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# ME 830 Seminar in Evangelization: Applied Rhetorical Theory

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## ME 830 Seminar in Evangelization: Applied Rhetorical Theory

Spring Semester, 2006

E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism

Asbury Theological Seminary

Instructor: George Hunter

### I. Course Description

“Understanding ‘Rhetoric’ as the study of (very) effective discourse, oral and written, this seminar draws from primary and secondary sources to reflect from the entire twenty-five centuries of the struggle to understand and inform influential speaking and writing, with a view to informing emergent forms of the public communication of Christianity’s message.”

### II. Course Objectives:

1. To raised consciousness regarding the strategy dimension of the Christian leader’s speaking and writing.
2. To root advanced students in rhetorical theory’s most important perspectives, theories, and lore.
3. To equip advanced students for analyzing and critiquing the discourse of other advocates of the past and present.
4. To advance the student’s capacity for effective public communication as a Christian advocate.
5. To advance the effectiveness of the student’s writing for academy, church, and pre-Christian populations.
6. To prepare advanced students to teach Evangelization and Missiology (in part) from an informed rhetorical perspective.

### III. Textbooks:

Seminar participants will work through and process parts of two formidable texts, and will reflect throughout the semester on one famous evangelistic sermon—Clarence McCartney’s “Come Before Winter” (class handout)

1. Bizzell, Patricia and Bruce Herzberg, ed’s. The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present, Second Edition (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2001)
2. Corbett, Edward P. J. and Robert J. Connors. Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, Fourth Edition (Oxford University Press, 1999).

### IV. Assignments and Seminar Participation:

1. Students are expected to read the assignments for each session of the seminar, and to come with any written work assigned for the day—with a photocopy for each member of the seminar. (In the historical sections of Bizzell and Corbett, the student is not responsible for all the details, but for the major figures, issues, themes, and trends.)

[The assigned reading for a week is sometimes less than demanding—to permit students time to read more widely in their interests. The instructor encourages student papers to draw from any wider reading, and to draw from McCartney’s sermon—as our common model for the semester.]

2. There will be no final exam and no large final term paper. A grade will be assigned to each of the six short papers given during the seminar, with secondary weight given to seminar attendance, preparedness, and participation.

## Seminar Schedule and Outline (Subject to Modification)

February 8: Orientation to Evangelization, and to Rhetorical Theory for Rethinking Evangelization

1. Presentation: "What Do We Mean By 'Evangelistic Ministry'?"
2. Presentation: "Introduction to 'Communication' and 'Rhetorical Communication'"

February 15: "Invention:" Rhetorical Resources for Discovering "What to Say."

For today, read Bizzel 1-16 and Corbett 15-26 for perspective.

For today, read Corbett 27-139 (especially 27-38 and 52-130) and Rachel Carson's "The Obligation to Endure" with Corbett's analysis (185-195).

1. Presentation: "Perspectives on the 'Ethos' Dimension in Rhetoric and Persuasion."
2. Discussion of Readings; perspectives for understanding McCartney's sermon.

February 22: "Disposition:" Rhetorical Perspectives for Organizing Your Message"

For today, read Bizzel 19-41, 431-449, and 556-580 for perspective.

For today, read Corbett 256-292 and Martin Luther King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" with Corbett's analysis (301-319).

1. Presentation: "Genres of Rhetoric . . . Reconsidered"
2. Presentation: "Perspectives on the 'Pathos' Dimension in Persuasion"
3. Discussion of Readings; perspectives for understanding McCartney's sermon.

March 1: "Style: Strategies for Saying It Effectively"—Part One.

For today, read Bezzel 791-813, 983-999, 1183-1205 for perspective.

For today, read Corbett 337-411 (especially 377-411) and Corbett's analysis of Martin Luther King's writing style in "Letter from a Birmingham Jail) 478-483.

1. Presentation: "Plato and the Sophists."
2. Presentation: "Perspectives on Style."
3. Discussion of readings; perspectives for understanding McCartney's sermon.

March 8: "Style: Strategies for Saying It Effectively"—Part Two.

For today, read from Bezzel the Longinus article and excerpt 344-358, the Spencer article and excerpt 1152-1167, and the Richards article and excerpt 1270-1280.

**First seminar member presentations:** Present a eight to ten page (double spaced) paper in which, drawing especially from Bizzel's historical summaries, you identify and develop several of the issues or themes that to thread their way through rhetoric's history, especially issues or themes that may be relevant to the public communication of Christianity.

March 15: Classical Rhetoric

For today, from Bizzel, read the Isocrates article 67-71, the Plato article 80-86, and (especially) the Aristotle article and excerpt 169-240.

1. Presentation: "The Role of Rhetoric in the Expansion of Ancient Celtic Christianity"
2. **Continuing first seminar presentations**

March 22: No Class; instructor out of town.

March 29: Medieval Rhetoric

For today, from Bizzel, read the Augustine article and excerpt 450-485

1. Presentation: "Perspectives on Rhetorical Analysis and Criticism."
2. **Second seminar member presentations:** In a four to five page paper, drawing from Augustine, summarize and reflect upon what you perceive to be his most important perspectives and insights for the public communication of Christianity.

April 5: Reading Week; no class.

April 12: Renaissance Rhetoric

For today, from Bizzel, read the Erasmus article (581-596) and the excerpt from Book II of his Ecclesiastes 628-650 (especially chapters 1-3 and 6-8).

1. Presentation: "The Role of Narrative in Public Communication"
2. **Third seminar member presentations:** In a four to five page paper, drawing from Erasmus, summarize and reflect upon what you perceive to be his most important perspectives and insights for the public communication of Christianity.

April 19: Enlightenment Rhetoric:

For today, from Bizzel, read the Bacon article 736-739, and the Campbell article 898-901 and the excerpt from Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric 902-946 (especially 902-906 and 923-946).

1. Presentation: "The Role of Humor in Public Communication"
2. **Fourth seminar member presentations:** In a four to five page paper, drawing from Campbell, summarize and reflect upon what you perceive to be his most important perspectives and insights for the public communication of Christianity.

April 26: Modern and Post-Modern Rhetoric—Part One

For today, from Bizzel, read the Burke article 1295-1297 and the excerpt from Burke's Grammar of Motives 1298-1324 (especially 1298-1302 and 1322-1324, and Rhetoric of Motives 1324-1340 (especially 1324-27, 1334-36, and 1338-40), and Language as Symbolic Action 1340-1347.

1. Presentation: Presentation: "How Effective Discourse 'Constitutes' (and "Reconstitutes" People's Identity and New Realities"
2. **Fifth seminar member presentations:** In a four to five page paper, drawing from Burke, summarize and reflect upon what you perceive to be his most important perspectives and insights for the public communication of Christianity.

May 3: Modern and Post-Modern Rhetoric—Part Two

For today, from Bizzel, read the Weaver article 1348-1350 and Weaver's "Language is Sermonic" 1351-1360.

1. Presentation: On the Role of "Framing" in Public Discourse
2. Presentation: On the Effective Delivery of Public Messages"

May 10: Final Seminar Member Presentations

**Sixth Seminar Member Presentations:** Drawing from your reading and reflection, present an eight to ten page paper analyzing (with any appropriate critique) Clarence McCartney's celebrated sermon "Come Before Winter."

May 17: Final Exam Week; keep this time scheduled in case we need a make-up session of the seminar.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bizzell, Corbett, and Sloan's Encyclopedia of Rhetoric each feature extensive bibliographies. We have (or soon should have) the following sources in Fisher Library. Fisher also subscribes to The Quarterly Journal of Speech. Many other sources are available at Asbury College, University of Kentucky, and by inter-library loan.

Bizzell, Patricia and Bruce Herzberg. The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present, Second Edition. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001. The most comprehensive collection of primary sources.

Conley, Thomas M. Rhetoric in the European Tradition. New York, 1990. A distinctive revisionist view of rhetoric's history.

Corbett, Edward P. J. and Robert J. Connors. Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, Fourth Edition. Oxford University Press, 1999. The most widely used comprehensive secondary sources, focused for writers.

Crowley, Sharon and Debra Hawhee. Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students, Third Edition. Pearson/Longman, 2004. Another comprehensive secondary source, covers more topics than Corbett, focused for speakers.

Hammerback, John C. and Richard J. Jensen. The Rhetorical Career of Cesar Chavez. Texas A @ M Press, 1998. The definitive study of "Reconstitutive Rhetoric."

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. Metaphors We Live By. Chicago, 1980.

Lucaites, John Louis, Celeste Michelle Condit, and Sally Caudill. Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader. Guilford Press, 1999.

Kennedy, George A. Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times, Second Edition. University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

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Simons, Herbert W. Persuasion in Society. Thousand Oaks, CA, 2001.

Sloan, Thomas O., Ed. Encyclopedia of Rhetoric. Oxford University Press, 2001.

Stewart, Charles J., Craig Allen Smith, and Robert E. Denton, Jr. Persuasion and Social Movements, Fourth Edition. Waveland Press, 2001.