

Seminar in the History of Rhetoric Section 02

ENGL 257

Spring 2023 4 Unit(s) 01/25/2023 to 05/15/2023 Modified 02/01/2023

Class time: TH, 4:00-6:45PM

Class location: Faculty Office Bldg (FOB), 104

The history of rhetoric is often traced to Ancient Greece, when rhetoric supposedly developed alongside the birth of democracy. In this story, rhetoric is uniquely Western—a function of Greece and Rome’s exceptional influences in the history of civilization. But historians have long reimagined civilization’s western roots and developed broader, “worldly” perspectives on histories, rhetorics, and histories of rhetorics. Taking our cue from “worldly” rhetoricians and historians, we will discover arguments involved in global rhetorical traditions—Indigenous and Native, East and South Asian, African, Latin and South American, and more—and seek to contextualize them in our experiences. We’ll ask: what is at stake in histories of rhetoric, why do they continue, what can we learn, why should we care, and perhaps even, what might we contribute?

Contact Information

It can sometimes take me a day or two to answer emails, and I rarely check, much less answer at night or over the weekend. It's not a "you" thing; it's a "me" thing. I'm always trying to juggle work, family, and personal responsibilities, and one of the tools I have at my disposal is boundaries. If you need a speedy reply, you can try to call my office (I'm often there M-F, 8:00am-5:00pm), stop by office hours, or let me know in your subject line that you need a timely response.

Professor: Dr. Ryan Skinnell

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Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature

Department Office: FO 102

Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/english (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english>)

Department email: english@sjsu.edu (<mailto:english@sjsu.edu>)

Department phone number: 408-924-4425

Office Hours

Thursday, 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM, FOB 111 or on Zoom

I plan to be in my office during our office hours, so please feel free to drop by. In general, it is preferable if you let me know you're coming so I don't step out for a walk or to make copies when I know you're coming. It also helps me make time/space for all my students. But if you just want to pop in, do it! If you'd prefer a Zoom meeting, just let me know so I can set it up.

I'm also available BY APPOINTMENT. Unless I have another specific commitment, I'm usually pretty flexible about meeting. Send me a message, and we can set up a time. You can do this even if all you want to do is shoot the breeze!

Course Description and Requisites

Study of rhetorical theory and practice from classical to modern times.

Prerequisite: Classified standing or instructor consent.

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

This course can be demanding. The reading load is heavy, the material is challenging, and course requirements are substantial.

That said, COVID times continue to be what COVID times are, so we're going to need manage our expectations appropriately. We're going to try to be like wolves—we'll work together as a pack, leave no one behind, occasionally fight a Kodiak bear (*Ursus arctos middendorffi*).

During most class periods, we will discuss readings, do group activities, and hear presentations. I strongly encourage students to visit me in my office hours to discuss course materials and/or assignments throughout the semester—especially in the event that course expectations are overwhelming or confusing.

It's an English course, I know, but let's do some quick math. ENGL 257 is a 4-unit course. That means we are signing up to do a minimum of 12 hours of study per week just for this class. 2½ hours will be class time. The remaining 9½ hours a week, you will work on your own or with your peers to prepare for class and complete assignments. I have designed the work using this math to guide us. I will refer to it often to help you manage this workload over the semester.

Please note:

Sometimes projects and discussions include material that can be contentious and even potentially upsetting. We may encounter materials that differ from and perhaps challenge our ideas, beliefs, and understanding of reality. Students are encouraged to discuss issues about such materials with me. In class, discussion is welcome and encouraged, but comments found to be intentionally offensive, disrespectful, or combative will not be tolerated.

Please also note:

If you have special needs or accommodations requests, see me as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in forfeiting accommodations to which you're entitled. And even if you're not "entitled" to accommodations, talk to me anyway so we can make this an environment in which you can learn.

Other Available SJSU Resources

The University provides all students several resources to help us successfully learn in this course. The services provided include counseling and psychological care, mentoring and tutoring, access to food and housing, to technology, and writing support.

- [Accessible Education Center](#)
- [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#)
- [Peer Connections](#)
- [SJSU Cares](#)
- [Spartan Food Pantry](#)
- [Student Technology Resources](#)
- [Writing Center](#)
- [Other Campus Resources](#)

Course Goals

1) to develop an introductory understanding of rhetoric as a discipline

- 2) to develop an understanding of some of the major issues in the history of rhetoric
- 3) to situate rhetoric within personal, cultural, historical, and global contexts
- 4) to practice modes of academic inquiry
- 5) to apply some of the basic principles of rhetorical history to contemporary situations

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the MA English program, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric.
2. Demonstrate high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research
3. Demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the interpretation and evaluation of literary texts.
4. Demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to
 - a. organize and present material in a cogent fashion,
 - b. formulate and defend original arguments,
 - c. employ effectively the language of their discipline and
 - d. write under time constraints.
5. Demonstrate a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language.

Upon successful completion of the MFA in Creative Writing, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a high level of ability to propose and complete a publishable, full-length work of literature in a primary genre concentration (fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, or scriptwriting).
2. Demonstrate high level of proficiency to write works of literature in a secondary genre concentration (fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, or scriptwriting).
3. Demonstrate an appropriate level of knowledge of literary history, literary theory, and craft and theory of creative writing.
4. Demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the evaluation and interpretation of literary texts.
5. Demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to:
 - a) organize and present material in a cogent fashion;
 - b) formulate and defend original arguments;
 - c) employ effectively the language of their discipline;
 - d) write under time constraints.

Course Materials

Course Format

Technology Intensive, Hybrid, and Online Courses

It will be useful to have internet access in class for research purposes, but it will not be required without advance warning. Some software applications we might use include: Zoom, Canvas, SJSU Google Suite, a PDF reader, Discord, etc. If you need to borrow laptops, iPads, and more, please contact [Student Computing Services](#). If you need software training, contact [Student Technology Training Center](#).

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on [Canvas](#). You're responsible for regularly checking messages through MySJSU to learn of any updates. For help with using Canvas see [Canvas Student Resources page](#).

Library Liaison

Our library liaison is Peggy Cabrera. She is available to help you find resources to do your work in this course. She has set up for students [a library resource page for the Department of English and Comparative literature](#). The tutorials on this page will help you to understand academic research processes and tools, and they will help you to develop an eye for the most valuable

resources for your work.

You will find Peggy Cabrera's contact page by clicking on [this link](#).

History & Theory of Rhetoric: An Introduction

Author: Herrick, James

Publisher: Routledge

ISBN: 978-0-367-42734-4

Other Readings

Additional readings will be posted on Canvas and/or located by members of the class.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Most students who enroll in this class will have never read rhetorical history or rhetorical theory before. In fact, many will probably not have any previous knowledge of rhetorical studies at all. Nevertheless, as you can see from the course and program outcomes above, English majors strive to extend their reading capacity to accommodate a full array of intellectual expertise across literary and rhetorical scholarship that stretches over time and across national boundaries. That presents us with serious challenges. We will compound those challenges by inflating the scope of our inquiry to cover more than 2500 years and rhetorical traditions that span the entire globe. This will seem daunting (it is), but it is actually one of the important challenges at the core of the English major. Our intellectual journeys all include encountering new texts, new languages and dialects, and new ideas; assessing, sorting, and weighing evidence; making (hopefully informed) decisions about which potential paths to follow; and contributing where possible to advancing the discussion, whether through writing, teaching, or speaking.

We'll be doing this together—I am not an expert in all of the rhetorical traditions we'll be studying, so we'll be learning together. This class, then, is designed to increase your capacity to read and understand rhetorical history, situate it in relation to other historical and intellectual frameworks (as well as your lived experiences), and apply those skills to other rhetorical and literary productions. In this course we will develop new reading practices and routines to accommodate these challenges.

These are the instruments we will use to advance our inquiry together.

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Course learning outcomes</i>
Participation	150	3
Reading responses (x12)	10 pts/each (120 total)	1-5
Ancestor acknowledgement	150	3, 4
Rhetoric in the world	180	1, 3-5
Global rhetorical tradition	200	2-4
Presentation	100	4
Final reflection	100	3-5
Total	1000	

Community Engagement: Class Participation

For a class like this one, much of the learning happens in class because the most useful learning happens in community-- supporting and learning from one another. Therefore, it is imperative you be in class and participate as best you can. Think of it as a responsibility to our community. In general, class participation entails: (1) demonstrating that you've completed the readings/assignments, (2) contributing to class discussions, (3) completing in-class activities and assignments, and (4) supporting all your community members.

Reflective Practice (on-going): Reading Responses

Your reading responses are primarily reflective writing. The prompt is simple: what value did you get from the readings and/or what did it echo for you? Addressing this question could take an infinite number of forms, but the goal is to think with writers, scholars, and/or class community members in order for you to put yourself and your experiences in relation to the course materials, including those you might feel little to no interest in.

Please post your responses on Canvas by **12:01am on Thursday morning**. These responses are worth 10 points. You will earn 10 points for a good faith effort. By "good-faith effort," I mean the submission responds appropriately to the assignment and does not violate the academic integrity policy. A post that I judge to not be a "good-faith effort" may receive fewer than 10 points. A post that makes a particularly useful or insightful contribution to our collective inquiry can potentially earn more than 10 points.

Situating Yourself: Ancestor Acknowledgment

The Ancestor Acknowledgement asks you to tell us who you are by telling us what community you came from. It is a practice of acknowledging the systems of support in which you grew and to which you pay respect as a student and scholar. We're going to spend a significant amount of time in the first half of the semester reading about the Greeks and the Romans, &tc., but very few of us can trace our lineages back to 500BCE Athens. We can and do, however, regularly trace our lineages back to the communities we come from—families (biological and chosen), friends, neighborhoods, intellectual traditions, race, ethnicity, gender, and so on. In other words, it doesn't have to be a formal community. You're selecting and defining the community that helped bring you to this place. If the conventional history of rhetoric grounds itself in a particular intellectual tradition, locating other traditions requires us to identify different communities and stories and imagine different intellectual trajectories. Your Ancestor Acknowledgement will begin this work. We'll talk more about this assignment throughout the semester.

Applying Knowledge: Rhetoric in the World

For this assignment you will select **THREE OR MORE** cultural texts, which you locate "in the wild." No restrictions. They could all be similar in form or rhetorical appeals but otherwise unrelated to one another. They could all be different approaches to the same argument/issue. They could be elements of a heated argument. For that matter, they could be three completely random texts, which would be an adventure. In any case, the choice is yours. Using concepts from our class readings, you'll conduct a comparative rhetorical analysis that helps your readers (i.e., me and your classmates) appreciate the key rhetorical elements that connect your texts meaningfully. You're making an argument here—using rhetorical methods, rhetorical concepts, and cultural texts, you're arguing for a particular meaning based on relationships. This assignment may extend your Ancestor Acknowledgment or it may take a completely different angle. The goal here is to notice rhetoric at work in the world around you in ways that the conventional rhetorical tradition might help you explain.

Creating Knowledge: Global Rhetorical Tradition

This assignment is an extension of the Ancestor Acknowledgement (which asks you to situate yourself in a specific community) and the Rhetoric in the World assignment (which asks you to connect a specific intellectual tradition to your lived experience). This assignment asks you to build on those prior insights to connect your community to a broader rhetorical tradition. In short, you're developing a narrative that draws the personal to the communal to the intellectual to the global. Fun, huh?

For this assignment, you will locate a minimum of **FIVE** texts (though you're welcome to select more) that help to contextualize your and your community's relationship to rhetoric. At least **THREE** of your texts should be from outside our assigned class materials, but you may feel free to define "text" broadly—they could be ancient artifacts, academic articles, popular songs, clothing styles, podcasts, dances, fables, and so on. Then you'll write a short essay (3-5 pages, or so, though you shouldn't feel constrained by length) that helps explain the narrative as you envision it.

Think of this almost as a proposal—if you set out to study your community's rhetorical tradition(s), what paths would you start down? The goal is to help locate your chosen community in relation to the study and practice of rhetoric in order to extend the field in potentially new ways.

Sharing Knowledge: Presentation

You'll essentially report on your Global Rhetorical Tradition. You'll have up to 15 minutes to help us get to know your community and its relationship to rhetoric. You are welcome to incorporate pieces of your reading responses, Ancestor Acknowledgement, and/or Rhetoric in the World assignment as you see fit.

Metacognitive Practice: Final Reflection

For scholars, the purpose of reflection is to revisit our own work and capture learning that may carry forward from one learning event/task to the next. Reflection is a crucial part of a student's and scholar's career, and it is especially important when what you're doing doesn't *obviously* align with your next classes, research projects, or intellectual endeavors. Your final assignment in this course is a reflection.

Drawing on the assignments you completed in this course, you will write a reflection (no more than 1500 words) in which you describe to me your evolution as a scholar in the history of rhetoric. Your reflection essay should explain to me the experience of reading unfamiliar materials, of working in a community of researchers, of developing new lines of inquiry, and of presenting your work (even when it's clearly not in a "finished" stage).

I will read this essay to understand how you interpret your own development in this course. As you tackle this challenge, you will want to keep in mind our expected course outcomes, as well as the program's outcomes. Bear in mind, the goal is to interpret your *development*, not necessarily a steady course of progress. Which is to say, your best argument may be about progress as a rhetorical historian/historical rhetorician, but maybe not. Maybe you can make a better case that you developed meta-awareness about your own learning habits, or about your intellectual preferences (even if they weren't incorporated in this class), or even about your limits.

As you tackle this challenge, it will be useful to draw on specific examples from your own work in the class, including:

- Any discussion posts critical to your development as a rhetorical reader of history
- The major assignments
- Class discussions, activities, community engagements

How and where might the learning outcomes be interpreted, contested, extended, qualified, refined, to account for your adaptation as a scholar of rhetorical history? A successful reflection will help us both arrive at some new understanding of and appreciation for the learning you achieved in the course.

EXTRA CREDIT

There *may* be an opportunity for extra credit if I can get it arranged in time involving a rhetorician or two from local universities. Stay tuned, and feel free to ask about details.

✓ Grading Information

Official policy...

All work must be submitted on time. Unexcused late work will be graded down a full letter grade for every day it is late. If there is a reason you cannot make a deadline, contact me BEFORE THE DEADLINE. You must turn in all assignments to pass the class.

However...

Seriously, if something comes up, talk to me. I'm more concerned about your learning than your punctuality, so if there's an issue, let's see what we can figure out together. I want you to get the chance to learn and earn the grade you want. I want you to be a member of the class community, even if sometimes you have to step back for a minute. I want you to walk away from this class with a sense that you got something from it that you can carry with you. So let's make that our guiding light and bend the official policy around it.

Breakdown

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>930 to 1000</i>	<i>93 to 100%</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>900 to 929</i>	<i>90 to 92%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>870 to 899</i>	<i>87 to 89 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>830 to 829</i>	<i>83 to 85%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>800 to 829</i>	<i>80 to 82%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>760 to 799</i>	<i>77 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>730 to 759</i>	<i>73 to 75%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>700 to 729</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>660 to 699</i>	<i>67 to 69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>630 to 659</i>	<i>63 to 65%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>600 to 629</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Calendar subject to change with fair warning

Readings listed should be read **BEFORE** class

Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are on Canvas

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	1/26	<p>Due: none</p> <p>During Class: Introductions, syllabus, our intellectual task, Ancestor Acknowledgment (Skinnell)</p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
2	2/2	<p>Before class: Read Herrick, Ch. 1 (pp. 1-24)</p> <p>Due: Respond to Canvas Discussion Board #1 before 12:01AM on the day of class</p> <p>During Class: Discussion of reading, "The" history of rhetoric and the rhetorical situation (https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1556881/pages/readings), ancestor acknowledgement</p>
3	2/9	<p>Before class: Read selections of Herrick, Chs. 2-5 (pp. 32-35, 38-45, 52-56, 81-86, 101-111)</p> <p>Due: Respond to Canvas Discussion Board #2 before 12:01AM on the day of class</p> <p>During Class: Discussion of reading,</p>
4	2/16	<p>CLASS WILL NOT BE MEETING THIS WEEK. SKINNELL IS AT A CONFERENCE IN CHICAGO.</p> <p>Before class: Read Herrick, ch. 11 (pp. 276-284) AND any text (or more than one) from the Global Rhetorics list (https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1556881/pages/global-rhetorics-readings-a-very-small-sampling).</p> <p>Due: Respond to Canvas Discussion Board #3 before 12:01AM on the day of class</p> <p>During Class: Complete the "Ancestor Acknowledgement Invention" assignment; complete the "Select to Global Tradition essays" discussion board.</p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
5	2/23	<p>Before class: Read Herrick, Chs. 6-8 (pp. 131-138, 160-163, 172-178, 185-191)</p> <p>Due: Respond to Canvas Discussion Board #4 before 12:01AM on the day of class; submit a working draft of your Ancestor Acknowledgment any time before class begins.</p> <p>During Class: Peer Review; rhetoric's boring phase; global rhetorical traditions</p>
6	3/2	<p>Before class: Read Cruz Medina, "Digital Latinx Storytelling: testimonio as Multimodal Resistance"; and Cruz Medina, "The Family Profession"</p> <p>Due: Respond to Canvas Discussion Board #5 before 12:01AM on the day of class</p> <p>During Class: We will meet at Mosaic in the Student Union because Cruz Medina is going to join us to give a talk and discuss his work in Critical Race Theory, culturally sustaining pedagogies, and multicultural digital storytelling.</p>
7	3/9	<p>Before class: Herrick, chs. 9-10 (pp. 208-218, 230-246)</p> <p>Due: Respond to Canvas Discussion Board #6 before 12:01AM on the day of class; submit the polished draft of your Ancestor Acknowledgment any time before class.</p> <p>During Class: Rhetoric in the world</p>
8	3/16	<p>Before class: Take a deep breath</p> <p>Due: Respond to Canvas Discussion Board #7 before 12:01AM on the day of class</p> <p>During Class: Rhetoric scavenger hunt; rhetoric in the world proposal/draft</p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
9	3/23	<p>Before class: Aja Y. Martinez, "A Plea for Critical Race Theory Counterstory" (posted on the Readings (https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1556881/pages/readings) page)</p> <p>Due: Respond to Canvas Discussion Board #8 before 12:01AM on the day of class; submit a working draft/proposal of your Rhetoric in the World project any time before class.</p> <p>During Class: Peer review, what's rhetoric doing in the world?, what can we do about it?</p>
10	3/30	SPRING BREAK
11	4/6	<p>Before class: Read Malea Powell, "Learning (Teaching) to Teach (Learn)"; Jim Corder, "Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love" (both posted on the Readings (https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1556881/pages/readings) page)</p> <p>Due: Respond to Canvas Discussion Board #9 before 12:01AM on the day of class</p> <p>During Class: What's everybody arguing about, anyway?</p>
12	4/13	<p>Before class: Read TBD</p> <p>Due: Respond to Canvas Discussion Board #10 before 12:01AM on the day of class; submit polished draft of Rhetoric in the World any time before class</p> <p>During Class: Discussion of reading</p>
13	4/20	<p>Before class: Read TBD</p> <p>Due: Respond to Canvas Discussion Board #11 before 12:01AM on the day of class</p> <p>During Class: Discussion of reading</p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
14	4/27	<p>Before class: Read TBD</p> <p>Due: Respond to Canvas Discussion Board #12 before 12:01AM on the day of class; submit a working draft of your Global Rhetorical Tradition any time before class.</p> <p>During Class: Discussion of reading</p>
15	5/4	<p>During Class: PRESENTATIONS</p>
16	5/11	<p>Due: submit polished draft of your Global Rhetorical Tradition any time before class.</p> <p>During Class: PRESENTATIONS</p>
Final Exam	TUES, 5/23	<p>FO 104, 2:45-5:00pm</p> <p>Due by the end of the exam period Final Reflection</p>