

What Is Rhetoric?

English 3050: Sladky

Due Wednesday, August 27, 11:59 PM

In a discussion post, address the following:

What is rhetoric? Find a definition of rhetoric or write your own definition of rhetoric. Then, share your definition with the class in a short presentation.

Explain what you think this definition means and why you think it is significant now. Be prepared with the following information:

- Introduce yourself.
- The definition.
- Cite your definition: where did you find it? (MLA works cited format.)
- Who said it?
- How does the definition relate to what you know to be true about writing and speech in the contemporary world, or in the realms that you write and/or speak?
- Do you agree or disagree with this definition? Why?
- Consider Booth's chapter, "How Many Rhetorics?" in what ways does Booth shed light on your definition of rhetoric or add to your understanding of rhetoric?

Quote and Question, Question and Quote Prompt

English 3050: Sladky

The ancient rhetorician Cato said "*Rem tene, verba sequuntur*," or, "Hold the thing, the words will follow." The writer Flannery O'Connor wrote: "I write to discover what I know." In other words, the best way to prepare for class discussions is to read the assigned readings and write something about them. Each class (mostly) there will be a quote/question reading response discussion post where you will write a reflection about the reading.

You have two options for formatting this post. You may follow a quote and then question format or answer a peer's question and then identify an interesting quote.

1. Identify a **quote** that you found interesting, explain why it is interesting to you, what it means to you, how it connects to something else we've read about in this class, how it connects to something that you've read about in another class. Identify a **question** that you have about the reading.
 - Construct open ended questions. How? Why? What? Open ended questions foster discussion more readily than yes/no questions.
 - Ask a question that ties rhetoric and rhetorical history to one of your interests.

- Ask a question comparing/contrasting rhetoric and rhetorical history to the present moment, or between two time periods.
 - Ask a question that examines a personal experience: what do you think about ___? How would you respond to ____? What would you do in ___ situation?
2. **Answer** a peer's **question** or speculate as to what the answer might be. Show your thinking or reasoning as to why you think what you think. Then identify a **quote** that you found interesting from the reading, explain why it's interesting, what it means to you, how it connects to something we've read in class or that you've read elsewhere.
- This option is meant to create a way to respond to one another and create a conversation in the discussion board posts.

The purpose of this is to help you figure out what you find interesting about the course material, what you want/need to know more about, what annoys you, what you don't like, and how you feel about what you're reading. It is also meant to help you make connections between the history of rhetoric and the world as we know it now. Everything we know about writing and rhetoric today, started thousands of years ago.

N.B. This will also help you figure out what you might want to explore for your final project in this class.

Exploratory Writing Assignment: Encomium English 3050: Dr. Sladky

Encomium due: **Wed. Oct. 8, by 11:59 PM**

Invent, organize, and write a classical encomium on a figure important to rhetorical history and from the course so far. You will prepare a paper of praise or blame (insult) of a rhetorical figure. This is an opportunity to think about who we study already and who we should study *more*.

Choose a figure mentioned in the Herrick text. Identify which figure you will write about before the project is due.

450-500 words.

Includes formal reflection.

Guidelines:

Your encomium should follow the general [outline](#) of an encomium.

The encomium praises or blames (insults) one rhetorical figure.

The encomium reflects an understanding of the historical figure, time period, their importance to the history of rhetoric, and your interest in the topic.

Revise and edit as needed.

There is room to be creative, and you can discuss your rhetorical moves in your reflection piece.

MLA style format; 12-pt. font; Times New Roman; double-spaced.

Works Cited page for any sources used, including course textbook.

Include screenshots of any AI prompts that you used in the process of writing this assignment.

How do you write an encomium?

Consider the [outline](#).

Are there examples of an encomium I can look at?

[Encomium on Helen](#)

Pericles' Funeral Oration

[Gettysburg Address](#)

MLK Jr.'s "I have a dream..." [speech](#)

RFK's "[Remarks on the assassination of MLK](#)"

Critical Reflection:

For a critical reflection, you will write a response to the following questions that is about 2 paragraphs or 1 page (**500 words**). Use the questions as guidance for you. Be sure to cite specific examples from your project to illustrate each point. Also, make sure to use effective transitions and links between paragraphs to connect your ideas in one cohesive writing.

1. Give background on your topic and explain its importance to you.
2. What audience did you intend to inform and what research did you find to develop your topic? What new conclusions have you drawn after conducting your research and then composing your exploratory writing assignment?
3. How did you incorporate rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos), and the rhetorical concepts of exigency and constraints, into your project?
4. Reflect on the production process for creating your encomium:
 - a. How did the affordances of this medium help you deliver your message?
 - b. How easy was it to create a text in this genre? Did you have to learn new technology?
 - c. What did you like most about your delivery? What surprised you or went wrong? What would you change if you had more time?
5. What skills/techniques do you feel you learned and/or improved during the process?

Exploratory Writing Assignment: Patronage Letter

English 3050: Sladky

Letter due: **Wed., Oct. 29, by 11:59 PM**

You've learned a lot about the history of rhetoric, particularly society and persuasion, the turn toward written composition, and the understanding of the mind from the second half of this course! **Write a letter** where you ask a member of nobility or another prominent person for support for a rhetorical venture of your choice, such as a new scientific society to a journey of discovery. Consider the genre, what conventions have we noticed about letters and the style of writing associated with them and the rhetorical moves? Consider your means of persuasion as you construct your letter. You will need to conduct research mostly based in your textbook to help you find a viable project and consider types of arguments that were likely to be effective given your audience.

Choose and report on topic/figures from the Herrick text before due date.

450-500 words.

Includes formal reflection.

Formatting guidelines:

Your letter should follow the conventions of the genre.

Your audience is clear.

It is clear *why* you are writing, i.e. your purpose is clear.

You engage with rhetorical strategies (including rhetorical appeals).

MLA style format; 12-pt. font; Times New Roman; double-spaced.

Works Cited page for any sources used, including course textbook.

Include screenshots of any AI prompts you used during this project.

Resources for Patronage Letters:

["Being a Patron of the Arts in the Digital Age"](#)

["Creative Funding: Letter Writing for Patrons and Sponsors"](#)

["Women of Letters"](#)

["Republic of Letters"](#)

["An Age of Patronage"](#)

["Patronage of the Arts"](#)

Critical Reflection:

For a critical reflection, you will write a response to the following questions that is about 2 paragraphs or 1 page (**500 words**). Use the questions as guidance for you. Be sure to cite specific examples from your project to illustrate each point. Also, make sure to use effective transitions and links between paragraphs to connect your ideas in one cohesive writing.

1. Give background on your topic and explain its importance to you.
2. What audience did you intend to inform and what research did you find to develop your topic? What new conclusions have you drawn after conducting your research and then composing your exploratory writing assignment?

3. How did you incorporate rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos), and the rhetorical concepts of exigency and constraints, into your project?
4. Reflect on the production process for creating your patronage letter:
 - a. How did the affordances of this medium help you deliver your message?
 - b. How easy was it to create a text in this genre? Did you have to learn new technology?
 - c. What did you like most about your delivery? What surprised you or went wrong? What would you change if you had more time?
5. What skills/techniques do you feel you learned and/or improved during the process?

Available Means Composition

ENGL 3050: Dr. Sladky

Due Date: Wed. Nov. 12, 11:59 PM

Your task for this assignment is to critically engage with a primary text written by a rhetorician in history. For this project, we limit “who” those rhetoricians are to women, whose written or spoken words are included in the *Available Means* anthology (Ritchie and Ronald). This gives you a wide array of voices to engage with, from fifth century BCE to 1999.

This collection emphasizes a wide variety of location, purpose, audience, and *means* of persuasion. Whether they aim to persuade is also entirely contingent on the other exigencies around them in time and place. Where and why are they writing? For whom? What was their intended outcome or purpose? These are questions you will engage.

FORM

Your composition will take the form of an infographic. This handout with visuals should include the sections required, organized to best share your findings with your audience—your colleagues and professor. Your audience may be hearing about this rhetor for the first time. You have a limited amount of space to complete this task, and so you want to make sure that everything you include is clear, concise, and important to you point.

REQUIRED ELEMENTS: WHO, TOPOI, MEANS

Please include the following elements in your composition:

1. **Introduce the text and author.** Who is the author/rhetor who wrote this primary text? When were they living, and what social, gender, class, and racial factors are informing their position?
2. **What is the text?** Is it a speech, an essay, an article, something else?
3. **What is the context for the text?** Address *kairos* here! Who is the audience that the text addresses? What is the rhetor’s purpose behind the text?

4. **Identify the *topoi* of their written or spoken text.** As women add to the canon of rhetoric, new *topoi* are added – topics/places from which arguments can be made. Which places/spaces/topics are present in the primary text you selected? This is also a good space to explore how the author is accommodating their context in time and place. Also a great space to explore the subversive nature of women rhetors in history, and to what extent your text/author in question may be exercising subversion.
5. **Identify the means used by this rhetor.** This can include logos, ethos, pathos, kairos, but also includes many more, less “traditional” appeals. Though excluded from traditional forms and spaces of rhetoric for much of history, women were still exercising their available means to speak, and those look different over time. Think critically here to imagine their means.
6. **What are your key takeaways?** Why do you think that the *topoi* and means are effective, or not?

N.B. A key to success: be sure that you use “quotes” from the text. When you use a quote, don’t just let it speak for itself: you must explain why you think it’s effective. If you think a phrase is an effective example of *pathos*, explain why you think so.

Critical Reflection:

For a critical reflection, you will write a response to the following questions that is about 2 paragraphs or 1 page (**500 words**). Use the questions as guidance for you. Be sure to cite specific examples from your project to illustrate each point. Also, make sure to use effective transitions and links between paragraphs to connect your ideas in one cohesive writing.

1. Give background on your topic and explain its importance to you.
2. What audience did you intend to inform and what research did you find to develop your topic? What new conclusions have you drawn after conducting your research and then composing your exploratory writing assignment?
3. How did you incorporate rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos), and the rhetorical concepts of exigency and constraints, into your project?
4. Reflect on the production process for creating your visual infographic:
 - a. How did the affordances of this medium help you deliver your message?
 - b. How easy was it to create a text in this genre? Did you have to learn new technology?
 - c. What did you like most about your delivery? What surprised you or went wrong? What would you change if you had more time?
5. What skills/techniques do you feel you learned and/or improved during the process?

GRADING – How to succeed in this assignment

Please use MLA format for citations, please include at least one citation outside our class texts (Herrick & *Available Means*).

I will be grading based on how deeply you've engaged with the primary text and how you translate that thinking to your composition to share with the class. In other words, this is your chance to also be a successful rhetor.

Think about the rhetorical tools at your disposal:

- Consideration of audience
- The five canons (invention, arrangement, style, memory, delivery)
- The rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos, Kairos)
- Matters of contingency
- Questions of power
- Is your purpose to persuade, to inform, to delight?

Rubric:

Criteria	Points
Clearly introduce the text and author.	10 pts.
Clearly identify context, kairos, audience, and purpose for text.	15 pts.
Clearly identify and explain the <i>topoi</i> /places of the text. These might be unexpected, subversive, or different from traditional places rhetoric takes place.	20 pts.
Identify and explain the means used by the rhetoric: ethos, pathos, logos, kairos, and	25 pts.

other means that women use. Explain the effectiveness of these strategies (don't just state that the rhetor uses them).	
MLA works cited page in addition to the Infographic; cite the <i>Available Means</i> text and one other outside source. Submit screenshots of AI prompts you consulted.	10 pts.
Critical Reflection	20 pts.

Rhetorical Multimodal Final Project

English 3050: Sladky

Final Project Due: Mon. Dec. 8, 11:59 PM

What to submit:

1. **Multimodal Resource** delivered electronically in draft and final form: e.g. flyer, pamphlet, movie poster and synopsis, wiki, updates to a Wikipedia page, blog, prezi, powerpoint, recording, web link, etc.
2. Consider a specific rhetorical figure or concept or the history of rhetoric in general. (You might use this as an opportunity to explain why we should study a figure, concept, or subject in general.)
3. Consider your audience: your professor and classmates.
4. **Project reflection**, due with Final Project (1-2 pages double spaced, standard formatting) addressing these questions:
 - What content are you most proud of? What aspects of delivery or design?
 - How would you rate the quality of your final project? What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of your work on the project?
 - How does your choice of form and method of distribution work well for your intended audience? Do you think your multimodal choices will help your audience respond to your content better than a primarily linguistic document?
 - How would you rate your effectiveness in the production, writing, and editing process? Provide one or two specific examples to support your rating.

Your effort will involve primary and/or secondary research outside of class; a minimum of five research sources must be used, one of which can be our textbook. Another of these sources could be an interview or informal survey. Web-based publications, trade information, and scholarly materials are all good resources for the project.

The criteria for assessment of the research report include the following:

- Focused on topic related to rhetoric
- Content makes sense for the format and medium you choose for the delivery of your project
- Developed focus, including an informative thesis or persuasive claim
- Adequate research to support thesis/claim and to provide value content
- Documented research sources (MLA or other approved format for citations and works cited page)
- Well-written and edited content
- Thoughtful design and editing of content, design, and delivery for an audience

Rubric for final project

Criteria	Comments
Project Proposal	
Topic relevance to rhetoric / course themes (10)	
Content makes sense for format and medium; Informative thesis or persuasive claim (20)	
Adequate research to support thesis/claim, valuable content shared with professor and peers (20)	
Documented research sources (5 minimum); MLA format & MLA works cited page (10)	
Well-written and edited content (10)	
Thoughtful design and editing of content, design, and delivery for an audience (10)	
Project Reflection (20)	

This project is worth 25% of your total course grade. The proposal you submitted is counted as pass/fail into that final grade.

Final Reflection - worth 5% of your total grade - an easy way to earn that last 5 percent.

This is separate from your test, but you can include it in the same or a separate document based on your preference. You can upload both to the same folder if they are separate.

In a few paragraphs, provide a reflection on our course together this semester. This can include the following considerations (but does not need to include all of them!):

- What content was useful? What content felt less relevant?
- What did you wish we spent more time on?
- How did you feel about course assignments?
- How did you feel about the online discussion space?
- Where do you see this class fitting into the rest of your degree program?
- Overall, do you feel like you gained knowledge about what rhetoric is, and why it's useful to study?
- Overall, do you feel like this course encouraged you to think critically?
- What could be changed to better facilitate critical thinking about the history, theory, and application of rhetoric?
- **Overall, what are your feelings and takeaways from this class?**