



Bodies Of Persuasion

Space: 029 State Hall
Time: Tuesdays, 6-9 PM
Instructor: Dr. Jeff Pruchnic
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Description

When Aristotle defined deductive reasoning as “the body of persuasion” in the Rhetoric he largely purged the discipline of its preexisting concern with the connection between physical embodiment and forces of persuasion. During the past decade these repressed elements — and their related structures of affect, performativity, materiality, and sensation — have returned with a vengeance to rhetorical studies. In this seminar we will examine both the importance of embodiment to the origins of rhetoric as well as its more current return(s): how the body has emerged as a problem for critical thought in the past and the questions it provokes for rhetoric, politics, and ethics in the present.

Requirements

Seminar Paper (50%): The major requirement for this course is a 20-30 page seminar paper of “publishable” quality. Although you will have fairly free reign in choosing your topic, all papers must be focused on rhetoric and/or the body and have some connection to the ideas we will be discussing in this course. I am more than happy to help you develop your topic and approach throughout the semester; however, unlike your health insurance carrier, I assume you have pre-existing conditions: a research itinerary or interests that can be molded into a project for this course.

Conference-Style Presentation (20%): Your seminar paper will also be the basis for a 15-20 minute, conference-style presentation, that will be delivered during one or our two final meetings.

Weekly Responses (20%): Each week you will compose a response to the material under review and we will begin each class by reading and discussing these responses. As we progress further in the course, these responses may also intersect with your work on the seminar paper. Soft copies of these responses will also be due to the course blog within 48 hours after our class meeting.

Book Presentation (10%): Two books have been selected for each class meeting from the third week onward (listed in the smaller font in the schedule). You will select one of these texts (or one of your own choosing that I have approved) to “present” to the class in a 15-20 minute discussion of how it intersects or impacts our course trajectory and why it might be useful to other members of the course.

Schedule

Week 2

Epictetus: “On Adornment”

Gorgias: “Encomium to Helen”

Plato: *The Sophist*

Plato: *The Gorgias*

Plutarch: “How to Tell a Flatterer From a Friend”

Week 3

Hawhee: *Bodily Arts* (2005)

Jeffrey Walker — *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* (2000)

Janet M. Atwill — *Rhetoric Reclaimed* (1998)

Week 4

Nietzsche: *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872)

Nietzsche: “The Greek State” (1872) and “Homer’s Contest” (1872)

Maffesoli: “The Return of the Tragic in Postmodern Societies” (2004)

Jacques Attali — *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (1985)

Michel Maffesoli — *The Contemplation of the World: Figures of Community Style* (1996)

Week 5

Kenneth Burke: *Permanence and Change* (1935)

Elaine Scarry — *The Body in Pain* (1987)

William E. Connolly — *Neuropolitics* (2002)

Week 6

Deleuze: “Desire and Pleasure” (1977)
Deleuze: “Postscript on the Societies of Control” (1992)
Deleuze/Negri: “Control and Becoming” (1990)
Foucault: *Discipline and Punish* (1975)
Foucault – *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (2005)
Alexander R. Galloway – *Protocol* (2004)

Week 7

Rotman: “Becoming Beside Oneself” (1999)
Rotman: “Corporeal of Gesturo-Haptic Writing” (2002)
Rotman: “Ghost Effects” (2004)
Rotman: “Going Parallel” (2000)
Rotman: “The Alphabetic Body” (2002)
Marshall McLuhan – *Understanding Media* (1964)
Mark B. N. Hansen – *New Philosophy for New Media* (2006)

Week 8

Richard Doyle: *Wetwares!* (2003)
Steven Shaviro – *Connected* (2003)
N. Katherine Hayles – *How We Became Posthuman* (1999)

Week 9

J. L. Austen: *How to Do Things with Words* (1975)
Judith Butler: *Gender Trouble* (1990; excerpt)
Judith Butler: *Bodies That Matter* (1993; excerpt)
Kafka: “Before the Law” (1920)
Kafka: “A Report to an Academy” (1917)
Jeffrey T. Nealon – *Alterity Politics* (1998)
Mladen Dolar – *A Voice and Nothing More* (2006)

Week 10

Affect Readings TBA
Teresa Brennan – *The Transmission of Affect* (2004)
Lauren Berlant – *Compassion* (2004)

Week 11

“Hands” Readings TBA
Deleuze/Guattari – *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980)
Agamben – *Homo Sacer* (1998)

Week 12

Jonathan Beller: *The Cinematic Mode of Production* (2007)

Ranciere — *The Future of the Image* (2007)

Laura U. Marks — *The Skin of the Film* (1999)

Weeks 13 & 14

Conference-Style Presentations