Comm 681: Classical Rhetorical Theory  
Spring 2011

Instructor:  
Dr. Tom Heeney  
9 College Way, Room 207  
Phone: 953-3859, E-mail: heeneyt@cofc.edu  
Hours: T/Tr 1-3:00 & by appointment

Required texts:  
James D. Williams, ed., *An Introduction to Classical Rhetoric: Essential Readings* (W)  
John Poulakos, *Sophistical Rhetoric in Classical Greece.* (P)

Philosophy & Policies:  
As a graduate seminar, and an introduction to the area of classical rhetorical theory, we will combine a close reading of primary texts (in translation), with contemporary commentary and scholarship. This will be a difficult and rewarding exercise. I do not assume you have necessarily read any of these thinkers before, but I do assume as a graduate student in the humanities that you have the combination of analytic and research skills that will facilitate your discovery and understanding. And these texts are indeed the ‘classics’ of western intellectual discourse, and inform thinking and discussion beyond the modern boundaries of any particular ‘discipline.’ So as a sophisticated reader in 21st century America, bound as we are to current events, it will also be instructive to look back and discuss what ‘well-furnished minds’ thought worth knowing.

As a seminar, I will rely on your being prepared each session to discuss our assigned reading, and that in addition you will be able to use the bibliographies and other typical search tools to produce various written assignments.

Grades:  
Your course grade will be a final formulaic combination of written assignments and class discussion. Your major written assignments are outlined below:

- 3 short (10-12 page) topical research reviews (100 points each) ……….300  
- 1 revision of short paper (15-20 pages)…………………………………….100  
- Attendance and participation………………………………………………….500

These combine for a total of 500 possible points, and the final grade will be determined by the following brackets:
A = 100-90%; B+ = 89-86%; B = 85-80%; C+ = 79-76%; C = 75-70%; D+ = 69-66%; D = 65-60%

Tentative Syllabus & Reading assignments:


1-20 Classical Rhetoric as Foundation:

1-27 Read: W Chapter 1 & 2 (all), Gorgias “Encomium on Helen” (A 251-256).

2-3 Sophistic Rhetoric and Language: Visualizing Persuasion

2-10 Read: W Chapter 3 (all); Aristotle *Poetics* (A 275-277); Aristotle *On Rhetoric, Book 3* (A
193-229); Isocrates “Against the Sophists” and “Antidosis” (A 266-269), Poulakos, *Sophistical Rhetoric in Classical Greece*, (all).

2-17  **Paper one due:** “Sophistical Rhetoric in Modern Times”

2-17  **Plato**
Read *W* Chapter 4

2-24  **Aristotle**
3-3  Read *W* Chapter 5, Kennedy Introduction (A)

3-17  **Paper two due:** Myth or Reason, Drama or Analysis?

3-17  **Rhetoric and Rome: Law, Republic, and Letters**
3-24  Read: *W* Chapters 6 & 7

3-31  **Poetry and Pedagogy**
Read: *W* Chapters 8 & 9

4-7  **Paper three due: open topic**

4-14  **Rhetoric and Rome: Late** Empire, Statecraft, Character, and Religion
4-21  Read: *W* Chapter 10

4-28  **Final: the final research paper due**