Rhetoric

Chair
  • Steve Duck

Undergraduate minor: rhetoric and persuasion
Faculty: https://clas.uiowa.edu/rhetoric/people
Website: https://clas.uiowa.edu/rhetoric/

The Department of Rhetoric offers undergraduate courses that fulfill the Rhetoric requirement of the different colleges at the University; see GE CLAS Core in the Catalog. It also provides individual instruction in its Writing Center, Speaking Center, Conversation Center, and the Iowa Digital Engagement and Learning Initiative (IDEAL) multimodal composition studio and offers other undergraduate courses, graduate seminars, and an undergraduate minor.

Rhetoric for the GE CLAS Core

Rhetoric courses help students to develop skills in speaking, writing, listening, and critical reading. They also build competence in research and inquiry as well as in analysis and persuasion, starting with public controversies in their social contexts and generalizing to all forms of idea presentation, whether academic readings, everyday debates, media messages, or student papers. Writing and speaking skills are emphasized and developed.

All rhetoric classes follow specific department goals, but each instructor uses a unique set of texts and contexts to teach rhetorical concepts. Rhetoric courses are sometimes organized around a special topic, such as the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), nursing, or law, but the primary emphasis is always on responsible inquiry and analysis. Some course sections involve special activities, such as service-learning components, but the workload across all sections is comparable, with a fixed number of major assignments and a department-approved library of readings.

During their first year at the University, students enroll in the rhetoric course indicated on their degree audit unless they are required to complete one or more prerequisite courses in English as a Second Language (ESL) as a result of their English proficiency evaluation.

Students planning to transfer to the University of Iowa should discuss rhetoric course equivalencies as soon as possible with the University of Iowa Office of Admissions. To learn more about the GE CLAS Core requirement, see GE CLAS Core in the Catalog.

Students who undergo formal evaluation by Student Disability Services and are found to be learning disabled in reading, writing, or speaking should request reasonable accommodations in order to complete rhetoric. Accommodations may be arranged by Student Disability Services in consultation with the Department of Rhetoric and individual instructors.

Programs

Undergraduate Program of Study

Minor
  • Minor in Rhetoric and Persuasion

Courses

Rhetoric Courses

RHET:1000 First-Year Seminar  1-2 s.h.
Small discussion class taught by a faculty member; topics chosen by instructor; may include outside activities (e.g., films, lectures, performances, readings, visits to research facilities). Requirements: first- or second-semester standing.

RHET:1010 Writing for Academic Success  0-2 s.h.
Individualized instruction in the Writing Center; in conjunction with GE CLAS Core Rhetoric courses.

RHET:1020 Reading and Comprehension  3 s.h.
Transitional course to help prepare students for RHET:1030, focusing specifically on reading and comprehension strategies, and foundational writing strategies.

RHET:1030 Rhetoric  4-5 s.h.
Analysis and critique to discover, question, explain, and justify positions and claims made in writing and speaking; reading and listening to comprehend and assess arguments; employment of rhetorical concepts (e.g., purpose, audience); understanding research as responsible inquiry for speaking and writing; special topics, activities. Requirements: completion of any required ESL courses. GE: Rhetoric.

RHET:1040 Writing and Reading  3 s.h.
Introductory course in writing required of students who have completed a college-level public speaking course, but have not otherwise satisfied the rhetoric requirement. Requirements: completion of GE CLAS Core speaking requirement and any required ESL courses. GE: Rhetoric - Writing.

RHET:1060 Speaking and Reading  3 s.h.
Introductory course in speaking required of students who have completed 6 s.h. of college writing instruction, but have not completed a 3 s.h. college-level speaking course; intended to improve speaking, listening, critical, analytical, and advocacy skills. Requirements: completion of GE CLAS Core writing requirement and any required ESL courses. GE: Rhetoric - Speech.

RHET:2000 Big Ideas: Creativity for a Lifetime  3 s.h.
Exploration of what senior artists can teach about creativity and aging; interdisciplinary project-based collaborative learning opportunities that consider role of arts and creativity across a lifespan; essential skills necessary to be professionals in numerous careers including health, social work, education, humanities, and the arts; integration of teamwork and opportunities for individual growth that allow for personal development; identification of ways for students to be more creative in their own lives and work. GE: Values and Culture. Same as ARTS:2000, ASP:2000, EDTL:2000.

RHET:2031 Desire, Consent, and Sex in U.S. Culture(s): Replacing Coercion and Violence with Respect  3 s.h.
Exploration of desire, sex, consent, and sexual violence in practical and theoretical dimensions; recent demands by students to change the way sexual violence is addressed; theory and sources from popular media; lectures by scholars, activists, and professionals; sexual violence, rape culture, and sexuality-based oppression confronted with academic/therapeutic/political knowledge; real world strategies to help better understand and combat sexual violence, theories. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060. Same as GWSS:2000.
RHET:2055 Persuasion and Advocacy 3 s.h.
History of women’s rhetoric in the West and ways in which these approaches can be adapted to modern demands; strategies of prominent women rhetors analyzed from antiquity to present; how our own historical moment constrains, shapes, and enables women’s public speaking and writing today; projects that take advantage of multimodal presentation platforms and apply insights from class to causes of interest to UI students; enables students from all disciplinary and professional backgrounds to improve persuasive skills relevant to their careers. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060. Same as GWSS:2055.

RHET:2065 Persuading Different Audiences: Launching a Successful Career 3 s.h.
Examination of ways people sway one another in different contexts; best means to impel a specific audience in a particular moment, recognizing that audiences and contexts are multiplied by technology; students critique current presentational techniques with special attention to how each succeeds or fails in its approach to relevant audiences; creation of multimodal projects for real world purposes (e.g., personal websites, persuasive video or audio essays, promotional project for local advocacy group, public performance); formal presentations on results of inquiry-guided research. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060.

RHET:2070 Persuasive Stories: The Cultural Phenomenon of the West 3 s.h.
Examination of the persuasive dimension of stories; students master the skill of storytelling by examining stories circulating within their culture and exploring the effects these stories have on thinking about their identities and discovering their own voices; integration of speaking and writing skills with persuasive storytelling skills through short oral and written assignments that lead to a final multimodal project of two interrelated storytelling assignments—production of a website and a podcast. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060.

RHET:2075 Digital Selves: Online Identities 3 s.h.
Production of a persuasive self in social media; issues of identity and performance in electronic forms. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060.

RHET:2085 Speaking Skills 3 s.h.
How to become confident and effective speakers; assignments include formal presentations and shorter, informal speaking activities; peer and instructor feedback help improve the impression students create as speakers; strengths developed include earning credibility, capturing and maintaining audience interest, and coming across as personable, professional, and confident. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060.

RHET:2090 Conversation Practicum 3 s.h.
Intercultural conversation with international students in small groups or pairs; readings, classroom discussions, and in-class training to develop cultural competence and related skills. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060.

RHET:2095 Fundamental Strategies of Persuasion 3 s.h.
Strategies of approaching persuasion in a variety of personal, professional, and communal contexts; fundamentals of persuasion including audience adaptation, creating reasoned and passionate appeals, conveying character, and enabling identification taught from perspective of production. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060. Requirements: completion of GE CLAS Core Rhetoric.

RHET:2250 Negotiation and Conflict Resolution 3 s.h.
Strategies of successful negotiation across a wide range of conflict situations; keys to success in peacefully resolving conflicts; personal, professional, legal, and political negotiations; apologizing; mediation as alternative to litigation; analysis of conflict characteristics to determine optimal negotiation strategies; development of negotiation interpersonal skills; practice negotiating under real world scenarios.

RHET:2400 Idea to Innovation 3 s.h.
Opportunity for creative, self-motivated students to begin making a difference in their communities today; examination of how cities and communities are organized spatially and socially; case studies detailing social innovators in a variety of disciplines; preparation to effectively communicate ideas to a broad range of audiences; identification of research opportunities, community partners, and mentors connected to students’ areas of interest with a goal of implementing innovative social change.

RHET:2610 Acting for Success 3 s.h.
How skills learned by actors in the theatre world can be applied to presentations and interactions in business, education, and beyond; business world reliance on technology for communication; ability to connect and communicate on a personal level with others as the x-factor to stand out as a team player and a leader; acting techniques traditionally used in theatre to open up communication in office and interviews; presentations and elevator pitches (armed with techniques to avoid stage fright); how to connect and bring authentic self to everything you do. Corequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060. GE: Engineering Be Creative. Same as THTR:2610.

RHET:2620 Body Language: Study of Movement and Gesture in Speaking 3 s.h.
How to effectively analyze and perform movement and gesture in public and interpersonal speaking situations; development of skills; use of movement and gesture in many types of public speeches including academic and professional presentations, political debates, ceremonial addresses, protest demonstrations; readings from classical treatises on oratory to recent social science research on nonverbal communication. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060.

RHET:2800 Social Media: Persuasion, Influence, Connection 3 s.h.
Developing social skills and networking; influence and power in social media, sharing and “trending”; themes of being connected and being isolated, privacy and surveillance. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060.

RHET:2993 Online Portfolio 2-3 s.h.
Practical training to create an online portfolio; creation of web page through WiX that gives a comprehensive view of student’s experience and aspirations to enter job market; personal and professional identity profiles (“about me”), WordPress blogs to reinforce personal/professional identity profiles, section or video with pertinent experience, résumé or a link to LinkedIn. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1060 or RHET:1040. Requirements: satisfaction of GE CLAS Core Rhetoric.
RHET:3009 Negotiation and Conflict Resolution 3 s.h.
Strategies of successful negotiation across a wide range of conflict situations; keys to success in peacefully resolving conflicts; personal, professional, legal, and political negotiations; apologizing; mediation as alternative to litigation; analysis of conflict characteristics to determine optimal negotiation strategies; development of negotiation interpersonal skills; practice negotiating under real world scenarios. Same as URP:3217.

RHET:3085 Advanced Speaking Skills 3 s.h.
Preparation for speaking as a leader; how to speak effectively, authoritatively, and eloquently in a variety of settings; assignments including podcasts, video-recorded speeches, and TED talks; informal assignments provide occasions to practice, and give and receive quality feedback, as well as experiment with unique and memorable ways of speaking that give life to things that are abstract, technical, philosophical, and poetic. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060.

RHET:3130 Rhetorics of Animal Advocacy 3 s.h.
Explore the range of social, ethical, and environmental problems that motivate animal advocacy past and present, and analyze several advocacy campaign responses to those problems (e.g., People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, Farm Sanctuary, The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, The National Humane Alliance); students will examine self-selected animal-related problems and design animal advocacy campaigns of their own choosing. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060.

RHET:3138 Writing to Change the World 3 s.h.
Writers who can frame questions, weigh competing perspectives, structure an argument, and write with clarity and respect for diverse audiences as powerful agents for change; writers who have inspired human rights movements; public forms of writing with local organizations whose missions are shaped by social attitudes to gender and sexuality; how language, imagery, popular culture, and history affect perceptions of gender and sexuality; conducting research and evaluation of evidence; best practices for communicating and collaborating; skills needed to be an effective advocate. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060. Same as GWSS:3138, SJUS:3138.

RHET:3140 Nature and Society: Controversies and Images 3 s.h.
Theoretical perspectives that explain and/or interpret environmental change and human environmental interactions; conceptual tools to understand complex relationship between nature and society at multiple scales; ways in which individuals and communities have overcome economic and environmental limitations in economically developed countries and economically developing countries; critical thinking through exposure to contentious viewpoints and assessment of their strengths and weaknesses. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060. Requirements: completion of GE CLAS Core Rhetoric.

RHET:3150 Narratives of Gender and Masculinity 3 s.h.
Engaging with and deconstructing the stories men and women tell about what it means to be a man in the 21st century; topics may include cultural differences in the construction of gender and masculinity, queer masculinity, masculinity and social justice movements (especially feminism), history of the present moment in masculinity, masculinity from a non-binary perspective, literary representations of masculinity, and masculinity in mass culture. Requirements: completion of GE CLAS Core Rhetoric. Same as GWSS:3700.

RHET:3250 Persuasive Writing for Science and Health Care Professionals 3 s.h.
Writing persuasively in professional settings; students write short papers in every class meeting and receive ample feedback from their peers and instructor; exploration of various writing formats including letter, personal essay, blog, project proposal, and grant proposal; for students majoring in science or health care areas. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060. GE: Engineering Be Creative.

RHET:3260 Persuasive Speaking for Science and Health Care Professionals 3 s.h.
How to speak persuasively in professional settings; students speak in every class meeting and receive ample feedback from their peers and instructor with the goal of developing a presentation style of speaking that blends the personable and professional; exploration of various speaking forms including report, interview, video-recorded presentation, podcast, and large audience presentation (TED Talks); for students majoring in science and health care areas. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060. GE: Engineering Be Creative.

RHET:3290 Advanced Business Speaking 3 s.h.
Speaking as a purpose-specific, audience-oriented, and situation-bound activity whose demands change from one setting to another; students learn to speak with authority, come across as professionals, and manage the impression they create in their audience by speaking in various business settings including business presentations, boardroom meetings, employee briefings, customer complaints, and peer meetings. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060.

RHET:3360 Classical Techniques in Modern Speaking 3 s.h.
Examination of public speaking in context of ancient Greece, when the shift from aristocracy to democracy made public speaking the only way to rise to a position of power; excerpts from ancient texts that demonstrate link between public speaking and democracy; strategies ancients used in public, celebratory, political, and judicial settings to make the best case for themselves; application of these strategies in modern settings for public speaking. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060.

RHET:3585 Speak, to Change the World: The Art of Speechwriting and Speechmaking 3 s.h.
Students focus on "speaking that makes a difference" by studying famous, classic, and contemporary speeches designed to change the world; addressing communal/societal causes of students' choice; writing eloquent and persuasive speeches; delivering scripted speeches in ways that earn character, credibility, and authority; for students interested in community or enterprise leadership; writing political, journalistic, public relations, or entrepreneurial speeches; and delivering scripted speeches professionally.
RHET:3600 Issues in Rhetoric and Culture: Crafting Online Persuasion

RHET:3610 Writing in the Presence of Death: Rhetoric, Narrative, and Hospice
Role of rhetoric in health care practice, decisions, and ethics; rhetorical production of patient and professional selves in health care: varied practices, diverse perspectives, and situated production of medical and health care knowledge. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060. Requirements: satisfactory completion of GE CLAS Core Rhetoric. Same as ASP:3610, GWSS:3610.

RHET:3620 Exploring Travel Adventure Tales: Following in their Footsteps
3 s.h.
Works by contemporary travelers who followed in the footsteps of previous travelers and used the first voyagers; accounts in their own narratives; works include Chasing Che: A Motorcycle Journey in Search of the Guevara Legend; The Cruellest Journey: Six Hundred Miles to Timbuktu; In the Footsteps of Marco Polo; and Voyage of Rediscovery: Exploring the New West in the Footsteps of Lewis and Clark; optional camping/hiking trip in the spring following in the footsteps of Lewis and Clark along the Missouri River. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060.

RHET:3630 Apology and the Art of Verbal Self-Defense
3 s.h.
Apology as defense of actions, opinions, or personal character; how the quality of an apology can have profound effects on whether you go to jail, lose your lover, raise your grade, or get fired or promoted; different types of apologies across personal and professional life, from showing up late to an interview to making a corporate apology for an airline disaster; identifying and practicing skills of effective apologies in the interpersonal and public spheres. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060. Requirements: satisfactory completion of GE CLAS Core Rhetoric.

RHET:3700 Advocacy and Sustainability: Crafting Stories of People, Place, and Resilience
3 s.h.
How sustainable approaches to meeting critical social needs (food, water, shelter, air, work) have influenced food systems, policies on development, environmental problems, social justice, and policy both local and global in scope; readings and field research activities leading to creation of work of multimodal advocacy. Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060. Requirements: fulfillment of GE CLAS Core Rhetoric.

RHET:4980 Special Projects for Undergraduates
Prerequisites: RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060.

RHET:5100 Practicum: College Teaching and Professional Development for Teaching Assistants
Guidance for teaching assistants seeking introduction to teaching at college level; focus on practical pedagogical concerns, including how to structure a course, devise learning outcomes, develop a syllabus and a calendar of assignments, evaluate student work, and create a student-centered classroom with collaborative learning experiences; pre-semester intensive training session, weekly meetings during first month of semester, periodic meetings to address midterm and late-semester issues; concurrent with TA teaching assistantships. Recommendations: interest in teacher training and preparation. Same as CLAS:5100.

RHET:5330 Directing a Writing Center
Supervised tutoring in Writing Center involving graduate and undergraduate tutors and fellows across disciplines; providing instruction on recruitment and development of writing support teams; helping a variety of persons on campus (undergraduate, graduate, faculty) to improve their writing skills in many different areas, ranging from class or conference papers to publicity materials. Requirements: professional development program and rhetoric teaching.

RHET:5335 Directing a Speaking Center
Supervised tutoring in Speaking Center involving graduate and undergraduate tutors and fellows across disciplines; providing instruction on recruitment and development of writing support teams; helping a variety of persons on campus (undergraduate, graduate, faculty) to improve their speaking skills in many different areas, ranging from class or conference papers to publicity materials. Requirements: professional development program and rhetoric teaching.

RHET:5350 Colloquium: Teaching Rhetoric
Professional development program for new rhetoric teachers; includes three-day workshop.

RHET:5352 Seminar: Topics in Teaching and Professional Development
Professional development and advanced study of pedagogical theories and practices; focus on teaching as a rhetorical act; readings on pedagogy, composition theories, and learning process; academic and alt-ac career options; teaching philosophy statement, teaching portfolio, peer classroom observations, and research project; for experienced rhetoric instructors and others teaching writing-intensive, process-oriented courses. Recommendations: previous or current teaching experience in composition-intensive courses.

RHET:5375 Teaching in a Writing Center
Seminars or practicums to prepare graduate students to teach in the University of Iowa Writing Center or similar settings; seminar component on writing and reading processes, tutoring strategies, English-as-a-second-language issues; practicum experience tutoring in the Writing Center. Same as CW:5375.

RHET:5385 Teaching in a Speaking Center
Preparation to teach in University of Iowa Speaking Center or similar settings; seminar component on speaking and reading processes, tutoring strategies, English-as-a-second-language issues; practicum experience tutoring in speaking center.
RHET:6071 Sentimentalism and Affect Theory 3 s.h.
Readings in sentimentalism as literary genre, rhetorical practice, cultural mode, and psychosocial phenomenon; focus on attendant theories of affect; integration of literature and culture with work on politics of affect in postcolonial and transnational studies, critical race and ethnic studies, American studies, gender and sexuality studies. Same as ENGL:6075.

RHET:6330 Writing for Learned Journals 1-4 s.h.
Seminar that supports graduate students in bringing written work to publishable form; analysis of target journals' audiences, interests, and citation politics; submission and the publication process; response to reader reports and criticism; best writing and research practices; discussion of knowledge cultures and discourses in disciplines and the contemporary academy. Same as GRAD:6300.

RHET:6400 Current Issues in Rhetoric 3 s.h.
Ethical, social, or cultural issues; rhetoric's role in their contemporary significance; traditional aspects of rhetoric, their pertinence to present concerns. Same as COMM:6400.

RHET:6965 Topics in Second Language Acquisition: Writing 3 s.h.
Theory, pedagogy, research, and assessment in second language writing. Taught in English. Same as SLA:6965, SPAN:6965.

RHET:7500 Science Communication in the Digital Age 2-3 s.h.
Preparation for communicating scientific discoveries and importance of scientific endeavors in digital media; focus on adaptable and transferable skills; relevant preparation for digital communication in academic and nonacademic career paths; develop aptitude with speaking and performance skills relevant to video presentation; develop familiarity with video composition and editing processes.

RHET:7900 Special Project for Graduate Students arr.

RHET:7920 Innovative Methods in Pedagogy: Radical Feminist Pedagogy 3 s.h.
Readings in history, theory, and practice of pedagogical innovations appropriate to composition instruction and other interdisciplinary teaching; project-based assignments that produce materials appropriate for classroom use. Same as GWSS:7920.

RHET:7930 Writing in the Disciplines arr.
Writing instruction.

RHET:7940 Public Speaking for Academics 3 s.h.
Prepares graduate students for the public speaking occasions germane in their home disciplines and in their future professions; students gain experience moving between different rhetorical registers in public speaking through engaging in cross-disciplinary conversations about performance and speaking practices while refining discipline-specific speaking strategies; honing the ability to communicate the same information in different forms and styles (along with understanding the corresponding advantages and limitations of such) will contribute to students' teaching and scholarly skill sets.