

Survey of Rhetoric

Study Questions

Some Introductory Comments

These questions exist for your benefit. I have been using the study question format for teaching my upper-level rhetoric courses for the last two years and the response by students has been very positive. Initially people are concerned about the frequency and volume, but later find that they serve several purposes. First, they make reading easier by giving you an idea of what I think is important and what you need to look for before you begin reading long, and sometimes fairly dense, pieces of writing. Second, they provide you with a handy study tool when it comes time to write papers and prepare for exams. Finally, they make discussion in class a whole lot less painful. If study questions are used correctly, everyone should be on the same page when class begins. Study questions do, however, make you read. They force you to be prepared. This aspect of the course is a curse for the “slacker” and a benefit to the student that comes to class to learn something!

Grading

This class has 45 people in it. You each write one-two page responses to your study questions every day. You’re also taking two exams and writing a total of twenty pages of essays this semester. There is no conceivable way that I could read every answer you write. These study questions involve a certain degree of honor. You will receive all of the points available to you on a given day, regardless of the “correctness” of your answers, if its clear to me that you’ve made a bona fide effort to take the assignment seriously. How do I know this without reading everything word for word, you may ask? It’s really rather simple. I scan most of your responses to look for key words, complete sentences, and so forth. I also “spot check” individuals papers by reading them completely. So while I may not read your responses completely every day, you can bet I do several times during the semester. So if you’re thinking about putting a lot of “filler” down on the page—think again. I also have a reasonably good idea of what the length of your responses should be. If you write the equivalent of a half page for 13 questions on Quintilian, I know something’s wrong. Be conscientious about this assignment and it will reward you in the end!

Point values are assigned by dividing the maximum of total points for the assignment by the number of days of study questions (SQ on the syllabus). There are 19 worth 10 points each. That leaves 10 left over, which you get for free if you complete all 19. You can miss one set of study questions without penalty, because we all have bad days. So doing 18 sets gets you a MAXIMUM of 190 points. Doing 19 gets you a MAXIMUM of 200 points. Variable reductions will occur if it’s clear that you aren’t completing the questions. I will also take such preparation into consideration when calculating your class participation grade.

Rightness of Answers

As it is a physical impossibility to respond to ALL of your discussion questions, it is your responsibility to correct your own errors. It is perfectly OK to write on your responses before you turn them in. In fact, I strongly encourage you to do so. While some people take all of their notes on the discussion questions sheets, I wouldn’t recommend doing that. My recommendation would be to keep a separate notebook outlining the lecture (I lecture in outline form) AND make corrections on the discussion questions so you’ll have all of your bases covered when you study. This is a great

way to cross-check your information. Let me be absolutely clear about this: If you receive a set of study questions back with no comments on them it DOES NOT mean that I believe all of the answers are correct. It simply means that I agree that you did the work. It's up to you to make sure you are keep information that is consistent with class discussion and lectures. By way of analogy, this is very similar to what foreign language classes do with lab work or workbook exercises, or some math classes do with checking problems. The value for you is in the exercise.

Length

There is probably no reason why these should fill more than 1.5 to 2 pages. The exceptions might be the readings that take two days (Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian). I would recommend formatting your answers in outlines or bulleted lists rather than in paragraphs. This will make the information much more accessible to you when you go to study later. You will also find that the questions often ask for lists or definitions, which are conveniently organized in such a manner.

There are some questions that ask you to be speculative, or give your opinion. These questions are designed to get you to think about your paper topics and to prepare you for classroom discussion.

Class Discussion of Study Questions

You will be expected to talk in this class. The study questions give you a vehicle to responding to questions and commenting on course material. At the beginning of the semester I will be taking all of your pictures with a digital camera and learning each of your names carefully. I will also be keeping a fairly close eye on how often each of you respond to questions. If you think you can hide from this process, you can't. So don't try.

August 30
Classical Rhetorical Heritage
Reading: Brummett, pp. 21-29 and 34-38

1. Based on your reading, do you believe that the Greeks considered study of the arts a pleasure of a practical necessity?
2. Who were the Sophists and what did they do?
3. What made Plato different than the Sophists?
4. What is dialectic? How is it similar or different when compared to rhetoric (focus on Plato?)
5. What do Plato and his contemporaries see as the role of “virtue” in the study of rhetoric.

September 4
Plato's "Gorgias"
Reading: Brummett, pp. 46-106

1. Brummett says that Plato was an idealist. What does he mean by that?
2. What are the "forms?"
3. What does Plato think about audience adaptation?
4. Identify three critical objections by Plato to rhetoric.
5. According to Plato, is rhetoric an art? Be able to identify specific passages (you don't have to write them out) where the different views of rhetoric's merit as an art appear).
6. Why does Plato hate rhetoric so much?
7. Be prepared to defend either Socrates' or Gorgias' side in the debate over the value of rhetoric. You don't need to write anything here, but think about the arguments you will make in defense of your position.

September 6

Aristotle “The Man, The Myth, The Legend”

Reading: Brummett, pp. 141-190 and *The Rhetoric*, Book I

1. Aristotle was Plato’s student. Are their views of rhetoric the same? If not, how are they different.
2. Is Aristotle a theoretician or a practitioner of rhetoric?
3. How does Aristotle define rhetoric? What are the different types and when and where are they appropriately practiced?
4. What is the difference between the artificial and the inartificial proofs?
5. How does Aristotle characterize logical proof? What forms does it take? What does he appear to believe are the best forms for proof?
6. Pages 151-161 include a list of common topics. Are these divisions useful? Could you add or detract from them? What purpose do you think these divisions served for Aristotle?

September 11
Aristotle Continued
The Rhetoric, Book 2&3

1. What are the four general topics? (Hint: look on pp. 165-168) Describe, in essence, what each of these topics addresses.
2. What is the difference between demonstrative and refutative enthymemes?
3. Aristotle lists 28 topics from which enthymemes can be constructed? Are these divisions sufficient? Is it possible to enumerate more? What utility is there in so enumerating the topics?

September 18
Cicero and “De Oratore”
Reading: Brummett, pp. 198-293
(Focus most of your energy on Books I and II. Skim Book III.)

These questions will be addressed over the course of two days in class.

1. How and where did Cicero develop his skills as an orator?
2. Would Cicero be an advocate of a liberal arts education? Support your answer with Cicero’s arguments (through the mouthpiece of Crassus). Can a good speaker in a specific field, in Cicero’s view, be called a “good orator.”
3. Was Cicero and advocate of “rhetorical rules?”
4. Which is a more important factor in the formation of a good speaker, according to Cicero, natural gifts or education?
5. Is there value in fear for the public speaker? (See page 218)
6. Cicero says the business and art of the orator is divided into five parts? What are they?
7. What role should writing and education in writing have in the training of the orator? How should the Orator train through writing?
8. What three key elements of persuasive speaking does Cicero identify in Book II, XXVII?
9. How should the elements of an argument be assembled? (See Book II, LXXVI)?

September 25
Quintilian and “Institutio Oratoria”
Reading: Brummett, pp. 294-354

These questions will be discussed over the course of two days. Please have all of the questions finished for the first day and we will pace ourselves through the material.

1. How does Quintilian define “oratory” differently than the definitions of oratory and rhetoric that we have thus far encountered?
2. Is it possible for a “bad person” to be a good orator? What does Quintilian think? What do you think?
3. Which is more important for Quintilian, audience adaptation or rules of rhetoric?
4. What role does natural talent play in forming the orator, in Quintilian’s view?
5. How is grammar different than rhetoric for Quintilian?
6. How should the teacher of rhetoric address the strengths and weaknesses of his or her pupils? In other words, when should the teacher praise and critique the students?
7. Under what “heads” should the question of rhetoric as an art be addressed, according to Quintilian?
8. From Quintilian’s perspective, how is speech different or similar when compared to other “arts?” What does it mean to have productive and practical arts? What is an active or administrative art?
9. What is Quintilian’s opinion of appending judgment to the canons of rhetoric?
10. Following from Cicero, according to Quintilian, what are the three different things upon which we must inquire in every case?
11. What five parts are the forensic speech divided into? How are these divisions similar or dissimilar to what you learned about organization in COMM 170?
12. What are propriety and obscurity? Why does Quintilian see them as useful?
13. What are tropes? Identify the tropes Quintilian focuses on.

October 2
St. Augustine and “On Christian Doctrine”
Reading: Brummett, pp. 391-431

1. Describe the personal evolution in St. Augustine’s thinking about rhetoric? What changes occurred in his life that would change his thinking?
2. Why, according to Brummett, is Christianity “one of the world’s most rhetorical religions?”
3. Traditionally we have talked about a three-fold division of general purpose in public speaking: to inform, to persuade, and to entertain. What are St. Augustine’s equivalents? Is there any significance to the difference?
4. According to St. Augustine, what are the two things upon which the interpretation of scripture depends?
5. Does Augustine, like Quintilian, believe that an orator is only a good man? What is St. Augustine’s argument? Be prepared to locate it in class if asked (you don’t have to write-out the passage if you don’t want to).
6. How important are rules of rhetoric to Augustine? Compare this perspective to other theorists we have considered—Cicero, Quintilian, Aristotle.
7. What value does St. Augustine place on oratorical declamation? When should it be done?
8. According to St. Augustine, can someone be a poor speaker and still be effective?

October 4
Let's Get Ready to Rumble!
Ramus vs. Quintilian
Reading: Brummett, pp. 448-469

1. In the Medieval period, which fields of study were the most valued? Where did they stand relative to the value of rhetoric?
2. What is the "Universal method?"
3. What problem does Ramus have with the classical rhetorical theorists?
4. In the first few pages of his indictment of Quintilian, Ramus advances an argument about the relative importance of rhetoric as situated within the liberal arts. What is rhetoric's place in the liberal arts, according to Ramus?
5. Why doesn't Ramus like Quintilian's definition of the orator? What is his argument?
6. What are the universal gifts bestowed on man, according to Ramus? How are they distributed and what is their province?
7. Which of the canons of rhetoric does Ramus emphasize?
8. In what order should the grammar and rhetoric be taught to children? Why?

October 9

George Campbell and “Philosophy of Rhetoric”

Reading: Brummett, pp. 542-596

(Focus on sections addressing types of rhetoric and general purposes and types of evidence.)

1. What does Brummett mean by faculty psychology? Note, it may be helpful to drop that term into an Internet search, since your book doesn't explain it very well.
2. What, according to Campbell, is eloquence?
3. What general purposes (or ends of speaking) does Campbell observe? How are these different from what you have previously learned? Think about other theorists you've studied so far. How are these categories a departure from them? What “faculties” do each of these categories correspond to?
4. What are the different kinds of evidence for Campbell? How is this different than the classifications of reasoning you've heard in other classes or read about already in this text?
5. What problems, in your opinion, does Campbell present for our understanding of rhetoric? Does he present us with any major contradictions to address?

October 11
Hugh Blair and “Taste”
Reading: Brummett, pp. 597-619

1. What, in your opinion, is “taste?”
2. What kind of art is rhetoric, for Blair? What distinguishes this kind of art from other kinds of art?
3. Brummett asserts that there’s a shift in emphasis during the Enlightenment period between different elements in the communication model. Where is the shift? How does Blair represent this shift?
4. What is Blair’s standard for taste? Is this standard workable? Does it allow for consistent observation from one person to the next? Are these standards elitist?
5. What is Blair’s view of rhetorical rules? What purpose do they serve for him?

October 16

Richard Whately and “Elements of Rhetoric”

Reading: Brummett, pp. 620-657

(Focus on early segments on rhetoric and the value of rhetoric. Focus also on discussions of different kinds of proof, presumption and burden of proof.)

1. How does Whately define rhetoric? Is this a broader or narrower conception of rhetoric than we've previously heard?
2. Relative to the other theorists we've studied, how much does Whatley value reason?
3. What's the difference between inferring and proving?
4. Based on your reading of Whatley, which of the five canons of rhetoric do you think he would find the most important?
5. What is the proper province of rhetoric?
6. What is presumption?
7. What is burden of proof?
8. Whatley provides examples of presumption in different propositional contexts—policy (presumption in favor of existing institutions), fact (presumption of innocence), and value/fact (presumptions against a paradox, presumptions for Christianity, etc.). Be prepared to discuss your own examples of instances of presumption in fact, value, and policy disputes.
9. Under what circumstances might the burden of proof be shifted?

October 23

Bakhtin—Just Not For Skin Irritations!

Reading: Brummett, pp. 671-691

1. Brummett says that Bakhtin saw language as dialog. What does this mean? Does this mean language cannot exist in isolation (intrapersonally)? Clarify this.
2. What is an ideology? How are ideologies produced? Give an example of an ideology you see functioning in contemporary society or history and suggest the means by which it was produced?
3. Does a word have any particular meaning in isolation? When does it acquire meaning? Can a word have different meanings in different fields? Provide an example.
4. What is the difference between theme and meaning? What do the terms mean?
5. What use does this theory serve for students of rhetoric?
6. How is Bakhtin's theory unique from the kinds of theories we have studied thus far?

October 25
IA Richards
Reading: Brummett, pp. 702-732

1. What is the difference between perceptions and sensations? Richards' theorizes that there are no such things as sensations. How does he justify this?
2. What is "delegated efficacy?"
3. How does Richards define "context?"
4. Richards talks about a process called sorting. What's happening when we sort input? Describe the process he describes.
5. What, according to Richards, is "the whole business of Rhetoric?"
6. How does Richard's new rhetoric view ambiguity? How is this different than prior perspectives of rhetoric. Don't rely just on Richards. Consider what you have already read.
7. Richards suggests a different view of metaphor by prior theorists. What function does Richards attribute to metaphor that's different?

November 6
The World of Kenneth Burke
Reading: Brummett, pp. 741-43, 762-771

1. What is dramatism? What is logology?
2. What are the five key terms of dramatism?
3. How are the five key terms related to one another?
4. What is Burke's view of ambiguity? What does he want to do with it?
5. What is identification?
6. What is consubstantiality?
7. What does Burke mean when he says "literature is equipment for living?" Hint: Don't take the term "literature" too literally. Think about language in the broader sense.

November 13
Burke and *Mein Kampf*
Reading: Brummett, pp. 744-762

1. Who, for Hitler, serves as the symbol of the “common enemy?”
2. Describe the steps in the argument Burke makes about the sexual symbolism in the NAZI message. Who plays what character in this “soap Opera?”
3. What are the four important features of the unification device?
4. What function does the city of Munich serve for the NAZIs?
5. Burke uses the term “equations” several times. What does he mean? There aren’t any numbers in this text!
6. Based largely on the first and last paragraphs of the text, what is Burke’s purpose in writing this essay? What does he want the rhetorical critic to do when he or she analyzes a text?

November 15

The Argumentation Theorists: Perelman, Obrechts-Tyteca, and Toulmin

Reading: Brummett, pp. 785-808

1. How do Perelman and Obrechts-Tyteca define “audience?”
2. What is responsible for the degeneration of rhetoric?
3. What is the difference between persuading and convincing?
4. What three kinds of audiences do the authors identify?
5. What most one do to win-over the Universal audience?
6. Is the Universal audience a useful concept?
7. Brummett says Toulmin’s approach is more rhetorical, with less of a logical rigidity? But Toulmin advances a model of argument, right? How is this “rhetorical?”
8. Define the different terms of Toulmin’s model: claim, data, warrant, backing.
9. Is the backing required for the warrant the same in every field? Try to develop an example of how two different fields might possess different warrants or backing for warrants in different fields.

November 20

Michel Foucault and the “Archaeology of Knowledge”

Reading: Brummett, pp. 816-855

Focus mostly on p. 838 and beyond once the first two questions are answered.

This is tough reading. Try not to get frustrated.

1. What are discursive formations and what are the four rules that govern them?
2. What does Foucault think about disciplinary categories in academics? Why does he think this?
Do you agree or disagree?
3. What are “exterior” and “internal” rules?
4. What function does Foucault serve in our expanding knowledge of rhetoric? Does he add to or detract from our understanding of language and rhetoric?

December 4
Molefi Kete Asante: “The Afrocentric Idea”
Reading: Brummett, pp. 856-878

1. What is the “rhetorical condition?” Why is this somehow better than Lloyd Bitzer’s “rhetorical situation,” which Asante cites?
2. What is the problem with traditional criticism, according to Asante?
3. What are the characteristics of hierarchical discourse? How is this present in the academic environment in which you now sit?
4. How is the traditional Speaker-Receiver model of communication problematic for an Afrocentric rhetoric?
5. What characteristics, according to Asante, define the style one would see in Afrocentric rhetoric?

December 6
Karlyn Kohrs Campbell “Man Cannot Speak For Her”
Reading: Brummett, pp. 894-903

1. What is Campbell’s work primarily focused on?
2. For Campbell, what is rhetoric?
3. What is the aim of the rhetorical critic? What is their job?
4. What factors limited the creation of a body of women’s rhetoric prior to the 20th Century.
5. What characteristics, does Campbell note, are sometimes attributed to a feminine style?
6. For discussion in class, create a timeline from the founding of the United States through the present. List 10-20 of the most significant pieces of discourse (speeches or other “rhetorical movements”) in our history. Try to do it from oldest to newest. You may be asked to present your timeline in class.