
RHETORIC & PERSUASION in Spring 2021 (CM3052)

Course Code	CM3052	Professor(s)	Justin McGuinness
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-402
Class Schedule	F: 10:35-11:55 in C-103 T: 15:20-16:40 in C-103	Office Hours	Mondays period 5, (15h20-16h40) by prior appointment
Credits	4	Email	jmcguinness@aup.edu
Semester	Spring 2021	Office Tel. Ext.	575

Course Description

Verbal communication is central to the success of the human species – along with other forms of communication, visual, kinetic, haptic. Building on an earlier course in the Global Communications degree, namely CM2004, Comparative Communications History, an examination of the development of human communication practices and technologies, **CM3052** focuses on human communication as being a fundamentally persuasive practice. Starting with an examination of certain key texts relative to rhetoric and its theorization, the course becomes more practical in its second half with students producing persuasive speeches of their own for peer evaluation as well as participating in a class debate.

The **central texts** of this course are Plato's *Gorgias*, often considered, along with another dialogue, *Phaedrus*, to mark the beginning of reflection on communication in the ancient Mediterranean lands. Students will then read a small number of speeches and texts examining the nature of rhetoric in cultures markedly different from each other in time and place. These include persuasive speech from Pericles, the Imam 'Ali, nineteenth century figures including Mary Woolstonecroft, Frederick Douglass, Emile Zola and twentieth-century figures like Thomas Sankara, Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela. Furthermore, students will discover how specific word forms and images are used to convince different audiences.

In the **second half** of the term, the focus of the course shifts to **production**. What modes of rhetoric can we identify in the multitude of texts, images and sounds that surround us? What has been the impact of the expansion of digital media on rhetorical forms since the end of the last century? Having thought about how the tools of rhetoric, first theorized over two thousand years ago, have been used in different contexts, students are asked to use these tools themselves to make persuasive appeals and sway an audience. As a final exercise, they will also participate in an in-class debate on a question chosen by the group.

From this class, students will acquire a heightened sense of how human beings are persuaded of the justness or wrongness of certain practices or ideas, noting that rhetoric can be a voice of

dogma, ideology and a practice calling people to political commitment, action and even revolution.

Course Learning Outcomes

To gain a richer understanding of the history of rhetoric and the debates surrounding its role and function in society.

To become familiar with the major rhetorical figures and schools, while examining their methods of constructing rhetorical appeals and of conducting rhetorical analyses.

To interrogate the nature of 'persuasion' in terms of what makes certain modes of discourse more persuadable than others in given situations.

To become more practiced in determining the best means of analysis in given rhetorical situations and to be able to deploy different methods of rhetorical analysis

To become more practiced in determining the best means of persuasion in given situations and to be able to make productive use of various rhetorical appeals.

General Education

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS FOR CM3052:

In taking course CM **3052** students will expand their thinking in the following areas:

1. **Historical knowledge.** They will gain an understanding of the history of rhetoric, including the debates surrounding its role and affordances in different societies. They will also be familiar with certain rhetorical schools and how they envisaged strong persuasive speech.
2. **Theoretical foundations and recent developments in communications studies.** Students will become aware of positions on rhetoric taken by certain key communications theorists, including most notably Plato and Aristotle.
3. **Global perspectives.** The course is taught from a strongly comparativist perspective, with students being encouraged to think of how rhetoric has developed in several different periods and places, notably ancient Hellenic city-States, the pre-modern Islamic world, nineteenth century France and North America and twentieth century South Africa.

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1. **Practical skills.** Students will gain experience in speaking to their peers in preparation for speaking before bigger and unknown audiences in professional life. This will be based on a reflection on how certain modes of speech or image are more effective in certain situations than in others.

These outcomes are aligned with **student learning outcomes numbers 1, 2, 3 and 5** for the Department of Global Communications:

- (1) Student work shows **knowledge of the history of communications** and the development of communications as an academic discipline.
- (2) Student work shows **in-depth knowledge of the theoretical foundations and recent developments in particular areas of communications study**.
- (3) Student understands and is able to **compare systems of media, communications and culture from a global perspective**.
- (4) Student work shows ability to make use of research methods, including historical, textual, qualitative and quantitative, in order to write and present research. (Not applicable to this course).
- (5) Student is able to apply **practical skills important to careers in communications**.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By taking this course, students will be able to answer these **critical analytic questions**:

- Why did rhetoric as a theorized practice emerge in fifth century Athens and the Hellenic world?
- How and why was the study of rhetoric of importance in certain times and places?
- How can the interface between communications technologies and rhetoric be theorized? What are the key variables?
- How has rhetorical practice varied across time and cultures? How do different media environments shape rhetoric?
- What is the contribution of certain great rhetoricians? Studied are speeches by Thucydides, Saint Matthew as imagined by Pier-Paolo Pasolini, the Imam 'Ali, Mary Woolstonecraft, Frederick Douglass, Emile Zola, Thomas Sankara, Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela.

Students taking **CM 3052** will also have experience in the following **skills**:

- read academic text for argument and detail, and to develop a point of view on how the argument is being made;
- understand the structure of academic work in communications and come to read with some confidence the main parts of an academic book chapter or paper (abstract, research questions, discussion of substantive area, methodology, construction of a corpus of data, analysis);
- develop argument in speech and/or image to an audience, using visual software if appropriate;
- participate in a formal debate on a communications related issue, and reflect on the effectiveness of this particular mode of rhetorical communication.

Course Outline

VISITS:

Ideally, there will be a visit in class-time (dates and time to be announced) to a major Paris museum.

CLASS SCHEDULE FOR CM3052 (spring 2021):

The class has two major themes: **Rhetoric examined** – case studies of specific examples at micro and macro levels and **Rhetoric in production** – exercises in speaking. In **Rhetoric examined** we look at major speeches from the ancient Mediterranean and from recent centuries. We will be interested in seeing how rhetoric emerged as a discipline and an educational practice. In **Rhetoric in production**, students, through a guided series of exercises (making speeches of different kinds, individually and as part of a debate), will have space to gain confidence in building a persuasive argument using the techniques of rhetoric.

Dates for presentations and speeches will be assigned in class. There may be certain changes to the schedule, in terms of readings and pace, depending on the class' specific interests.

January

Week I – Tuesday 19th & Friday 22nd January

19th January. Introduction to the course. Aims and assignments. Where does the North Atlantic tradition of rhetoric come from? Nuances of a term. A comparative approach to the arts of rhetoric and persuasion in a Global Communications degree.

22nd January. Background to Athenian society. How and why did rhetoric become important in ancient Hellenic societies? Classifying rhetoric, three terms: ethos, pathos and logos.

Week II – Tuesday 26th & Friday 29th January

Theme 1 (continued): Rhetoric examined: speech in modern political contexts

Classifying rhetoric, three more terms: deliberative, judicial or epideictic

26th January. Rhetoric in action: prime-minister **Julia Gillard**'s 'Misogyny Speech' before the Australian parliament (2012)

29th January. Rhetoric in action: primary school teacher **Ahmet Naç**'s 'You're Atatürk, your hand bleeds' TEDx talk given in Istanbul (2015)

February

Week III – Tuesday 2nd & Friday 5th February

From **week III** onwards, students will **present pieces of rhetoric, articles or book chapters to the class**, either alone or in pairs, relating the text to the broader themes of the course.

Theme 1 (continued): Rhetoric examined: the rhetoric of post-apartheid South Africa

Tuesday 02nd February. Rhetoric in action: archbishop **Desmond Tutu**'s speech to the graduates of the University of Cape Town (1993). Religious oration and politics.

Friday 05th February. Rhetoric in action: speech by Nelson Mandela delivered at the opening of the South African Parliament, 24th May 1994. Chapter to read; 'The two rhetorics of the Presidency' from P. Salazar's 2002 *An African Athens. Rhetoric and the shaping of democracy in South Africa*.

Very short break I: Saturday 6th to Wednesday 10th February

Week IV – 12th February

Theme 1 (continued): Rhetoric examined: classification and techniques

Friday 12th February. Further discussion on Salazar's *An African Athens*. Introduction to the *progymnasmata* (exercises on standard forms). Students are asked to find and event samples of these basic forms for discussion in class.

Week V – 16th & 19th February

Theme 2: Rhetoric in production: thematic speeches by students

First day of student thematic persuasive speeches. Starting on this date, for **seven successive classes**, students will deliver speeches to the class, lasting for around twelve to fifteen minutes, on a theme of their choice. For each speech, two colleagues will write a critical commentary on the speech, to be handed in to the professor and to the speaker.

Tuesday 16th February. Student thematic speeches

Friday 19th February. Student thematic speeches

Very short break II: Wednesday 24th to Sunday 28th February

Week VI – 23rd February

Tuesday 23rd February. Student thematic speeches

March

Week VII – 2nd & 5th March

Tuesday 2nd March. Student thematic speeches

Friday 5th March. Student thematic speeches

Week VIII – 9th & 12th March

Tuesday 9th March. Student thematic speeches

Friday 12th March. Student thematic speeches

Week IX – 16th & 19th March

Tuesday 16th March

Return to **Theme 1: Classical rhetoric examined**

Plato's vision of rhetoric in *Gorgias*

Friday 19th March Further discussion of *Gorgias*

Week X – 23rd and Friday 26th March

Theme 1 (cont): Classical rhetoric examined

Tuesday 23rd March. More Hellenic thinking on the art of speaking well. For discussion: Herrick (2005) chapter 4, "Aristotle on rhetoric". **NB** In class examination on the elements of classical rhetoric (10% of grade).

Friday 26th March. To read for this class: extracts from Aristotle's *On Rhetoric*.

March to April

Week XI – 30th March & 2nd April

Theme 1 (cont): Classical rhetoric examined

Tuesday 30th March. Texts: short speech exemplifying classical epideictic rhetoric along with a chapter on architectural resonances. Second theme. How did classical buildings speak? What was the nature of their audience? Discussion of extracts from George Hersey's *The Lost Meaning of Classical Architecture* (1988).

Friday 2nd April. Texts: material on twenty-first century building as rhetoric or 'starchitecture'.

April

Week XII – 6th & 9th April

Tuesday 6th April

Theme 1 (cont) Rhetoric examined: rhetoric in the nineteenth century

Extracts from speeches by Frederick Douglass.

Friday 9th April

Extracts from *Germinal* by Emile Zola. Extract TBA.

NB Discussion of possible themes for final debates; distribution of roles.

Week XIII – 13th & 16th April

Theme 1 (cont) Rhetoric examined: Christian oratory through the medium of film

Tuesday 13th April

In-class viewing: Pasolini's *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew*

Friday 16th April

Completion of in-class viewing of *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew*. Discussion.

Week XIV – 20th & 23rd April

Tuesday 20th April

Formal team quiz: *Rhetorical challenge*

Return to ***Theme 2: Rhetoric in production.***

Friday 23rd April

Meeting time in class to prepare for final debates.

Week XV – 27th & 30th April

Tuesday 27th April

Theme 2* (cont): *Rhetoric in production.

Meeting time in class to prepare for final debates.

Friday 30th April

First student debate. For grading of this exercise, see below under Final examinations.

Wednesday, 28th April, last day of classes.

Thursday 29th April – Sunday, 2nd May, reading days (Saturday, 1st May, public holiday)

Tuesday 4th May at 15h. Final examination period. For CM3052, second student debate accounting for **40% of grade**, including (for speakers) 30% on actual production and participation and 10% on reflection on the debate. For audience members, 30% of grade will be given on a five-side commentary on the debate; active presence during the debate will account for 10% of grade.

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

ATTENDANCE:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

For any class you may miss, inform the professor on jmcguinness@aup.edu

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

In all cases of missed course meetings, the responsibility for communication with the professor, and for arranging to make up missed work, rests solely with the student. Travel plans, *especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods*, must be made with attendance requirements in mind.

Covid-19 temporary amendments:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are still expected to attend ALL scheduled classes. Due to special circumstances related to the Covid-19 pandemic, students will have the option of attending some classes online either in a synchronous or asynchronous format. In general, students are expected to attend at least one class a week in a synchronous format by either being physically present or logged in via the TEAMS online platform during class. It is still the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STATEMENT: As an Anglophone university, The American University of Paris is strongly committed to effective English language mastery at the undergraduate level. Most courses require scholarly research and formal written and oral presentations in English, and AUP students are expected to strive to achieve excellence in these domains as part of their course work. To that end, professors include English proficiency among the criteria in student evaluation, often referring students to the university Writing Lab where they may obtain help on specific academic assignments. Proficiency in English is monitored at various points throughout the student's academic career, most notably during the admissions and advising processes, while the student is completing general education requirements, and during the accomplishment of degree program courses and senior theses.

Grading Policy

GRADING POLICY:

There follow a list of grades and the sort of performance expected to achieve each grade. These standards are followed in all courses in the Department of Global Communications. They are held to reflect lecturers' common-sense vision of what constitutes student work at each grade level.

A Almost always in class on time. Fully prepared to participate in class. Has done all the relevant reading and sometimes more. Outstanding performance in tests and examinations.

Writes clearly and concisely.

B Almost always in class on time. Frequently participates in both class discussion and group work. Tries hard in examinations and writes well.

C Average effort. Sometimes late. Not always ready to participate but pays attention. On the whole has read the required texts.

D Generally unprepared and this is reflected by an unwillingness to participate in class discussion. Uses class time for other activities. Generally uninterested in course material.

F No evidence of preparation for class. Often late or absent. Fails to hand in assignments on time. Misses more than three classes without proof of a legitimate reason.

Assignments

Grades will be given on the basis of the following assignments

Presentation of an article, book chapter or piece of rhetoric – 10%

Major thematic speech to class – 30% (during classes between 16th February and 12th March)

Note for colleague on their thematic speech – 10% (due in class after speech given).

Examination on the elements of classical rhetoric – 10% in week X on Tuesday 23rd March.

Final exercise: in-class debate – 40% of grade, which will be on either actual production or on a written analysis of the debate. Participation from the floor in the form of questions is also part of the evaluation.

ASSIGNMENTS & DEADLINES: The course involves a large amount of reading. Your understanding of the texts will be monitored in a number of ways, including:

1. Assignments related to readings or class activities – 60% of grade.

Presentation of an article, book chapter or piece of rhetoric – 10%

Major thematic speech to class – 30% (during classes between 16th February and 12th March)

Note for colleague on their thematic speech – 10% (due in class after speech given).

Examination on the elements of classical rhetoric – 10% in week X on Tuesday 23rd March.

2. Final debate – 40% of grade.

Debate to be held in last class period on **Friday 30th April** and in final exam period on **Tuesday 4th May at 15h** in C-103. (Should the health situation require, this final will be held on-line)

For those students who are active speakers, this exercise is graded as follows: **30% of grade** is based on speech during the debate, with a further **10% of grade** being based on a short note on preparations for speaking in the debate to be sent in prior to the debate, via email.

For those students who are audience members, a reflective essay on the debate to be handed in via email on **Friday 7th May (30% of grade)**. A further **10% of grade** is based on attendance and comments made during the debate.

(Any homework to be handwritten or typed on A4 paper, in TNR font, size 11, spacing 1,5)

Other
