

Course Title: Eloquence. The Beauty and Persuasion of Ancient Rhetoric from Cicero to Today

Course Code: CLA 63

Instructor Name and Bio: Christopher Krebs, Professor of Classics, Stanford

Class Sessions and Recording:

Meeting days and times: Tuesdays, 7:00 - 8:50pm PT, Jan. 10 – Mar. 14

Meeting location: Zoom

Class sessions will be **recorded**.

Course Features:

- Live session
 - Lecture, discussions, and Q&A
- Assignments & Coursework
 - Assignments and course materials posted in Canvas
 - Students may give a final presentation (recorded or live)

Course Summary

It's how the language that you speak shapes the way that you think. And that gives you the opportunity to ask, "Why do I think the way that I do?" "How could I think differently?" And also, "What thoughts do I wish to create?" (Lera Boroditsky).

“America, I never said this journey would be easy, and I won’t promise that now.”
(Former President Barak Obama)

In his campaigns, Barack Obama promised change; yet in formulating that promise, he relied on rhetorical rules and devices, which for more than 2,000 years have remained unchanged. His successor in office employed his own rhetoric, which can be analyzed with the help of ancient rhetoric just as well. Across the ages, another politician and orator, Marcus Tullius Cicero, who reigned supreme for decades in Rome, in the city of rhetoric, will provide guidance in our understanding and appreciation of both ancient and modern rhetorical accomplishments.

Ancient rhetorical theory specifies three requirements for an effective speaker: talent (*natura*), teaching (*doctrina*), training (*usus*). To speak well can be learned. Cicero, hoping for his son to learn and follow in his footsteps, wrote for him a small introductory treatise “On the Classification of Rhetoric.” Just a few years earlier, an unknown author had produced the *Rhetoric for Herennius*. Both can serve as introductions even today.

This course aims to introduce participants to Cicero's Rome and rhetoric and to study and practice his art of speaking well in its ancient and modern applications. More over, as most recent research by Lera Boroditsky et al. has demonstrated that the way we speak and think are inextricably entwined (please watch her TED talk before our first meeting), this course is also concerned with thinking colorfully and clearly; in the words of Ludwig Wittgenstein:

“The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.”

We will read a selection of Ciceronian and other outstanding Greek and Roman speeches, along with an ancient rhetorical treatise; we will then apply our understanding of rhetoric to “modern” speeches, as delivered by Shakespeare's Antony and Michelle Obama or written by Martin Luther King Jr. (in his *Letter from Birmingham Jail*), among others. By the end of the course, participants will have gained a deeper understanding of the workings of rhetoric, to spot them as well as use them. They will be encouraged to prepare and deliver one speech on a topic of their choosing in the final class.

Grade Options and Requirements

- No Grade Requested (NGR)
 - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
 - Students must attend and/or watch at least [9] class sessions.
- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
 - Students must attend and/or watch at least [9] class sessions and must deliver a speech of 8 minutes length during one of the final three class meetings.

**Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*

Textbooks/Required Materials

Required:

Cicero: *Selected Political Speeches*, transl. by M. Grant, New York (Penguin Classics) 1989 (orig. 1969).
Everitt, Anthony, *Cicero: The Life and Times of Rome's Greatest Politician*, New York 2002.
Pernot, Laurent, *Rhetoric in Antiquity*, transl. by WE Higgins, Washington, DC, 2005.
Sachs (ed.), *Plato's Gorgias and Aristoteles' Rhetoric*, Focus 2008.

Recommended:

Anonymous, *Rhetoric For Herennius*, Cambridge (Loeb) 1954.
Clarke, M. L., *Rhetoric at Rome. A historical Survey*, London & New York (3rd. ed.) 1996.
Corbett, Edward PJ & Robert J. Connors, *Classical Rhetoric for the modern student*, New York (4th ed.) 1997.

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions
365 Lasuen St., Stanford, CA 94305
continuingstudies@stanford.edu
650-725-2650

Gibbons, Edward, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. I, 1776; vols. II, III, 1781; vols. IV, V, VI, 1788–1789, London.
Hochmuth, Marie (ed.), *A History and Criticism of American Public Address*, Vol. 3, New York, 1965.
Lanham, R. A., *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, Berkeley & Los Angeles 1991 (2nd ed.).
Miller, R.F., *In Words and Deeds. Battle Speeches in History*.
Safire, William, *Lend Me Your Ears: Great Speeches in History*, New York 1997.
Syme, Ronald, *The Roman Revolution*, Oxford 1939 (numerous reprints).
Zarefsky, David, *Public Speaking: Strategies for Success* (5th Edition).

Useful websites:

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/moviespeeches.htm>

<http://humanities.byu.edu/rhetoric/Silva.htm>

First Assignment

Please listen carefully to LERA BORODITSKY as she explains “[How language shapes the way we think.](#)” ==> (i) What are her arguments, (ii) how are they organized, (iii) how does she present them?

Please read: (1) ARISTOTLE, *Rhetoric* I, with PERNOT 218.1-220.5. (2) CICERO, *Against Catiline* (I): please take note of its structure and its arguments. (3) EVERITT, c. 1.

If you have time, watch: OBAMA’S [acceptance speech in Chicago](#) (2008): take notes on what you find *noteworthy*.

Tentative Weekly Outline

Schedule (Letters (A) refer to the canons, numbers (1) to the parts of a speech):

1 01/10 **Introduction:** “Don’t tell me words don’t matter” — Achilles or the consequences of the breakdown of communication. — What is eloquence? What is rhetoric? Does it matter?

(A) **DISCOVERY** of arguments (*inventio*, εὑρεσις) I: WHERE TO GO.

A few examples: (1) King Aragorn’s Battle Speech at the Black Gate & Agricola’s battle speech at Mons Graupius. (2) (Shakespeare’s version of) Marc Antony’s Funerary Oration & Hilary Clinton’s 2016 acceptance speech. (3) Atticus Finch’s closing argument & Cicero’s defense of Marcus Caelius Rufus.

Concepts/Ideas/Tasks: (1) Aristotles’ three **kinds of speech:** deliberative, forensic, and encomiastic. (2) The **five canons** of rhetoric. (3) The **four (+) parts**

of a speech. (4) To communicate, to understand, to think. (5) Rhetorical analysis of Cic. *Cat.* 1¹ and **three questions** to ask yourselves, always.

FOR NEXT WEEK: Please read: (1) ARISTOTLE, *Rhetoric* II with Pernet 220-7 and entry on Aristotle in the OXFORD CLASSICAL DICTIONARY (OCD). (2) PERICLES' funerary oration in THUCYDIDES (with the entries on both in the *OCD*) and **Lincoln's Gettysburg Address**.² (3) MADISON, *The Federalist No. 10*³: please take note of the **arguments**, and mark whatever you find noteworthy (collect at least five *memorabilia*). (4) EVERITT, c. 2, 3: write a summary (not longer than a page [250 words]). (5) Please study the list of "places" (and fill it out). (6) Watch the opening of Clinton's 2012 convention address.⁴

2 01/17

(A) **DISCOVERY** of arguments (*inventio*, εὑρεσις) II: HOW TO USE THEM.

(1) **THE EXORDIUM**, OR: WHAT TO DO WITH THE FIRST PART OF YOUR SPEECH

- The three modes of persuasive appeal: emotional, ethical, rational.
- Aids to discovery — Syllogisms
- The arguments in Federalist No. 10 — Analysis of Pericles' and Clinton's opening remarks with the help of Quintilian
- Most important points in the exordium.

FOR NEXT WEEK: Please finish Aristoteles' *Rhetoric* and read SOCRATES, *Apology* (with particular attention to arguments and structure). (2) EVERITT, c. 4. (3) CLARKE, *The Greek Background*, in: *Rhetoric at Rome*. (3) Please read and watch Frederick Douglass on "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?"⁵ and **Obama's** speech on race (please pay particular attention to **structure**).⁶

3 01/24

(B) **ARRANGEMENT** of the material (*dispositio*, τάξις): HOW TO BUILD A SPEECH.

- The overall arrangement.
- The arrangement within: exordium, *narratio*, *argumentatio*, peroration
- Socrates' *Apology*: arguments and structure
- Obama's speech on race

FOR NEXT WEEK: Please read: (1) SALLUST'S speeches by CAESAR and CATO (please take note of their respective arguments) along with the entries on all three in the *OCD*. (2) Ps.-Sallust's Letter to Caesar along with DR. KING'S *Letter from*

¹ An analysis of the opening question: "[Painting Catiline into a Corner](#)."

² Edith Hall devoted her Gresham lecture to the speech, and there's a modern take on it in the national interest:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NzpRgD4H8V4>

<https://nationalinterest.org/article/freedom-and-duty-pericles-and-our-times-959>

For a recent recitation of the Gettysburg Address (starting at 4:20):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGLDE5kE5Ks>

³ <http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa10.htm>

⁴ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5knEXDsrl4>

⁵ <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2927.html> Full version:

https://masshumanities.org/files/programs/douglass/speech_complete.pdf

⁶ <http://www.poynter.org/how-tos/news-gathering-storytelling-writing-tools/88009/why-it-worked-a-rhetorical-analysis-of-obamas-speech-on-race/>

*Birmingham jail*⁷. (3) EVERITT, c. 5. (4) PERNOT, *The Roman Way and Romanization*, in: *Rhetoric in Antiquity*.

If you have time, study the LIST OF FIGURES OF SPEECH & THOUGHT, part I.

- 4** 01/31 (2) **THE STATEMENT** of facts (*narratio*): LET'S GET THEM STRAIGHT, SHALL WE
- The *narratio*: en bloc or in between?
 - Crisp and clear rather than longwinded.
 - Sallust's Speeches
 - Letters by Ps.-Sallust and Dr. King
- FOR NEXT WEEK: (1) Listen to and read: J. F. **Kennedy's inaugural address**.⁸ (2) Read the two analyses in the New Yorker.⁹ (3) EVERITT, c. 7. (4) LIST OF FIGURES OF SPEECH & THOUGHT III. (4) Chimamanda Ngozi **Adichie**, "[The Danger of a Single Story](#)."
- 5** 02/07 (C) **STYLE** (*elocutio*, λέξις): VIRTUOSIC WRITING AND (?) SPEAKING and PROPER WORDS IN PROPER PLACES
- Cardinal virtues: correct, clear, concise, proper and purple.
 - Analysis of Dr. King's letter.
 - Stylistic analysis of Kennedy's address. Discussion of TNY analyses
 - Some figures of **thought**.
- For next week: Please read: (1) CIC. *On the Command of Cnaeus Pompeius* (which arguments does Cicero refute, which does he advance?). Compare the case for presidential powers.¹⁰ (2) ENTRY on POMPEIUS in the *OCD*. (3) EVERITT, cc. 8, 9 (4) the excerpt on *argumentatio* (I). (5) Clarke, 53-84 (*Ciceronian Rhetoric and Oratory*). (6) TACITUS'S speeches by SENECA and NERO and the entries in the *OCD* on all three; take note of Nero's refutation. (7) Pick one of Nero's arguments and write Seneca's retort. (8) CLARKE, *Oratory under the Emperors*.
- 6** 02/14 (3) **The Argumentatio(n)**: How TO REFUTE (*refutatio*) AND How TO Assert
- To Take and Tweak
 - Analysis of "On the Command ..."
 - The Genius of Cicero?
 - Seneca refuted
 - To advance and assert.
- FOR NEXT WEEK: Please read: (1) Zarefsky (sel.), (2) EVERITT, cc. 10, 11 (3) watch and listen to: Clinton's convention speech. (4) Write Nero's *confirmatio* (three arguments, same style as his *refutatio*, with the help of TAC. Ann. 14). (5) CIC. First Philippic. (6) Please watch Atticus Finch's speech.¹¹ (7) What would you want to do at the end of a speech?

⁷ http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html

⁸ <http://www.historyplace.com/speeches/jfk-inaug.htm>

⁹ [A new look at JFK.](#)

¹⁰ <http://archives.cnn.com/2002/LAW/08/columns/fl.dean.warpowers/>

¹¹ http://www.wat.tv/video/atticus-finch-gregory-peck-pc45_2h385_.html

- 7** 02/21 (D) The **Art of Acting and Articulation** (*actio*)
(4) Peroratio(n): LET'S END THIS
- Clinton TALKING TO the teleprompter
 - Cicero's Philippic
 - Three steps to perfection
 - Strategies for the end of a speech
 - Atticus Finch
- FOR NEXT WEEK: (1) MARC ANTONY'S *funerary speech*¹² (take note of the structure and organization and of any stylistic glister). (2) Please choose three favorite passages (around 150 words in length) in addition to one from Marc Antony's speech, copy them, and mark with varying colors: syntactical structures, repetitions, antitheses, et al. Then choose two of the passages and rewrite them in your own words. Finally, rewrite the other two doing one better. (3) Please read CICERO'S INTRODUCTION TO RHETORIC. And watch OBAMA'S Acceptance speech (again): what do you see now?
- 8** M 02/28 The power of Irony.
 Rhetorical **exercises:** copying passages, imitating, aemulating.
- Analysis of M. ANTONY'S speech.
 - Favorite passages
 - How to imitate a style
 - Obama's speech revisited.
- FOR NEXT WEEK: (1) Please watch this excerpt of the debate between H. **Clinton** and D. **Trump**,¹³ the **Farewell** Address of President Donald J. Trump (with an analysis [here](#)). (2) Please read **PLATO**, *Gorgias*, and the entry in the *OCD* on both. (3) HOCHMUTH, *The Criticism of Rhetoric*. (4) EVERITT, c. 14. If you have time, (5) PERNOT: *The Heritage of Greco-Roman Rhetoric*. [For next week and the week after: watch the [Ted Talk on Humor](#). Read Cicero's discussion of Humor in *On the Speaker* 2.216–306.¹⁴
- 9 03/07 **The Fragility of Reason.**
 Ant-Rhetoric? Rhetoric against Rhetoric. The Force of Wit
- 10 03/14 The Force of Wit Continued.
 Final Speeches.

¹² <http://www.megapathdsl.net/~sdutta/marcAntony.htm>

¹³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBdK4L2RdKE>. An analysis of this rhetoric of division can be found here: <https://theconversation.com/a-field-guide-to-trumps-dangerous-rhetoric-139531>

¹⁴ What do you make of this summary: <https://jonathansandling.com/cicero-on-humour-and-laughter/>
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