

## COMM 357: Survey of Rhetoric (10:30–11:50 VH 1404)

Dr. Kevin M. Minch

**Instructor:** Dr. Kevin M. Minch  
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**Office Hours:** 1:30-3:30 Tues./Thurs; 3:30-4:30 Monday; And By Appointment

\* Please feel free to call me at home. It does not bother me in the least. In the interest of everyone concerned, however, I would prefer that you confine such calls to the period between 9 AM and 10 PM. I do not consider myself bound by any answers or promises I make during late hours. As a general rule, you are more likely to find me at the office than at home. There is voice mail at both locations.

### Course Objectives

The title of this course says a lot, but not everything. This course is both a survey of the history of the study of rhetoric as well as a survey of the evolution of human understanding about language, rhetorical theory, and the practice of rhetoric. By the end of this semester students should be able to identify major figures in the history of rhetorical theory, their contributions to this study, and the major tenets of their philosophies. Moreover, students should leave the course possessing the ability to trace the evolution of thoughts about rhetoric and be able to understand the interconnectedness of different theories. Students should also acquire an appreciation for the relationship between rhetoric and other academic disciplines, including history, philosophy, religion, classics, political science, sociology, and psychology. Some general questions we will explore include:

What is rhetoric?  
Are rhetoric and persuasion synonymous?  
Is rhetoric “good?”  
Can a person be taught to be a good orator?  
How does one teach rhetorical skill?  
What constitutes a “good speech?”  
What is the role of criticism in the study of rhetoric?  
How might one best go about critiquing a piece of rhetoric?  
...and many others

### Evaluation of Performance

A survey course is designed to impart fundamental knowledge about key concepts and figures in a discipline. In the case of this course, the curriculum is a gateway to more narrowly focused courses in the communication arts. To the end of preparing students to pass through that gateway, the exams and papers in this course are designed a) to test rote memory of fundamental persons, concepts, and facts and b) assess students’ abilities to tie this knowledge together conceptually and articulate a holistic vision of what the study of rhetoric is all about. Measurement of success in these two areas is achieved by two separate measures. The exams in this course are decidedly objective—focusing on factual questions with essentially right and wrong answers. The papers in this course are designed to serve a complimentary function—to determine how well students can synthesize the material of the course, express concepts and draw connections. Thus, where exams might normally contain an essay component, that component is diverted to more focused writing opportunities that will permit students an opportunity to creatively demonstrate their broader knowledge of the subject matter.

### Course Materials

Brummett, Barry. *Reading Rhetorical Theory*. Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers, 2000.

While not a required text, I strongly recommend that students invest in a style guide appropriate to their further study in this discipline. Students of rhetoric will generally find themselves writing in either the MLA or APA style. The

library has limited online references to formats. Students will be expected to adhere to one or the other of these style manuals when writing.

### **Attendance and Work Completion Policy**

I consider each of you to be adults. Consequently, I will not enforce a rigid attendance policy in this course. However, it should be clear to everyone concerned that there is always “collateral damage” when one does not attend class. I will not accept study questions submitted by students who miss class. I will not allow students missing quizzes or tests to make up said work. I will not accept papers turned in via mailbox, e-mail, or fellow student courier if the student responsible for the work does not attend the class period during which the assignment was due. I will not supply notes or outlines to students skipping class. Since class participation is an element of the course grade, poor attendance will severely impact that grade.

In the event that you have to miss class for a legitimate reason—University-sponsored activity, job interview, serious illness, etc.—I expect prompt notice (preferably advanced notice). Appropriate accommodations for the completion of the assignments involved will be made at the discretion of the instructor.

All assignments in the course must be completed to receive a passing grade. In other words, you cannot “play the points.” If you have enough points to get a B going into the final and decide to skip it, your points to that point will be voided and your grade will drop back to an F.

### **Digital Submission of Assignments**

All papers (study questions are not included) must be submitted digitally—in Microsoft Word format. Please send the paper via e-mail attachment before the commencement of the class period upon which it is due. Keep a spare copy on hand for your own use. A reply message will be sent upon receipt of your paper. If you do not receive a message verifying receipt of your paper by 5 PM the evening the paper has been turned in, you should immediately contact the instructor. It is your responsibility to verify whether a paper has been correctly submitted. Use of “Spell check” and “Grammar check” are highly recommended, as this will be one of the tools used to check format, spelling, etc.

### **Work Format Policy**

Spelling and grammar do count. As Cicero and Quintilian explained, the study of language and grammar are an integral part to becoming a good practitioner of the art of rhetoric. I will grade your writing as carefully for spelling, style, and grammar as I do for content. Samples of effective writing are included on my Website. The site also contains suggestions about various stylistic pitfalls to avoid. Errors in style, spelling, and grammar in excess of ten will result in automatic grade reductions. Your first nine errors are “free.” Once you hit error #10 your grade drops 10%. Every subsequent error results in a 1% reduction. Proofread VERY carefully. If you are not willing to commit the time to check your work I am not the instructor you want to have class with.

### **Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty**

I have no tolerance for academic dishonesty. Cheating is not just copying off of someone else’s paper or exam. Representing someone else’s ideas without attribution, copying word-for-word without using quotations marks, or excessive paraphrasing without attribution, can all be forms of plagiarism. Be sure to carefully cite any information you quote—even if it is from a primary source like your class textbook. DO NOT, under any circumstances, consider using the “Buy a Paper” services on the Internet. I have them all bookmarked on my browser and check for duplicates on every assignment. The penalty for academic dishonesty in my class will be severe, including failure in the course and referral to upper administration for further action.

### **Students With Special Needs**

If you have any special needs, such as a physical disability, learning disability, hearing or speech impairment, etc., please let me know at the earliest possible convenience. I will do whatever I can to accommodate your needs within the confines of the law.

## Grading

I grade on a straight scale of 1000 points. Students with 900-1000 points at the end of the semester receive an A. Students receiving 800-899 points inclusive will receive a B, and so forth. Students with a total of 599 or fewer points will receive an F. Unless specifically announced as an extra credit opportunity for all students, there will be no opportunities to earn additional extra credit.

Assignments and their point values are distributed as follows:

<b>Midterm Exam</b>	200 Points
<b>Final Exam</b>	200 Points
<b>Paper #1</b>	50 Points
<b>Paper #2</b>	50 Points
<b>Paper #3</b>	200 Points
<b>Study Questions</b>	200 Points
<b>Class Participation</b>	100 Points

## Course Schedule

*All Reading is to be complete before the class period under which it is listed. (SQ) indicates that study questions are due on that date at the conclusion of the class period.*

Tuesday, Aug. 28	“Introduction to the Course: What is Rhetoric and What Does it Mean to Survey It?” <b>Recommended Reading:</b> Brummett, pp. 1-20
Thursday, Aug. 30	“Classical Rhetorical Heritage: The Sophistic Duel” <b>Read:</b> Brummett, pp. 21-29, 34-38 (SQ) <b>Recommended Reading:</b> Begin reading Plato’s <i>Gorgias</i> (see below)
Tuesday, Sept. 4	“Plato’s <i>Gorgias</i> ” (SQ) <b>Read:</b> Brummett, pp. 46-106
Thursday, Sept. 6	“Aristotle: The Man, The Myth, the Rhetorical Legend” (SQ) <b>Read:</b> Brummett, pp. 141-190, <i>The Rhetoric</i> Book I Only.
Tuesday, Sept. 11	“Aristotle Continued” (SQ) <b>Read:</b> Brummett, pp. 141-190, <i>The Rhetoric</i> Books II and III.
Thursday, Sept. 13	“Some Context: Uses of Rhetoric in Roman Times” <b>No Reading (Recommend reading ahead on Cicero)</b>
Tuesday, Sept. 18	“Cicero and ‘De Oratore’” (SQ) <b>Read:</b> Brummett, pp. 198-293
Thursday, Sept. 20	“Cicero Continued” <b>No Reading</b>
Tuesday, Sept. 25	“Quintilian and ‘Institutio Oratoria’” (SQ) <b>Read:</b> Brummett, pp. 294-354 <b>First Paper Due</b>
Thursday, Sept. 27	“Quintilian Continued” <b>No Reading</b>
Tuesday, Oct. 2	“St. Augustine and ‘On Christian Doctrine’ (SQ) <b>Read:</b> Brummett, pp. 391-431
Thursday, Oct. 4	“Peter Ramus vs. Quintilian” (SQ) <b>Read:</b> Brummett, pp. 448-469
Tuesday, Oct. 9	“George Campbell’s Philosophy of Rhetoric” (SQ) <b>Read:</b> Brummett, pp. 542-596.
Thursday, Oct. 11	“Hugh Blair and Taste” (SQ) <b>Read:</b> Brummett, pp. 597-619.
Tuesday, Oct. 16	“Richard Whately on the Elements of Rhetoric” (SQ) <b>Read:</b> Brummett, pp. 620-657.
Thursday Oct. 18	<b>Midterm Exam</b>
Tuesday, Oct. 23	Dr. Minch will be in Maryland. Exam will be administered by a proctor. “Mikhail Bakhtin and Marxist Implications for Rhetoric” (SQ)

Thursday, Oct. 25 **Read:** Brummett, pp. 671-691.  
 Tuesday, Oct. 30 **Class Will Not Meet--Finalize Paper #2**  
 Thursday, Nov. 1 **Second Paper Due--Class Will Adjourn After Brief Meeting**  
 NCA Convention—**Class Will Not Meet**  
**Alternative Assignment:** Use Class Time to Work on Paper #3  
 Tuesday, Nov. 6 “I.A. Richards” (SQ)  
**Read:** Brummett, pp. 702-732  
 Thursday, Nov. 8 “The World of Kenneth Burke” (SQ)  
**Read:** Brummett, pp. 741-43; 762-771.  
 Tuesday, Nov. 13 “Burke and Mein Kampf” (SQ)  
**Read:** “Rhetoric of Hitler’s *Battle*,” pp. 744-762  
 Thursday, Nov. 15 “Toulmin, Perelman and Obrechts-Tyteca on Argumentation” (SQ)  
**Read:** Brummett, pp. 785-794 and 795-808  
 Tuesday, Nov. 20 “Michel Foucault and ‘The Archaeology of Knowledge’” (SQ)  
**Read:** Brummett, pp. 816-855  
 Tuesday, Nov. 27 **Third Paper Due**  
 Catch-Up Day (Wrap-up Perelman, Toulmin, and Foucault)  
 Thursday, Nov. 29 To Be Announced  
 Tuesday, Dec. 4 “Molefi Kete Asante: ‘The Afrocentric Idea’” (SQ)  
**Read:** Brummett, pp. 856-878  
 Thursday, Dec. 6 “Karlyn Kohrs Campbell: ‘Man Cannot Speak for Her’” (SQ)  
**Read:** Brummett, pp. 894-903  
 Tuesday, Dec. 11 “Pulling it All Together”  
 Final Exams: Dec. 13-Dec. 18

# Paper #1

## “What is Rhetoric?” or “Can Rhetoric be Taught?”

### Due: September 25 Before Class

**Objective:** Upon the completion of the assignment students will be able to demonstrate their ability to synthesize the various and opposing arguments in course readings surrounding the questions: “What is rhetoric?” and “Can rhetoric be taught?” Students will also demonstrate the ability to describe and interpret the theories of the classical rhetorical theorists that addressed this question.

**Assignment:** Write a five-page essay responding to ONE of the following questions: “What is rhetoric?” or “Can Rhetoric be Taught?” The paper should be a complete five pages, double-spaced, with one inch margins and a 12-pt. Times-Roman font. The paper should contain an introduction, clear thesis statement, and two or more distinct points (or supporting arguments) that further flesh-out the argument being advanced by the thesis. The paper should also contain a conclusion that appropriately summarizes the argument. The argument should be liberally supported with citations and references to works read in class. Secondary references are encouraged if they will add to the strength of your argument. Block quotations may not constitute more than 10% of the total word count of the paper. DO NOT try to artificially “bulk-up” your paper with block quotations.

**Length Caveat:** My preference is that you write for five pages. If your paper exceeds five pages in length, and such excess is, in your view, critical to the explication of your argument, you may continue beyond five pages. Be advised, however, that I will read papers of five pages length FIRST and will return them before I address longer papers. Longer papers require more attention and quick feedback is a high priority for me. Please be advised that the longer your paper is, the more likely it is that it will take a few days to get back. On the opposite side, there is NO reason why this paper should be shorter than four pages. Papers shorter than four FULL pages will be severely penalized.

**Method of Submission:** Please submit this paper to me via e-mail attachment at [kminch@truman.edu](mailto:kminch@truman.edu) BEFORE the time that class meets on the due date. You will receive an e-mail verifying receipt soon after it is received (not automated—just me). You are responsible for making sure the document is in a readable format. My preference is Microsoft Word, although Word Perfect documents usually translate pretty well. Your paper will first be screened for spelling, style, and grammar errors. Upon completion of that screening it will be critically evaluated using the rubric found on the course Website. You will receive a printed copy of the evaluation form and a digital copy of the paper will be returned to you with spelling and grammar problems highlighted. A copy of your paper will be stored electronically through the end of the semester. You are advised to do the same.

**Grading:** It is highly recommended that you consult the rubric on the course website. It is further highly recommended that you consult the section entitled “Kevin’s Recommendations on Paper Writing” before beginning. This will help you avoid some common pitfalls. I am looking for a paper that is WELL ARGUED—not merely a regurgitation of concepts you have heard or read in class. Think the argument through. Tell me what you think! Support your argument.

If you have any questions, contact me.

## Paper #2

# “What Constitutes a Good Speech?” or “Who Was Right?: Quintilian or Ramus?”

**Due: October 30 Before Class**

**Objective:** Upon the completion of the assignment students will be able to demonstrate their ability to synthesize the various and opposing arguments in course readings surrounding the question: “How should we judge a good speech?” Students will also demonstrate the ability to describe and interpret the theories of the rhetorical theorists that addressed this question.

**Assignment:** Write a five-page essay responding to the following question: “What constitutes a good speech?” An alternative topic would address the question: “Who was right: Quintilian or Ramus?” The paper should be a complete five pages, double-spaced, with one inch margins and a 12-pt. Times-Roman font. The paper should contain an introduction, clear thesis statement, and two or more distinct points (or supporting arguments) that further flesh-out the argument being advanced by the thesis. The paper should also contain a conclusion that appropriately summarizes the argument. The argument should be liberally supported with citations and references to works read in class. Secondary references are encouraged if they will add to the strength of your argument. Block quotations may not constitute more than 10% of the total word count of the paper. DO NOT try to artificially “bulk-up” your paper with block quotations.

**Length Caveat:** My preference is that you write for five pages. If your paper exceeds five pages in length, and such excess is, in your view, critical to the explication of your argument, you may continue beyond five pages. Be advised, however, that I will read papers of five pages length FIRST and will return them before I address longer papers. Longer papers require more attention and quick feedback is a high priority for me. Please be advised that the longer your paper is, the more likely it is that it will take a few days to get back. On the opposite side, there is NO reason why this paper should be shorter than four pages. Papers shorter than four FULL pages will be severely penalized.

**Method of Submission:** Please submit this paper to me via e-mail attachment at [kminch@truman.edu](mailto:kminch@truman.edu) BEFORE the time that class meets on the due date. You will receive an e-mail verifying receipt soon after it is received (not automated—just me). You are responsible for making sure the document is in a readable format. My preference is Microsoft Word, although Word Perfect documents usually translate pretty well. Your paper will first be screened for spelling, style, and grammar errors. Upon completion of that screening it will be critically evaluated using the rubric found on the course Website. You will receive a printed copy of the evaluation form and a digital copy of the paper will be returned to you with spelling and grammar problems highlighted. A copy of your paper will be stored electronically through the end of the semester. You are advised to do the same.

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Either topic suggests establishing some CRITERIA. What things, factors, or speaker faculties need to be present for a speech to be deemed “good?” The term “good” was deliberately chosen for its ambiguity. You can explore “good” in the sense of “effective” or “morally right.” The second topic requires you to set up some minimal criteria for determining who is “right” or “wrong.” Perhaps you will want to bear in mind some of the standards advanced by the dialecticians in search of the “truth.”

If you have any questions, contact me.

# Paper #3

## “What, If Any, Unifying Theme Is Present In 20<sup>th</sup> Century Theories Of Rhetoric?”

**Due: November 27 Before Class**

**Objective:** Upon the completion of the assignment students will be able to demonstrate their ability to synthesize the various and opposing arguments in course readings surrounding the question: “What, if any, unifying theme is present in 20th century theories of rhetoric?” Students will also demonstrate the ability to describe and interpret the theories of the classical rhetorical theorists that addressed this question.

**Assignment:** Write a eight to ten-page essay responding to the following question: “What, if any, unifying theme is present in 20<sup>th</sup> century theories of rhetoric?” The paper should be a complete eight pages, double-spaced, with one inch margins and a 12-pt. Times-Roman font. The paper should contain an introduction, clear thesis statement, and two or more distinct points (or supporting arguments) that further flesh-out the argument being advanced by the thesis. The paper should also contain a conclusion that appropriately summarizes the argument. The argument should be liberally supported with citations and references to works read in class. Secondary references are encouraged if they will add to the strength of your argument. Block quotations may not constitute more than 10% of the total word count of the paper. DO NOT try to artificially “bulk-up” your paper with block quotations.

**Length Caveat:** My preference is that you write for ten pages. If your paper exceeds ten pages in length, and such excess is, in your view, critical to the explication of your argument, you may continue beyond ten pages. Be advised, however, that I will read papers of ten pages length FIRST and will return them before I address longer papers. Longer papers require more attention and quick feedback is a high priority for me. Please be advised that the longer your paper is, the more likely it is that it will take a few days to get back. On the opposite side, there is NO reason why this paper should be shorter than eight pages. Papers shorter than eight FULL pages will be severely penalized.

**Method of Submission:** Please submit this paper to me via e-mail attachment at [kminch@truman.edu](mailto:kminch@truman.edu) BEFORE the time that class meets on the due date. You will receive an e-mail verifying receipt soon after it is received (not auto-mated—just me). You are responsible for making sure the document is in a readable format. My preference is Microsoft Word, although Word Perfect documents usually translate pretty well. Your paper will first be screened for spelling, style, and grammar errors. Upon completion of that screening it will be critically evaluated using the rubric found on the course Website. You will receive a printed copy of the evaluation form and a digital copy of the paper will be returned to you with spelling and grammar problems highlighted. A copy of your paper will be stored electronically through the end of the semester. You are advised to do the same.

**Grading:** It is highly recommended that you consult the rubric on the course website. It is further highly recommended that you consult the section entitled “Kevin’s Recommendations on Paper Writing” before beginning. This will help you avoid some common pitfalls. I am looking for a paper that is WELL ARGUED—not merely a regurgitation of concepts you have heard or read in class. Think the argument through. Tell me what you think! Support your argument.

This topic demands that you distill the information in the 20<sup>th</sup> century section of your text. You have a wide range of political ideologies represented here—from Communism to Anarchy. There are also some very different views here about HOW rhetoric should be studied. Look for common threads and try to connect those threads together to identify a central theme.

If you have any questions, contact me.

# Personal Data Form

Please complete the following information as thoroughly as possible. This information will help me to better help you in this course.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Town: \_\_\_\_\_

May I include your e-mail address in a class mailing list to facilitate quicker dissemination of class news and feedback?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No

If you have taken other COMM courses, please identify which ones and the name(s) of the instructor(s).

Why did you take this class?

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**Please Read and Sign the Following (Due by Second Class Period):**

I have read, or plan to read, the course syllabus in its entirety. I understand and accept the policies stated here and agree to abide by those policies. I understand that completion of all of the assignments in this course is necessary to pass it and that I am responsible for obtaining all of the necessary class materials and instructions for the fulfillment of the assignments given here. In addition, I agree to read the University's policy on academic misconduct and am aware of what constitutes plagiarism and the penalties for engaging in it.

**Name**

**Date**