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## Radicis: Ideology, Argument, and Composition Courses in American Colleges

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

*RADICIS:*

IDEOLOGY, ARGUMENT, AND COMPOSITION

COURSES IN AMERICAN COLLEGES

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

BY

DONOVAN S. BRAUD

CHICAGO, IL

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For Mom and Dad; Bro. James McDonnell, CSC;

MPM; EBR; Fr. Michael Grace, SJ;

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## ABSTRACT

The development of “composition” out of larger rhetorical studies in American colleges and universities has narrowed the scope of rhetorical training our students receive, most notably excluding the political and social dimensions of persuasion. This dissertation is an attempt to recover the larger political and civic scope that was the original focus of rhetoric. I join a growing chorus of voices seeking to bring classroom practice to bear on the larger social and civic lives of our students. My approach is original in that it blends classical rhetoric with contemporary ideological theory to derive a pedagogy that will allow students to see the importance of rhetoric and persuasion in their lives and provide them with a *techne*, a set of skills that can be used to analyze and generate discourse for a variety of audiences, including academic ones.

I begin by showing that current-traditional composition methodologies and theories do not allow for students to productively generate social and civic discourse, a significant change in rhetorical study. Because of the lack of civic and ideological focus, students tend to parrot the arguments they are exposed to without truly examining their underlying principles. The origin of this “formalist” approach lies in the peculiar response to an expanding student population and a new model of the university that began to take shape in the United States in the nineteenth century. Increasingly under-trained students were faced with a curriculum that demanded an ever-increasing

specialization of its scholars. As a result, remedial efforts at training newer students to write “academic” prose became standard practice.

As an alternative, I propose a composition course based on classical rhetorical principles. Concepts such as *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*; decorum; enthymemic reasoning; and audience analysis are central to argumentation in both the contemporary era and in the classical age. However, contemporary understandings of ideology as the underlying motivation for most human belief and behavior must be taken into consideration. By incorporating contemporary ideological theory into classical rhetorical theory, this project will provide a pedagogical model that will allow students to participate more fully in the civic arena, and give them a set of skills that can be used in academic settings, thus remaining true to the larger civic nature of rhetoric, while fulfilling institutional goals for composition classes.

## CHAPTER ONE

### *EXORDIUM AND PARTITIO*

One of the first things I stress to my students is that no argument exists in a vacuum; there is always a previous argument or an exigence in the “real world” to which it responds. This project is no different. It is a response to arguments made by other composition theorists as well as to the situation I found myself in when I began teaching composition. As is typical with many other graduate students, I was trained in contemporary writing instruction and the larger rhetorical history to which our writing classes belong. However, as I began teaching composition courses, I noticed a rupture between the disciplinary history, as well as theories advanced in journals and books on the subject on the one hand, and the type of composition assumed by the available textbooks and expectations of various writing programs on the other. The potential value of rhetorical training for students’ lives as active participatory citizens was essentially ignored, and thus, rhetoric in the contemporary classroom had been seriously enfeebled.

Composition courses are the contemporary manifestations of the rhetorical training that was once the capstone of college education, and are ultimately derived from ancient Greek and Roman rhetorical theory.<sup>1</sup> Classical rhetoric, even before it was fully

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<sup>1</sup> A direct inheritance from the classical period is not the only way of conceiving of the freshman course. Robert Connors argues in *Composition-Rhetoric* that the composition course as we know it represents a completely different type of rhetorical situation that necessitates a new rhetorical response, while Susan Miller argues that composition courses “were not intended to, and did not, replace earlier rhetorical education” (*Carnivals* 80).

codified into a coherent set of guidelines for a particular set of skills, was concerned primarily with the civic and political aspects of persuasion, an emphasis especially notable in the influential works of Isocrates and Aristotle. The Greek focus on the orator's service to the polis is continued in Roman rhetoric, especially in the works of Cicero and Quintilian, which shaped the classical legacy inherited by later Western students. From the beginning, ancient rhetorical practice was concerned with running the state well; what we would call "politics" in the contemporary era. While collegiate rhetorical instruction was once the fundamental basis for civic training, it has since shifted focus to a more formalist discursive exercise divorced from real persuasive situations, concentrating on features of correctness such as the proper use of standard written English and adherence to the "academic" format (a clearly stated thesis, topic sentences, etc.). Argumentative suasion of an audience based on its previously accepted beliefs has given way to fulfilling certain academic tasks that have little or nothing to do with real persuasion. It has become something of a commonplace to argue, as Patricia Roberts-Miller has, that "the formalistic approach to public discourse is a problem that needs solving" (2), not only because a narrow concentration on formalism shifts the focus of rhetorical activity away from audience analysis and persuasion, but also because it deprives students of a powerful tool for discourse analysis and production. Furthermore, most courses, either by design or through ideological influence, steer clear of political topics as grounds for argument in class discussions and writing assignments.

This contemporary version of rhetoric represents a significant investment in terms of time, labor, and classroom materials. "The teaching of writing, at least according

to publishers of textbooks for writing courses, engages about four million freshman-level students per year. [...] [W]e could safely estimate (adding administrative costs) that \$100 million is spent each year in America on something we might think of as teaching students how to write at the college level” (Miller 4-5). Even more importantly, freshman composition courses represent one of the last required courses for virtually every incoming student. Many must also take “basic writing” courses, a contemporary form of remediation. Successful completion of a composition requirement (through passing a class or through “testing out” of it) is one of the first curricular gates that our students must pass through. As such, it represents an ideological site because the curriculum itself “represents a commitment to a set of values concerning the uses of culture and the uses of people. The curriculum declares what should be passed on to the future and what students should become” (Herzberg, “Composition and the Politics of the Curriculum” 97). Herzberg argues that the curriculum reproduces the culture valued by its sponsors: business and the state in the contemporary case. Thus, “Schools tend to reproduce the existing social structure: the hierarchy of wealth and status, the alienated work pattern that sustains capitalism, the external discipline of labor, and the internalized profit goals of management, the consumer ideal, and much more”; this is done primarily through teaching middle-class children to “write clear expository prose” (Herzberg “Composition and the Politics of the Curriculum” 98-99). Herzberg claims that the “overt curriculum” of clear prose is less important than the “covert curriculum” of teaching new employees “patience and submission to discipline” which is characterized as “‘application’ and training in the ‘work ethic’” (105).

I would add to Herzberg's notion of cultural reproduction and the covert curriculum something beyond the surface features of writing and the ability to sit still in a cubicle. By focusing on writing done for academic purposes as its sole province, rhetoric for civic use by the middle class (and, perhaps more importantly, by the increasing ranks of non-traditional students) has been abandoned by the academy. The ultimate effect of this abandonment is a professional-managerial class that is not prepared to engage in civic argumentation. Furthermore, they are not given the skills to critically evaluate or critique the political and civic rhetoric *used on them* on a daily basis. I see this as another effect of a covert curriculum: by withering rhetoric through the removal of a civic and political focus, composition courses tacitly train students to accept knee-jerk, black-and-white characterizations of political "hot button" issues. In effect, they are trained *not* to critically evaluate civic argumentation.

The emphasis on clear "academic" prose most often takes the form of so-called "current-traditional" composition. In "Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories," James Berlin argues that contemporary composition instruction is in fact divided between the current-traditional and the expressionist camps. I will deal with expressionist rhetoric in the Refutatio chapter (chapter 4), partly because I see it as a response and alternative to current-traditional rhetoric, and because I see the latter as the most dominant, partly because it subsumes the theoretical advances of those pedagogical methods that question it. Current-traditional rhetoric – what I call "formalist" or "handbook" rhetoric – assumes that rhetorical competence is a matter of grammatical correctness and adhering to a style based on the fundamentals of thesis-driven prose

(clear topic sentences, transitions between paragraphs, etc). This formalist turn downplays the function of argument, and engages students in false rhetorical exercises which have little or no bearing on the way actual discourse designed to sway belief works. (Where is the “thesis sentence” of a State of the Union Address?) Furthermore, contemporary composition, for the most part, does not encourage students to be truly critical of the discourse they read or of the arguments they produce. Relying on received beliefs, unquestioned readings, and assumptions about an audience or opposition encourages students to repeat ideologically loaded arguments without giving them due consideration. However argumentatively enfeebled formalist rhetoric is, it manages to remain popular, in part, because of its supposed neutrality. Herzberg states,

The “current-traditional” composition course embodies even today the aura of technical neutrality or objectivity. Studies of composition textbooks continue to find an overwhelming emphasis on correctness, the modes of discourse, and even old-style logic. The course’s origin in the elite college curriculum is revealed in the literary and belletristic essays that illustrate the modes of discourse. The connection of this writing to a specific class culture is hidden by presenting the modes as ideal types of psychological universals. (“Composition and the Politics of the Curriculum” 110)

Born from the changing academic values of the late nineteenth century, formalist rhetoric was designed to bridge the gap between whatever secondary schooling a student had and the new discourse they would be exposed to in the academy. A century and a quarter later, there are serious problems with using the same basic model of rhetoric instruction.

To begin with, in composition courses, students are asked to “imagine an audience” but not to actually discover and analyze the belief system of a potential audience. Thus, models of discourse which focus on such artificial exercises with no real

audience aside from the instructor end up allowing students to make assumptions about both their audience and opposition which inevitably fall back on presuppositions rather than actual investigation. Formalism reinscribes the ideological formations many students bring with them into the academy. Because of this, attempts at “political” discussion and writing in composition classes often result in enclave tactics, or an outright refusal to see an alternative view. As a result, composition courses wind up turning out students who are non-critical citizens, who do not deliberate *about* ideas, ideologies, or policies, but merely become consumers of them by expressing their preference for a particular one.

In order to reinvigorate deliberation in the student populace, composition courses should focus on argument. “The overwhelming consensus in the literature is that argumentation is the best deliberative model for public discourse” (Ryfe, “Principles” 164). Furthermore, those arguments should be about the most contentious topics circulating in public discourse. This will allow the university to model effective argumentative practices in the society at large. Judith Rodin states,

The most important form of civic engagement for universities may be their own evolution as strong and lively “discourse communities,” shaped in the crucible of their members’ intense engagement with issues of personal and public moment. We can create real, solid communities by engaging – even arguing – with each other over important matters, not by ignoring or suppressing those concerns, especially when we disagree. We must form communities of serious conversation around the most compelling issues of the day [...]. The university is an obvious setting for robust and thoughtful discourse on such hot-button topics. By fostering these conversations, the university will offer students valid experiences of active, engaged public discourse and civic involvement that will serve as lifelong prototypes. But when discussions grow hot and ill tempered, as they sometimes do, the university must also model how heat and anger can be handled and utilized for positive change. (Rodin, “University” 235)



Rather than repeat the same “uncivil” and unproductive discourse that exists in the public sphere, composition courses, as I will show in chapter 3, can be models of argumentation that cut to the root of the problems we face as a society on an ideological level.

Arguing about the values and belief systems that form the foundations, or first premises, of our most contentious social problems will focus the content of discourse in more productive ways. A clash of values in the public sphere often leaves the interlocutors at loggerheads. As I will show<sup>2</sup>, the concept of ideological nodal points can help argumentation be more productive, and allow citizens to coexist while maintaining a degree of agonism that is healthy for the public sphere. As Steinberg states, “At the very least, a productive public conversation should be a vehicle for desensitizing such issues and facilitating coexistence, even in the face of irresolvable disagreements. In short, the action is at the intersection of public talk and the important social issues, cultural concerns, and political debates of the day” (253). The action Steinberg speaks of is comparable to the civic and social rhetorical assignments I will outline in this project.

Through these assignments, my students will engage with the arguments of those whom they may not agree with, but cannot dismiss out of hand. This is a central tenet of the notion of reciprocity, “a middling-term between tolerance and respect. Under conditions of reciprocity, individuals actively engage with rather than simply tolerate the views of others. Unlike respect, which requires an active appreciation of alternative views, reciprocity merely guarantees that individuals will concede the existence of those views, and commit to engage with them. Reciprocity, that is, demands a form of

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<sup>2</sup> See chapter three.

engagement between isolation and appreciation” (Ryfe, “Principles” 167). Reciprocal engagement with an opposition is more than simply disagreeing with or accepting the opposition. Rather, reciprocity demands that agonists engage meaningfully with the opposition. Our composition students will not simply bandy “pro” and “con” arguments back and forth; they will attempt to fully understand the moral and ethical warrants that underlie their own arguments, as well as their opposition’s.

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The remainder of this work will look both backward and forward in time. I will examine the origins of the formalist or current-traditional approach and make an intervention by suggesting a pedagogical model based in the *radicis* – the roots – of our discipline. Part of my project suggests that the traditional, prescriptive means of conveying an argument in an “academic” fashion (thesis, three levels of support, etc.) is not necessarily rhetorically effective in every circumstance. To illustrate this point, I have abandoned the traditional organizational strategy of an English Department dissertation.<sup>3</sup> I have used the classical model as an arrangement principle, and each chapter represents one of the stages of a classical speech. This chapter includes the *exordium* and *partitio*, an introduction to the topic at hand and a description of the argument to follow. Chapter two will be the *narratio*, a description of the background of the subject, followed by the *confirmatio*, or proof of position. Chapter four will serve as the *refutatio*, or response to the opposition. The epilogue will serve as the project’s *peroratio*.

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<sup>3</sup> Many seem to recapitulate the overall strategy of a five-paragraph essay; an introductory chapter outlining the theoretical or interpretative intervention (the thesis); three or four examples, one chapter each (the body); and a concluding chapter.

Chapter two will look to the origins of the contemporary composition course in the last half of the nineteenth century. Composition as a field of instruction was a response to changing trends in the academic community's demographics in the post-bellum period. The advent of specialization was inspired by the German model of university instruction, combined with a larger and more diverse student body who may not have had "adequate training" in writing at the secondary level. The change from "rhetoric" instruction to "composition" is a response to these trends, and the current-traditional or "formalist" approach to composition that evolved out of the late nineteenth century still holds sway in many classes. I have associated this part of the project with the *narratio* of classical Roman speeches. During this part of the oration, rhetors would give the audience all necessary background information on the case before the court or issue before the senate. In order to properly understand the limitations of rhetoric as it is taught in the twenty-first century, we must look to the origins of composition in the late nineteenth.

Chapter three, the heart of my argument, will suggest ways in which we can reconfigure contemporary composition courses using the classical model inflected with ideological analysis. This chapter will consist of concrete suggestions for changing current-traditional courses to better meet the social and civic goals of rhetoric that virtually disappeared by the twentieth century. The course I propose will focus on traditional concepts such as the three appeals (*ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*), arguments structured as enthymemes, and the ideological constructs which underlie all argument presented in the public sphere. Furthermore, dealing with the somewhat contentious

concept of skills transfer, I will show how this model will also meet the current goals for composition courses in terms of teaching students how to properly engage in “academic” writing – a problematic term in itself. This chapter is parallel to the Roman *confirmatio*, the section of a speech where a rhetor would present his argument on the topic at hand. This was the most important section for many speeches, as it would prove a defendant’s guilt or innocence, propose a course of action for the state, or give reasons for praising or blaming public figures. Chapter three is the heart of this project as well; it lays out my plan for a pedagogy based on classical rhetorical concepts combined with contemporary theories of ideology.

Chapter four will discuss objections to the method that I have proposed. I will also attend to the problems of teaching ideologically-based discourse, including the notion that this might forcibly change students’ opinions and value systems. Many composition teachers shy away from social and political assignments for these very reasons, but, I argue, they do a disservice to our students because they do not adequately prepare them to analyze and generate public discourse. Additionally, current-traditional composition pedagogy is more than a century old, and there have been many theoretical advances in the meantime. I contend that many of these advances are subsumed under the current-traditional paradigm. Furthermore, each of the alternative systems (expressivism, social construction, process, etc.) presents problems for social and civic rhetoric that are either solved by the classical approach, or have benefits that can be subsumed by a classical approach. Lastly, I will deal with the problem of importing a model of writing instruction that was codified two thousand years ago onto the contemporary scene;

obviously not every element will be necessary, and many will have to be reworked to be applicable in the contemporary period. In the *refutatio*, Roman rhetors would preemptively address any potential arguments that could be raised against their position. This is the best place to address obvious counter-arguments, as well as twentieth century pedagogical advances in composition studies, as these advances represent objections in the sense that they are alternative ways to teach composition than the one I propose.

The epilogue will suggest more radical ideas for change. I will suggest that we change the very nature of the rhetoric “course” into a system of instruction that lasts throughout a student’s career. Four years of rhetoric instruction will better allow students to critically apply the knowledge gained in their college careers to political and social problems in the community at large. Another radical change will be to abandon the system of textbook publications that composition instructors have relied on since the late nineteenth century. The *peroratio* was the final part of a classical speech, and was often designed to arouse the emotions of the audience. Although *pathos*-based argument is not used very often in academic argument, the suggestions I make here are not as easily implemented in the traditional curriculum. Radical suggestions such as these are as close to emotional arguments as we get, as they are directed at the very institutional identity of our discipline.

Finally, a word on the voice I use in each chapter. All of the chapters except for the second are in the first person. This is because most of my discourse is about interventions I have made through the course I have developed. It seems only natural to present these in first person. The second chapter, however, is presented in third person

because it is a presentation of research into a previous era in composition pedagogy. As these are not exclusively my own ideas, I felt that returning to a more traditional third person voice would be more appropriate. Also, I have tried to use plain language whenever possible, avoiding unnecessary or excessive technical jargon. One of the challenges facing higher education research is to make our ideas more accessible to the general public, and expressing arguments in a manner which those outside of our particular discourse communities can understand is a crucial first step. This project will, successfully I hope, help to bridge the discursive gap between the academy and the “world outside,” a crucial element in the pedagogy I will outline in chapter three.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *NARRATIO*

Nineteenth-century rhetorical instruction in the United States can be characterized as a response to a push-pull situation. On one hand, there is an academic push toward specialization in newly formed disciplines modeled after German universities. On the other, there is a social pull resulting from opening up the formerly exclusive student body to a more diverse population with academic aspirations different from those of their predecessors. These two impulses, one toward specialization, the other toward democratization, and both related to the interests of a petit bourgeoisie, when taken into consideration with material changes in the surrounding culture, result by the end of the century in a unique conception of how rhetoric should be taught. A longer perspective (far beyond the scope of this project), shows that nineteenth-century rhetorical instruction responds, as rhetoric as a body of knowledge always does, to material, social, and institutional change<sup>4</sup>. Robert J. Connors provides a summary of the changes to rhetorical instruction in the nineteenth century, worth quoting in full:

The very culture of rhetoric, which had always informed Western education, turned from a public, civic orientation meant to prepare leaders of the church and state toward a more privatized, interiorized, and even artistic orientation meant to aid in self-development or career preparation in bureaucratic organization. [...]

---

<sup>4</sup> Roman rhetoric becomes an exercise in flattering a ruler during the late empire and the Byzantine period, for example. Christian influences on invention are well known, including Augustine's theory of the Spirit providing all sources of material. The list goes on.

But what happened to rhetoric in American colleges between 1820 and 1900 is, in the realm of that discipline, remarkable: a 2,500-year-old intellectual tradition adopts an almost completely new base of theory, a variety of novel pedagogies, an almost completely changed audience and constituency, and a wholly new cultural status in less than eighty years. (23-24)

Connors' observation on the rapid change in the nature of rhetorical instruction suggests deeper sources for the ultimate institutional change from rhetoric as the underlying foundation of a liberal education into a one- or two-course sequence relegated to the freshman year.

It is useful for purposes of contrast, therefore, to describe the place and methodology of rhetorical instruction in America up to the early nineteenth century. In this system, rhetoric was taught over a number of years, and most often toward the *end* of a student's career, which does not mean, however, that students wrote nothing until they were juniors. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, writing was primarily taught by having students translate to and from the classical languages. Furthermore, writing was considered as preliminary to speeches given throughout a student's career: "The primary medium of instruction was speech, and the translation, imitation, or composition a student wrote, whether in English or in one of the classical tongues, was understood as a script for oral performance" (Halloran, "From Rhetoric" 153). Furthermore, the rhetoric taught under this system was still largely "classical" in nature:

In the period immediately preceding the revolution and extending into the early decades of the nineteenth century, writing instruction was governed by assumptions and methods drawn from the system of classical rhetoric. Oratory of the deliberative, forensic, and ceremonial kinds was assumed to be the most important mode of discourse. Students learned the conceptual material, the *techne*



or “art” of rhetoric by transcribing dictated lectures and engaging in catechetical or disputational recitations [...] (Halloran, “From Rhetoric” 155)

The classical system of rhetoric was most commonly used to teach upper-level students the art of discourse with the ideal of the citizen orator in mind, which was linked to democratic action and participatory agonism. John Quincy Adams’ *Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory* gives the best picture of this system and offers concrete advice on every aspect of the rhetorical act, encompassing Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. The Boylston Chair in Rhetoric at Harvard was originally established with the stipulation that the classical model should be followed in classroom practice (Berlin, *Writing Instruction* 14).

Another use of classically-derived argument pedagogy in early nineteenth-century American colleges was the so-called “rhetorical.” These were public displays of verbal performance, often from pre-written texts. As Russell shows, these rhetorical followed a path similar to the ancient Greek progression of exercises in rhetoric:

The order of rhetorical reflects the fundamental shape of the classical *progymnasmata*. Younger students began with declamation: memorized, paraphrased, or summarized performances of familiar material (often set pieces of prose or verse being studied in the curriculum); older students progressed to “original” compositions: argumentation, debate, and oratory, which called for more sophisticated manipulation of materials. (41)

These rhetorical parallel the classical tradition in another manner. They depended not on the individual perceptions of the author for their argumentative force or eloquence, but rather on “a common *public* store of knowledge and received ideas, a shared tradition” (Russell 42).

Students spoke and wrote in a very different setting from that of the current academy. Academic performance was judged in classrooms based on ability to repeat

information gleaned from readings and lectures. Writing as a means of judging performance was unheard of:

The audiences for which a student wrote regularly were his own class, his literary society, and the entire college assembled. It was the approval of these audiences that mattered, and the critical response of the tutor was valuable insofar as it helped a student achieve that end. Examination for purposes comparable to what we call grading was done infrequently, usually in the form of oral disputation with the college president and perhaps the trustees judging the students' performance. (Halloran, "From Rhetoric" 160-161)

Thus, students participated in what Ong would call "secondary orality" – writing was used as a preliminary script for oral presentation, whether memorized and recited word-for-word, or used for what we would call "exploring" a topic.

Furthermore, every student was expected to follow the same course of instruction. Courses in rhetoric, classical languages, history, moral philosophy, and religion were required of all students, and were taken as a whole class. Student populations were significantly smaller than in the latter half of the century, so teaching an entire cohort of freshman was not an impossible task. The standardized curriculum with rhetoric taught over a series of semesters, culminating in classical instruction, can be seen as a type of "rhetoric across the curriculum," albeit a very small curriculum.

The older American curriculum that employed classical conceptions of rhetoric would not last. The contrasting forces of democratization and specialization in the nineteenth century would eventually smother it, and generate the freshman composition course and its particular pedagogical and theoretical manifestations as an ersatz replacement. In this process, rhetorical instruction shifted its focus from an agonistic, civic-oriented subject constrained by community standards, to an irenic, disciplinary and

professionally oriented subject which is seen as remedial in nature and focuses on formalism rather than true rhetorical responses to argumentative situations. As a consequence of this shift, rhetorical pedagogy has lost focus on the argumentative skills used for citizenship, and the academy has lost the specific inclination to apply classroom knowledge to larger pressing social issues. Before considering the academic and social trends that created this situation in the nineteenth century, however, I must discuss the epistemological theories of faculty psychology and Common Sense philosophy which underlie the change from early nineteenth-century rhetoric to late nineteenth-century composition.

### **That's Exactly What I Was Thinking: the Influence of Faculty Psychology and Common Sense Philosophy**

Nineteenth-century models of rhetoric didn't spontaneously generate themselves; most were based on the highly influential works of Bain and Campbell, imported from England in the eighteenth century. Their works, in turn, were informed by theories of the mind as a set of faculties, each with its own specific powers and duties. Faculty psychology divided the mind, which was seen in a Cartesian light, separate from the physical body, into a set of "faculties." Reason governed logical thought processes and was thought of as superior to the Imagination and Will. Reason was to be exercised through "mental discipline" so that it could override the more destructive sides of human nature represented by the other two faculties.

The other major epistemological influence, Common Sense philosophy, contributed a view of language as a "transparent recorder of thought or physical reality

[that] grew up with the scientific method in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries”

(Russell 10). For Common Sense philosophers, the human mind perceived nature in an unmediated manner through sense apprehension. What could be seen, touched, and heard could be known unproblematically. As Sharon Crowley notes:

Unlike classical or medieval rhetoricians, then, modern discourse theorists assumed the existence of an individual ordering consciousness that was always in touch with both nature and with its own operations and was not necessarily constrained by community expectations. This originating consciousness manipulated its “ideas,” which represented either the things of the world, related ideas, or propositions. The stuff of invention – subjects, ideas, knowledge, discoveries, and thoughts, as well as aims or intentions – preceded discourse; it existed in some coherent and knowable way prior to and outside of discourse. (16)

This theory of epistemology comes mainly from John Locke, and posits that all minds operate in the same way. Information about the outside world is gathered by the senses and fed into the mind where it is stored and processed by comparison to other “ideas.” In rhetorical theory, most notably that of Campbell, this comparison allowed for intuitive and deductive proofs. Intuitive proofs were obtained through the mind’s direct interaction with nature (observation), whereas deductive proofs were made through the combination and connection of ideas (reflecting on the mind’s operations) (Crowley 19-20).

“Evidence,” especially in the form of sensory input and inductive reasoning made from this input, replaced the topical system of invention common from the classical period on. “The new process of invention depended primarily on a rhetorician’s private and internal mental experiences; proof consisted in imitating this process in as exact a manner as possible, so that the experience could be recreated in the minds of an audience” (Crowley 29).

In order to make sure the logical processes operating on the mind of the author were operating on the reader in the same way, many rhetoricians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries turned to the logical tradition of method, a system of ordered steps to produce a desired effect. Method functioned “[...] in the interior world of individual minds when they were engaged in investigation, [and was] a means of establishing connections between minds through discourse” (Crowley 33). Eventually, method as a manner of presentation would serve as a theory of composition in itself (Crowley 42). Methodical presentation of materials discovered from observation would become standard composing practice for those American professors, trained in Blair and Campbell’s texts, as they moved West to newer institutions as the century progressed.

In this model of psychology, the mind of every member of an audience bears an exact resemblance to the mind of the rhetor. Because all humans are configured the same mentally, then there is little need to consider the potential differences between audiences or among members of a particular audience.<sup>5</sup> Much of the advice contained in handbook sections on method refers to making the rhetor’s own thought processes as clear as possible, so that they may be reproduced in the mind of the audience. As the nineteenth century progressed, assumptions about the similarity of minds and the transparency of thought processes remained firmly entrenched. “That the methodical and associational pictures of the mind at work were themselves historical inventions was soon forgotten by

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<sup>5</sup> Differences in perception or experience account for the deviance of some minds from the standard pattern. Insanity (labeled as a defect in the faculties, or a lack of control by the rational faculty) was also commonly used as an explanation for why someone would hold different views about the world than those commonly held by rational people. Considered in this way, faculty psychology is rooted in community standards, but the community consists of identical members and allows for no deviation.

the pedagogues who adapted eighteenth-century discourse theory to their own needs. Rather these pictures metamorphosed into a set of intellectual prescriptions that were assumed to be natural to all minds” (Crowley 54).

Faculty psychology and Common Sense philosophy contributed a picture of subjectivity, and hence the ways in which subjects could be persuaded, which was at odds with the classical approach. Rather than seeing argument as constrained by differences among audiences or even within one audience (since all minds function in the same way), adherents of this notion of subjectivity believe that argument springs from within the orator herself, from her observations and ruminations, and need only be presented clearly and in the right manner in order to have the desired effect on the particular faculty of the audience she tries to convince, which is the precursor of the notion that there is such a thing as general “academic writing,” which was inevitably reinforced by the freshman composition course.

Part of the reason for faculty psychology’s enduring legacy lay in the fact that most prominent rhetoricians of the eighteenth century were stalwart supporters of this view. Campbell, Blair, Newman, and Whatley all contribute to the perception of the mind that nineteenth-century rhetoricians would take for granted. This epistemology would have far-reaching effects, many of which undergird the rationale for and teaching of composition courses today.

### **Campbell’s Influence**

George Campbell’s greatest influence is arguably in helping to shift invention from a social act to a private one. His 1776 *Philosophy of Rhetoric* represents “a real

departure from classical thought about rhetorical invention, which assumed that rhetors began their investigations with what other people thought, rather than with an introspective review of their own thought process” (Crowley 16). Material for a particular discourse was discovered through direct observation and reflecting on the speaker’s own previously held ideas. In his scheme, invention in terms of generating material becomes secondary to adapting the particular message to the minds of the hearers (Berlin, *Writing Instruction* 20-21). Because all properly functioning minds would come to the same conclusions about a particular topic, the writer need only guide the passive listener through the process of apprehension. Arrangement of the material should reflect the writer’s own methodical thought processes when coming to specific conclusions: “[T]he arrangement of a discourse should directly reflect the kinds and sequence of the processes that had created it: resemblance, contiguity, causation, and order in space or time” (Crowley 44). In terms of style, it is simply a matter of the orator reproducing her own thoughts in the mind of the audience through transparent language. As James Berlin notes, “The orator’s task is to reproduce the effect of sensation, insofar as possible, through concrete language. Hence derives the direction for using language that continues to appear in college textbooks on writing even today” (*Writing Instruction* 23). Campbell’s insistence on vivid and clear language to aid in understanding has become an almost unquestioned axiom of contemporary composition textbooks: be clear in your writing.

Each of the above features is characteristic of a rhetoric based in faculty psychology. What makes Campbell significant is that he was the first to associate a

specific aim or purpose of the rhetor's with a particular type of discourse. "All the ends of speaking are reducible to four; every speech being intended to enlighten the understanding, to please the imagination, to move the passions, or to influence the will" (Campbell, *Philosophy*). While many types of discourse could be blended to maximize the rhetorical effectiveness of a particular piece of discourse, "these other and immediate ends are in effect but means, and must be rendered conducive to that which is the primary intention. Accordingly, the propriety or the impropriety of the introduction of such secondary ends, will always be inferred from their subserviency or want of subserviency to that end, which is, in respect of them, the ultimate" (Campbell, *Philosophy*).

Campbell's formula would be pared down and popularized by Newman half a decade later. Both would be instrumental in the shift to EDNA (exposition, description, narration, and argument), discussed below.

### **Blair's Influence**

Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* was published (with corrections from the speeches) in 1783 and rejects classical invention based on topics in favor of invention drawn from observation and knowledge of the subject under scrutiny. "In a single stroke, Blair placed the entire process of invention beyond the province of rhetorical study, arguing that the art of rhetoric can only teach people how to manage the arguments they have discovered by other means" (Crowley 11). According to Blair, "Knowledge and science must furnish the materials that form the body and substance of any valuable composition. Rhetoric serves to add the polish; and we know that none but firm and solid bodies can be polished well" (Blair 11). Furthermore, Blair gives



prominence to rhetorical display as a means of persuasion despite his injunction that only “firm and solid” substance can be displayed well: “For without being master of those attainments [i.e. composing well], no man can do justice to his own conceptions; but how rich soever he may be in knowledge and good sense, [he] will be able to avail himself less of those treasures, than such as possess not half his store, but who can display what they possess with more propriety” (Blair 11). Rhetoric, as in the Ramistic tradition, becomes a matter of displaying what has been discovered through other means. This question of whether or not to include invention in the domain of rhetoric was a topic of debate throughout the 1800s (Kitzhaber 51).

### **Newman’s Influence**

In contrast to the transcription of Blair’s lectures, Samuel P. Newman’s 1827 *Practical System of Rhetoric* was the first rhetoric designed specifically as a manual. Exclusively devoted to written composition, this work focused on a Ciceronian division of speeches, and was concerned with “style and criticism” (Kitzhaber 55). Newman’s greatest influence was to tailor specific genres of writing to discourse based on purpose: didactic, persuasive, argumentative, descriptive, and narrative (Kitzhaber 56). Newman associated each of these purposes with a particular mental faculty shared by speaker and audience alike. Didactic works were instructive and appealed to the understanding, while persuasion influenced the will, argument was paralleled with reasoning powers, and narration and description both appealed to the imagination (Crowley 98). In Newman’s scheme, a particular type of discourse, no matter what the audience’s preconceived

notions about the subject of that discourse, could be deployed with confidence to achieve the writer's goals.

Because of this correlation between genre and purpose, grounded in faculty psychology epistemology, Newman has a good claim to being the inventor of the "modes approach." He forms a bridge between Campbell's faculty approach and Blair's belletristic rhetoric, culminating in the "prototype of the modal formula" which would become EDNA (Connors 220). Ultimately, Newman had two lasting effects on discourse theory: he moved the place of invention from the rhetorical situation (audience and subject) to the intention of the rhetor and therefore the genre of the work, and he narrowed down the number of genres studied by eighteenth century discourse theorists (Crowley 98-99). The first contribution is the most important for contemporary composition instruction. The practice of teaching successive genres modeled in many contemporary freshman composition texts can be traced directly back to Newman's text.<sup>6</sup>

### **Whatley's Influence**

Richard Whatley's 1828 *Elements of Rhetoric* is influential primarily because it places the onus of invention on the shoulders of someone other than the student writer. Earlier theorists, such as Campbell, placed heavy emphasis on individual observation of the natural or social world as sources for invention. Whatley provides what James Berlin describes as an "*invention of management to replace the classical invention of discovery*" (*Writing Instruction* 29). That is, his advice on the discovery process consists of dicta on

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<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, Newman also argues for the placement of rhetorical instruction at the beginning of higher education as current practice advocates, not the end, as had been done prior to the late nineteenth century.

how material from other sources is to be used in discourse. This is not the same as grounding invention in what is socially acceptable for a given audience, but is rather closer to the contemporary “research paper.” Whatley advises teachers to have students begin the composition process by selecting a topic close to the students’ interests, even if it is mundane or trivial, narrow the subject down and focus it on a particular proposition, and then compose an entire essay based on the narrowed subject, emphasizing proper usage. As Berlin notes, “it is difficult to avoid noting that this plan for teaching composing is the one still found most commonly in today’s composition textbooks, some 150 years after its presentation” (*Writing Instruction* 30).

### **German Models: Pushing Toward Specialization**

The rhetoricians discussed above achieved their influence in a new educational environment. By 1850, the American university system began to graft graduate divisions onto existing undergraduate programs. This was an accommodation to the so-called “German model” or “Humboldtian model” of the university, which only offered advanced graduate courses, but which placed importance on students choosing their own path of study, much like the contemporary system of majors and minors. In fact, “The elective system, the graduate school, the PhD degree, the graduate seminar, the lecture system, the concept of academic freedom, the ideal and even the methodology of research – all these and more we owe chiefly to the German university” (Kitzhaber 16-17). Importing this system wholesale into the United States would have been impractical if not impossible, and the resulting system was a “novel hybrid institution” (Connors 176). This hybrid created a situation in which professors with advanced training had to teach

undergraduates, something for which many of them were unprepared. What had once been the capstone of a college education, taught by respected experts steeped in the classical rhetorical tradition was to become, under the German model, what we recognize today as “freshman composition,” taught primarily by graduate students and English professors who specialize in other “literary” fields within the discipline.

One of the primary reasons for this sea change in the nature of rhetorical instruction was that academic writing became increasingly specific in its goals and demands, and that specificity was based on the increasing division between fields of knowledge generated by the new university system:

In the new print-centered, compartmentalized secondary and higher education system, writing was no longer a single, generalizable skill learned once and for all at an early age; rather it was a complex and continuously developing response to specialized text-based discourse communities, highly embedded in the differentiated practices of those communities. [...] Each discipline, each kind of institution, developed its own “literacy,” its own tacit expectations about how its members (and its students) should write. (Russell 5)

Ultimately, this would solidify a conceptual split between content and expression.

Despite the new demands from emerging discourse communities, most colleges still held to a model of writing as transcribed speech or thought, as discussed above. Thus, “If writing was an elementary, mechanical skill, then it could be relegated to the margins of a course, a curriculum, and institution” (Russell 5). If writing was indeed a general skill, then it should be taught at the beginning of a student’s freshman year so that it might be applied in all subsequent courses. This procedure assumes, however, that what is learned as persuasion from one department will be acceptable as persuasion by another. Once students learn how to write, the logic goes, they will be able to communicate effectively

no matter what course they are writing for. This erroneous belief is a fundamental flaw in rhetorical pedagogy that continues to inform the logic behind freshman composition well into the twenty-first century, and stems ultimately from the conception of mind handed down by Faculty psychology, and language handed down by Common Sense philosophy.

### **The Rise of Literature**

One of the new departments that arose in the German-model universities was the English Department: “By conjoining the belletristic study rooted in Blair with the philological research coming from Germany, the modern English department got its start and was by 1880 chugging along at many of the new universities” (Connors, 181). There were no PhDs in rhetoric coming over from German universities, which were research-oriented and not interested in “persuasive” arts. Rhetoric suffered ultimately from a lack of reproduction of teaching and research staff and was swallowed up by burgeoning English departments<sup>7</sup>, forced into a text-bound existence, or by speech courses as “elocution.” In either case, rhetoric as an art of persuasive discourse was seriously challenged by the end of the nineteenth century.

Rising along with English as a field of study was philology, which helped to cast the study of language as a scientific pursuit amenable to the academic *zeitgeist* of the late 1800s. Furthermore, literature as the main emphasis of the field gains prominence: “From about the mid-1870s English studies, and especially literature, took up an ever larger place in the curriculum of all colleges. [...] Work in English at most colleges was divided

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<sup>7</sup> Connors points to the unscientific nature of rhetoric and a prevailing political and cultural condemnation of rhetoric in Germany to explain why it was not taught as a graduate level subject in German universities, and hence, was not imported to the United States (179).

into three main areas: language, literature, and composition and rhetoric. Almost invariably the courses in literature outnumbered those in the other two fields” (Kitzhaber 40). The literary focus of the new English departments gave rise to “belletristic” rhetorics during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Halloran sees this as, in turn, shifting the emphasis of rhetorical action from speaker to audience. Interpretation becomes more important than constructing new texts, which fits the disciplinary treatments of “literature” as a distinct scholastic entity by the end of the nineteenth century (Halloran, “From Rhetoric” 163). Newman’s *A Practical System of Rhetoric* (1827), Quackenbos’s *Advanced Course of Composition and Rhetoric* (1855), Boyd’s *Elements of Rhetoric and Literary Composition* (1844), Parker’s *Aids to English Composition* (1845), and Hart’s *A Manual of Composition and Rhetoric* (1870) were all instrumental in moving rhetoric and composition toward a form that is recognizable as the progenitor of contemporary versions of these classes. “These tend to emphasize rhetoric as written, rather than oral discourse, and are concerned with providing the principles of taste that will enable the student to write effectively” (Berlin, *Writing Instruction* 35-36).

Lastly, Michigan started the first speech department in the country in 1892. The speech departments filled the vacuum left by the decline of the old fraternal speaking and debating societies, which were supplanted by the Greek fraternity system after 1850 (more on the decline of these so-called cleosophic societies below) (Kitzhaber 42). Kitzhaber also attributes the rise of speech departments to the nature of elocution training, which did not address argument, but merely expression, and the fact that popular

1880s manuals of rhetoric did not address the claims of oral argument either (42-43). After the 1880s, “speech” as expression was divorced from the generation of “content” for those speeches; rhetoric had formerly encompassed both.

English and Speech departments, by the turn of the twentieth century, had effectively become the flagships of discourse study within the academy. But their exclusive foci (literary study and the study of taste and elocution) either forced the teaching of argumentation into the bounds of a specific discipline, or forced it out of the academy as a focus of instruction altogether. Russell notes the somewhat elitist consequences of this move:

By relegating systematic writing instruction to the margins of academic work, outside the specific disciplinary contexts where students are taught to enter coveted professional roles, institutions preserve standards of excellence and reduce social equity [...] For much of this century, many institutions have used freshman composition as a way of weeding out those considered unfit for college work *before* they had the opportunity to enter specialized studies. (Russell 27)

While the newly erected disciplinary borders within the academy were forcing rhetorical action into specialized discourses that each particular disciplinary community “owned,” places for the student body to actively engage in persuasive discourse were also dwindling away. Thus chances to apply knowledge, both rhetorical and disciplinary, to problems outside of the classroom began to disappear; rhetoric and composition became exclusive “scholastic” exercises.

### **The Demise of the Cleosophic Societies**

One of the most important spaces outside of the classroom where students could practice their rhetorical skills were “cleosophic” societies, centers of learning run almost

exclusively by students themselves, though professors and other intellectual luminaries were occasionally invited to speak on diverse topics. The societies were given rooms and funding by their home universities, and often held a library better than the official college library. These societies sponsored discussion groups and debates, many of which were on controversial topics such as abolition.<sup>8</sup> The cleosophic society, then, served as a forum for progressive social and political discussion using the rhetorical techniques learned in class. While the classroom “rhetoricals” may have been abstract set pieces which kowtowed to standards of the Victorian social order, the cleosophic society was the place for a student to debate topics of “great social and political relevance” (Russell 45).

Typically, a cleosophic society would organize weekly debates whose agonists were classmates, and would publish journals that were a combination of modern scholarly journals and student literary publications.

The debates and journals of these clubs dealt with the political and philosophical issues of the time – issues more or less ruled out of the classical curriculum of the colleges. In their societies, students could debate the topics they wished [...] The many literary magazines founded and supported by the societies during this period provided a similar forum for students to debate contemporary issues, as well as to polish their skills in English composition; their college courses were more likely to concentrate on improving their Greek or Latin. (Applebee 12)

The societies were more than just a social group that argued and then published their arguments; they served a function similar to, but more in-depth than, modern practices of peer-review. Connors notes, “Society members engaged in a variety of ritualistic activities, but they also assisted each other in studies by critiquing one another’s work.

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<sup>8</sup> Russell notes that Emerson was invited to speak on abolition by many cleosophic societies, even when the home university of a particular society may have refused him (44).



The most important aspect of such critiques was rhetorical, and the debates organized and judged each week by the societies were their central purposes” (47-48). The societies were centers of agonistic rhetoric, but were eventually supplanted by the Greek fraternity and sorority system common at most contemporary universities.

After the 1870s, “at school after school one sees the gradual breakdown of the older literary and debating societies” (Connors 50). Part of the reason Connors gives is that women were not allowed into these cleosophic societies as debating with women was seen as somehow “unmanly” at best, immoral and dangerous at worst. By the turn of the century, most of the societies were disbanded, and their properties taken over by the college or by the newer Greek-style fraternities and sororities. This period also saw the rise of competitive inter-collegiate debate tournaments, which continue arguing to this day in a more formal and ritualized manner than was done in the cleosophic societies. Another reason for the decline and evaporation of these societies was the increasingly non-disputational nature of collegiate education. From 1860 to 1900 there is a marked decrease in the agonistic recitation and answer method of earlier classroom instruction. The lecture/recitation method was slowly and methodically replaced by the more irenic forms of the seminar, the discussion-based class, and the laboratory. The writing done was also moved from disputational topics of political and social origin, to more “intensive, but privatized writing practice” (Connors 50).

The debates and the critiques of those debates were organized and semi-formal collaborative learning spaces that helped the students move their knowledge of rhetoric outside of the classroom and into the public sphere. This movement is important because

it points to the progressive nature of the cleosophic societies, something echoed by their willingness to take up controversial topics such as abolition. They were inherently progressively-oriented because they moved away from the argumentative set-pieces given in classes and forced students to apply their rhetorical skills and classroom knowledge to larger social questions. This application is something that contemporary rhetoric instruction has lost, and is something which I hope to bring back through the methodology described in the third chapter.

### **Pulling Toward Democratization**

While acolytes of the German research institution proselytized for its acceptance with resounding success, there was a contradictory force at work in American colleges. The German university promoted a model of education based on private research done by individuals who were specialists in their field, a diametrical opposition to the polymath tutors of the eighteenth century. These new professors were anchored in advanced research rather than pedagogy, which promoted an educational model that winnows as it progresses; the more advanced the degree, the fewer holders of that degree there are. Contrary to this spirit of attrition in educational settings, social forces would promote an ever increasing inclusion in American colleges as the second half of the nineteenth century advanced. The Morrill Act of 1862, along with an increasing number of women and lower-class students, opened up the student body, but with dire consequences for classically-oriented rhetoric instruction.

### **Land Grant Colleges and the New Student Body**

Russell notes, “In antebellum society, postelementary education was by modern standards extraordinarily homogenous, guaranteeing a linguistic common ground. Almost all postelementary schools were unapologetically elitist and sectarian. Students and faculty were of the same sex, race, religion, and, for the most part, of the same social class” (35). College education as a precursor to, or even a prerequisite for, a job would have been a foreign concept for antebellum students and teachers alike, with two exceptions: lawyers and ministers.

However, “College education after the Civil War no longer led only to the bar or the pulpit, but to the farm, the schoolroom, the mine, the office, and the mill. New occasions taught new duties” (Connors 80). In a prescient move, Congress passed the Morrill Land-Grant College Act in 1862 to create colleges with a more practical aim than the older institutions such as Harvard, an aim that would meet the needs of the rapidly expanding northern and western areas of the post-bellum period (Russell 50). The Act itself “provided each state with 30,000 acres of Federal land for each member in their Congressional delegation. The land was then sold by the states and the proceeds used to fund public colleges that focused on agriculture and the mechanical arts” (Library of Congress). Kitzhaber reports that, “Within five years after the act became law, twenty-three states had availed themselves of its provisions” (12). Ultimately, “sixty-nine colleges were funded by these land grants, including Cornell University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University of Wisconsin at Madison” (Library of Congress).

After the land grant colleges were established, admissions standards were drastically lowered. According to Connors,

Older expectations of full preparatory training in Latin and Greek went by the boards after the 1870s, as the new colleges and universities invented themselves, and the wide comparative reading that was the very stuff of the classical curriculum went with them. Thus many of the newer universities and smaller colleges admitted students whose background reading was seriously deficient. For Hugh Blair in 1783, who can count on his audience knowing the writings of Cicero, Vergil, Lucan, and Addison, stylistic discussion offered possibilities completely foreclosed to John Genung or John Hart a century later. (282)

This lack of widespread reading prior to college led to the college reader, still a popular choice as a supplement to or, in some cases, a component of contemporary composition textbooks. More importantly, this lack of prior knowledge was a symptom of ever-increasing inclusivity in American universities where more and more women and members of the lower classes were beginning to matriculate. The combination of a gender bias that did not allow women *or* men to argue and a lack of a common knowledge base helped to move rhetoric towards composition by reducing its agonistic qualities and focusing on remediation, especially after the publication of the Harvard Reports, discussed below.

### **Gender Allowances**

The entrance of women into the academy was an accomplished fact by a decade after the Civil War, with separate colleges for each sex (some including the entire classical course men had and some focusing on more “feminine” courses). Oberlin was the first to admit women and men into the same classes in 1837, but coeducation was slow to catch on. Connors points to social conceptions of gender circulating at the time as

a cause for the slow acceptance: “many educators feared that coeducation would produce ‘unmanly’ men and ‘unwomanly’ women, and fewer than six colleges became coeducational before the Civil War. Those that did admit women were the focus of an often rancorous debate” (43). The agriculture and mechanics colleges started under the Morrill Act (nearly all of the newer colleges were in the Midwest) were coeducational from the start, for the most part. After this, coeducation was inevitable, with thirty percent of colleges admitting women by the 1880s and seventy percent by the turn of the twentieth century.

As is the case with the cleosophic societies, the idea of women as agonistic arguers was seen as taboo in the classroom. “Professors did not wish to humiliate women by forcing them to match wits or prove publicly their knowledge; male students did not want to look foolish or churlish in front of ‘the girls’” (Connors 49). This irenic rather than agonistic classroom practice extended into the entire field of academic rhetoric. Formerly, disputational and argumentative practices held sway in rhetoric classes and in the cleosophic societies, but “[s]uch a rhetoric was dangerous and it could be fed to women only in harmless bits and pieces, stripped of its popular uses. The situation of rhetorical instruction for women mirrored the attitude that women’s proper sphere was private, minimizing traditional agonistic oral forms and maximizing analysis and composition” (Connors 53). The shift to the “report” rather than the debate as the principle mode of academic discourse has its roots in this movement away from agonism in general.

### **Class Allowances**

In addition to women, the land grant colleges also admitted students who were not members of the upper classes. Several decades before the Morrill Act, consciousness of class distinction became an integral part of American society. “At some point after 1840, the social common denominator stopped falling and began to rise as a class system reasserted its importance. Americans became newly aware of and concerned about their speaking and writing habits [...] Classes, based upon wealth and upon education, were beginning to form – and where there is class distinction, linguistic distinctions are not far behind.” (Connors 114-115). Of note in Connors’ analysis is the emphasis on language use as a signifier of a person’s class. Many of the new students matriculating in the new universities and colleges were significantly under-prepared for their academic environment, and remedial instruction became an increasingly important aspect of the curriculum.

Remedial instruction was an attempt to bring newer types of students “up to speed” with their upper-class competitors, and provide a way for them eventually to compete with each other.<sup>9</sup> Along with class consciousness comes the desire for members of lower classes to better their positions either through social change on a political level, such as in the Marxist model, or, as in the case of the United States, through some version

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<sup>9</sup> Crowley points out that socialization may have been a “hidden agenda” of sorts behind composition instruction. Not only did reliance on formalism allow for easy grading of papers in an overworked environment, but many texts and classroom practices also held up the emerging middle class ideology of correct usage as a sign of urbanity or polished manners. Insistence on one urbane way of speaking or writing combined with the irenic spirit of many assignments shows that, as Crowley notes, “the institutional project of current-traditional rhetoric was to produce quiescent, moderate, and solicitous student discourse” (138).

of the Protestant work ethic and individual social elevation. Halloran reports that by the nineteenth century, the “right” to rise socially and economically was an ingrained cultural assumption in the United States. However, this social mobility was necessarily tied to a competitive spirit among would-be aspirants to the burgeoning middle class. “The middle-class spirit made people competitive strivers; professionalism created arenas for striving and a currency of exchange in the form of ‘professional expertise’” (“From Rhetoric” 165). Increasingly, colleges came to be seen as training grounds for work, which will advance a person socially and economically, rather than training grounds for citizenship.

The notion of college as job training blended perfectly with the German model and the recognition of literary study as a professional possibility within the newly-created English departments. As Halloran notes:

To be a professional was a new ideal representing what the culture most valued, as Quintilian’s citizen orator had represented what classical culture most valued. Unlike the citizen orator, a version of which was central to the vernacular neo-classical rhetoric of the late eighteenth century, the professional was a specialist whose service to society took the form of applying arcane, scientifically-based knowledge to “the common purposes of life.” (“From Rhetoric” 167-68)

The emphasis on professional knowledge conveyed as a specialized course of instruction in business, chemistry, or engineering (in other words, majors) left little room for the more generalized and fluid *techne* that is rhetoric. The importance of education for citizenship was supplanted by the importance of education for a paycheck, something hauntingly familiar to anyone teaching in the early twenty-first century.

### **“Current-Traditional” Composition: The Result of a Tug-of-War**

The errors newer students – untrained in canonical readings, and some lacking the equivalent of a high school education – were making became something of a national scandal during the 1870s and 80s. Harvard was the first school to tackle the problem in a systematic fashion by instituting English A, a simplification of the sophomore course in rhetoric, which was moved to the freshman year. “Other schools quickly adopted Harvard’s move, and Freshman Composition was born” (Connors 129). Albert Kitzhaber notes the ultimate effect of this sea change in rhetoric pedagogy: “Beginning shortly after the appearance of the Harvard English entrance examination – and, perhaps, in no small measure because of it – there was an increased insistence on rhetorical and grammatical correctness as the most important qualities in student writing. The sort of correctness desired, however, was superficial and mechanical” (199-200). The emphasis on grammar and mechanics can be seen as a direct result of Harvard’s attempt to negotiate the social and academic forces at work in the academy in the late nineteenth century. In 1891, Harvard’s Board of Overseers appointed a three-member committee consisting of non-academic professionals to investigate its English A program by analyzing sample essays from students on the subject of their secondary school training in writing. Many of the findings were dismal, and the report of the committee sparked a series of “Why Johnny Can’t Write” articles in many contemporary newspapers and journals. The report argued that secondary schools had begun to teach students to pass the entrance examinations, but little else (Kitzhaber 43). Harvard’s committee concluded that these schools were not doing a good enough job of preparing students for their freshman writing course, and that



Harvard should raise entrance standards as a response. The continued influence of common sense philosophy on the “Report of the Committee on Composition and Rhetoric” in 1892 can be seen in the fact that it blamed the secondary schools and urged more instruction in composition, as it was “absurd to suggest that any human being who can be taught to talk can not likewise be taught to compose. Writing is merely the habit of talking with the pen instead of with the tongue [*sic*]” (qtd. Kitzhaber 45).

Composition courses were originally intended to fix a perceived problem in student preparedness (their grammar and writing lessons, where applicable, had not been learned). For college administrators and educational theorists of the time, the problem was one of a lack of basic training, rather than a lack of experience in a firefight, so to speak. We might see such problems as a symptom of a lack of experience in composing texts, but this was not the case in the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> The emphasis on grammar and correctness of expression and mechanics was not a trend that developed in isolation from other rhetorical principles. Kitzhaber notes the relationship between grammar and other proscriptive elements:

The ideal of superficial correctness was not, of course, something entirely new. It was, in a sense, an extension of existing tendencies – the dogmatic right-or-wrong approach to rhetorical and grammatical problems that had existed at least since the eighteenth century; and the mechanical, external view of the writing process that had characterized American rhetorical theory from the first. [...] The assumption was that good writing automatically resulted from the mechanical application of fixed rules. Good writing meant, therefore, not effective writing,

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<sup>10</sup> However, the emphasis on superficial correctness was also a response to the increasingly obvious social difference between those students who were privileged enough to receive a college preparatory education and those who were not. “A gentry needs symbolic representations of its gentility, and the age of Victorian gentility was beginning. In the 1840s we begin to see a new movement in the United States, a movement whose desiderata were proper usage and grammatical correctness in speech and writing” (Connors 120).

but writing that violated none of the rules. The barrenness of this attitude served to remove rhetorical theory even farther from a realistic appreciation of the function of rhetoric, as well as insulating rhetorical instruction from a direct contact with the world around it. (204)

This is a key feature of the formalist pedagogy that we have inherited in the twenty-first century. Adherence to rules, be they of grammar or of the necessary elements of a descriptive essay, is a remedial view of rhetoric, one that tries to instruct students in the mechanics of one particular dialect – that of the elites.

Remediation became a key feature of composition courses at the outset. “The first and most common ‘solution’ [to the problem of student writing] was a general-composition course. [...] The course focused on mechanical skills: correct grammar, spelling, and usage necessary for transcribing preexisting, fully formed speech or thought into correct written form” (Russell 7). Rhetorical training, under the influence of faculty psychology, increasing institutional pressure to bring “under-prepared” students up to par, and a decreasing emphasis on civic speech, had more in common with grammar and diction training than it did with argumentation. However, this was not originally thought to be a permanent solution. “Up until the mid-1890s, in other words, it was assumed by many that freshman composition courses were a stopgap remedial measure, a temporary aberration, to be dispensed with after the great propaganda war in favor of more secondary school composition had been won” (Connors 185). However, the composition course, regardless of original intent, became an ingrained feature of American college curricula. In fact, by 1897, Harvard’s *only* required course was the freshman composition class (Berlin, *Writing Instruction* 59).

Additionally, freshman composition courses, which are among the few writing-specific courses (aside from creative writing and the occasional “writing intensive” or “writing across the curriculum” course requirement) currently taken by students, were originally meant to be a starting point for rhetorical education, not its end point:

In fact, the reformers originally saw the freshman course as merely the beginning of a four-year program for developing students' writing, a program that retained the essential shape of the traditional rhetorical training. [...] To accomplish this goal, Harvard and many other universities tried for three decades to adapt the old rhetoricals to the demands of the new university, with its elective curriculum and departmentalized written knowledge. (Russell 51)

This adaptation resulted in the so-called “forensic system,” which took the form of various writing requirements in the different, newly established departments found in the German-model university. This system only lasted at Harvard from 1900-1920, and was essentially a continuation of the old rhetoricals in written form. Forensics were written down and turned in to the appropriate professors, not delivered before the college president after revising the written draft. After the forensic system was dropped, Harvard adopted a “remedial” course for those who couldn't prove their discursive mettle in English A.

By the end of the nineteenth century, freshman composition classes would become the proving ground for what we now call “Current-Traditional Rhetoric,” although the term is contentious.<sup>11</sup> Current-traditional rhetoric depends on the faculty model of psychology linked with modal presentation of discourse (more on the modes, or

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<sup>11</sup> Connors, for example, names his volume *Composition-Rhetoric* to lend support to his thesis that “composition” is actually a form of rhetoric specifically designed for a written medium. Others have pointed out that what is current is usually not traditional.

EDNA, below) that matches a particular effect with a particular type of “argumentation.” Most are adaptations of Campbell’s rhetoric, which desires to bring about an effect in the mind of the audience. Argument, which appeals to the will to produce action, is seen as different from persuasion, which appeals to reason to bring about belief. Appeals to the will are eventually relegated to the newer speech departments, and appeals to emotions and the imagination are given over to the “literature” wings of the English department, where poetry and prose fiction are studied. Increasingly, composition courses began to focus on the understanding. “Exposition, ‘setting forth’ what is inductively discovered (narration and description are similarly conceived), becomes the central concern of writing classes. This is also, of course, the kind of writing most valued by the technologically oriented business community. Freshman English became a course in technical writing” (Berlin, *Writing Instruction* 63).

There are several aspects of late nineteenth century composition that remain with us well into the twenty-first century. One component of this revision of rhetoric was the changing nature of invention. Rhetoric could not teach a student to discover material, only to organize what has been discovered elsewhere in what Berlin calls a “managerial” invention, which is actually a form of arrangement (*Writing Instruction* 64). Arrangement was made central through the so-called “modes” of discourse, as well as emphasis on the three principles variously named, but traditionally codified as unity, emphasis, and coherence; arrangement was also central to the increased emphasis on the paragraph as a unit of discourse.

Furthermore, a very limited conception of style is advanced by current-traditional rhetoric. “Since language must be chosen to embody the content of thought, the study of diction and sentence structure becomes an abiding concern, both resting on eighteenth-century theories of language” (Berlin, *Writing Instruction* 64). Language was a transparent glass through which shone the light of knowledge. Any fault in the transmission of that light must lie in some flaw in the glass, not the very nature of light itself. As a result, many composition manuals stressed the concept of clarity. A clear and precise style as a hallmark of good writing became so ingrained in composition instruction that the two soon became synonymous. “Style was thought to be the main concern of textbooks – offered along with the forms of discourse – because it could be reduced to a set of abstract principles, succinctly stated” (Berlin 71). This stylistic concern was not the same as the classical concern with finding an appropriate style to suit the audience and the reason for speaking. Rather, it is concerned with the ability of words to mirror the mental experience of the rhetor. Earlier conceptions of style as ornament to thought, such as those found in Blair and Campbell, were eventually absorbed by the literature wing of the English department. “The result was a further limiting of the province of the writing course, focusing on the use of language in a way appropriate to science and technology” (Berlin, *Writing Instruction* 72). Stylistic amplification gave way to simplification in the name of a scientific clarity of expression.

Rhetoric has gravitated toward two poles in its long history: “invention and style, matter and manner, substance and expression” (Kitzhaber 169). What is most interesting about the late nineteenth century’s approach to style is that it advances a narrowed

conception of style based in abstract principles, at the same time placing a great deal of emphasis on that narrow conception. The new stylistic tradition, under the influence of Blair and Campbell, replaced the Ciceronian and figurative theories with subjective terms such as vigorous or flowing. Furthermore, most of the rhetorics of this period were repetitions of Blair, and retained his abstract quality, although some attempt was made to simplify the discussion in America (Kitzhaber170).

One of the most interesting changes to the conception of style was its fusion with the ancient canon of arrangement. “Because language had only one function – to mirror thought – the function of arrangement came to be very like that of style in current-traditional rhetoric. Both served to externalize the internalized process of invention” (Crowley 121). Thus, the style of the writing was determined by the intention of the author, not the desired effect on the audience. “This new stylistics became a foundation of composition-rhetoric in the nineteenth century, and pieces of it have survived into our own time” (Connors 258). For example, the emphasis on “clarity” as a hallmark of good academic writing is still featured in many writing and argument texts to this day.

Crowley sees the current-traditional treatment of arrangement *qua* style as reducing rhetorical principles to the trinity of Unity, Coherence, and Emphasis. Second is the emergence of the “nesting approach” to composition instruction (Crowley 121). She defines this approach as the tendency to see a work as “[...] a nest of Chinese boxes, in which the smaller parts of discourse – words and sentences – were contained inside, and reflected by, the structure of increasingly larger parts – the paragraph and the essay” (132). Unity, Coherence, and the “third principle” (variously called mass, distinction, or

progression) ultimately derive from the investigative tradition of logic. Unity ensured that an investigation had some bounds, though arbitrarily set, and would not go on until doomsday. Coherence ensured that every relevant point would be discussed,<sup>12</sup> while the third principle stated that all parts of the discourse should be related to one another in a logical fashion, provided, of course, by the methodical approach to arrangement (Crowley 124). Style becomes, by 1900, an extension of static, yet vague and potentially contradictory abstractions to all levels of discourse from the sentence to the entire composition.

Aside from an emphasis on correctness and a concern with style as arrangement, current-traditional rhetoric also focuses on “modes” which supposedly have diverse ends, rather than concerning itself with persuading an audience, and personal writing topics rather than those grounded in civic matters. This type of writing instruction was reproduced by textbook publications and reinforced by working conditions faced by most of the new writing instructors.

### **Who’s This EDNA You Keep Writing About? Irenic Discourse and the Modes**

One of the most influential innovations of late nineteenth century composition instruction was the development of so-called multimodal discourse. This concept stresses a distinction between various genres of writing – usually exposition, description, narration, and argument – that are presumably useful in the academy. Prior to the shift

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<sup>12</sup> It is easy to see how these two principles are potentially in conflict with each other. One rhetor may consider a certain point to be a violation of unity, while her opponent might think of its omission as a violation of coherence. For example, in the case of abortion, the economic status of a pregnant woman might be a relevant concern for some who consider quality of life to be tantamount, while the same argument would be irrelevant for those who consider the sanctity of life to be of primary concern.

away from agonism in general, discourse produced by college students was expected to take an argumentative form. In fact, Connors sees this shift as one of the reasons why multimodal discourse was so successful. “At least one important reason for the decline of unimodal rhetoric, I believe, was the decline of public agonism in colleges and the resultant lack of interest in agonism’s central genre, argument” (62). However, faculty psychology from the previous century had just as profound an effect on multimodal discourse.

Modes are specifically connected to faculty psychology and the methodical presentation approach of the eighteenth century. Rhetoricians eventually concluded that the introspective powers necessary for invention could not be taught, but had to be developed through practice in observation and keeping notebooks. The presentation of ideas in writing so that they mirrored good thinking and observation could be taught, though. This would eventually take the form of modes of discourse, each applicable to a certain rhetorical end. However, modal theory carried over from eighteenth-century rhetoricians collapsed invention and arrangement into one discussion based on the intention behind the discourse. Intention named which faculty should be appealed to, and thus which genre should be used, which in turn determined the arrangement of the discourse (chronological for narration, spatial for description, etc.) (Connors 45-46).

Kitzhaber notes the dominance of the modes by the end of the nineteenth century: “It was in the 1890s that the ‘Forms of Discourse,’ either four or five in number, finally triumphed and became the dominant organizing principle behind most of the textbooks in rhetoric” (127). The fifth mode was usually listed as “Persuasion.” Among rhetoricians,



there was disagreement about the difference between persuasion and argument, with Baldwin being one of the few to attack the usual distinction showing persuasion as appealing to emotions and argument as appealing to reason, a complete reversal of Campbell's association (Kitzhaber 130-131). Some textbooks appeared that specialized in one particular form of discourse (Kitzhaber 133).

Perhaps the most important impact the modes had on composition was to remove argumentation as the principal aim of rhetoric. Connors explains:

Though classical rhetoric did not completely foreclose nonargumentative ends, in traditional rhetoric the narrative or description or definition was always assumed to exist for the purpose of serving the master-end of argument. This priority of argument in rhetorical theory and practice was completely assumed for more than two millennia. But then, with startling rapidity, argumentative rhetoric was supplemented and then supplanted by a rhetoric admitting a variety of discourse ends. (60)

Of all the genres included in EDNA(P), argumentation is the least amenable to faculty psychology as well as the methodical and introspective approach to invention taken during the nineteenth century. This is due, Crowley argues, to the necessity of considering an audience's desires, and reliance on non-empirical forms of proof (110). Thus, argument as the primary end of academic discourse was replaced by a variety of ends, which led to a differentiation in both the content and organization of general "academic" writing which had not been present throughout the long history of rhetoric. Essentially, a variety of discourse modes could exist in a vacuum, independent of argumentative ends.

One of the interesting outcomes of this development was a tacit concession to a unimodal argument theory through the idea of paragraph development. Scott and Denny's

*Paragraph Writing* was the first to popularize the means of “developing” a paragraph; “these ‘means’ included Contrast, Explanation, Definition, Illustration, Detail, and Proofs” (Connors 225). J.D. Hill offered several patterns of paragraph development including contrast, definition, and illustration. These means and others would eventually become the “methods of exposition” that would replace the modes in some current-traditional formulations of composition (Connors 226). The paragraph development schemes were essentially Aristotelian *topoi* commandeered for arrangement purposes (Berlin, *Writing Instruction* 69 and Connors 224 ff.).

Modal discourse became a cornerstone of virtually all English department study by the end of the nineteenth century. An 1899 report by the NEA on college entrance requirements recommended revamping secondary English instruction. Arthur Applebee describes the model curriculum advocated by the NEA: “Instruction in literature and in composition were integrated around a series of focuses taken directly from studies of rhetoric: narration, description, and exposition, for example, were each given a semester of emphasis” (49). This committee’s findings show that modes of narration had become so ingrained in the discourse of writing instruction that each one is to be a source of study for an entire semester. Instruction in both literature and composition is grounded in a modal system of classification, freezing this concept of discourse into a timeless abstraction which governs almost all examples of writing. By the end of the century, formalism in terms of modal discourse had become a major influence on the writing instruction students received even before they matriculated into college.

The full impact of modal discourse is still seen in twenty-first century composition courses through the prevalence of this organizational pattern in many contemporary handbooks. Kitzhaber's critique of modal writing is worth quoting in full:

The effect of the forms of discourse on rhetorical theory and practice has been bad. They represent an unrealistic view of the writing process, a view that assumes writing is done by formula and in a social vacuum. They turn the attention of both student and teacher toward an academic exercise instead of toward a meaningful act of communication in a social context. Like Unity-Coherence-Emphasis – or any other set of static abstractions concerning writing – they substitute mechanical for organic conceptions and therefore distort the real nature of writing. (139)

Modal discourse is essentially a “fill-in-the-blank” method of writing that can be completed per assignment and is not connected to any larger discursive goal.

### **Personal Writing Topics**

Prior to the shift to a German model, most students argued about socially significant subjects. In “1787 students were arguing more civic and religious theses [...] [T]he burden of these assignments was still argumentative and non-personal; they would have been recognizable to Cicero's teachers” (Connors 301). However, the cult of the individual which arises in the late sixteenth century was to have profound effects on the types of assignments students were to write in the nineteenth century. As Connors notes, “The nineteenth century saw this classical approach, in a relatively few years, change into a rhetorical praxis far more personal, private, intimate – in short, a praxis informed by romanticism rather than by classicism” (302).

During the first half of the nineteenth century, students wrote on topics similar to those assigned for speeches under the older recitation method. Some topics at the

beginning of the century were: *Evanescence of Pleasure*, *The Domestic Life of the Ancient Egyptians*, *Curiosity*, *Ruins of Time*, and *The Dice of the Gods Are Loaded*. As strange as these topics may seem, Connors notes their value for both instruction and social argumentation. “Writing assignments were abstract, culture-based, and social in orientation. English composition was devoted, as rhetoric had been, to teaching the received ways of handling public topics by deploying gleaned knowledge mixed with commonly held beliefs” (303). John Walker’s *Teacher’s Assistant to English Composition*, published in 1801, even included a simplified, truncated list of *topoi* similar to those of many classical authors. However, “education after 1810 could no longer rely on the long-held assumption that students would have read large amounts of the classical literary canon in the original languages” (Connors 307). Connors characterizes the personal writing and invention schemes as a “conscious retreat” from the complicated classical topical system because of this lack of wide reading on behalf of students (308).

Furthermore, “[...] as the amount of student writing increased and as more serious attention was paid to composition work, objections against this sort of topic [i.e. civic] became strenuous” (Kitzhaber 104). Connors notes that after the Civil War, many institutions were changing the nature of even the oral rhetoric presented to and by students. Rather than the older disputational debates, many performances were multi-modal “effusions” approaching the theatrical, and “public speaking gradually became histrionics,” allowing women to participate in an arena that “minimized the element of pragmatic contest” (58). Concomitant with this modal shift, there is a move away from civic or social issues as the argumentative basis for performance. “This shift [to personal

writing] reflects the same concern with private, individual experience that marks imaginative literature, particularly that of the romantic and post-romantic period, in contrast to traditional oratory's focus on culturally sanctioned commonplaces" (Halloran, "From Rhetoric" 165). After the Civil War the rejection of abstract, civic-based topics becomes an institutional given. Part of the reason for rejecting this system also lies in the ascendancy of the modes of discourse as an organizing scheme for rhetoric, beginning with Alexander Bain. This explains why the first two modes usually taught, narration and description, were so popular; they simply required the student to observe and repeat what was observed. They didn't require her to have any knowledge outside of her own experience. John Hart's *Manual of Composition and Rhetoric* from 1870 was the first to emphasize the personal nature of assignments, especially those in narration and description, which usually included the first person pronoun.<sup>13</sup>

After 1875, personal feelings and thoughts acquire centrality in most discussions of invention and assignments (Connors 302). "During the 1870s we can see invention methods snap inside out, from primary emphasis on recall and synthesis of sources to a new emphasis on observation and on choosing and analyzing aspects of personal knowledge" (Connors 312). Invention in personal experience essays becomes more a matter of selecting and narrowing aspects of experience from the store laid up by students in their everyday lives. In the 1890s, reaction against the old topics was almost complete. "All the topics in the books after 1893 showed that an effort was being made to ask of the student only what he knew or could reasonably find out through limited investigation"

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<sup>13</sup> Connors lists Hart's now infamous "How I Spent My Summer Vacation" as an example (311).

(Kitzhaber 107). Joseph Denny suggested that topics should reflect real social situations which students might reasonably encounter in their real lives (Kitzhaber 108).

Connors argues that personal experience writing is the easiest for an overworked teacher to read and correct (141). This type of assignment usually follows a simple narrative or spatial organization and is not as complex as an argumentative paper. Presumably, an instructor can read many more “summer vacation” essays than “liberty versus equality” essays because narratives don’t require a teacher to look for flaws in the argument or think of possible counter-arguments. Even though personal experience continues to be the basis for many assignments in composition texts well into the twenty-first century, a tacit assumption must exist in writing teachers about students when assigning them. We want to believe their personal experience essays are actually based on personal experience, and are not works of creative fiction, although some do stretch the limits of believability.

### **Textbooks**

Connors points to the derivative nature of most rhetoric instruction, untrained teachers, and increasingly efficient and cost-effective production as the three major factors contributing to the increase in composition textbook production in the United States during the nineteenth century (78). Blair’s influence was felt as belletristic rhetorical approaches supplanted classically derived theories. After Blair, writers no longer synthesize Aristotle to Quintilian as had been common, but rely on Blair for their model. Textbooks begin to incorporate models and question/answer drills designed to produce writing from students, but not writing that has to be turned in. “The change from

abstract treatise was, then, accomplished by adding questions, exercises, drills and assignments to the rhetorical lessons at the heart of each treatise chapter” (Connors 73). Many of the composition and argument texts produced in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries continue with this model by providing a chapter centered on a concept, such as a mode of discourse or a stylistic proscription, followed by “exercises” that are designed to emphasize and concretize that concept in the students’ minds.

Thus writing, which is obviously a practice-based skill, became tangled with the insistence on abstract ‘mental discipline’ of the early nineteenth century, and the conception grew that one learns to write by consciously learning ideas about writing and then practicing the application of those ideas. The story of the growth of composition textbooks is the story of the abstract and theoretical rhetoric that was the legacy of the treatise forcing itself into realms of skill development not easily conformable to it. (Connors 72)

The skill-development model of composition instruction that Berlin outlines is still with us today, and effectively solidifies each mode or concept as a discrete entity with little or no relation to discursive production as a holistic act.

As a result of the Harvard Reports, “[b]y the end of the century, the typical composition textbook was devoted to the forms of discourse, stylistic matters organized around the principles of unity, coherence, and emphasis, and discussions of usage and grammar. Superficial correctness had become the most significant measure of accomplished prose” (Berlin, *Writing Instruction* 73). As early as 1880, Connors reports, instructors had been searching for a system of reference for enforcing “rules” of composition, consisting mainly of grammatical and formal proscriptions (146).<sup>14</sup> The

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<sup>14</sup> The first handbook to consist solely of rules was Edwin C. Wooley’s *Handbook of English Composition: A Compendium of Rules*, published in 1907. This text was the culmination of a professional drift of sorts.

contemporary discipline was formed in part by the textbooks “that rhetorical instruction spun off as it devolved after 1860 from a theoretical to a practical pedagogy” (Connors 69). Furthermore, this institutional drift was solidified through an alliance between English professors looking for easy pedagogical techniques and publishers looking for profits. “Large houses that still control much text publishing today [1997] – Ginn, Harper, Holt, Heath – were being formed and establishing extensive sales and distribution networks, and after 1870 their most popular texts defined the content of disciplines in a way that had been rare before the advent of cheap stereotyping and automatic binding” (Connors 82). The emphasis on the textbook as the locus of rhetoric instruction begs the question of whether these tools are even necessary for successful rhetorical pedagogy in the first place.

### **One More Paper and My Eyes Will Fall Out**

Another factor that contributed to the rise of current-traditional, textbook-based rhetoric instruction was the ratio of students to teachers. “When the college movement began around 1815, there was a sudden serious shortage of college-level teachers and no corresponding mechanism for producing them” (Connors 77). The shortage continued as the German model took over toward the end of the century. As a result, many of the newer universities used a new crop of English teachers not fully trained in rhetoric. These untrained teachers, hurled into the trenches, turned to redactions of Blair presented in a proscriptive and prescriptive, question-and-answer format.

By 1860, this was a standard feature of many composition and rhetoric classes, but the required freshman composition course would bring an even greater workload to



already overburdened teachers. The University of Michigan, in 1894, had four teachers and two graduate assistants for 1,198 students. Harvard had twenty teachers for 2,000 writing students (Berlin, *Writing Instruction* 60). “The average size of the freshman class at Harvard was over two hundred students by 1870, and by 1903 it had grown to more than six hundred” (Connors 190). With a teacher to student ratio ranging from 1:300 to 1:100, teachers understandably sought an instruction and evaluation method that would be more amenable to massive grading loads.

The immediate solution to the numbers difficulty was to develop a composition course that could be taught to many students at once, through lectures and readings. And if the theory of composition used were highly formalized, the work of grading papers could be simplified, since harried teachers could ignore the contents of their students’ themes and would only need to assess the degree of conformity to the formal features prescribed by the lectures and the textbook. (Crowley 136)

Reading, evaluating, and commenting on a paper is a time-consuming task which was made easier by proscriptive rules and an emphasis on formal correctness transmitted through the lecture and the textbook.

The ultimate result of this was (and continues to be) a false impression of rhetoric as a “fill-in-the-blank” exercise in conforming to grammar rules and particular modes of discourse rather than a *techne* involving argumentation based on audience analysis. Thus, by 1900

Instead of teaching a discipline rooted in a millennia of tradition, he – or, increasingly, she – is teaching a congeries of theory and pedagogy less than forty years old. Instead of being sought by students, rhetoric courses by the early twentieth century are despised and sneered at, and their instructors have fallen from the empyrean of named chairs to the status of permanent underclass: “composition teachers,” oppressed, ill-used, and secretly despised. (Connors 171-72)

Not only did the composition course give a false impression of the nature of rhetoric to students, it also devalued the work done by instructors of those courses. As Connors notes, “The composition underclass as we know it had proved one of the most durable legacies of the creation of the university system” (174).

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Many of the changes in rhetoric instruction during the late nineteenth century have had profound and lasting effects on freshman composition taught in the twenty-first century. Agonistic, civic-oriented rhetoric which asked students to bring their education to bear on pressing social problems has been replaced by a formalist approach centered on fulfilling tasks unconnected to larger rhetorical ends such as learning to write “clearly” or “correctly” or to write in one particular genre with no discernable rhetorical purpose or specific audience. As such, our students are not trained in how to apply or analyze argument on important civic issues, and our democracy suffers because of it. Yet, we have the institutional mandate to teach students how to write within the academy according to the various conventions of the academy’s disciplines. In the next chapter, I will outline a pedagogical model based on classical rhetorical models, combined with contemporary understandings of ideology, which will give students a set of transferable skills applicable to both civic and academic rhetorical situations.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *CONFIRMATIO*

NEMO ME EXIGAT ID PRAECEPTORUM GENUS QUOD EST A  
PLERISQUE SCRIPTORIBUS ARITUM TRADITUM UT QUASI QUASDAM  
LEGES IMMUTABILI NECESSITATE CONSCTRICTAS STUDIOIS  
DICENDI FERAM - QUINTILIANUS II XII I

Nobody should expect from me those type of rules which have been handed down by writers on the art, nor ask me to bring laws constricted, as it were, by unchanging necessity. – Quintilian II. XII.I

This chapter will propose a pedagogy based on classical rhetorical theory and practice as outlined by various authors from the ancient world, taken as a synchronic whole. The point is not to recover a complete classical *progymnsmata*, but to rehabilitate those practices which can best be used to teach transferable skills that are applicable to contemporary situations. As Douglas Downs and Elizabeth Wardle point out, “Resisting the notion that talk about pedagogy is merely talk about ‘practice’ is especially important to writing studies because our field is conceived – by those who fund it, those who experience it, and most of those who work in it – as primarily pedagogical” (553). Although “composition studies” as a field implies a meta-language (or theory) that is used to talk about that very field, the majority of our work involves teaching the class, and reading, grading, and helping students to revise their papers. I will propose a reactivation of classical rhetorical principles and civic focus, which are not new suggestions in themselves. However, they have not, to my knowledge, been combined

with contemporary conceptions of ideology. It is my contention that classical rhetoric naturally lends itself to describing and generating ideologically-based argumentation, which is important not only for critical thinking in academic settings, but also, and more importantly, in students' everyday lives as citizens.

The previous chapter has shown the origin of current-traditional, formalist rhetoric in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The contemporary composition course created as a result of these shifts rests on the fundamental assumption that what is learned in composition courses can be transferred to other academic rhetorical situations. This assumption is necessary, given the placement of the course at the beginning of a student's college-level education. Notice that this assumption was explicitly *not* the case prior to the advent of freshman composition. Prior to the decades-long shift to the teaching of rhetoric at the beginning of a college student's career, it was assumed that students would need a body of knowledge to argue about, so rhetoric was reserved for the end of the course of study. The prominence of "transfer" as a first premise on which composition courses are based has come under attack in much recent scholarship.<sup>15</sup> Many theorists contest the notion of transfer because it presumes that there is a general academic discourse, defined as a particular form of written product. However, as Amy Devitt points out, "Writing is so embedded in rhetorical contexts and social structures and institutions that to study one location for writing reveals only that location. Writing is a highly situated act.[...] It would seem obvious that any skills so generalized as to be transferable

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<sup>15</sup>See Downs and Wardle, Smitt, and Wardle.

from one situation to another would be so generalized as to be meaningless” (216). While I do not agree with Devitt that *skills*<sup>16</sup> which are transferable are so broad as to be meaningless, I do agree that concentrating on genre is a problem. Obviously, there is no such thing as general academic discourse – a lab report is not a biography, nor a literary analysis – so we should instead concentrate, as Smitt, Downs, and Wardle have argued, on transference of skills that will enable students to write in a variety of genres, including non-academic ones. I believe it is, in fact, more important to teach non-academic discourse, as most of our students will use academic writing only as undergrads; in the “real world,” they will be exposed to commercials, political speech, office memos, and the like. Rhetoric instruction is useful not only for composing texts, but for interpreting them as well. It is this skill which is sorely lacking in formalist rhetoric, and has done a disservice to our students’ ability to engage productively with political and civic argument.

As a remedy to the faulty concept of transferring “academic writing” or “general educated discourse” from composition classes to other courses, many writers have recently suggested that freshman composition be re-envisioned as a course that attempts to teach skills rather than genre(s) that would be transferable from freshman composition to other writing situations. Douglas Downs and Elizabeth Wardle, for example, advocate changing FYC into “Introduction to Writing Studies” which they describe as “a course

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<sup>16</sup> The disagreement about “transfer” and “skills” among rhetoricians and compositionists highlights the loaded nature of these terms.

about how to understand and think about writing in school and society” (557).<sup>17</sup> My point is that classical theories of rhetoric have taught this concept of “skills transfer” to different rhetorical situations for roughly the past two and a half thousand years. Rather than reinvent the wheel, we should look to our roots.

Also, classical rhetoricians, by the very nature of their enterprise, were concerned with the civic and social nature of their speech, and their works can therefore be used as models for critically analyzing and composing texts on political topics. The course of study outlined below will emphasize not only composition, but rhetorical analysis of contemporary social and political discourse. Such analysis serves two purposes. The first is a variation of the Roman practice of *imitatio*, and the concept of reading model discourse in contemporary composition. This practice shows students how a complete argument is presented to an audience in order to serve as an example. I differ from traditional systems of modeling in that I ask students not to *copy* the model, but to look at the model as a discursive artifact that is targeted at a specific audience. Furthermore, the Greek concept of a *phylakterion*, or amulet of protection, is applicable. I want to arm students with the discursive strategies necessary to unpack the ideological basis of civic arguments they encounter.

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to describing a classically-derived composition class that focuses on civic argument. This class will accomplish a two-fold

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<sup>17</sup> See Smitt, Wardle, and Devitt for similar suggestions on changing composition to some form of “writing studies” course.

task: restore focus on social and political discourse to college rhetorical education, and allow for the transfer of “skills” that are mandated by institutions and departments. The concepts below are presented in topical order; see the sample syllabus in Appendix I as an example of how these concepts are deployed chronologically and are associated with specific assignments.

### **Introduction to Classical Rhetoric**

The first concept to cover is the “long history” of rhetoric. Many students are unaware of the larger intellectual history that the composition course embodies. By connecting their mandatory writing class to the longer intellectual history of the discipline, we place students into a much deeper and more nuanced intellectual tradition. Students should see rhetoric as a discipline that will allow them to interpret, evaluate, respond to, and use texts, as well as a process-oriented discipline that is heuristic in nature and will allow them to make their own arguments for both civic and academic purposes. In my class, I use a Power Point presentation that incorporates definitions from classical rhetoricians, as well as their inheritors in the medieval, early-modern, and contemporary time periods. The point of this diachronic analysis is to show students that rhetoric is a highly mutable discipline that undergoes periods of devaluation and resurgence. The students are also exposed to definitions of rhetoric that recognize the importance of emotional argument in the rhetorical tradition. Rather than present only positive definitions, I also give negative definitions that portray the discipline as a deceptive practice that can be used to sway people to unethical and immoral action. The purpose of these negative definitions is to show that rhetorical skill can be used for ill,

and to illustrate the necessity of learning rhetorical methods in order to have a *phylakterion*, a term I actually use in the introduction.

The introductory section ends by explaining three ways of thinking about rhetoric as a *techne* that will ultimately be helpful to students by providing them with transferable skills applicable to any argumentative situation: rhetoric as situation, rhetoric as three appeals, and rhetoric as process.

### **Rhetoric as Situation**

Lloyd Bitzer's 1968 analysis of the rhetorical situation is perhaps one of the most influential contemporary formulations of the topic. While his ideas are by no means universally accepted by all rhetoricians, they are still relevant to and important for the field, as is evidenced by the "Poster Page" in the February 2010 issue of *College Composition and Communication*. His description of rhetorical situations focuses on the conjunction of exigence, an "imperfection marked by urgency" (6) or a state of affairs or event which requires a social body to solve a problem and implement that solution; audience, the *actual* group of receivers of discourse; and constraints. "Standard sources of constraint include beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives and the like; and when the orator enters the situation, his discourse not only harnesses constraints given by situation but provides additional important constraints—for example his personal character, his logical proofs, and his style" (8). Bitzer claims that exigence, audience, and constraints "comprise everything relevant in a rhetorical situation. When the orator, invited by situation, enters it and creates and presents



discourse, then both he and his speech are additional constituents” (8). The general features of Bitzer’s formulation of the rhetorical situation are as follows:

1. “Rhetorical” discourse – that which is capable of affecting a change – is called into being by the situation.
2. The rhetorical situation invites a fitting response.
3. The rhetorical situation prescribes and constrains the fit response.
4. Exigence – the event or state of affairs which suggests discourse in the first place – and constraints on response are objective, observable events.
5. The rhetorical situation exhibits variously more or less complex and organized structures.
6. The rhetorical situation comes into existence, matures, then either decays or persists. Since some situations recur (such as presidential addresses or term papers), they become constraints (8-13).

I would like to reconsider Bitzer’s analysis of the rhetorical situation through the lens of the classical tradition. The first four of Bitzer’s elements are covered by the classical concept of *kairos*, which I address below. Element five seems to be a self evident feature of any discursive situation, and can be applied to both *kairos* and the notion of *decorum*, or making discourse fit both audience and the specific forum in which the discourse is presented. The sixth aspect offers a very useful insight, and can be used to explain and help students interrogate the use of genres in both academic and non-academic writing. Bitzer’s triangular representation of the rhetorical situation is nothing new; there are various triangular representations of the rhetorical situation. My formulation of the

“rhetorical triangle” incorporates the classical elements of audience, author, and subject, while highlighting the ideologically-situated nature of each discursive act.

### **The Rhetorical Triangle and Ideological Relationships**

Traditional ideological analysis, such as that promoted in orthodox Marxism, runs the danger of sliding into a transparent language error. (If the proletariat could *only be shown the truth*, they would rise up in revolt, etc.)<sup>18</sup> The positivist conception of epistemology (all reasonable minds think in the same fashion) at the heart of these orthodox interpretations has been replaced, at least in English departments, by one that recognizes knowledge as created by an interaction among writer (producer), text (medium), and reader (receiver). This rhetorical triangle is at the heart of classical rhetorical practice. Forming an argument with a real audience’s belief system in mind avoids the transparent language trap because it accepts meaning and form as constrained by an audience from the outset.

The triangle is a diagrammatic representation of every rhetorical situation. The corners of the triangle are the audience, writer or speaker, and subject matter. In the middle of this triangle is a box, representing the particular text that embodies the argument about the subject, generated and presented to the audience by the reader / writer. The box is in turn circumscribed by the forum, or the place of “publication” of the actual text. The triangle itself is circumscribed by the context – the overall social,

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<sup>18</sup>See Aune, *Rhetoric and Marxism*, introduction.

political, and / or academic background of the argument. The context also includes previous arguments on the same topic. (See Figure 1.)

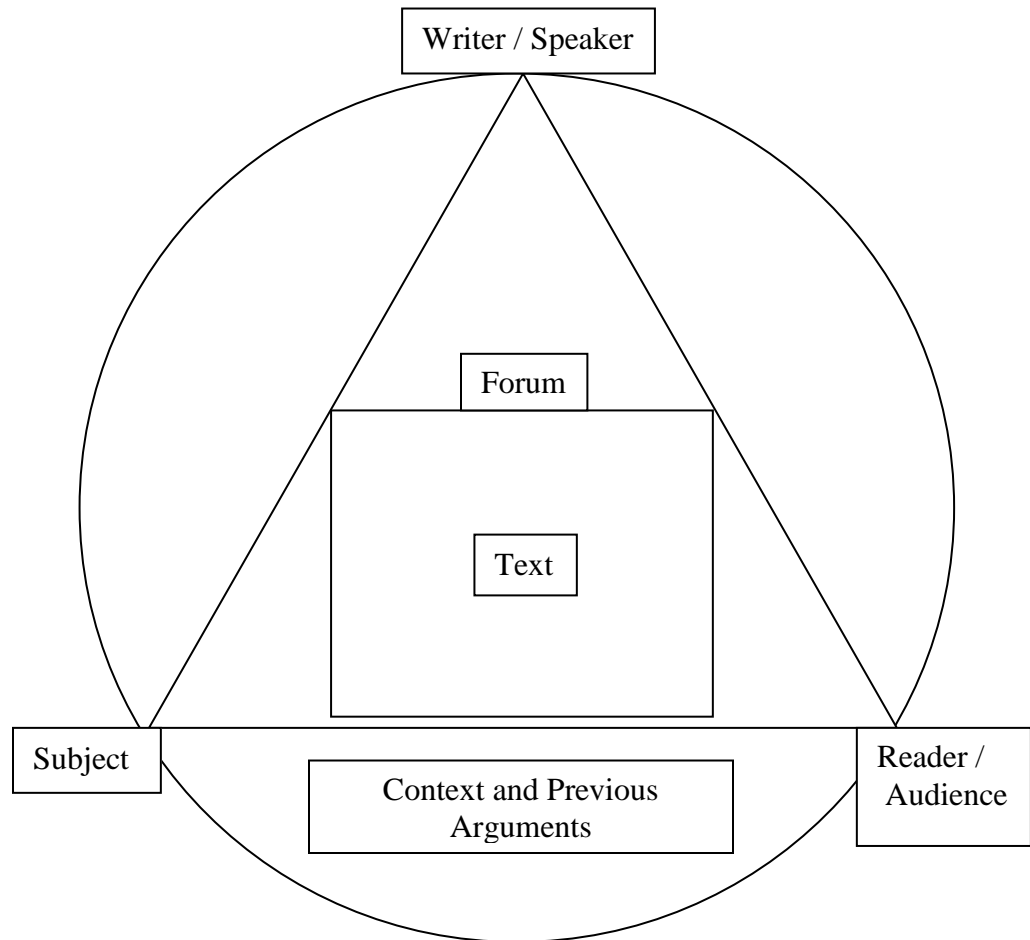


Figure 1 – The Rhetorical Triangle

The complex interaction of each of the elements of the triangle constrains the discourse students will generate in several ways. Each particular audience will accept only some of the available arguments, sources for supporting evidence, and styles whether the situation is academic or non-academic. For example, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will probably not accept a woman's right to choose as a justification for abortion, because from their perspective arguments based on the freedom to choose are insufficient in the face of belief in the sanctity of God-given life; academics often ask for a works cited list populated by juried academic resources rather than a slight reference to or even omission of sources; and a Southern Baptist homily should not be presented in the manner and vocabulary of the BBC evening news. Depending on the forum (website, academic conference, board meeting, paper for a biology class, etc.), the presentation will require a text-only approach, verbal communication, visual arguments, or a combination of the three. The larger social milieu and history of argument on a topic also determine many of the acceptable arguments about that topic. For example, making the case for a nationalized health system in the United States is difficult, in part, because of our antagonistic relationship to socialism during the Cold War. By the same token, nineteenth century notions of race are no longer acceptable to most audiences as a way of explaining the achievement gap between Caucasian and minority students.

Introducing the rhetorical triangle at the outset of the course allows the idea of constraint to be applied to other class concepts. For example, arrangement involves selecting arguments that a particular audience would find acceptable from the pool of

those generated during brainstorming, and tailoring discourse to the audience through use of appropriate diction and rhetorical flourishes in the section on style. Transfer of notions of *decorum*, or propriety, and its related Greek concept of *to prepon* are important goals here. Certain audiences have expectations that must be respected if persuasion is to be successful. Quintilian, who devotes the eleventh book of *Institutio Oratoria* to *decorum*, gives the best description:

Oratorical Ornament is in fact varied and manifold, requiring different forms for different contexts; consequentially, unless it is adapted both to circumstances and to persons, it will not only fail to lend distinction to the oratory, but will ruin it and make the facts work against us. What use is the use of words which are good Latin, meaningful, elegant, and even embellished with Figures and Rhythm, unless they accord with the views toward which we wish the judge to be guided and influenced? What use is it to apply a lofty style to trivial Causes, a concise and refined one to momentous ones; a cheerful manner to gloomy themes, a smooth one to harsh; a threatening tone when we plead for mercy, a submissive one where energy is needed, and a brutal and violent one when what the subject demands is charm? (Quintilian XI.I)

Quintilian emphasizes that discourse must be adapted depending on the character of the person represented in court cases, the audience, the nature of the case, the time and place, and the character of those whom he speaks against. In class, we discuss *decorum* by looking to various rhetorical situations and the discourse generated as a response to them, such as the “Gettysburg Address,” Roosevelt’s “Pearl Harbor Address,” Kennedy’s “Inaugural Address,” or King’s “I Have a Dream.” The tones of these speeches vary greatly, because each is a response to different exigencies and each is constrained by differing audience expectations. A sense of *decorum* is, like many rhetorical concepts, closer to an art than a science because human actions and situations are infinite, as argued by Aristotle and Quintilian, and students can only develop it well through repeated

practice. By making them aware of the basic principles of *decorum*, we can enable students to use the notion of propriety consciously when generating discourse in the future.

### **Rhetoric as Three Kinds of Appeals**

Aristotle divides logical argument into those that are artistic, which a speaker generates herself, and those that are inartistic, which a speaker would find inherent in an event or from what we now call outside sources. Originally, this division was not envisioned by Aristotle in terms of what we would call academic research. Artistic proofs came from the speaker through the practice of rhetorical invention, whereas inartistic proofs depended on the particulars of the case, such as witnesses or physical evidence and were not under the control of the speaker (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.2.2-3). For example, an argument involving climate change might use statistics on observable temperature changes and the amount of carbon in the atmosphere as inartistic proofs, but connect the two phenomena to human practices in a causal manner using an artistic proof.

Besides the division into artistic and inartistic, classical rhetoric has traditionally divided persuasion into three categories of appeals: *logos* or reason, *ethos* or character and qualifications of the orator, and *pathos* or emotion. The appeals represent three different strategies that overlap and intersect in differing combinations based on the given rhetorical situation. Learning when to use each appeal appropriately and learning to unpack the appeals when they are seen in discourse are integral components of the class, and students should be introduced to the appeals fairly quickly. During the class, I make sure to relate the different appeals to academic and social / political discourse.

## Logos

Students are already familiar with inartistic appeals from their high school work with research papers. Artistic logical argumentation is certainly at the heart of all academic discourse, be it the inductive proof of a scientific hypothesis, or a deductive interpretation of a literary text based on feminist theory.<sup>19</sup> This type of argument is central to political discourse as well, but in a much different manner. Academic argumentation often relies on explicitly stated premises<sup>20</sup> and conclusions drawn from them, while political argumentation often makes inferential arguments from the audience's pool of beliefs, which can be used to draw conclusions, as well as to construct implied premises from which conclusions are drawn by the speaker. For instance, post-Cold War American political discourse assumes that socialism is not only antithetical to American values, but also irrelevant as a political and economic model after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Therefore, any politician or policy labeled as "socialist" (regardless of the actual degree to which he, she, or it is socialist) will be connected to an anti-American agenda. "Candidate X is a socialist" conjures up the inference that that candidate is not in tune with "real American values."

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<sup>19</sup>Of course, the *vice versa* is also true. Rocket scientists make calculations about trajectory deductively based on universal laws of gravitation just as classical rhetoricians observed examples of successful speech to determine guidelines for the *techne*. It is little wonder that Aristotle assigned induction to learned people, as he participated in the process while composing the *Rhetoric*.

<sup>20</sup>Academic argumentation also relies on explicitly cited premises from other academics in cases of quotation or source use.

*The Centrality of the Enthymeme and Ideology in Argument*

A concise definition of the enthymeme is difficult to come by, because, as Nancy Harper points out, “everyone knows what an enthymeme is, and no one knows what an enthymeme is” (304). The difficulty the enthymeme poses is due in part to the language Aristotle uses when discussing it in the *Analytics* and the *Rhetoric*. As John Warrington notes in his introduction to the *Prior and Posterior Analytics*, “Aristotle’s language is often highly compressed, and it becomes *necessary* to expand his sentences almost to the point of paraphrase” during the process of translation (xiii). However, Aristotle does distinguish between the syllogism and enthymeme, suggesting two distinct forms that argument can take: dialectic is the province of induction and syllogism, and rhetoric is the province of example and enthymeme (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.2). Jeffrey Walker claims that Aristotle does not explicitly define the enthymeme, but presupposes a definition of it that is current in contemporaneous sophistic discourse: “[...] in a more specifically technical sense, an ‘enthymeme’ is a strategic, kairotic, argumentational turn that exploits a cluster of emotively resonant, value-laden representations and systems of oppositions made ‘present’ (usually) by exetastic buildup, in order to generate in its audience a passionate identification with a particular stance” (180). Walker’s focus on the emotional resonances created by enthymemic reasoning is a departure from the “traditional” sense of the term in modern rhetorical discourse, and points to the fluid nature of this argumentative tactic. I introduce the enthymeme in the section of the class on logos, but enthymemes can be used for pathos-based argument as well as in constructing an aura of ethos around a writer.



Nancy Harper also defines the enthymeme in a manner which is applicable to contemporary discourse. She arrives at her definition through an inductive analysis of Aristotle's examples of the enthymeme from the *Prior Analytics* (70a13 – 70a27) and the *Rhetoric* (137b15 – 137b19). Harper claims an enthymeme consists of three parts: “(1) an observation, (2) a generalization, and (3) an inference. An enthymeme may be abbreviated and, when it is, it is usually the *generalization* which is omitted as commonly accepted ‘fact’” (306). Harper also argues that all enthymemes are causal in nature (305); however I suggest that this last condition need not necessarily be the case. If Aristotle does indeed use the enthymeme in a way consistent with current sophistic practice, then the examples he gives in *Prior Analytics* and *Rhetoric* need not be the only uses of the enthymeme. Harper's emphasis on causality may be the result of her methodology; if she defines the enthymeme from only five examples, there may be insufficient samples from which to derive a definition. The important aspects of Harper's definition (indeed of all contemporary adaptations of the enthymeme) are that some element of the argument is left unstated, and that that element is assumed by the audience as true. It is at this intersection that modern interpretations of ideology as a structured system of socially constructed belief become helpful. Audiences assume to be true that which they have been exposed to as ideological “truth.” These truths involve assumptions about the nature of reality, humanity, and political organization which later serve as premises for arguments; they become the foundations of enthymemic argument in the political and social spheres.

At this point, it is necessary to address what ideology means for the composition classroom. The problem with defining ideology is much the same as that of defining the enthymeme; as Terry Eagleton notes, “Indeed it is hardly an exaggeration to claim that there are almost as many theories of ideology as there are theorists of it” (14). I will, therefore, enter the fray and provide a provisional definition of my own which is both applicable to and usable by composition students. Ideology is a structure of socially and historically bound assumptions or beliefs about ontology (the way things are) and / or ethics (the way things should be). These assumptions serve as premises for arguments about social and political policy that students are exposed to daily. I usually don’t refer to the premises as “elements of ideology” in class at first, but rather “values” or “beliefs.” Students don’t usually object to these terms, but often associate the term “ideology” with a negative connotation due to the prevalence of the term as a pejorative in contemporary discourse. Depending on the maturity and intellectual savvy of an individual class, I may begin to use the term “ideology” along with an explanation as the semester progresses.

Regardless of what terminology I use, it is important to discuss where the values and ideologies we use come from; *ex nihilo nihil fit*. The ideologies we, our students, and everyone else uses are structural and social in nature. Althusser’s structural model of ideology, outlined in “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” is especially helpful here, as it enables students to trace the development of their own ideological relationship to the world around them. Eagleton explains,

For Althusser, ideology works primarily at the level of the unconscious; its function is to constitute us as historical subjects equipped for certain tasks in society; and it does this by drawing us into an “imaginary” relation with the social

order which persuades us that we and it are centered on and indispensable to one another. Ideology is not thereby false, since, first of all, this relation is more a matter of unconscious feelings and images than of falsifiable propositions, and secondly because all of this goes on within certain material practices and institutions – “ideological state apparatuses”, as Althusser calls them – which are indubitably real. (14)

This seems paradoxical at first, that we may be drawn into an imaginary relationship by a real practice or institution. A simple example that most students will have at least some experience of is the repetition of the Pledge of Allegiance in American classrooms. This concrete practice asks children to imagine themselves in a relationship of reciprocal “allegiance” with a country that guarantees “liberty and justice for all.” Some students may have had this relationship confirmed on both sides, while others may have been falsely arrested or harassed by the police, clearly a violation of both liberty and justice. In either case, students can see how institutions and practices determine the ideological matrix which students inhabit, be they compliant with or resistant to the hegemonic ideologies of the time. No matter how they position themselves, students will have previously held belief structures when they enter our classrooms, and will usually have some understanding of how beliefs inform and constrain the society around them.

Students’ previous experience with belief systems can be used to teach how the enthymeme works in civic argument. Recent work on the enthymeme focuses on its central role in persuading an audience based on its previously held beliefs.<sup>21</sup> These beliefs are in turn based on ideological formations which constitute the individual in contemporary theory (assumptions about race, class, gender, etc.). As Janice Lauer states

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<sup>21</sup>See Hood, chapter 1.

in *Invention in Rhetoric and Composition*, “Using the enthymeme, the rhetor started with a premise that came from the audience and then reasoned to a probable conclusion” (8). Enthymemes, like the *topoi*, are firmly grounded in the storehouse of “always-already” formed beliefs of the audience.<sup>22</sup> What is left unsaid is that which is supplied by the audience and often rests on their ideological preconceptions. What do they take for granted as true about society, human nature, government, etc.? A good example of a modern enthymeme which reveals its ideology: “Don’t get in the car with Maria; she’s a woman.” A full syllogistic statement of this argument would be: 1) All women are bad drivers; 2) Maria is a woman; and therefore 3) Maria is a bad driver and you shouldn’t ride with her for your own safety.

Granted, most enthymemes are not so blatant in their ideological leanings. Usually, when we come to major or minor premises in political and civic discourse that depends on sharing certain “givens” with an audience, we are in what is most easily recognizable as ideological territory. For example, an argument that claims national healthcare coverage funded by the government is un-American because it is socialist is obviously ideological in nature, and depends on the unstated principle that socialism is un-American. Discourse in American political speech is a perfect place for students to tease out the ideological nature of arguments by having them reconstruct enthymemes

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<sup>22</sup>The enthymeme is reconfigured as claim and support plus warrants and backing in some newer models of rhetoric, such as the Toulmin method. In Toulmin’s system, an argument is made from a claim and support; sometimes the support must be supported itself. Warrants and backing provide levels of support for evidence made about claims, and can be equivalent to the unstated premises in an enthymeme.

that depend on assumptions about the value of spreading democracy, free markets, family values, equality, and the like. Analyzing the ideological content of political speech will show students the place of ideology as belief in their own lives and help to demystify the concept. The goal of reactivating classical concepts such as the enthymeme is to start turning the myth of composition's "responsible democratic citizens" into a reality by arming them with the critical skills necessary to analyze and compose persuasive political discourse.

Ideological analysis also creates, in the hermeneutic stage, what the Greeks called a *phylakterion*, or an amulet of protection. When students consume political or social discourse, they should be prepared to boil that discourse down to its ideological core to see if they truly agree with it. In terms of ideological theory, this pedagogy adds an element of agency to the interpellation process. Under Althusser's formulation, ideology pre-exists the subject and interpellates her with little or no action other than recognition on her part.<sup>23</sup> Recognition and naming of ideological positions will allow students to confront and renew or reject previous positions. This is essentially an ideologically-centered reconfiguration of the old saw that colleges provide opportunities for "personal growth" – a selling point of the college experience for guidance counselors and admissions officers nationwide.

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<sup>23</sup>See "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses."

The hermeneutic aspect of the course is especially applicable to contemporary students because they are presented with such arguments on a daily basis via television.

Roger C. Aden notes,

When public arguments are presented on television, then, both the content and the form of the arguments encourage postmodern processing. That is, the content of arguments presented to the public consist of “already said” fragments, from which individuals construct their own interpretations. The televised form of the arguments further encourages such processing: Viewers feel involved, but that involvement is more passive, fostering acceptance of the content more so than if the argument appeared in another medium. Both content and form suggest that arguments in postmodern cultures function deductively, relying upon audience agreement of what’s already “known” to create further agreement. Ironically, this form of argument processing mirrors that posited by Aristotle in his explanation of the deductive reasoning form he labeled an enthymeme. (31)

Students are already familiar with the enthymeme from their consumption of radio, television, or webcast / podcast news; commercials; and even political speech from senators and presidents. As part of the work on enthymeme and logos, students reconstruct an entire argument from a political or civically-oriented source: presidential or senatorial speeches, opinion-editorial articles, and discourse from interest groups work well for these in-class and homework assignments. I have assigned States of the Union Addresses, responses to the Addresses from opposition parties, campaign commercials, and arguments posted on websites. After reconstructing the argument, they then fill in the unstated premises or conclusions, and then name the values (read: ideology or ideologies) that the unstated premises are based on. For example, recent arguments against government-sponsored health care claim that such a practice would be tantamount to “socialism.” Unpacking this claim requires students to eventually realize that “socialism” – however abused the term may be – is assumed to be antithetical to American values.

After taking apart enthymemes, students are then better able to construct them for themselves. The first task in composing enthymemes is to understand or analyze the audience for their arguments. During the civic writing assignments, I ask students to first consider and define an audience that will be responsive to their writing, and then to consider which values would be helpful as premises in constructing arguments geared toward that audience. When students actually construct enthymemes, they begin by considering what they ultimately want the audience to believe about the subject at hand, and work backwards to base those arguments on premises that are acceptable to the audience, as different audiences will find different premises acceptable in different rhetorical situations. For example, a student who wants to argue against universal healthcare may find a sympathetic ear in a conservative audience and be able to equate the plan with “socialism,” something which is antithetical to American values. On the other hand, an audience of liberal healthcare professionals who may be in favor of the plan will not necessarily believe or be swayed by the socialism argument. This audience may have to be approached differently, and the student may have to attack universal healthcare on different premises such as comparative factual arguments about the efficiency and quality of other universal healthcare systems. In these examples, the student starts with the claim that health coverage should not be universalized, but will have different support for that claim in each case. The first enthymeme would look something like “Universal health coverage is a socialist practice, and should not be implemented because socialism is antithetical to American values and traditions.” The second enthymeme may need more elaboration: “As healthcare professionals, you should

seek to deliver the best possible care to your patients. Universal coverage will not allow you to do this because it will stretch time and resources too thin.” A comparison to other systems where this may be the case could follow. Students soon discover that good discourse will employ several enthymemes in the process of convincing an audience.

### **Ethos**

The traditional conception of ethos is specifically associated with the persuasive power of the moral character of the speaker, and is therefore approached differently from the appeals to logic and emotion because it is not easily identified as operating in a particular section of a given discursive product, but rather as an aura of sorts created by the speaker himself. Aristotle’s conception of ethos is that it is a type of persuasion by “moral character,” but not from a preconceived notion of the writer or speaker on the part of the audience, but rather from the speech “delivered in such a manner as to render him worthy of confidence” (*Rhetoric* 17). Locating the aura of the author within the text produced by that author is a strategy specifically relevant to the composition class and, while it is in line with Aristotle’s views, it is not necessarily the only way of conceiving of ethos in the classical tradition. Plato, for instance, assumes that knowledge of a speaker’s character or reputation supersedes and precedes any textual representation of that person.<sup>24</sup>

The Platonic formulation of ethos is good for hermeneutic uses. After students are introduced to the three appeals, I often (when the technology is available) show so-called “positive” political commercials (as opposed to contemporary *ad hominem* and muck-

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<sup>24</sup>See the conception of ethos as familial reputation in *Phaedrus*.



racking “negative” advertisements) and campaign speeches in class. The purpose of this exercise is to arrive at a description of how politicians (and their campaign staffs) develop an aura of ethos through dress, posture, associated imagery, and speech style as well as content. Contrasting, for example, a style that is highly decorous and polished to the “everyman” presentation of a candidate in an open collar shows students, in an admittedly binary fashion, two contrasting types of ethos with different purposes.<sup>25</sup>

Connecting ethos to political discourse in this manner asks students to consider how candidates fashion themselves for consumption by voters, and how this fashioning is integral to the argumentative process as a whole. This sense of ethos is ideological in nature, because it is essentially a measure of the degree to which a speaker conforms to or varies from the hegemony of the audience’s complex of ideologies. Presentation of the self in accordance with what an audience believes to be “moral” or “ethical” is a key element in getting that audience to assent to an argument.

Arguably, students have little to no moral or ethical reputation in the sense of a preconceived aura in the eyes of their readers when it comes to academic discourse. For students to make ethos “claims” of their own, they necessarily require an expanded conception of the appeal that they can adopt as their own. When it comes to constructing arguments, I extend ethos to include not only the character, but the qualifications of the

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<sup>25</sup>John Kerry and George W. Bush in the 2004 presidential campaign debates are excellent examples. Based on their body language alone (Kerry as painfully erect, and Bush as slouching in a conversational manner), Kerry was perceived as somewhat elite and aloof by my students, while Bush was seen as trying to foster a connection with the common citizen.

author as a type of *immediate* ethos possessed by the speaker himself in the sense described above. The concept of “qualifications” is applicable to ethos because, for the ancients, a sense of moral virtue expressed through “good sense, virtue, and goodwill [*sic*]” (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 171) enhanced a speaker’s ability to produce conviction in an audience. In a sense, the speaker was qualified to speak on social and political topics because he was a moral person. Our technocratic culture tends to place more emphasis on a person’s professional qualifications than on their moral worth as a source of credibility. For example, we accept the Surgeon General’s warning on the side of a packet of cigarettes not because we believe that the Surgeon General is a good person who has our health in mind (although this may be the case), but because the warning comes from the *Surgeon General himself*. Anyone who occupies that post must be qualified to make pronouncements on matters of health, otherwise they would not be in that position. Credibility for the claim on the side of a pack of cigarettes comes from the authority associated with professional rather than moral credibility.

Extending *ethos* to include qualifications as well as character still does not solve the problem students encounter when trying to establish their own *ethos* in writing assignments. It is here that immediate ethos as personal experience can be helpful. Acknowledging that personal experience of a subject may be adequate for civic argument, but should only be used for illustrative purposes at best in most types of academic writing, I encourage students to bridge their own experiences with the “everyday” manifestations of civic and political topics. Experience with a topic becomes a qualification for talking about that topic. Personal experience with local political

problems can provide the basis for civic argumentation (see below), but this might not apply to academic writing assignments students will have in college. I also introduce ethos in a *secondary* sense as “borrowed” from someone else. This is incorporated into the class when discussing academic discourse communities and conventions for research. Students are introduced to the concept of a discourse community, and the idea that history professors like to hear from other history professors who they know are qualified to speak on history because they have been through the academic accreditation process. A history major coming into the university as a freshman obviously is not as qualified as Stephen Ambrose, but she can borrow qualifications from Ambrose by quoting from him in her World War II History final paper. Aligning discourse communities with ethos is a good way of introducing students to the difference between popular press and juried or peer-reviewed academic sources. Rather than being proscriptive (“Use only juried academic sources because that is what teachers expect!”), inviting students to see their sources as ethos building provides them with a sense of agency when researching their academic arguments. They soon learn that if using academic articles enhances their ethos and therefore academic credibility, then using popular press sources or even un-attributable web pages might be frowned upon in an academic context.

Students can develop a non-academic sense of *ethos* by positioning themselves as in line with or counter to the dominant ideologies of their society depending on purpose and audience. For example, in “The Ballot or the Bullet,” Malcolm X positions himself not as an American, but as a victim of America. Suggesting open revolt as an equivalent to the electoral process, then consciously positioning himself as outside of the American

hegemonic norm by claiming to *not* be an American is a good *ethos* move on his part. The surrounding social context of the Civil Rights movement, when segments of the population were denied equal rights, demanded a position against the dominant ideologies which denied these rights. By taking a militant stance against this system, X adds to his credibility with an audience predisposed to this position. Depending on the situation and audience, students can take a stance that is oppositional to or absolutely in line with current dominant ideologies.

A final way for students to enhance their sense of *ethos* in writing is by adopting a qualified argumentative stance. This involves making reasonable claims which take opposition arguments into consideration, and may even address these points. Also, admitting places where an argument is weak or falls short can lead an audience to perceive the writer as a reasonable person who is open to other ideas. This is a very different stance than the oppositional one described above, but both can be effective ways of enhancing *ethos* in writing, depending on the rhetorical situation.

### **Pathos**

Appeals to emotion are not very common in academic writing, although connotatively loaded diction can achieve the desired effect. Such appeals are, on the other hand, extremely common in all types of civic and social rhetoric as well as commercial advertisements. Aristotle's conception of emotional argument includes those based in anger, slight, hatred, love, friendship, fear, shame, shamelessness, favor or benevolence, pity, righteous indignation, and envy (*Rhetoric* II ii – x). These can be used in

contemporary arguments involving patriotism, religious sentiment, desire (sexual and otherwise), group belonging or identification.

One of the best ways to introduce students to social arguments based on emotion is to focus on obvious examples that rely solely on emotion to make their point: propaganda posters. Many of these visual artifacts do indeed have logical arguments underpinning them, but they rely on an emotional association on the viewers' part to make the argument stick. For example, Wesley's 1943 work "...Because Somebody Talked" depends on the "loose lips sink ships" truism as a logical operator, but uses a sad puppy, a gold star, and a naval kerchief to transmit that message in a context of global warfare. (See figure 2.) We decode the imagery as a class. The morose canine is an almost universal symbol, but the gold star may require bit more interpretation because some students may be unfamiliar with the particular usage of this signifier in American culture. The kerchief requires still more, but many are able to surmise the meaning after I emphasize the World War II context and ask them to recall films that recreate the period or, ideally, are from the era. Students conclude that sadness at the loss of life is the way in which this particular poster *works* as an appeal to pathos, but are also able to see the logical conclusion reached by this emotional appeal. The sad puppy is sad because of the loss of one life, but the implications of "talking," or divulging military secrets (even inadvertently), during a time of war can be extended to boatloads – literally – of people.

Emotions such as sadness, fear, pity, or love, evoked by propaganda posters, according to Robert H. Frank, "often predispose us to behave in ways that are contrary to our narrow interests, and being thus predisposed can be an advantage. For it to be, others

must have some way of discovering we have these commitments” (7). Using the logic of Wesley’s poster, empathy with the potential dead sailor (or his puppy) would cause a person to think twice before divulging potentially sensitive information, even if it means ruining a chance at impressing a potential mate (a narrow interest indeed) because he or she is also a potential spy. In civic argumentation, pathos can be a signal to the audience of a speaker’s emotional commitments, which belie their ideological affiliation. Sadness over the loss of a soldier during conflict is a good indicator of patriotism, and by activating this emotive complex in an audience, Wesley’s poster may convince people to act in a manner contrary to their narrow interests, as Frank suggests.



Figure 2: “Because Somebody Talked”

Frank, a management specialist at Cornell's business school, is concerned with the physical and verbal cues that people exhibit as a way of discovering emotional commitments, but his analysis can be extended to the level of content and expression in visual, verbal, or written discourse. After discussing pathos as a strategy and the argumentative process that it represents through codes, the class then examines pathos in civic and political speech. I have students select a speech from the list of the Top 100 Speeches from [americanrhetoric.com](http://americanrhetoric.com) (Lucas and Medhurst). I ask the students to do brief research on the argumentative context with the aim of establishing the prevailing *zeitgeist* of the times.<sup>26</sup> Then, they read the speeches looking for specific emotional appeals as well as the overall tone of the work established through diction as well as delivery (when audio and video are available). Our last task is to connect the specific appeals and tonal resonances with emotions, using Aristotelian categories as a starting point, but expanding on those categories as necessary. Pupils are quick to pick up on Malcolm X's righteous indignation, Franklin Roosevelt's patriotism, and Martin Luther King's hopefulness.

Pathos has a significant place in social and political discourse, but is downplayed in academic discourse. We do reserve, especially in the humanities, a small place for pathos in the identifications we allow between the object of study and the speaker or writer making an argument on that object's behalf. This is especially true of academics

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<sup>26</sup>Asking them to remember the feeling of the country during and after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks is helpful here. This is also a first step in audience analysis – putting themselves in the place of the audience at the time of reception.

who try to expand their audience to the traditionally popular field.<sup>27</sup> One way to minimize the appearance of pathos in academic discourse, for the purposes of this class, is to suggest the “human face” strategy. Inartistic appeals and logical explanations are, by nature, quite removed from the individual subject’s experience of the world around her. Students can often relate to the situation represented by a statistic or a line of reasoning, but she can’t *feel* it – neither can her audience. Rather than base an entire argument on emotional reasoning alone, I suggest to students that they augment other appeals with pathos by giving an example. Don’t just tell your audience about the consequences of gang membership by pointing to incarceration and mortality statistics from credible sources; tell the story of a gang member’s last day of freedom on earth as an introductory strategy. The reason why a human face works is that pathos centers on an individual response, which resonates with larger group ideologies; each of these can be associated with appeals based on logos and ethos. The key here is to make students realize that pathos shouldn’t be the basis of argument in academic rhetoric.

### **Rhetoric as Process**

The ancients, by the time of Quintilian, had divided rhetoric into five “canons” which represented the process of speech making from what we would call brainstorming to delivering the speech in front of an audience. The canons were: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. Contemporary emphasis on process can be

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<sup>27</sup>See Arundhati Roy’s descriptions of the effects of damming India’s rivers in *Power Politics* for a good example.



found in most handbooks or rhetorics and generally divides the act of writing into brainstorming, drafting, and revising, the last as a series of re-workings of a paper with the possibility of feedback from peers and instructors. As I will show below, using the classical system can do the same work as contemporary process theory but will be more productive for generating discourse and tailoring it to a specific audience.

### **Invention Using Stasis and Topoi**

In Greek and Roman rhetorical theory, invention was a matter of discovering points of argumentation about a topic that would be acceptable to a particular audience. Discovery for the ancients was not a matter of an individual genius coming up with “original” argumentation, but rather tailoring an argument to particular community standards. If an argument was considered unlikely to be accepted by an audience, it would not be presented by the rhetor. The *topoi*, as enumerated by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric*, and adopted by many other rhetoricians such as Cicero in the *De Inventione* and *Topica*, were standardized argumentative types that were “common” (applicable in all rhetorical situations), or “special” (applicable in certain circumstances such as legal proceedings or funeral orations). These *topoi* were essentially lists of categories that could be used to generate acceptable arguments (See Table 1). They existed in a space outside of the speaker and were firmly rooted in the conventions of the wider social order. As I have shown in Chapter 2, the nineteenth century saw the reduction of *topoi* to genres rather than heuristic devices; many of these genres are chapters in contemporary rhetoric textbooks.

When students begin to write their own arguments for the class, we briefly review *topoi*, as well as *stasis* theory, although it is not necessary to study *stasis* theory because many of the concepts overlap with the *topoi*. I begin by introducing three of the essential *stasis* questions that Greek and Roman orators used to arrive at the central points of a topic. This practice does not necessarily generate a group of arguments, but is a good way for students to arrive at a concise description of their own understanding of a topic as well as places where they may need more background information. The *stasis* questions I use are derived from Quintilian's list in the *Institutio Oratoria*, which is ultimately derived from Cicero (3.6.80 ff): *an sit*, *quid sit*, and *quale sit*. Originally, they were asked of an action being judged during legal cases, but can be adapted to contemporary writing classrooms as a preliminary brainstorming tactic. *An sit* ("Is it?"), or questions of fact, asks students to do preliminary background research on the topic. Sometimes this question is extremely simple, as in cases of the factual existence of a phenomenon like homelessness. Yes, there are homeless people, but factual questions can extend this research to finding preliminary numbers on homelessness and perhaps even trends in homelessness statistics over a period of time. *Quid sit* ("What is it?") is a question of definition and requires students to focus on terms in the topic that may need to be defined for the sake of argument, terms such as "homelessness" or even "home" in the above example. This question overlaps with the definition category from the list of *topoi* and can be used to identify the terms to define at this stage. *Quale sit* ("What is it like?") is a question of quality or evaluation. At the early stages, this simply asks students for their own opinion on a particular aspect of the topic. Sometimes the answers to *quale sit* may

be painfully obvious, such as “Homelessness is bad.” The point of the stasis questions is for students to map their own responses to their topics, and the answers will not form the *final* version of an argument by a long shot. Therefore, starting with rather simplistic responses is not necessarily bad; *stasis* questions are expanded on with the *topoi*, which are arguments about a particular subject commonly used in and by discourse communities. Shifting from *stasis* to *topoi* forces students to consider arguments other than the ones they generate themselves.

When constructing their own civically oriented arguments, students begin by using a compilation of classical *topoi* as a brainstorming device (See fig. 3).<sup>28</sup> “Aristotle’s notion of *topoi* or commonplaces function as fragments to which speakers turns for agreed-upon examples [*sic*]” (Aden 31). The first step in constructing topical arguments is to review various perspectives on and arguments about the subject matter from a variety of political stances. We then assign these arguments to the specific topic in the list to show how enthymemes can be constructed from the *topoi*. For example, an argument about illegal immigration’s effect on the labor market could be placed under relationship, specifically cause and effect. Examining the claim that illegal immigrants displace American workers could be assigned to beliefs about nationalism and patriotism, as well as economic structure. The *topoi* can serve to find acceptable first premises for an

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<sup>28</sup> This list is a compilation of various topics from the Aristotelian and Ciceronian traditions. I am indebted to Gideon O. Burton’s *Silva Rhetoricae* website, sponsored by Brigham Young University, for suggesting *topoi* for contemporary use. I have not used all of Burton’s categories because there is a great deal of overlap which is sometimes confusing for students, such as the Cause and Effect topic’s close relationship to Antecedent and Consequence. The former can include the latter, so I have only used Cause and Effect.

audience, as well as to question ideological assumptions when used as the basis for argumentation. In the immigration example, an effect argument that claims displacement of American workers would have to be investigated to see if Americans are actually driven out of work by immigrant labor. *Topoi* are starting points. Claims that the individual topics suggest must not be accepted at face value and students are guided to investigate the ideological assumptions embedded in the claims they generate.

Topics are not discreet, independent groups that stand apart from each other. Rather, they are closer to “strange loops” in information systems theory – seemingly closed discursive fields that are actually interdependent and recursive in such a way that a change in one may necessarily force a change in one or all of the others. Douglas Hofstadter explains that a strange loop is

[...] not a physical circuit but an abstract loop in which, in the series of stages that constitute the cycling-around, there is a shift from one level of abstraction (or structure) to another, which feels like an upwards movement in a hierarchy, and yet somehow the successive "upward" shifts turn out to give rise to a closed cycle. That is, despite one's sense of departing ever further from one's origin, one winds up, to one's shock, exactly where one had started out. In short, a strange loop is a paradoxical level-crossing feedback loop. (101 – 102)

Depending on the arguments generated by a particular level of the *topoi*, any other argument generated by another level may change. For example, if one argues that climate change is caused by human intervention in the atmosphere, then the relationship sub-heading of the “possible / impossible” topic generated necessarily must say that humans might stop climate change through further intervention in the atmosphere. If climate change is defined as a naturally occurring phenomenon, then it would be virtually impossible for humans to stop it.

*Topoi* are not only useful for analyzing and generating arguments; I contend that what we have come to call the discursive practices of discourse communities are essentially contemporary manifestations of special topics. For instance, in my field of

Common Topics	Special Topics
Definition Formal (genus / species) Extended or Stipulative	Judicial  Right and Wrong  Just and Unjust
Division Whole and Parts Subject and Adjuncts	Deliberative  Good and Unworthy  Advantageous and  Disadvantageous
Comparison Similarity and Difference / Degree Contraries and Contradictions	Epideictic  Virtue and Vice
Relationship Cause and Effect Contraries and Contradictions	Academic  Varies by Discipline
Circumstance Possible and Impossible Past Fact / Future Fact	
Testimony Authority Law and Precedent Oaths and Witnesses "The Supernatural"	

Figure 3. *Topoi*.

literary specialty, postcolonial and global literature, we argue about such concepts as ethnic essentialism, hybridity, and the continuum from colonialist to neo-colonial literature. While these concepts may be used by some other academic discourse communities, you wouldn't find them in an astrophysics paper. By characterizing discourse practices as special topics, we invite students to discover the range of arguments active in their fields or majors. This allows them, in Bartholomae's famous phrase, to "invent the university." That is, we can provide them with a framework for appropriating and using discursive practices in the academy. Hermeneutic topical analysis here is a transferable skill that invites students to use the practices common to academic rather than "popular" social and political inquiry, and invites them to name and identify special topics operating in their chosen fields that were not available to the ancients.

Students can generate discipline specific lists of *topoi* in a number of ways and from a number of sources. Taking notes in classes (especially introductory courses for disciplines), actively reading textbooks and academic articles and books, attending talks by guest lecturers, and researching for other writing assignments are all fertile ground for topical analysis of academic arguments which students can later use in their own writing. The topical list was eventually to become the commonplace book, a place where students kept passages or ideas of interest. When we move on to academic discourse, as discussed below, I essentially ask students to develop contemporary versions of commonplace books (even if they exist only in a student's mind or in an electronic format), and keep expanding them throughout their careers.

One benefit of using *topoi* to construct enthymemes is that this process suggests actual *content* for the brainstorming stage. Contemporary brainstorming suggestions such as freewriting and clustering suggest a *methodology*, but not a *content*. If students have no experience with a topic, suggesting that they create a cluster of ideas around that topic is a moot point. Topical analysis gives students a step-by-step heuristic that they can see mirrored in civic discourse, and invites them to set up their own discursive map of their discipline when first entering the discourse community. This map will be a useful, ever-expanding store of arguments for their entire academic careers, and can even be extended to discursive practices in the workplace. More importantly, students are able to use the common topics in academic and civic discursive situations for the rest of their lives.

### **Arrangement as Audience Analysis**

The *topoi* are generative, but that does not necessarily mean that all ideas generated in the invention process have to be used in the actual argument. Selecting arguments that an audience will accept and putting those arguments in an effective order was the provenance of arrangement in the classical canons. This process requires the students to analyze the audience they're writing for in depth. During the civic argumentation phase, I have students direct their discourse to an audience addressed – a specific person or group of people who can act on the topic they're writing about.<sup>29</sup> This

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<sup>29</sup>Some examples of these specific audiences targeted by students are: Chicago Mayor Richard Daley on parking meter privatization, Loyola University Chicago Dean of Students Jane Neufeld on banning smoking on campus, and members of the Senate Armed Services Committee on soldiers' treatment at V.A. hospitals.

assignment sequence invites students to write not to a vague audience invoked, but rather to people whom they can analyze through that audience's previous argumentative discourse, voting record, policy statements, and the like. Even if the audience would seem to be hostile to the argument a particular student makes, the trick is to get students to think of ways to appeal to shared beliefs as a basis for argument. During the academic phase of the course, I often suggest that students consider audiences in a similar fashion. They know that the default audience for any writing in a classroom is the instructor, so I suggest that they read an essay or book by their professor to gain an understanding of that person's argumentative assumptions.

Arrangement is also the place for a discussion of the ever-present bogeyman haunting the closets of freshman dorms across the land – the “thesis sentence.” Many textbooks and indeed many instructional methodologies at the secondary level claim that a thesis sentence must be thought of *before* writing the “body paragraphs” of the essay. This claim reinforces the “five paragraph essay format” and actually causes writers' block in students who may have an idea of what to argue, but are not able to formulate anything resembling a thesis. Arrangement as a step in the writing process asks students to choose which of the arguments they've generated in invention will be most acceptable to an audience. It can also serve as the stage where students boil down their arguments into one main claim in order to generate a thesis as a result of arguments made, not as a precursor to them. Theses should not be generative of other arguments, but rather should be constructed from arguments made on the topic. During the analysis stage, students should look for the placement of theses and their formulation in academic essays. Many



will be surprised to find that some academic works don't place the thesis in the traditional "high school" location (the last sentence of the first paragraph), that some have several theses (such as in a book-length literary study), that some have implicit theses rather than explicitly stated ones, and that some (especially those written before the 1890s) don't have a thesis at all. The goal of this expanded discussion of the thesis is to have a more nuanced and historically-based understanding of its function and the format it takes in their specific discipline.

### **Style and Academic Prose**

Style was the canon of ancient rhetoric concerned with the manner in which an argument was "polished" for a particular audience. In Cato the Elder's famous phrase, "*Rem tene verba cedunt*" – "Hold the idea, and the words will follow." It is important for any writer to know what she wants to say before putting those ideas into a final format. I encourage students to see the idea of style as something that they should cover in one of many editing stages, usually the penultimate or last. The most important aspect of teaching style is to show students that it is not an arbitrary choice based on personal preference, nor blind adherence to conventional rules of grammar and usage, but rather something that should be governed by the Roman concept of *decorum*.

A good way to have students think of classifying style is to think of diction according to the three ancient categories of high, middle, and plain or low. I make sure to suggest that the hierarchical distinction suggested by the names does not mean that "high" is better than "low," but that these names are labels of appropriateness based on ancient conceptions of audiences and speakers. Cicero provides a good description in

*Orator*, but his classification must be understood in the terms of the Attic versus Asiatic debate during his lifetime. Cicero's position as an Asiatic led him to favor a more florid style, but he recognized the value of being able to combine all three levels of style. Thus, a turf war of sorts broke out over the plain style, and Cicero devotes much more space to this level in *Orator*. Cicero explains:

[T]here are three styles, the plain style for proof, the middle style for pleasure, the vigorous style for persuasion; and in this last is summed up the entire virtue of the orator. Now the man who controls and combines these three varied styles needs rare judgment and great endowment; for he will decide what is needed at any point and will be able to speak in any which the case requires. For after all the foundation of eloquence, as with everything else, is wisdom. In an oration, as in life, nothing is harder than to determine what is appropriate. (*Orator* 70)

Cicero describes the plain style as consisting of everyday, unadorned Latin; only words which best encapsulate the idea should be used. Maxims and metaphors can be used because they are common to urbanites and country dwellers alike (Cicero, *Orator* 81). Humor and wit can also be used, but must be decorous (e.g. not ribald or aimed at misfortune). The middle style is the one in which "all the charms of language and thought are intertwined" (Cicero, *Orator* 96) and uses all ornaments such as metonymy and allegory. The speaker employing the middle style uses commonplaces and speaks in an erudite manner. Because of the use of ornamentation, the middle style makes a speaker seem charming while the plain style makes him seem wise. In contrast, the elevated style makes a speaker seem to be teetering on the edge of insanity (Cicero, *Orator* 99). But this style is the most convincing because "Now it storms the feelings, now it creeps in; it implants new ideas and uproots the old" (Cicero, *Orator* 97). This style relies heavily on

uncommon words and rhetorical ornamentation and is usually combined with a vigorous delivery.

Cicero's division is helpful, but rooted in verbal delivery and, because of cultural differences, does not take into consideration the proliferation of dialects and slang open to today's orators. Ancient Rome was a fairly homogenous society at the top. Although Cicero was a *novus homo*, his insistence on *concordia* among the classes during Caesar's populist power grab shows him to be thoroughly aristocratic and somewhat conservative.<sup>30</sup> It was rare for members of lower classes or non-Romans to advance to the ranks of the Senatorial class during the late Republic, and language use among them was probably fairly uniform. Contrasted to the diverse makeup of contemporary composition courses, Roman orators seem to be carbon copies of each other. Thus, an adaptation of the styles is necessary. I characterize the plain or low style as the speech students would use with their friends, full of slang, incorrect usage, and rather imprecise diction in most cases. The middle style is "Standard Written English" – proper grammar, limited use of figures of speech, and no slang. This is commonly found in national news broadcasts, and is currently the style most commonly associated with conveying information. High style uses sesquipedalian words, has lengthened sentences with complex structures, and relies heavily on figures of speech.

After introducing the concept of stylistic difference and appropriateness, I have my students examine the style of civic and political speech from various points in recent

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<sup>30</sup> See Everitt, *Cicero* for a full discussion of Roman political life during Cicero's time, especially chapters 1-6.

American history. Some of the most productive discursive analysis happens when I contrast two very different styles and try to connect them to the audience of the original speech as well as the context in which that speech was given. Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" and Malcolm X's "The Ballot or the Bullet" are good pairs because of the two very different styles and the connection students are able to establish between the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement. I name Lincoln's speech as an example of the high style, and students are quick to pick examples of elevated diction such as "Four score and seven years ago" for "Eighty-seven years ago." This diction, as well as Lincoln's use of parallelism and complex sentences, is appropriate for the audience and context.<sup>31</sup> X's use of colloquial diction and short inflammatory clauses is more appropriate for an audience that conceives of itself as an oppressed minority on the verge of civil disobedience, possibly revolution.

Once the two extremes are understood, I then point to news articles and feature pieces in popular press publications as examples of the middle style. Students are quick to pick up on the use of the middle style to convey information.<sup>32</sup> This should, then, be the basis for academic style. However, when we begin reading juried articles geared

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<sup>31</sup>It is also productive to contrast Lincoln's short speech to Edward Everett's "Gettysburg Oration," the speech before Lincoln's at the cemetery's dedication ceremony, which lasted almost two hours. Both engage in rhetorical flourishes and use an elevated diction, but Lincoln's stands out because it was extremely brief in a period in which speeches were typically as long as Everett's. Lincoln serves to illustrate that a rhetor can practice *decorum*, while still flouting expectations.

<sup>32</sup> Although conveying information was the domain of the plain style for the ancients, opening up the plain style to include slang forces us to use the middle style when conveying information to a large audience. News is not presented in regional slang, but rather in "standard English" and should therefore be incorporated into the middle style.

toward an academic audience, pupils begin to question whether the middle style is indeed the basis of academic prose. Complex, compound, and compound-complex sentences; discipline-specific terminology; idiosyncrasies of individual writers;<sup>33</sup> and even the time period in which an academic work was written can all contribute to an understanding of academic rhetoric as not necessarily confined to one of the tri-partite divisions listed above, but rather as participating in all three depending on context and audience expectations.<sup>34</sup> Practical advice, such as reading a teacher's work to get a sense of what she considers to be acceptable style, is geared toward audience expectations in this section of the class.

After introducing the different styles, I ask students to “translate” model discourse (the “Gettysburg Address” is a good choice) using the two other levels of diction. This is followed, later in the semester with an in-class writing assignment, by translating or code-switching sections of their own civic arguments. Most place themselves in the plain style after analyzing their works, and then translate them into more elevated or more colloquial speech. First attempts at this process are somewhat clumsy, but students soon get the hang of stylistic differences. One way to enable stylistic shifts (especially from low or middle to high) is to introduce students to tropes, such as metonymy and

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<sup>33</sup>Think of the difference between Stanley Fish publishing in the *New York Times* and Judith Butler writing in *PMLA*. While Fish is relatively easy to read, even by a non-specialist, Butler's style is very dense and often loaded with technical jargon.

<sup>34</sup>An academic presentation at a conference should be closer to the plain style because an audience will listen to the presentation, while a written text can be more complex because an audience can reread the discourse if something is unclear.

hyperbole, and sentence structure schemes, such as parallelisms and chiasmic structure.

After these flourishes are introduced, I then assign their use in papers as a way for students to incorporate them into their own writing.

### **Memory and Composing Technology**

In the ancient world, there were no Teleprompters, and orators were expected to deliver their speeches without reference to written notes; thus, all speeches were memorized, which was quite an accomplishment, considering most classical speeches lasted for hours. Rhetoricians did not memorize every word, but rather the general order of the argument, and any special phrases or *mots justes* they wanted to use.

Most students will not deliver their compositions orally, and even when they do, contemporary audiences expect speakers to refer to notes, if not read the transcript word for word. Thus, memory is not very applicable to the contemporary situation in composition classes. However, modern composition technology and the electronic manner in which many classes are able to submit work<sup>35</sup> can be incorporated into this canon. Reminding students to save their work in a variety of locations (i.e. keep extra copies of their disks and hard drives through web storage or a physical backup), and to be sure to submit papers in a format that instructors can open on their office or home computers is somewhat mundane advice, but can foreclose typical student excuses. “My hard drive crashed” has become the “My dog ate my homework” of the twenty-first

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<sup>35</sup>“Paper” is now a misnomer in many cases for the assignments we give. Students can submit via email as an attachment or through course software such as Blackboard’s “digital drop box” feature.

century.<sup>36</sup> Making students ultimately responsible for the electronic content they deliver can be reinforced through making saving and formatting a step in the composition process.

### **Delivery and Contemporary Design**

Ancient rhetoricians delivered their arguments to live audiences verbally; it was only after this delivery that records of the speeches were put into written format. Unless students are giving in-class presentations or delivering papers at an academic conference, contemporary academic discourse rarely requires anything like a formal “speech.” However, presentation of arguments need not necessarily be in “paper” format, and this is where the canon of delivery can be helpful. In fact, most of the argumentation we come across outside of the ivory tower is presented in formats which are nothing like the extended written analysis, claims, and support we are accustomed to in academic argumentation. For this reason, I ask students to examine and in some cases even compose arguments as websites, posters, news commentary, and even Power Point presentations.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>A website called Corrupted-Files.com sells students files that cannot be opened. The site advertises, “It will take your professor several hours if not days to notice your file is “**unfortunately**” corrupted. Use the time this website just bought you **wisely** and **finish** that paper!!! [*sic*].” Such insidious salesmanship is indicative of the problems we face because of composing technology and memory. The site even asks students to “Keep this site a Secret! [*sic*].”

<sup>37</sup>Because departmental and institutional demands force us to concentrate mostly on writing, I assign non-traditional formats such as posters or power point presentations as companions to, rather than replacements for written arguments.

Part of contemporary argumentation is awareness of the way design affects an argument's reception, especially on-line presentation (see Kress). Elements of a website's navigability, color palette, and multi-media support can enhance or detract from an argument in several different ways. While this may seem outside the bounds of composition, it is important to remind students of this fact, and a good way to illustrate how design and delivery can affect reception is to ask students to do rhetorical analyses of multi-media arguments. A good practice is to examine politicians' websites, especially during campaign season, for visual elements that are designed to enhance the written arguments presented in the textual sections of the website. My students have pointed out that most color schemes on the sites are red, white, and blue, which is designed to evoke a patriotic response in the audience. Additionally, candidates or politicians are usually represented from a low camera angle, often looking into the distance, which is designed to make them appear dominant and confident. By examining the effects of design and presentation on an audience's receptiveness, we invite students to become examiners of the effectiveness of rhetoric in much the same way as Aristotle was when observing what successful speeches had in common. We also push on the boundaries of the discipline and open up areas for future research.

### **Assignment Sequences and Course Practices**

The three conceptions of rhetoric – as situation, three appeals, and process – serve as the skeleton of the course, and assignment sequences and in-class writing and discussion assignments flesh that skeleton out. The class begins by analyzing and evaluating civic-based popular rhetoric, and then forms its own civic arguments. We then



move into academic writing situations, and finish by bridging the divide between academia and the civic and social realm with a combined assignment that asks them to present an academically-informed argument to both audiences.

### **Rhetorical Analysis**

The first writing assignment students tackle is a rhetorical analysis of either a popular press article on a civic or political topic such as an opinion / editorial article or a political speech.<sup>38</sup> The goal of this assignment is to get students to begin thinking in a rhetorical manner; this assignment is given after the brief introduction to classical rhetoric and a consideration of rhetoric as situation, but before we move into extended discussions of the three appeals. The purpose of a rhetorical analysis as an introductory assignment is to get the students to think in a rhetorical fashion; many are not used to consciously considering the context, intended audience, and various methods by which an argument persuades an audience. Furthermore, this is an introduction to civic and social rhetoric based on ideological argumentation. I ask students to think about the values that the audience must share with the writer if it is to believe his or her argument. This is the beginning of the ideological analysis that is carried through the semester.

While the definition of “values” and “beliefs” can be a very subjective way of discussing ideological premises, students are asked to look for patterns of assumptions when analyzing discourse directed at popular audiences. As discussed above, the enthymeme is perhaps the most prominent form of argument in contemporary popular

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<sup>38</sup>The assignments can be based on shorter, less complex discourse such as an op/ed piece for less advanced or “remedial” students, while the longer political speech sources can be used for more advanced students.

discursive practice. Students reconstruct the enthymemes as part of the rhetorical analysis process and look for common premises. For example, neo-liberal ideologues often assume that the market is capable of delivering goods and services to consumers better than governments can, and thus use free markets as a starting point for arguments. After seeing how individual values reflect larger structural ideologies, students are then prepared to make social and civic arguments on their own.

### **Civic Proposals**

The second assignment in the sequence asks students to fashion their own ideologically-based arguments on civic or social topics. By this point, we have gone over the three appeals and the process stages, and have done several analyses of civic argument from a variety of sources. Before giving the civic assignment, I introduce the concept of *kairos*, usually defined as “the principle of right timing and the principle of proper measure” but whose “rich dimensions include aspects of civic virtue, justice, and even epistemology” (Kinneavy, “*Kairos*” 60-61). It is the first two senses of *kairos* which are important at this stage of the class. In his diachronic analysis of the term, James Kinneavy argues that the two dimensions of *kairos*, timing and propriety, are necessarily connected to notions of proper justice, or giving according to merit, in Pythagorean philosophers, and this sense is passed through to Cicero in his discussion of propriety and decorum in *De Officiis* (62). “Proper measure,” then, refers to not only the response of the speaker in terms of wording and style, but even argumentative content which should be

directed toward justice.<sup>39</sup> In terms of civic education, Kinneavy points to the centrality of persuasion as the basis for education about civic virtue in pre-Socratic philosophers such as Gorgias and Pythagoras. Of all the elements of Kinneavy's analysis, though, the emphasis on the epistemological, and hence ideological, I argue, dimension of *kairos* is most pertinent to this discussion. He posits *kairos* as a central concept for the poets Pindar and Bacchylides because it is through seizing the right or opportune moment of a narrative (e.g. the climax which conveys a truth about a character, such as Oedipus' realization of his guilt in the eponymous cycle of plays) and constructing a poem around it, that poets are able to deliver divine truth to human beings. Furthermore, "Gorgias takes a more strident view of this process. The transcendent divine ideas take no account of the facts of human existence. To apply to man, the divine ideas must become immanent in human life through *kairos*" (Kinneavy 63). Even contemporary theologian Paul Tillich uses *kairos* in this sense: "*kairos* brings timeless ideas down into the human situations of historical time. It imposes value on ideas and forces humans to make free decisions about these values" (Kinneavy 62). If we here substitute the theological for the ideological, we can arrive at a useful description of the third aspect of *kairos*: it forces what ideologies consider to be "universal" or "timeless" values into specific situations, and is thus important when considering the ideological basis of arguments.

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<sup>39</sup>The maxim *in media stat virtute* is an embodiment of this concept, as are all "golden mean" conceptions of virtue.

*Kairos*, like the enthymeme, had many associations and meanings in the classical world, and when these various meanings are identified and translated they can be especially useful in a composition class. *Kairos* then can best be appropriated as a conjunction of timing and appropriate response. Kinneavy's analysis shows that ancient conceptions of *kairos* were centered on an appropriate and just response to an event or situation in the political or social realm that enacts "universal" principles in particular instances. Thus, *kairos* can serve as a starting point for argumentation which encourages writing on civic topics of contemporary import that will inevitably have an ideological component. I have found that the best way to introduce *kairos* as a workable concept is to name it as a specific enactment of rhetorical action that has three components: the timing suggested by a historical event or "trigger" (an event or situation in the real world which demands a rhetorical response, such as the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks or disproportionate poverty rates among minorities), an appropriate response to the trigger, and an enactment of larger values in a specific situation. The latter are dependent on the audience to be addressed, but the first is a response to a situation by the student writer.

In order to start working on the civic papers, I ask students first to think in terms of *kairos*. The first part of *kairos* is timing, determined by current events happening at the time of the class. I ask them to review news stories and current events web sites and blogs for several days, then ask them to choose a socially significant topic to work on that they are interested in because of moral or ideological reasons.<sup>40</sup> Many students may fall back

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<sup>40</sup>Depending on the maturity of the class, I ask them to write about something that makes them angry or elated.

on less time-specific topics such as abortion or same-sex marriage, and this can be attributed to many factors from failing to do the assignments to a genuine lack of interest in current events or special interest in ongoing social and political arguments. I ask students to then think of an audience who would be able to affect a change in what they see as a problem or who would be able to advance or continue what they see as an advantage; audiences suggested by some of my students range from the House and Senate Armed Services Committees to local aldermen to the Dean of Students.

These specific audiences are then analyzed in a series of in-class and homework assignments that ask the students to determine what values the members of this audience have (i.e. what the audience's ideological disposition is), and what type of arguments it will accept. At this point, students discover that some audiences are composed of members who have diverse ideological commitments. I then suggest looking for commonalities among the members, moving if necessary from the narrower ideological definition (Republican or Democrat, perhaps) to the larger one (American, which encompasses both of the major parties).<sup>41</sup> Reading prior texts by the audience or looking to values that are determined by the audience's professional commitments<sup>42</sup> are good ways for students to begin this process.

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<sup>41</sup>See the section on nodal points below. A diverse audience will possess the same type of nodal structure as a group of students, perhaps even more differentiated and diffuse. Thus, when students begin to work with nodal points, they can apply this concept to diverse audiences as well; some students get a preview of this idea early on in the semester.

<sup>42</sup>Most elected and appointed offices in the United States require the officeholder to support and defend the values embodied in the Constitution, for example.

What is most important about the concept of *kairos* and audience analysis is for students to arrive, however tentatively, at a conception of the audience's relationship to the subject matter, and this can best be achieved by reading any works by potential audience members on the subject at hand. As Kay Halasek notes, "The audience's role is not, therefore, defined solely, or even partially by its position relative to the author, as current rhetorical analyses most often suggest, but also by its perspective on the subject of the discourse. [...] Audience analysis must not concentrate on a contextualized demographic information but on the relationship between the audience and the issue under discussion [*sic*]" (63). As a part of this process, I encourage students to think of an audience's possible objections to their arguments, and answer these in a preemptive rebuttal as part of their paper. This process enacts Halasek's deployment of Bakhtinian intertextuality. Halasek notes,

Intertextuality, like heteroglossia and dialogue, is the natural condition of language interaction and interanimation. All discourse is intertextual in that it speaks *to* other utterances as well as *from* them. Every utterance is created in response to and in anticipation of other utterances, past and future. [...] Intertextuality, in its forward and backward glance, demands that we reconstruct our understanding of audience as more than synchronic. (65)

Students must read prior claims on a subject, and anticipate an audience's reaction to their discourse, as well as possible objections to it. This type of in-depth audience analysis places writers in the composing present of a discursive continuum, having read some of the past, writing with an eye to the future.

Audience analysis leads necessarily to the last aspect of *kairos*, the appeal to larger values that can be used as premises for enthymemes when constructing

ideologically based arguments. After finding possible values on which to anchor arguments, students go through the *stasis* and *topoi* processes. This structured brainstorming is constrained by the possibility of an audience accepting certain premises. Too often, students write civic or “political” papers addressed to a “general” audience with no consideration as to whether or not an actual audience would find their arguments compelling; the classical system solves this problem by complicating students’ flat notions of audience. It also allows for preliminary discussions of style as appropriateness of diction for audience and occasion. However, I usually reserve fine tuning of style for the third paper, which gives students a chance to interact with the same subject matter as the second.

### **Enacting Nodal Points**

The practices below, which can be used for in-class writing or as assignments for papers, involve students engaging with the same argument they have submitted for a final draft of a graded paper. Both of these practices contribute to reflexivity in students’ understanding of rhetoric. David Ryfe notes,

[Reflexivity] is derived from discussions of the postmodern condition, defined as hyperplurality, contingency, and complexity. In this context, constant reflection on a proposition’s values, assumptions, and terms is required not only because truth is relativized under these conditions, but also because situations change so rapidly that values and assumptions may not hold over time. Such reflection is required not only at the level of individuals, but at the level of the system generally. That is, mechanisms must be put into place so that values and assumptions may be constantly interrogated within institutions as well as by individuals. (“Principles” 169)

Reflexivity is a key aspect of the course as it enables students to have a more sustained argumentative relationship with one topic by forcing them to consider the opposition. The

two assignments, *controversia* and *advocatus diaboli*, are opposing sides of the same rhetorical coin in that respect.

Furthermore, these assignments serve a crucial function in developing students' understanding of ideologically based argumentation. In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Ernesto LaClau and Chantal Mouffe argue for the notion of places where ideological trajectories converge, establishing "nodal points" beyond simple class alliances which could be used to further articulate political affiliations across differing lines of identity; these nodal points are places of "partial fixation" where antagonists can agree on commonly held beliefs (105-106). Taking two extremes as an example, capitalist democracy and Marxism-Leninism can give a good example of the fixation of a nodal point around the value of egalitarianism. "Equality" as a value that both ideological complexes share is a possible point for further argumentation as to how to achieve this elusive goal, but also what it in fact means (*political* equality for one and *economic* or *material* for the other). By engaging with an opposition's use of their own values as nodal points, students can gain more experience with ideologically based argument, as well as gain a fuller understanding of what that the opposition may actually believe.

#### *Ideology and Nodal Points 1: Controversia*

*Controversia* is the practice of arguing on both sides of a topic; a practice that will be familiar to any student who has participated in high school or college debate. In *De Oratore*, Cicero outlines this practice as a means of coming to an approximate truth when judgment on a topic is in question. Ultimately, though, the Sophistic tradition of *dissoi logoi* – arguing on two diametrically opposed sides of a subject – is the source for this



practice. While most points of contention can be argued in a continuum from complete approval to complete negation, by focusing on an initial binary argumentative structure we open up the possibility for students to discover the spectrum between pro and con for themselves.

Although she sees democratic benefits to using *controversia* in classroom assignments (118), Kiersten Leigh Anderson, paradoxically enough, advises teachers to avoid having “students write on real-life issues” because most students get “carried right off their topic by the emotional pull of the material” (112). The vague phrase “real-life issues” probably refers to the same complex of topics that I refer to as social and civic ones. Anderson misses the benefit of the practice entirely. If students are only to write literary interpretation and not arguments on contemporary social problems that surround them such as economic policy, foreign intervention in the War on Terror, or even abortion, then they will have no experience in argument when emotional topics arise in their “real” lives. Cutting through the emotion to the logic beneath is the first step in fruitful argument, and we should introduce students to this process by having them argue on “real-life issues.”

To enact *controversia* as an assignment, I first return the papers on civic proposals which have my comments and evaluations on them. Then I assign students the task of writing on the opposing side of their proposal. We then do a *kairos*, *stasis*, and *topoi* invention process for the *controversia*, with the same audience as the first paper in mind. This forces students to look for a way to justify the opposing viewpoint by using the same value-based premises as in their civic proposal papers. In this process, students also learn

actually to investigate the arguments of the opposing side, instead of assuming what those arguments are or mischaracterizing them based on popular perception.

*Ideology and Nodal Points 2: Advocatus Diaboli*

The second practice asks students not to attack their own positions, but rather to defend them from attack. *Advocatus diaboli* stems from the Catholic tradition of beatification and canonization, and is an officer<sup>43</sup> in the Sacred Congregation of Rites whose duty it is to prepare arguments against anyone's elevation to sainthood. Established by Pope Sixtus V in 1587, the purpose of this office is to prevent anyone whose death was not "blessed in the eyes of God," as the saying goes, from receiving the honor of sainthood.

In this particular nodal point building exercise, I return normal comments and an evaluation of the civic proposal paper, as well as an argument of my own against the student's position. The students are then asked to defend their original positions, but must not repeat the same arguments as in their civic proposal. I argue against their positions in a manner similar to the *controversia* outlined above; I take the position of the *advocatus diaboli*. When defending their own positions, students can attack those of the advocate, add additional points to their original proposals, refine their original position in light of the opposition's argument, or present a combination of those responses. In either case, this practice performs a similar function as the *controversia* assignment – it forces the

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<sup>43</sup>"Devil's advocate" is a popular title; the actual title of the officer is *Promotor Fidei*, promoter of the faith.

students to consider opposing views about a subject that nonetheless intersect with their own values.

### **Academic Disciplines**

Once civic and social argumentation has been practiced and the fundamentals of rhetoric have been established as a basis for writing papers, we then move into transferring these skills into the academic environment. Before I assign any academic writing from within a discipline, I break students into disciplinary investigation teams. Ideally, these consist of three to four students who all have the same major, but disciplinary bounds can be crossed for closely related majors. For instance, having two English majors and one history major is fine because humanities are closer to each other in terms of argumentative practices than, say, biology and philosophy. These teams then read a variety of essays in their field (or its larger disciplinary umbrella such as humanities, business, or social sciences), with an eye to how arguments in specific disciplines differ from popular press arguments. These investigation teams then come up with a preliminary set of *topoi* that are used by writers in their discipline (see figure 4 for one example of a discipline-specific set of *topoi*). This is part of the process of transfer, to discover what types of arguments are available, and can be applied to other subjects in the same discipline.

After the teams have done a preliminary investigation into academic style and argumentation, it is then time to break the groups apart and have individuals begin constructing their own academic arguments. As with the civic arguments, I leave the exact topic up to the students, but ask them to write not to one specific professor, but

Character	Protagonist, Hero and Anti-Hero, Antagonist, Foils, Characters of Absence
Theme	As differentiated from “moral”
Tone	As conveyed through word choice, characterization, etc.
Setting	Milieu
Plot	Conflict, Climax, Coda
Identity Formation	Social Construction
Interpretative (Theoretical) Strategies	Formalism, Reader Response, Biographical, Psychoanalytic, Archetypal, Feminism, Marxism, Postcolonialism
Genre and intertextual criticism	Romanticism, Modernism, etc.
	Allusions

Fig. 4: Preliminary List of Literature *Topoi*

rather to the field as a whole, as if they were writing to a discipline-specific journal. The *kairos* of these rhetorical situations can vary from subjects assigned in other classes, such as a literary interpretation of a novel, to an academic treatment of a civic issue, such as the possibilities promised by human cloning and their ethical implications. At this juncture, I emphasize the transferability of *topoi*-based brainstorming skills from the composition class to the university as a whole. As students, they are expected to take on the argumentative and linguistic practices of the academy<sup>44</sup>; this set of skills allows them to do just that because I invite the students to catalogue and categorize the new knowledge they are exposed to as a means of developing brainstorming materials for future paper assignments. This method has two benefits: it allows students a greater degree of agency than the prescriptive writing models often encountered in formalist rhetoric, and it allows students to transfer skills from composition to other courses, as well as to bridge ideas among classes. For example, if a student is exposed to an argument about representations of women in his nineteenth-century literature course, the *topoi* he accumulates on this topic could also be applied in a twentieth-century course, with some modifications to account for the change in milieu of the literature.

### **Collaborative Assignments: Bridging the Ivory Tower to the World Outside**

The final assignment for the semester is a collaborative, interdisciplinary, and multi-media project that asks them to present an interdisciplinary argument to advanced and beginning academic audiences, as well as a non-academic one. The process begins by

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<sup>44</sup>See Bartholomae, "Inventing the University." Bartholomae's article, and the constructivist tradition it represents will be addressed in the next chapter.

selecting teams<sup>45</sup> of four to five students each based on difference; each team must avoid having two or more people in the same major. Such groupings might not be completely feasible in every class, but the key is to have students from a variety of disciplines working together to produce a series of related arguments. The previous assignment asked them to take on the voice and argumentative techniques of their respective disciplines and begin to see disciplinarity as something that divides academics because each discourse community has its own unique set of *topoi*. The final assignment seeks to make these borders permeable, but not break them down completely. Biology will never be literary criticism, but the two may intersect in certain ways, such as eco-criticism. In a way, collaboration across disciplines creates a type of nodal point, akin to that created by the intersection of ideologies.

Once these multi-disciplinary teams have been formed, they are given the assignment, which asks them to create three pieces of discourse on a significant civic topic of their choosing: an academic paper of 15-25 pages (depending on the institution), written from each of the disciplines; a visually-based argument on the same subject that is directed at a non-academic audience; and a presentation directed at other class members which explains to them the process by which the team generated its arguments from an academic perspective, and how those arguments were “translated” into a non-academic context. The purpose of this triple division is three-fold: to develop an appreciation for

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<sup>45</sup> I find this term to be more productive than “groups.” A group is a collection of people. A team is a collection of people united for one purpose. Though it smacks of recent corporate “team building” exercises, the distinction is helpful when reminding students who may not be participating fully that other members of the team are depending on them to do so.

and give experience in collaboration across academic disciplines, to encourage students to think of ways in which their classroom knowledge can be brought to bear on social and political problems, and to encourage self-reflection in the writing process. Some examples of subject matter that my students have undertaken for this assignment are human trafficking, the place of the *Twilight* series in the corpus of vampire mythology, and “*zona rosa*” violence in Juarez, Mexico.

The first component, the academic assignment, is, admittedly, somewhat of a false exercise. Real interdisciplinary work stems from accidental, even serendipitous, confluences of thought when an academic is exposed to another discourse community, not from the mandate of a higher authority. However, the exercise does provide valuable experience in making seemingly incompatible arguments fit together to form a coherent and well-organized whole. Furthermore, many of our students will have to collaborate on projects both before and after they leave the academy and this project may be the first opportunity for collaboration a student is exposed to. This section also provides ample opportunity to implement new technologies in and outside of the classroom which students can use to transfer technology skill sets to other rhetorical tasks. Software such as GoogleDocs, or Tidebreak’s Team Spot allows for collaboration across virtual and real spaces respectively. The hardest aspect of this part of the assignment is fitting a variety of arguments on one subject from a variety of disciplines into one coherent paper. I reserve time during class for a workshop on this topic. After the teams have selected their topics, and individual members have done initial invention (i.e. *stasis, topoi*) on their particular aspect of the project, I have them submit to me a list of the possible arguments on the

topic that could be directed at an academic audience. We then look for commonalities, points of convergence, and any possible nodal points in the many arguments generated about a particular topic. After a pattern is spotted in the threads, as it were, it is much easier to weave the discourse. These workshops also address issues of style and presentation in interdisciplinary work.

The discourse generated by the first part of the assignment serves as the basis for the second, a multi-media argument that reaches the same argumentative conclusion on the same topic as the first part of the assignment, but this time geared toward a non-academic audience. Websites, Power Point presentations, Wikipedia contributions or edits, YouTube videos, blog posts with visual or audio elements, even posters or t-shirt designs are all viable options for this segment of the project. The ultimate goal of this segment is to have students “translate” their disciplines into plain language or into visual rhetoric in order to reach a wider audience. Too much of what we do in the academy is obscured and mystified because of the nature of our discourse, and this project invites potential future scholars to see that this need not necessarily be the case. Furthermore, students are forced to apply their classroom knowledge to the world outside by the very nature of the civic topic, inviting them to see academic work as integral to the functions of civic interaction, not separate from them. Finally, because of the potential for a “virtual” or “on-line” dissemination of the argument, students are forced to consider how emerging technologies impact traditional concepts such as ethos<sup>46</sup> and audience.

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<sup>46</sup> To give a rudimentary example, authorship of a Wikipedia entry is almost anonymous on-screen, but ethos can be established through the use of credible cross-references.



Many of the images or sounds used in the multi-media projects will inevitably be taken from other sources. Such is the nature of media in the digital age; it is far easier to take a clip of a video or an image from the internet than it is to create original material. Rather than seeing this composing act as mere cutting and pasting, we should, as Joseph Janangelo suggests, see it as “virtual refinishing,” which he defines as “an activity that accounts for the need and ability to change something and keep it as it is” (298). Janangelo discusses the refinishing of the 1944 Judy Garland hit “Trolley Song” by a contemporary pop music video and a major network biographical film on Garland’s life. In each instance, the famous scene from *Meet Me in St. Louis* containing the song is repurposed for different artistic ends, and this concept can be extended to other instances of using media in ways other than originally intended. Janangelo explains,

Studying such intricate (yet deceptively simple) projects can enhance our understanding of visual rhetoric and move us from using reductive terms like “mash-up,” “appropriation,” and “manipulation” (with their simplistic, predatory connotations) that mark and limit student work, toward more expansive terms like “adaptation,” “distillation,” “meditation,” and what I call “rhetor response.” For rhetors who repurpose visual texts for public arenas, a worthy challenge is learning how to discern what’s in-contest in (and among) audience members in order to present material in ways that reward specific individuals without distracting or alienating viewers with other affiliations and needs. (Janangelo 313)

Janangelo’s analysis focuses on Garland’s shift from a “family friendly” MGM film star into a queer community icon, but can be applied to using media derived from an academic context in a non-academic one, and *vice versa*. When images or film clips are repurposed for the project, students are refinishing them in much the same manner as Janangelo’s model.

The final part of this project requires teams to give a presentation to their classmates on the generation of the academic paper and non-academic multi-media work. Such a presentation requires students to reflect on their own writing processes as well as their interaction with other group members. Critical self-evaluation is stressed as part of the revision process throughout the course, and this final aspect of the project reinforces the idea. In addition to self-evaluation, the presentation also requires students to evaluate their work as a group, which is critical to many professions outside of the academy. Peer review is a crucial aspect of the course, as students are required to participate in a round of review for each paper assignment except the last, and the final project evaluation builds off of these exercises.

### **Course Outcomes**

Most composition courses have stated goals or objectives which students should meet by the end of the class; these mirror to some extent the outcomes suggested by the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA). These include skills such as being able to write from multiple sources and cite those sources in an academic fashion, writing papers relatively free of error, organizing papers in a coherent fashion, and avoiding logical errors. While these are admirable goals and should by all means be met when possible, I believe that students should have broader goals in our composition courses. We should inculcate in our students an understanding of the larger governing concepts of rhetoric, such as the primacy of audience analysis, the importance of *decorum*, the relationship of ideology to civic claims, and *kairos* as a response to actual events in the world outside. We should also show them the importance of rhetoric for critically

understanding and analyzing social and political speech during their lives as citizens of states and a larger global community. Current technology allows us to communicate with a large audience and influence public opinion with relative ease compared to other periods in human history. We should encourage our students to contribute to the social and civic rhetoric of their society rather than just merely analyzing it. Therefore, an understanding of their place in the body politic and their relationship to the various ideologies of their society is also desirable. This list of expanded goals might seem virtually impossible to meet in a one or two class sequence in rhetoric. It is, but I do not think that means we should not at least try. I will also offer suggestions for restructuring the way rhetoric is taught that will allow for pursuit of these larger goals in my epilogue.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *REFUTATIO*

The course I have outlined in the previous chapter exemplifies a pedagogy that focuses more on the civic and ideological aspects of rhetoric than a traditional composition course does.<sup>47</sup> The classical model, adapted to the contemporary milieu, can also give students a transferable set of skills and concepts applicable to academic writing, and can be adapted to meet the requirements of most traditional composition courses, but I will suggest more radical changes to the standard model of composition in my epilogue. In this chapter, I will cover potential objections to pedagogy that is attentive to politics and ideology and is positioned against formalist, or “current-traditional” approaches to composition instruction.

#### **Arguing about Politics**

To begin with, my pedagogical model is unabashedly political and grounded in teaching how political arguments are based in ideological assumptions held by an audience. Examining these assumptions is potentially controversial, especially in The United States where a culture of polarized civic argument and a concern with “politically correct” expression lurks beneath the surface of our composition classes. Although many composition teachers actively engage “political” topics (which I will address below),

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<sup>47</sup> Not all courses or theorists ignore the social. John Schlib has recently argued for increased attention to social and political speech in composition course during the 2009 meeting of the MLA; see Jaschik.

there is a significant portion of the professoriate who believe that composition should steer clear of political and social topics. Such a view was popularly represented on the *New York Times* website by none other than Stanley Fish. He argues in “What Should Colleges Teach?,” a three-part blog entry, that composition courses should be concerned with expression only, echoing arguments made earlier in *Professional Correctness*. Fish’s argument is that academics can’t teach good citizenship and that when we do try to influence politics, we cease to be academics and become advocates for particular political positions. Such an argument rests on the assumption that any teacher who addresses political and social arguments will necessarily advocate a position rather than teach how political and social discourse works. Such a stance highlights the ideological nature of arguments, even when constructed by academics for both popular and institutional consumption. The liberal professor ranting about perceived injustices in the *status quo* has been a cliché since the latter half of the twentieth century, but that does not necessarily mean that the cliché is not completely untrue, nor does it mean that the cliché must be enacted in the classroom, yet it is this cliché, and Fish’s deployment of it, which allows his argument to carry such weight.

Ethan Fosse and Neil Gross, sociologists at Harvard and the University of British Columbia, respectively, argue that professors lean to the left of the general population due to many factors, including disparity between income and education, openness to new and controversial ideas, and religious identification. Research done by Bruce L.R. Smith, et al. shows that students are aware of this leaning, are able to recognize where a

professor falls on the political spectrum, and do not let that impinge on their own ideologies. They state, “Students do not arrive at college in an uninformed state. They arrive with values and conceptions of morality, religion, and the ultimate meaning of life. Students, in fact, enter college with deeply rooted belief systems that are highly resistant to change” (140). These belief structures will serve as the basis for arguments generated in class, and students in my model will learn to defend their positions before engaging with the opposition. Thus, the danger of a liberal professor changing a student’s belief system is unlikely, but not impossible. Smith, et al. continue:

Studies of pre-high school students have shown that students in their early teens already possess some political values learned largely in the family setting. Basic cultural values are learned early – in the home and childhood social relationships – and they are resistant to change.

This is one source of the reassurance that students will not be passive and simply allow themselves to be politically indoctrinated, even if professors try to do so. (104)

But this response assumes a teacher will always proselytize. However, professional ethics demand that we should not.

As teachers of rhetoric, we should be interested in showing our students the importance of rhetoric for their everyday lives as citizens, but we have a responsibility not to try to actively change our students’ political opinions. Such changes may occur as a result of arguments the students may be exposed to in our classes, but the same is true of any class. The important thing is for us to enable students to be rhetorically and argumentatively literate in order to participate in their social and academic communities. As Judith Rodin and Stephen Steinberg state, “The social task [of deliberative democracy] is not to make people like each other or feel at one with each other, or to

change private morals and behavior. Rather, it is to find common purpose that brings disparate communities and perspectives together, and to model a robust, positive public discourse that will muffle uncivil and unproductive discourse” (“Introduction” 8). The classes outlined in the previous chapter will work toward that end, and incorporate methods for doing so: the *controversia* and *advocatus diaboli* exercises. In these exercises, students have the opportunity to address disparate perspectives by enacting an opposition or defending against one.

Arguing on various sides of a position would be fine, but Fish is concerned with using admittedly controversial political topics in the class, an understandable worry because of the nature of political speech in the United States. Students are taught that they have the right to express themselves on such issues, and may have done so in an academic situation before, but such a perspective can, paradoxically, be detrimental to civic discourse. Lois Agnew, in the context of a discussion on teaching taste and propriety in contemporary composition, argues that the popular conception of contemporary free speech “privileges the individual’s rights of free expression without acknowledging the complex contextual factors that shape every communicative act,” which ultimately creates “internal barriers that inhibit students’ full access to public discourse” (748-749). These barriers arise due to a false binary between the will or good of the collective on one hand and the right of an individual to express her opinion on the other. Agnew notes, “Although justifiable in important respects, suspicions of public rhetoric’s ability to reflect ‘the will of the community’ have contributed to teaching practices that have not fully challenged our students to see themselves as active

participants in the community, rather than autonomous agents whose will is inexplicably thwarted by Others who are hostile to their interests” (757). As a counter to the mindset of the besieged autonomous agent, Agnew advocates examining problematic speech and arguments “through multiple perspectives that challenge [students’] initial starting points” (760). Agnew applies her argument to questions of proper and decorous speech, but her notions can be expanded to the content of social arguments as well as their expression.

Engaging in argument from multiple rhetorical perspectives will allow students to see what ideological bases arguments rest on, and where these arguments may intersect with their own belief systems through nodal points, as discussed in the previous chapter. A beneficial corollary to teaching students how argument works on both sides of a topic is an enrichment of their understanding of these issues. Rodin and Steinberg note, “In terms of goals and outcome, conversations on fractious issues such as affirmative action, abortion, or immigration should aim to achieve a more informed public understanding of complex issues, not necessarily to convert audiences to a predetermined position” (“Introduction” 9-10). Finally, it will also allow students to come to judgments about their beliefs on their own through the argument process. Allowing them to consider the implications and ethics of their beliefs as a type of rhetorical reflection is not the same as indoctrinating them into your own beliefs. Michael Sandel, the BBC’s Reith Lecturer for 2009 states, “The non-judgemental impulse is also an anti-democratic impulse. [...] The attempt to empty politics of moral controversy may seem to be a way of respecting our differences, but it is actually corrosive of democratic life.” Much of the political



discourse in contemporary American society seems to be polarized along moral lines, especially when it comes to actions centered on questions that seem to be ethically mutually exclusive, such as abortion or allowing members of the gay and lesbian communities to be married or joined in a civil union. By actively encouraging students to engage with these topics, we are encouraging them to come to terms with moral arguments on ideological grounds, and to look for commonalities between themselves and their opposition.<sup>48</sup>

### **Twentieth Century Composition Theory**

Another objection to my pedagogical model is that I have placed it in opposition to what I have called formalist rhetoric, and what others have termed “current-traditional” rhetoric. This is a holdover from the nineteenth century, as I have outlined in chapter two, but there have been more than a century of theoretical interventions since. Opposing this pedagogical approach may seem to be a case of attacking a straw man. However, as Lennie Irvin has argued, much of what has been advanced in the way of composition theory since the middle of the twentieth century has been subsumed by the formalist paradigm (“Open Spaces”).<sup>49</sup> The reasons are varied, but the most important are that composition instructors face working conditions that are almost identical to those of the late nineteenth century which spawned formalist rhetoric – crowded classrooms, “underprepared” (however problematic that term may be) students, and institutional

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<sup>48</sup> Not every student will engage with such topics, but allowing them to do so will come closer to a public sphere aimed at what Sandel calls a “politics for the common good” in the title of his lectures.

<sup>49</sup> See also Halasek, *Pedagogy of Possibility*.

pressure to produce students who can “write well” in other classes – and because of the rhizomatic nature of our discipline, as embodied in the texts we use for instruction.

Tony Scott, in a survey of contemporary composition textbooks, calls them “a theoretical hodgepodge, carrying assumptions about literacy and learning that were sometimes even internally contradictory” (70). Many texts, for example, make a token gesture towards tailoring style to audience, and then provide prescriptive rules for standard written English in the “handbook” section.<sup>50</sup> Such contradictions suggests that students should be able to employ several “literacies” (one for text messaging with friends, one for academic writing, one for an email to parents, etc.), while only giving “rules” for *one standard grammatical literacy*. Why is this? One explanation is that rhetoric and composition is itself a “hodgepodge” of theories, some of which are mutually exclusive when it comes to “assumptions about literacy and learning,” and even the nature of rhetoric itself, much less the way it should be taught in a classroom. However, throughout the history of rhetoric, there have been dominant models which tend to absorb challenges in a rhizomatic fashion, as elaborated by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. They explain

Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc., as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flies. There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome. These lines always tie back to one another. That is why one can never posit a dualism or dichotomy, even in the rudimentary form of the good and the bad. You may make a rupture, draw a line of flight, yet there is still a danger that you will reencounter organizations that restratify everything,

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<sup>50</sup> See Raimés.

formations that restore power to a signifier, attributions that reconstitute a subject – anything you like, from Oedipal resurgences to fascist concretions. (9)

Composition instruction can be seen in these rhizomatic terms. Theoretical advances represent lines of flight, which deterritorialize the dominant model, only to be reterretorialized by that model, usually in the next incarnation of any one of a number of textbooks. For example, the tenth edition of *Patterns for College Writing* begins with a description of the writing process that employs a combination of classical and contemporary terms such as invention, arrangement, drafting, and revising. The text then gives readings organized by mode with an introductory section explaining the key features of each mode; the modes represent both those derived from classical *topoi* and the nineteenth century modes: narration, description, exemplification, process, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, classification and division, definition, argumentation. Lastly, there is a chapter on “combining the patterns” which admits that “nearly every essay, including those in this text, combines a variety of patterns” (703). This textbook, like many others, falls back on modal organization strategies because these are easily amenable to classroom instruction – one or two weeks per mode, and the semester is done – yet students find out at the end that the discrete forms of writing they’ve been studying all semester long are very rarely discrete. *Patterns for College Writers* exemplifies the way in which textbooks reterretorialize theoretical interventions back into the formalist paradigm. In this text, process theory, as both a twentieth century intervention and a classical re-activation, is grafted onto nineteenth century concepts of modal discourse.

The textbook, still the center of composition instruction in many classrooms, will most often contain the roots of the current-traditional model. Most of them advocate a thesis-driven, expressivist-influenced statement of personal belief combined with a nod to writing process practices. Some may include the necessity to write “like an academic” as advocated by social constructionist theory, but most are what Robert Connors calls “thesis” texts, which claim that one idea, such as unity, is the governing principle of writing in all cases. This principle is given along with modes or “methods of exposition” (comparison, definition, etc.) derived in part from nineteenth century modes and classical *topoi* (“Rise and Fall”). In the case of *Patterns*, the central idea is process, and the influence of modal discourse from the nineteenth century is clearly evident. Prescriptive texts such as this one cling to the formalist model and wind up influencing classroom practice. They are, according to Deleuze and Guattari, a fascicular system.

The radical-system, or fascicular root, is the second figure of the book, to which our modernity pays willing allegiance. This time, the principal root has aborted, or its tip has been destroyed; an immediate, indefinite multiplicity of secondary roots grafts onto it and undergoes a flourishing development. This time, natural reality is what aborts the principal root, but the root’s unity subsists, as past or yet to come, as possible. (5)

Attacks on formalist or current-traditional approaches, seen as deterritorializations of them, are grafted onto the root of the traditional text, and are thus reterritorialized into a formalist approach through instructional textbook production.

It would be a most hasty generalization to say that *every* composition class in American colleges follows closely to the text used or to formalist ideas inscribed therein. I am sure there are many instructors who employ interventions into the field from

differing theoretical perspectives in their classroom practice. There are several theories of composition that have attempted to solve some of the problems of a formalist approach, notably process, expressivism, social construction, and “radical approaches,” but each of them can either be subsumed by my classical / ideological method<sup>51</sup>, or are problematic for civic and social approaches to rhetoric, as addressed below.

### **Challenges to Current-Traditional Pedagogy**

Christian Weisser notes that from the 1960s through 1980s:

Open admissions policies at many colleges and universities brought millions of students – white and black, men and women, traditional and nontraditional – to writing classrooms across the nation. [...] [These students] challenged the conventional methods of writing instruction, asked questions that were dissimilar to those asked by students who were enmeshed in traditional education systems, and in turn, compelled writing teachers and theorists to reexamine familiar classroom approaches. (9)

As in the late nineteenth century, instructors in the middle twentieth century faced an influx of “non-traditional” students, and as in the late nineteenth century, new writing pedagogy theories appeared to answer that challenge.

One of the first to question the efficacy of current-traditional composition instruction was the cognitivist or process-oriented approach, represented by the work of Janet Emig. This approach, sometimes grafted onto the “writing to learn” scenario, rejected the emphasis on the finished writing product found in formalist approaches, and “Emig’s work led to a *new* conception of writing as something with discrete stages”

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<sup>51</sup> I am aware that this is the very process by which I claim formalist pedagogy reterretorializes the very same deterretorializations. However, I wish these advances to be reterretorialized by the classical model, which is much more conscious of the social and civic implications of rhetoric instruction, and allows for more student agency in the instruction process.

(Weisser 13, emphasis mine). The irony is that a process-oriented approach is not at all new. Classical rhetoric, at least since Aristotle, tacitly assumed that a discursive work was crafted in various stages; this is embodied in the five canons of Roman rhetoric: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. The use of *stasis*, *topoi*, and ideologically-driven enthymemes in the invention canon is akin to brainstorming. The process of selecting and ordering, which makes up the arrangement canon, adds another element to traditional brainstorming. Audience identification and analysis is important in this stage, as it determines which arguments will be acceptable to particular ideologically-predisposed audiences. The canon of style involves more than just editing for “clarity” and proofreading, but tailoring the discourse to the expectations of audience, forum and occasion, even if that means deviating from “standard written English.” The process approach has been reterretorialized into a watered down version usually consisting of the triad brainstorm/draft/revise by most textbooks. My approach opens up the recursive nature of writing by introducing the ideological nature of argumentation and the process of audience analysis that is inherent in crafting discourse, something that contemporary reterretorializations of the process approach do not because they give little attention given to the ways in which audience expectations can influence the entire process of crafting an argument. Because classical approaches like topical analysis and arrangement *begin* with the audience rather than the writer, they achieve the same goal as process approaches, but focus students’ discourse on affecting an audience rather than exemplifying formalist steps that happen in a virtual discursive vacuum.

Along with process approaches, expressivism made its appearance in the 1960s and 70s as a response to the current-traditional method, and was surprisingly political at first. This political leaning eventually gave way to a more moderate strain advocated by theorists such as Peter Elbow. This school encourages forms and processes of composition aimed at encouraging students to find the ability to express their ideas in their own voice through constant practice. Weisser states, “While there was some diversity among the theories and theorists involved in this approach, they shared a common epistemology: the belief that truth and knowledge lie within the individual writer” (Weisser 16). The expressivist camp was concerned with social and political protest, but felt that the best approach was for a student to deal with the social body on an individual level because the pressure of conformity could distort their interpretation. Even then, a student’s beliefs on political topics should correspond to those of all others. “Most expressivists like Elbow, Murray, and Macrorie asserted the value of individual personal truth as corresponding with the general truth for other individuals” (Weisser 20).<sup>52</sup> The assumption that individual “truth” will correspond with the social body’s “truth” is correct for many students, simply because their subjectivities have been constructed by the hegemonic ideologies of their societies.<sup>53</sup> Expressivist rhetorical instruction reaffirms students’ “own” beliefs and does not ask them to analyze why they believe what they do. This is essentially a re-inscription of the ideological and political

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<sup>52</sup> See also, Berlin, *Rhetoric and Reality*, 486.

<sup>53</sup> Arguably, the increasingly divisive nature of American politics as well as the increasingly diverse nature of the American populace will make it less probable that an individual student’s truth will correspond to that of the society at large, as there is a multiplicity of societies at large.

interpellation that students face on a daily basis. Contemporary theories of subjectivity posit that our “own” beliefs are constructed by social, historical, and, most importantly, ideological forces, and introducing ideology and belief systems (as well as the constructed nature of those systems) as the basis for argumentation opens up possibilities that are foreclosed by expressivism for students to question whether or not their “truth” does actually correspond to social “truth.” Furthermore, the expressivist idea that political discourse should be approached in an “individual” manner does not allow for very productive discourse, as it makes the author’s beliefs the center of argument, not the audience’s. If a rhetor truly believes in creationism, he or she will have a hard time convincing a group of paleontologists through Biblical references alone, despite the truth value of the Bible for that rhetor.

In contrast to expressivism’s emphasis on the individual is the rhetoric of social construction, or discourse communities, which has its roots in the argument about paradigm shifts found in Thomas Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Although “there are nearly as many differences as similarities among those often grouped together under the rubric of social construction,” they are all united by a view of knowledge as created and transmitted in the particular language of a community (Weisser 23). This school of rhetoric, best represented by David Bartholomae, argues that students must be taught to adopt the language and argumentative conventions of the discourse communities they will eventually inhabit:

The student has to appropriate (or be appropriated by) a specialized discourse, and he has to do this as though he were a member of the academy or an historian or an economist; he has to invent the university by assembling and mimicking its



language while finding some compromise between idiosyncrasy, a personal history, on the one hand, and the requirements of convention, the history of a discipline, on the other. He must learn to speak our language. (135)

The use of *topoi* as a heuristic and hermeneutic model, as I have outlined in Chapter 3, allows students to appropriate the language and argumentation of discourse communities both within and outside of the academy. This is a more empowering form of “writing across the curriculum” – which can be seen as an outgrowth of the social construction school – because it provides students with agency in adapting to the academic writing community, and can be adapted to any particular discourse situation. Furthermore, it also allows for an ideological examination of the basis of a discourse community’s arguments. One consequence of adopting a community’s standards without adequate consideration is that it tends to reinforce the *status quo*. For example, advertising students who copy the dictum that “sex sells” can hardly be expected to create commercials that question gender hierarchies.

### **Political Approaches to Composition**

From the 1990s on, there has been an increased concern with political and social rhetoric in composition classrooms, which Weisser has categorized as “radical approaches.” He sees these radical approaches as a response to the shortcomings of social construction:

[M]any early social constructionists seemed to ignore the politics underlying the eminent status of dominant and academic (very often the same thing) discourses. Early approaches to social construction often emphasized collaborative learning as the passport to learning the language of the academy, which is usually assumed to be the goal of college writing instruction. What they failed to acknowledge,

however, is that this very discourse privileges certain language users (in this case, white, upper-class males) to the exclusion of others. (25)

As a result, many composition instructors have turned either to service-learning projects which combine writing assignments with social activism, or to social and political topics in hopes of addressing inequalities in a pseudo-Freirian tradition.

Paula Mathieu notes the increasing use of service learning in contemporary writing courses: “Many composition teachers today encourage students' civic participation and local engagement with issues such as American identity, race, gender, political discourse, or local legal cases and debates. In such classes, issues of power and rhetoric arise: competing ideologies, clarifying the political role of the teacher, and seeking a rhetoric that does not alienate or efface the political views of students and staff” (Mathieu 3-4).<sup>54</sup> Mathieu, borrowing from de Certeau, argues that contemporary service learning composition courses are strategic rather than tactical; a strategic orientation emanates from carefully defined “proper” (as in propertied) spaces, while a tactical orientation does not depend on a spatial binary separating the self from the Other. She points out the problematic nature of this relationship:

To apply strategic rules calls upon a potentially colonizing logic that seeks to control the space of the interaction through stability and long term planning. My argument is that when moving from the classroom into the streets, scholars, teachers, and writers must devise new time- and space-appropriate methods for how we plan and evaluate our work. Thinking strategically, then, is not an option, because the dynamic spaces where we work should not be considered strategic extensions of academic institutions. (16-17)

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<sup>54</sup> She also notes that many universities have latched on to these service learning courses “to act as both a draw for students and public relations for the institution” (Mathieu 12).

Service-learning, as a way of entering students' discourse into the social sphere, runs the risk of "framing local communities as generic sites of need, eager to benefit from university largess" (Mathieu 90). As a counter to such strategic service-learning projects, Mathieu advocates what she calls a "tactics of hope." The characteristics of tactical "classroom public writing" are: a sometimes unknowable outcome; a focus on concrete applications (such as a "street paper" produced by the homeless like Chicago's *Street Wise*) rather than generic problems (homelessness as a concept); collaboration and long vision; employment of various discursive strategies; and clear exigencies, but not always clear goals (Mathieu 49 ff).

Grounding civic and social writing in students' own lives, and then linking similar topics to their classroom experiences and knowledge through the assignment sequence I have outlined represents an embodiment of Mathieu's tactical approach. Her implicit argument is that discourse should be directed to sites and situations already existing outside the academy, and should at least try to have an effect on the world, even if that effect is minor or unknowable by the rhetor. Focusing on concepts such as *kairos*, which look to a real-world event or situation to generate arguments, and an audience that can affect *praxis* in the world, is a way of focusing on concrete applications for rhetoric in the social sphere, rather than simply colonizing a space outside the academy in which to generate discourse.

Rather than focusing on discourse for service-learning purposes, some courses attempt to "prepare students for citizenship in a democracy, for assuming their political and social responsibilities, and for lives as active participants in public life" by having

them write on civic or social topics (Weisser 3). This is problematic, for as Patricia Roberts-Miller argues, many composition instructors who assign civic topics do not have an adequate understanding of the various senses of argumentation in a democracy and hence, wind up inadvertently reinscribing formalist approaches to writing. She states,

The five-paragraph essay is regularly ridiculed among college teachers, so my using the example may seem odd, but the distinction between it and the assignment to “write a letter to your congressperson” is obscure to me. Both presume that argument is a thesis-driven list of reasons – the only distinction is whether the introduction is a funnel paragraph and the number of paragraphs. [...] It is an understatement to say that this form is unpersuasive to an intelligent and informed audience, but it was never intended to be persuasive to such people – it was intended to inform and confirm the godly,<sup>55</sup> to tell them something they more or less already knew, give them reasons they may or may not have previously heard, and end with a rousing exhortation. (Roberts-Miller 215)

The problem here is that many teachers stress the importance of political topics, but do not provide students with rhetorical instruction that allows them to generate meaningful civic and social discourse. Many of the important aspects of social rhetoric – attention to audience expectations in various settings, the ideological nature of political argument, the importance of *ethos* and *pathos* in social argument – are not stressed by the reterritorializing version of formalist rhetoric that is the dominant model in contemporary composition. As Weisser notes, “Public writing consists of more than expressing your opinion about a current topic; it entails being able to make your voice heard on an issue that directly confronts or influences you” (94). He also notes that any number of pedagogies can do this. I argue that melding the classical model with contemporary conceptions of ideology is the best approach because it gives students the best set of tools

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<sup>55</sup> Roberts-Miller traces the origin of the five-paragraph essay to the American Puritan sermon.

to generate discourse for a heterogeneous public sphere with many sites for discourse consumption.

Finally, focusing exclusively on civic writing would be professionally disingenuous to both the students we teach and the universities we work for. Part of the mandate of composition, no matter how impossible the task may seem to some theorists, is to teach students how to write in a university setting. My course, which uses classical rhetoric as a heuristic and hermeneutic for civic *and* academic writing solves this problem. Furthermore, the final assignment in the sequence invites students to connect their academic work with a *kairos* in the world outside the academy. This will give an additional life to knowledge gained in the classroom, one which students will be able to carry beyond their college experience and apply to civic arguments when they are citizens. Ideally, as I will address in the epilogue, we should be active participants in our students' writing beyond the one or two semester sequence of writing courses in order to ensure that this application of academic knowledge to civic life continues.

### **Classical Rhetoric Reactivated**

On the revival of classical rhetoric, Mathieu notes that some classrooms are now seen as places where audience, community, writer, and subject matter intersect. "Through this construction, the community outside the classroom and its concerns become part of the relevant rhetorical situation of a writing classroom. Teacher-researchers influenced by rhetoric have focused on civic literacy and ways to help students develop as active citizens" (Mathieu, 11). J.P. Corbett and others have reintroduced the classical model, as have I, but there are certain problems with bringing back a two-and-half-thousand-year-

old discipline. Among them are the facts that classical rhetorical instruction was very elitist and that it was geared toward speech rather than written or multi-media discourse.

Both of these problems can be addressed through strategic appropriation that is aware of the long history of rhetoric pedagogy. Walter Benjamin speaks of a historical materialist philosophy where an event is approached as a monad, as “a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past. He [the historical materialist] takes cognizance of it in order to blast a specific era out of the homogenous course of history—blasting a specific life out of the era or a specific work out of the lifework” (XVII). Although Benjamin speaks of events, a similar approach can be taken when approaching a concept, such as classical rhetoric. Bringing classical rhetoric into the contemporary classroom will require us to change those aspects of it which do not apply to contemporary situations (such as teaching it to upper class men only). Furthermore, we must also add to it when necessary, especially in terms of contemporary language used to describe the mechanics of persuasion. For example, Aristotle spends a great deal of time in Book II (Chapters 12-17) dealing with the “disposition” of various categories of citizens – the young, the old, the wealthy, etc. Although Aristotle did not have the vocabulary for it (even though it is of Greek etymology), these chapters are arguably exercises in psychology. It is also easy to reframe the “disposition” concept in terms of ideology – the disposition of Republicans, of feminists, of capitalists, etc. Importing the concept of ideology, which Aristotle and other rhetoricians also did not have the vocabulary to discuss, blasts classical rhetoric out of its period, and grafts it onto contemporary social theory. Using contemporary theories about the ideological nature of discourse in

conjunction with the methodology of classical rhetoric which shows how this ideology is employed through enthymemes, *topoi* used by various discursive communities, and other language coherent with contemporary subjectivity is a way of appropriating classical rhetoric that is in line with its civic and social aims, and with contemporary discourse theory.

## EPILOGUE

### *PERORATIO*

The pedagogical approach to the traditional composition course that I have outlined in this project can be incorporated into one- or two-semester courses at most current two- or four-year institutions, using traditional textbooks if necessary, and with the explicitly mandated goals of a department in mind. Most departments have “course goals” or “course requirements” that all instructors must strive to meet or follow, and many have a standard syllabus for all composition courses, as well as standardized and/or mandatory textbooks – teachers *must* assign a text, often from a list. Many composition instructors (the majority of them, I would suggest, from personal experience) are either adjuncts or graduate students, contingent laborers who cannot afford to rock the boat. Therefore, any radical intervention into the curriculum is ill advised. However, I would be remiss if I did not argue that the structure of contemporary composition courses is an integral part of the devaluation of civic and social rhetoric in those courses. The textbook and the one- or two-semester sequence should be abandoned, but the institutional weight of publication revenue and university curriculum goals often inhibit larger reforms. In this chapter, I will make two more radical suggestions for completely revising the composition course: abandoning the textbook as an instructional tool, and extending rhetorical instruction throughout the students’ college careers.



## **Textbooks**

Rather than look to specific textbooks or even genres of writing instruction book (rhetoric manual, grammar, reader, etc.), I will deal with the concept of a textbook as it pertains to rhetorical instruction. One of the guiding principles of rhetoric as a discipline (although this idea does disappear from the landscape in some periods and places) is that persuasion is fluid, dynamic, contested, and should be changed to suit the audience at hand. Contrast this to the very nature of the textbook. A text is a collection of prescriptions and proscriptions about a field. Essentially, a text is a compilation of what you can or cannot do within the bounds of a discourse community. Occasionally, there are textbooks published which do push against these boundaries, but the writers and publishers of textbooks are interested in maintaining hegemony over the reproduction of a discursive field's knowledge. Textbooks, therefore, are the means by which advances in composition theory are reterretorialized into the practice of the classroom, as I have argued in Chapter 4.

Aside from the theoretical objection, there is also the problem of lag time in publications, which therefore limits the nature of works included in readers and in the example essay sections of texts that don't have readers. This is problematic for any course that uses current events as the subject matter of student papers. Any textbook takes years to produce, and content from years ago is by definition not current. A better tactic is to use contemporary discourse produced as a response to the social and political context of the time when the composition class is happening. Using contemporary civic and political discourse allows students to see the relevance of rhetoric to the world

around them. It also has the advantage of being more localized than a textbook.

Textbooks aim for a nationwide distribution, and therefore tend to shy away from local concerns. However, as service learning has demonstrated (although somewhat problematically), the university can have an impact on its surrounding community, a demonstration of *praxis* connected with rhetoric that is a result of this community focus. Furthermore, when aiming at a specific audience, students are more likely to receive a personalized response from, and therefore a determination of whether or not a particular argument has worked on, local rather than national leaders.

My final objection to the widespread use of the textbook as a teaching tool is a material one. Many students don't keep their textbooks, especially for introductory courses or classes outside of their majors; rather, they sell them back to campus bookstores or online services (Craig's List, e-Bay, Amazon, Half.com, etc). Publishers routinely issue new editions of rhetoric and composition textbooks, making the previous editions less valuable on the used book market. The problem with this "new edition" practice is that most changes are superficial at best, including new essays (which still lag behind current events) or kowtows to recent theory (such as the inclusion of online writing). Thus students are saddled with an expensive book after the course is over, one which they see as useless at worst, and not applicable to their level of writing at best (they're not "freshmen" anymore, after all). In addition to being less valuable after class, textbooks often become little more than crib notes to lectures in class. When texts are assigned, we naturally want to teach "from" them (or at least with reference to them) so

that students feel that they've purchased them for a reason. Ironically, once they realize that lectures and exercises recapitulate what's in the textbook, they stop reading that text.

Because multiply-issued editions of textbooks lag behind the national conversation, and are necessarily focused on large political units when they are concerned with politics at all, we would be better off abandoning them. The principles of rhetoric can be conveyed to the students through the traditional lecture method, and reinforced through in-class activities and homework. Not only that, but those same principles can be questioned. When a textbook presents material such as modes of discourse or when to use "who" and "whom," it is done in a prescriptive or proscriptive manner, without concession to the way varying audiences might respond. When principles are presented, students can be told to look for or think of possible scenarios in which they should be violated. I do not suggest that *every* principle should be questioned at each class meeting or in each paper. Some, such as "always use 'whom' as an object," can be abandoned in the right cases, but others will remain. Those that do, such as "always analyze your audience's possible beliefs as well as the expectations of the occasion when making an argument" will be the most basic of rhetorical principles. These principles can be conveyed and explained without recourse to a textbook by any composition teacher worth his or her salt.

### **Rhetoric Instruction**

Can the principles of rhetoric, rooted in civic ideological analysis as well as academic discourse as I have proposed, be conveyed with or without a textbook in a one-

or two-semester sequence? Yes; but by no means can they be mastered by every student in that time. Even students who earn As in our classes have at least some room for improvement. Therefore, I propose that rhetoric instruction in colleges be extended beyond the first-year composition classroom. During the freshman year, a class such as the one I have proposed or any other one which introduces basic rhetorical principles to students will be taken as usual. It will be followed by advising in paper writing for the remainder of the student's career. Writing instructors will see cohorts of students through the process of writing for their classes, but also require separate assignments once a semester that connect the classroom knowledge students learn throughout their careers to the social sphere.

I see several advantages to this method. The first and most obvious is that students would receive additional personalized advice on academic writing throughout their careers, and this method will provide extra help in refining and polishing discourse produced for other classes. The actual degree to which we would have to intervene could be determined on a case by case basis, and could be as light as the equivalent of a mandatory visit to the writing center for a few papers each semester, or as heavy as weekly meetings at every stage of the writing process for each paper. This would, of course, require us to be or become more knowledgeable about the discursive conventions of other departments, to expand our purview beyond the bounds of the English Department. One of the central debates throughout the history of rhetoric is the level of expertise required of *rhetors* in other fields,<sup>56</sup> and this situation is a contemporary

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<sup>56</sup> See, for example, the debate among Crassus, Scaveola, and Antonius in Cicero, *De Oratore* I, xii-xx.

extension of the debate. I don't think we need to be experts in every subject, but should be conversant at introductory levels of most disciplines. In this case, we have as much to learn from our students as they do from us.

Furthermore, the position of the writing instructor would require significantly more time in terms of office hours used to individually counsel writers after they pass the freshman composition course. Adjunct faculty positions would need to be compensated additionally to reflect the time commitment required as a writing advisor, but the best method would be to hire full-time faculty for these positions, even if they are not tenure-track. Restructuring of the tenure process and the ratio of full-time to adjunct faculty is currently an ongoing and hotly contested debate, beyond the scope of this project. My suggestion obviously points to my underlying concern about the increasingly tenuous nature of academic employment and can add fuel to the debate, but by no means put out that fire.

The second advantage of a writing advisor who maintains contact with students beyond the first year course is in the civic nature of the assignments required of students by the writing advisor. These assignments are obviously extensions of the final assignment suggested in chapter 3, and have the same goal of connecting the classroom to the community. Because students know these assignments will be due, they will have to keep in mind how their academic work can best be applied to solving the problems of society or examining the discourse produced in the civic and political sphere. We have become very proficient as a profession at forming intellectuals who use their knowledge in professional situations. Political science majors and those who go on to serve in the

public sphere must put their academic knowledge to work there, but I think all majors should. Jeremiads against “outlandish” research, especially in the humanities, is a result of us not being able to translate our work into popular discourse or apply it to pressing social concerns in a manner that is palpable to a wider audience, something which a writing advisor can help to achieve. Civic assignments, geared toward and delivered to appropriate audiences can also show that the academy is interested not only in gate-keeping for a profession, but also in producing citizens who are active in the lives of their communities, nations, and globe.

By returning rhetorical instruction to the latter stages of a student’s career in an advisory role, we can remove the stigma of “freshman” from composition. Rather than being a required course that *only* happens in the freshman year, rhetoric can become a dynamic and integral part of every student’s curriculum. By focusing on how we can apply students’ knowledge to persuasion in the political and social sphere, rhetoric instruction can return to its traditional roots in the civic and social realm. Ultimately, most of us influence the world around us by proxy. It is through our students’ work that we extend our ideas and expertise into law, science, ethics, and other fields of human social endeavor. The principles of rhetoric are capable of much more than advice on where to put a thesis statement paper on the history of the English Civil War. We can have a direct impact on the social and political realm in a few years’ time, but only if we can show students the importance of rhetoric in their own lives and the lives of their communities.

APPENDIX A:  
CLASS MATERIALS

**College Writing Seminar  
UCWR 110**

Donovan Braud  
– 2:00

email: [dbraud@luc.edu](mailto:dbraud@luc.edu)

Office Hours: M/W/F 1:00

Office Phone 508-2240  
Center 418

Office: Crown

The Core Writing Seminar aims to teach students to write clearly and effectively, through the steps of brainstorming, peer review, revision, and final editing. Students will learn to articulate, organize, and support written positions. They will also learn how to read texts carefully and critically, and to recognize how various perspectives inform interpretations of texts. Students will see the importance of reading well, writing well, listening well, and speaking well. In addition, by collaborating with others as well as seeing the value of revision and the recursive nature of the writing process, students will be better prepared for classes across the Loyola curriculum. The course will promote grammatical, compositional, methodological, and rhetorical skills in the service of effective communication. As a result, the course will have five writing assignments that add up to at least thirty-five pages (about 8,750 words) of writing over the semester. These assignments will receive timely feedback from the instructor with the goal of effective revision by students. We will use peer-input for the process of revision, but such input will not replace input from the instructor.

This section of UCWR will explore basic tenets of classical rhetoric (theories of persuasion handed down from ancient Greece and Rome) as a means of strengthening students' writing skills both inside and outside of academia. By looking beyond the basic freshman writing course to the social implications of rhetorical practice, we will establish a connection between the collegiate experience and the larger community to which all students belong.

**Knowledge Area(s) satisfied:** College Writing Seminar

**Skill(s) Developed:**

**Values Requirement(s) satisfied:**

**Learning Objectives:**

**Knowledge Area (College Writing Seminar):**

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- A. Write clearly and effectively using standard written English.
- B. Effectively use the writing process from brainstorming through peer review to revision and final editing.
- C. Articulate, organize, and support positions clearly and persuasively in written form.
- D. Use writing effectively as a method of inquiry (i.e., "writing to learn").
- E. Read texts carefully and critically (e.g., ability to paraphrase, summarize,



compare and synthesize).

- F. Recognize how various perspectives inform interpretations.
- G. Tailor discourse to specific audiences and to specific rhetorical purposes.
- H. Recognize the various tasks involved in research, including developing a thesis, locating sources and assessing their credibility, and incorporating sources as evidence to support or qualify claims.
- I. Use and document source materials of all kinds appropriately and ethically.
- J. Recognize the rhetorical dimensions of and requirements for writing in multiple media.
- K. Reflect on one's own development as a writer and as a reader.

### Texts

Hacker, Diana. *Bedford Handbook Loyola University Chicago Edition*.

On-line readings and occasional handouts will be assigned on a class-by-class basis.

### Evaluation Criteria

4 short papers @ 15% each  
 long paper = 20%  
 participation = 10%  
 in class writing = 10%

### Schedule of Classes

***\*N.B.: Homework reading assignments will be announced in class well in advance of their due date.***

8/24 – Introduction to the course  
 8/26 – Diagnostic writing  
 8/28 – The fundamentals of rhetoric and argumentation based on ethos, pathos, and logos.  
 8/31 – Rhetorical analysis  
 9/2 – Paper #1 assignment discussion  
 9/4 – Paper #1 Peer Review with Team Spot  
 9/7 – Labor Day – NO CLASS  
 9/9 – Paper #1 due. Discussion of Ethos and Pathos  
 9/11 – Discussion of Logos – Syllogistic and Enthymeme reasoning  
 9/14 – Discussion of Logos – *Topoi* and invention  
 9/16 – Argumentative approaches  
 9/18 – Argumentative approaches  
 9/21 – Paper #2 assignment discussion

9/23 – Paper #2 peer review with Team Spot  
 9/25 – Paper #2 due  
 9/28 – Style – diction and word economy  
 9/30 – Style - tropes  
 10/2 – Style – sentence structure  
 10/5 – Mid-Semester Break – NO CLASS  
 10/7 – Research and Documentation Methodology  
 10/8 – Research and Documentation Methodology  
 10/12 – Research and Documentation Methodology  
 10/14 – Research and Documentation Methodology  
 10/16 – Research and Documentation Methodology  
 10/19 – Paper #3 peer review with Team Spot  
 10/21 – Paper #3 due. Discussion of warrants and backing. Working with ideology.  
 10/23 – Fallacies 1  
 10/26 – Fallacies 2  
 10/28 – Paper #4 discussion  
 10/30 – Paper #4 peer review with Team Spot  
 11/2 – Paper #4 due. Discussion of academic discourse communities  
 11/4 – Writing in the academic disciplines  
 11/5 – Writing in the academic disciplines  
 11/9 – Citation conventions and accidental plagiarism avoidance  
 11/11 – Final paper topical discussion  
 11/13 – Final paper topical analysis  
 11/16 – Writing workshops  
 11/18 – Writing workshops  
 11/20 – Writing workshops  
 11/23 – Writing workshops  
 11/25 – Thanksgiving – NO CLASS  
 11/27 – Thanksgiving – NO CLASS  
 11/30 – Paper draft conferences  
 12/2 – Paper draft conferences  
 12/4 – Final paper due

## **Academic Integrity**

The basic commitment of a university is to search for and to communicate the truth as it is honestly perceived. The university could not accomplish its purpose in the absence of this demanding standard. To the extent that this standard is respected, a genuine learning community can exist. Students of this university are called upon to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Plagiarism is a serious form of violation of this standard. Plagiarism is the appropriation for gain of ideas, language, or work of another without sufficient public

acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the deliberate taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources.

The faculty and administration of Loyola University Chicago wish to make it clear that the following acts are regarded as serious violations of personal honesty and the academic ideal that binds the university into a learning community:

Submitting as one's own:

1. Material copied from a published source: print, internet, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.
2. Another person's unpublished work or examination material.
3. Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit.
4. Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.

The critical issue is to give proper recognition to other sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty.

**Plagiarism on the part of a student in academic work or dishonest examination behavior will result minimally in the instructor assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. In addition, all instances of academic dishonesty must be reported to the chairperson of the department involved. The chairperson may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending upon the seriousness of the misconduct.**

Academic cheating is another serious act that violates academic integrity. Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher; providing information to or obtaining information from another student during the examination; attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted; and falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences all are violations of the integrity and honesty standards of the examination process.

In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty across departments, the academic dean of the student's college may convene a hearing board. Students retain the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the academic dean of the college in which they are registered. The decision of the dean is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean.

## UCWR Paper #1

Your first paper is a rhetorical analysis of an opinion / editorial article from a major publication. **Do not use a news story**, but rather one where an argument is being made. Most major papers have an editorial section on their websites as well. Your paper should focus on:

- What is the article's intended audience? This can often be determined by the forum (the newspaper itself). For example, *The New York Times* is often considered a liberal newspaper, while *The Chicago Tribune* is considered conservative. Also, the subject matter and even the ethos of the author can add to this analysis (think Ann Coulter or Rush Limbaugh versus Keith Olberman or James Carville). You can also go beyond social or political leanings – profession, gender, age, and other identifiers can be used to describe the intended audience.
- What is the context for the argument? What recent events may have prompted the writer to make this particular argument and why did the editorial staff choose to publish it?
- What is the main claim of the article? What would the author of the article want you to believe or do after reading it?
- How is this main claim supported? Is there adequate and appropriate support for the intended audience? What types of appeals are made (ethos, logos, pathos) and are these appeals sufficient to support the main claim?
- Is the style appropriate for the intended audience? Is the writer overly colloquial, too formal, etc.?
- Generally, a rhetorical analysis will end with an evaluation of the effectiveness of the argument on its intended audience. Would a member of that audience find the article persuasive? You might have to think like the intended audience if you're not a member of it!

**Be sure to quote from the article to support your analysis where necessary.** Papers should be about 4-5 pages long (1000 – 1250 words), double spaced, and should include a works cited list / bibliography for the article.

## UCWR Paper #2

Your second paper topic is open as far as specific subject matter, but you must focus on a socially significant local problem or political issue. The only restriction is that you must make an argumentative claim of some sort. You can use any of the argumentative appeals (ethos, logos, and appropriate pathos) and can try out any of the topical approaches (comparison, definition, evaluation, etc.). Some possible topics include, but are by no means limited to: school violence, the 2016 Olympic bid, student “striking” on the first day of class, gentrification of neighborhoods. Browse the local newspaper or watch / listen to a local news broadcast if you’re a bit fuzzy on local politics. (If you’re not from Chicago, you can focus on the politics of your local community.)

You should also have a specific intended audience appropriate for the topic. For example, if you’re taking on student strikes, you could address your argument to the students themselves; the Chicago School Board; Rev. James Meeks, the strike organizer; parents; teachers; etc. Be sure to appeal to ideological or political assumptions that the audience has. If you don’t address the audience by name in your paper, you can tell me who they are in a footnote.

Papers should be about 1250 to 1400 words (5 pages in Times New Roman 12 point) and have a bibliography in MLA, APA, Turabian, or other acceptable academic citation style.

## UCWR Paper #3

For your third paper, you will engage in the ancient practice of **controversia**, arguing on both sides of the same topic. This is not designed to make you a wishy-washy waffler. This is designed to get you thinking like your opposition in order to: 1) have an adequate and well informed idea of the opposition’s argument, rather than a mischaracterization of it, and 2) provide some grounds for **conditions of rebuttal**, or addressing an opposing argument in a preemptive fashion. In the third paper, you will argue the **opposite position** on the same subject matter and to the same audience as your second paper. Papers should be 4-5 pages long (12 point Times New Roman font), and must have three outside sources, two of which must be from juried academic sources (more on this concept later on this week). You must also use at least one **trope** and one **sentence scheme** from our discussion of style.

## UCWR Paper #4

Your fourth paper is open as far as specific subject matter goes, but you must write from within your major's discourse community. This means you'll have to argue in a manner similar to a scholar in your field. You will have to use the technical jargon of the community and the journals and books used by that discipline. Here are the only requirements:

1. The paper must be at least 7 pages long, double-spaced in Times New Roman 12 point font.
2. You should have a challenging, narrowed, and grounded topic that addresses a contemporary argument in one specific academic discipline (see p. 530 – 533 of the text for this idea if you're not familiar with it).
3. You should have at least 3 sources from juried or peer-reviewed academic sources ONLY. If you're unsure if your sources meet this criterion, see me or a reference librarian at the library or I.C. Be sure to cite in APA, MLA, Turabian, or other acceptable academic style, and include a bibliography or list of works cited.
4. You must use at least one trope and one scheme in the paper from the style lecture.
5. You must not use any colloquial or slang language (only the plain or technical style; no low style).

## UCWR Final Project

For the final writing assignment this semester, we will work on a collaborative, multi-media, interdisciplinary project. The class will break up into teams based on your majors. You *will not* work with people from your own discipline. You *will* work with people from outside your normal discourse community on the same topic; to the same audience; and present a written, visual, and verbal argument. We will break into groups and discuss topic ideas today. I would like you to address a significant social or political issue on the local, national, or global level from an academic perspective; bring your classroom knowledge and experience to bear on the world outside. Here are the guidelines:

1. General –
  - a. All members must participate in the generation of ideas, drafting of each element (written, visual, and verbal), editing, proofing, and final presentation of materials. Therefore, one participation log should be kept that tracks the contributions of each member of the group. We'll work on this today as well.
  - b. All members will be graded as a group. Therefore, you should be concerned with the process, as represented by the work log, as well as the product.

- c. Each group must meet with me to discuss the project before you turn it in (see below).
2. Written Argument – This will be an interdisciplinary academic paper using *only* juried academic sources that is at least 12 pages long (Times New Roman 12 point font). I will not mandate a minimum number of sources, but you should have enough to support your argument. (Get more sources than you think you will need and use the reference desk services for research help. You can also ask me for help during office hours or via email.) The paper should be a unified whole that represents a variety of disciplinary views on a single subject. It should be written for a general academic audience, so explain any discipline-specific terminology. Fitting all of the parts together will take some work, so we will use some of the writing workshops at the end of the semester to iron out the wrinkled bits.
  3. Visual Argument – This element of the assignment should translate the ideas you have worked on in the collaborative paper into a visually-based argument (sound can be included too) that is targeted at a general, non-academic audience. You can make a website, an augmented podcast that includes visuals, a Power Point presentation, a series of argumentative posters (similar to the propaganda posters we analyzed at the beginning of the semester during our discussion of pathos), or even a series of t-shirts. The only limitation is that it must include a complete argument (a claim and support for it). The enthymeme approach which leaves out a premise acceptable by your audience will be very helpful here.
  4. Verbal Argument – This will be a five to seven minute presentation to the class on our last meeting day. You should give a summary of the written argument, and explain the relationship between your academic analysis of the topic and your presentation of those ideas in visual form to a general, non-academic audience. You may nominate one speaker for the group, have contributions from all members, or a strategy that falls somewhere in between.

Each discipline will have some unique way of looking at the subject at hand, and may approach the question from perspective that you are not used to. If you have no idea what one of your teammates is talking about, ask her or him to explain. This process can be very helpful when you translate academic ideas into a visual argument that is easily digestible by a non-academic audience.

Take advantage of the resources at the library and I.C. that are available to you. The reference librarians are very helpful, knowledgeable, and courteous. Don't think you're "bothering" them by asking a complex question via text, e-mail, chat, or in person. We also have a multi-media lab in the I.C., which can be helpful in generating the visual argument for a general audience.

We will work on this project during the "writing workshops" classes listed on the syllabus. During these class meetings, you should also ask about any comments on papers that you have questions about or anything else that you would like to wrap up before the semester ends. On November 30<sup>th</sup> and December 2<sup>nd</sup>, we will not meet as a class; rather, each group will meet with me to discuss the final project before you turn it in.

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## VITA

Donovan S. Braud was born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana, where he attended Loyola University New Orleans, graduating *magna cum laude* in 1997 with a Bachelor of Arts in English, and a minor in Classical Languages and Civilizations. After taking a year off, he continued his education at Loyola University Chicago. While completing his PhD, he has taught at Malcolm X College, Oakton Community College and Loyola University Chicago as an adjunct instructor.

In addition to classical rhetoric and contemporary theories of ideology, Donovan is interested in postcolonial literature and theory, particularly in South Asian contexts. He has presented on rhetoric and composition, the use of classical mythology by contemporary postcolonial authors, and contemporary applications of ideological analysis to queer performance spaces.

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The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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