:** to encounter and engage diverse life experiences, worldviews, and cultures.

## Requirements for a Major

Code	Title	Credits
RHE-101	Public Speaking	1
	or RHE-140 Argumentation & Debate	
RHE-201	Reasoning & Advocacy (Fall Only)	1
RHE-320	Classical Rhetoric (Spring only)	1
RHE-350	Contemp Rhetorical Theory & Criticism (Fall only)	1
RHE-497	Senior Seminar (Fall only)	1
	One 300-level Rhetoric Elective course	1
	Three additional Rhetoric Elective courses (any level)	3
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>9</b>

## Recommended Sequence of Courses:

We recommend Rhetoric majors begin in RHE-101 Public Speaking or RHE-140 Argumentation & Debate during freshman year, take RHE-201 Reasoning & Advocacy and RHE-320 Classical Rhetoric sophomore year, RHE-350 Contemp Rhetorical Theory & Criticism junior year, and RHE-497 Senior Seminar senior year. Students may take elective courses at any point.

**It is strongly recommended that students complete the entire core (101 or 140, 201, 320, and 350) prior to 497 the fall of their senior year.**

Please note that RHE-320 Classical Rhetoric and RHE-350 Contemp Rhetorical Theory & Criticism are prerequisites for RHE-497 Senior Seminar. For planning purposes, students should keep in mind that RHE-201 and RHE-350 are typically Fall courses while RHE-320 is typically a Spring course. Rhetoric majors who intend to study abroad should plan to take these core courses during their sophomore year if they will be abroad the semester it is offered in their junior year.

Although we recommend the above sequence, students considering a Rhetoric Major may take courses in a different (i.e., non-numerical) order. For example, a student may take RHE-201 Reasoning & Advocacy even if he has not yet enrolled in RHE-101 Public Speaking or RHE-140 Argumentation & Debate. Similarly, a student may take RHE-320 Classical Rhetoric and/or RHE-350 Contemp Rhetorical Theory & Criticism even if he has not yet taken RHE-201 Reasoning & Advocacy. Students may also take core courses simultaneously, although we do not recommend taking more than two core courses in the same semester.

## Senior Comprehensive

Majors must pass two departmental examinations:

1. a written exam; and
2. a senior oral presentation.

## Requirements for a Minor

Code	Title	Credits
RHE-101	Public Speaking	1
	or RHE-140 Argumentation & Debate	
RHE-201	Reasoning & Advocacy (Fall only)	1
RHE-320	Classical Rhetoric (Spring only)	1
	or RHE-350 Contemp Rhetorical Theory & Criticism	
Two Rhetoric Elective Courses (any level)		2
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>5</b>

### RHE-101 Public Speaking

This course covers the fundamentals of rhetoric composition and delivery. Students research, compose, and deliver informative and persuasive speeches, and they lead a small group of their peers in a deliberative discussion. In addition, students learn and employ introductory principles of reasoning, argumentation, and rhetorical criticism. Finally, they analyze the videotape recordings of their speeches and learn to use electronic media in public presentations.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** Language Studies

### RHE-140 Argumentation & Debate

This course applies the principles of debate theory and practice to argumentation in the political and legal realms. Students will learn valid forms of reasoning and argumentation, common fallacies, argument analysis, clash, and rebuttal and how to apply this knowledge in the debate format. Students also participate in parliamentary debate and moot court simulations as mechanisms for learning foundational skills in oral argumentation. When possible, students will attend a live oral argument by the Indiana Court of Appeals or another appellate court. This course is typically offered in the spring semester.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** Language Studies

### RHE-187 Independent Study/Lang Studies

Individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a department Chair before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

### RHE-188 Independent Study/Lit Fine Art

Individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a department Chair before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

### RHE-190 Spec. Topics: Language Studies

Topics vary with each scheduled offering. Refer to Student Planning's section information for descriptions of individual offerings, and applicability to distribution requirements.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

### RHE-201 Reasoning & Advocacy

This course focuses on the process of constructing, analyzing, and evaluating public arguments. This is a foundational rhetoric course because it focuses on the development and application of knowledge in critical thinking, argument analysis, reasoning, and advocacy. It emphasizes the nature and role of communication in public discussions and decision making. The course highlights the adaptation of logic and reasoning to human action in a democratic society. The class examines public argument in a variety of forms such as political debates, speeches, and editorials, Supreme Court decisions, advertising, and popular culture. Judicial argument is examined in the form of Supreme Court decisions. Finally, social argument is examined through an investigation of selected examples from popular culture. The course serves the purpose of exposing non-majors to the fundamentals of rhetoric and communication. It also prepares Rhetoric majors and minors for more advanced courses such as Classical Rhetoric and Contemporary Rhetorical Theory and Criticism.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** Language Studies

### RHE-220 Persuasion

Students study the theory and practice of persuasion as part of decision making in a free society. The focus is on the individual's role as both persuadee and persuader with an examination of how to be critical, observant, responsible and ethical with regard to persuasive messages. The course examines persuasive language, propaganda, persuasive campaigns, and social movements. Students critically examine a variety of persuasive texts and participate in a campaign simulation.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** Language Studies

### RHE-260 Contemp US Public Address

What can a formal speech-in its traditional, oral its quality, or understand its rhetorical functions? How have technologies, such as television, the internet, and social media, changed public address? This class will study major speeches written and delivered by U.S. rhetors during the 20th and 21st centuries. We will study speeches from Eurocentric, Afrocentric, and feminist/queer theory approaches to learn about rhetorical artistry, the relationship between text and context, methods of analyzing public address, and the role of oratory in U.S. culture and democracy. Course sessions will emphasize primary texts but will utilize secondary literature to help understand the speeches and rhetorical analysis.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** Literature/Fine Arts

**RHE-262 Rhetoric of Sitcoms**

Whether it's *The Office*, *The Jeffersons*, or *The Honeymooners*, popular situation comedies (sitcoms) provide viewers a chance to escape reality and laugh. But how else might they function? How might they influence viewers' perceptions of the people and situations they depict? How do sitcoms enable or prevent social change? As Joanne Morreale writes in *Critiquing the Sitcom*, "[S]itcoms both incorporate and contain change; they both address and prevent political action, and they may be read as both conservative and progressive forms, sometimes simultaneously" (xii). In this class, we will pursue answers to the questions, "How do sitcoms reinforce or resist hegemonic understandings of race, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status, and how can viewing audiences interpret sitcoms in diverse ways?" We will study primarily U.S. sitcoms since the 1950s as they aired on broadcast and cable television and, more recently, on streaming services.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** Literature/Fine Arts, Global Citizenship, Justice, and Diversity

**RHE-265 Rhetoric, Science, & Public Policy**

What is the role of rhetoric in the public understanding of science, and in the creation of science-focused public policy? This course investigates the intersections of rhetoric and science in public engagement, exploring historical and contemporary examples in medicine, health, and environmental studies. Throughout the semester, we will consider the use of tropes in science communication, how the technical, public, and personal spheres of argumentation impact public policy, and the opportunities and challenges of public engagement in science. This course is well suited for rhetoric students interested in analyzing science-focused public discourse, and science students interested in the public communication of science.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** Literature/Fine Arts

**RHE-270 Special Topics Lit/Fine Arts**

Topics vary with each scheduled offering. Refer to Student Planning's section information for descriptions of individual offerings, and applicability to distribution requirements.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**Distribution:** Literature/Fine Arts

**RHE-280 Deliberation & Democracy**

Deliberation is a process through which public conversations occur and decisions can be made. During deliberation, citizens come together, share opinions, critique arguments and reasons, expand their understanding and perspective, and ultimately, seek to make public choices about pressing problems in their community. In this course, we will explore the theories and practices of democratic deliberation, evaluate the potentials for and limits of deliberation, and discuss and evaluate framing and facilitation techniques in diverse settings such as community meetings, strategic planning, and business. Students will participate in and create dialogues and deliberations on relevant public issues, and engage in facilitation.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** Language Studies

**RHE-287 Independent Study/Lang Studies**

Individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a department Chair before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**RHE-288 Independent Study/Lit Fine Art**

Individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a department Chair before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**RHE-290 Spec. Topics: Language Studies**

Topics vary with each scheduled offering. Refer to Student Planning's section information for descriptions of individual offerings, and applicability to distribution requirements.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**RHE-320 Classical Rhetoric**

This course focuses on the origin and development of rhetoric and rhetorical theory during the classical period. The course begins in the pre disciplinary stage of the Sophists and examines such works as Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen* and Isocrates' *Antidosis*. The course then moves to Plato's *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus* and the disciplinizing efforts of Aristotle. Finally, the course examines the efforts of Cicero and Quintilian to reunite philosophy and rhetoric and include ethics within the realm of rhetoric. Students learn how rhetorical theories are generated out of the specific needs of political and social contexts. Finally, students trace the relationship between rhetoric and philosophy from pre-Platonic unity, through Plato's bifurcation, and finally to the attempts at reunification by Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. This course should be taken in the junior or sophomore years. This course is typically offered in the spring semester.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** Literature/Fine Arts

**Equated Courses:** CLA-220

**RHE-350 Contemp Rhetorical Theory & Criticism**

Contemporary studies in rhetoric have broadened the conception of rhetoric beyond a narrow focus on public address to include the study of all symbols-verbal, audio, and visual-in diverse media. No longer simply interested in questions of persuasive effectiveness, contemporary rhetorical studies examine the role symbols can play in constructing or reflecting such elements as ideology, motive, and gender. This writing-intensive course highlights the growing complexity of the field by helping students to understand, use, and evaluate several of the most well-known theories and methods of rhetoric. In the process, students will learn how to interpret artifacts in several different ways. Consequently, the class is a methodological precursor to the senior project and must be taken during the junior or sophomore years. This course is typically offered in the fall semester.

**Prerequisites:** FRT-101

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** Literature/Fine Arts

**RHE-360 Gender & Communication**

As a culture, we often take gender for granted. Yet, our ideals of gender and sexuality are shaped and influenced by communicative practices and mass-mediated representations. This class examines this process, exploring the question, "How does rhetoric influence my understanding and practice of gender and sexuality?" In pursuing answers, students will develop relevant theoretical vocabularies and pay particular attention to the role of power and historical contexts.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** Global Citizenship, Justice, and Diversity, Literature/Fine Arts

**Equated Courses:** GEN-303

**RHE-365 Rhetoric of the News Media**

The news media have been the subject of much heated debate. In this seminar-style course, we will explore the role, nature, truthfulness, and functions of the news media through a rhetorical lens. More specifically, we will approach news reports as rhetorical texts as we ask such question as: What qualifies as news; who decides; and how might charges of falsehood relate to these queries? How do traditional journalists, partisan outlets, and citizen journalists differently define, frame, and report news? How do their stories influence our perceptions of the topics they address? Finally, what is or should be the role of the news media in a democratic society? In our discussion of these and similar questions, we will consider the historical development of the news media as well as the financial, technological, and institutional factors that shape and constrain the news.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credit:** 1

**Distribution:** Literature/Fine Arts

**RHE-370 Special Topics: Lit/Fine Arts**

Topics vary with each scheduled offering. Refer to Student Planning's section information for descriptions of individual offerings, and applicability to distribution requirements.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**Distribution:** Literature/Fine Arts

**RHE-387 Independent Study/Lang Studies**

Individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a department Chair before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**RHE-388 Independent Study/Lit Fine Art**

Individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a department Chair before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**RHE-390 Special Topics/Lang Studies**

Topics vary with each scheduled offering. Refer to Student Planning's section information for descriptions of individual offerings, and applicability to distribution requirements.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**RHE-487 Independent Study/Lang Studies**

Individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a department Chair before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**RHE-488 Independent Study/Lit Fine Art**

Individual research projects. The manner of study will be determined by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students must receive written approval of their project proposal from a department Chair before registering for the course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Credits:** 0.5-1

**RHE-497 Senior Seminar**

The Senior Seminar is a capstone course for rhetoric majors. Rhetoric majors conduct an original and extended research project in a sub-area of the field. In the process, they read and discuss relevant texts and journal articles as a class. The course covers procedures for conducting each of the components of the project (i.e., discovery and refinement of a research question, selection of appropriate materials for study, selection of an appropriate method, literature review of appropriate scholarship, the analysis itself, and the preparation of the manuscript). This course also provides senior majors a forum for the investigation and discussion of the ethical issues and responsibilities they have as communicators. This course is offered in the fall semester. Prerequisites: RHE-320 and RHE-350, or by permission of the instructor.

**Prerequisites:** RHE-320 and RHE-350

**Credit:** 1

## Rhetoric Faculty

Jennifer Young Abbott (chair)

Christopher E Anderson

Azmat Khan

Todd F McDorman

Sara A Mehlretter, *Sabbatical*

Gabriela Tscholl