

Engl 350: Second Exam (Thurs., 20 April)

Part 1 (1/3): Explain the argument. I'll give you a series of identified quotes from the readings for this unit; it will be your job to explain what the author is saying. This part will be closed book, although open one sheet of notes. A good answer explains the theory:

- accurately (most important)
- briefly (no irrelevant stuff that you hope has the right answer in it)
- in your own words
- together with an example from your ordinary experience, not discussed in class.

For example:

"Even if any given terminology is a *reflection* of reality, by its very nature as a terminology it must be a *selection* of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a *deflection* of reality"—Kenneth Burke.

"But if all men make each other in symbolic interchange, then by implication they *should* make each other, and it is an inescapable value in their lives that it is good to do it well—whatever that will mean—and bad to do it badly."—Wayne Booth.

"[A word] is precisely *the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee*. Each and every word expresses the 'one' in relation to the 'other.'"—Mikhail Bakhtin.

Part 2 (2/3s): Essay questions. There will be three questions; you'll select two to answer. State your views, positioning yourself among at least three other participants in the rhetorical tradition. (They should be mostly, although not necessarily exclusively, from the post-Spring Break readings.) This part will be open book. A good answer:

- demonstrates accurate familiarity with the breadth of the tradition
- and your ability to draw from it to defend your position with good arguments

1. Danish newspapers defend their cartoons by talking of free speech. Some Moslems march in London, protesting the insult to their prophet, carry signs reading "to hell with free speech."

A preacher stands in front of the Library, wearing a t-shirt that says "the truth sounds like hate to those who hate the truth," and carrying a sign identifying gays, Mormons, unsubmitive wives and others as "sinners." A student is quoted in the *Daily* as saying that he's surprised the University allows such anti-diversity speech.

These are examples of a widespread contemporary phenomenon: the lack of meaningful talk among people with "incommensurable" views. What, if anything, does rhetorical theory offer to solve this kind of problem (if it is a problem)?

2. In April, 2106, students will be taking this class and reading a Big Black Book with women equally represented in it (including me, I hope!). How, if at all, will the integration of women have changed rhetorical theory?
3. To what extent does it make sense to talk about the "rhetoric" of a blog or a building (pick one)? What (if anything) about the art that in classical times centered on civic oratory can be related to this contemporary "medium"?
4. Perhaps it's too simplistic to say that rhetoric persuades (or perhaps not), but it's still plausible that rhetoric aims to be effective—aims to change the world in some way. How do mere words—ephemeral sound waves, black marks on a white surface, pixels—make change happen?
5. Is there a fundamental break between classical rhetorical theory and contemporary rhetorical theory?
6. Some people believe that science can solve the problems we face. Is this true? If not, why not, and what specifically does rhetoric contribute to answering these questions and problems?
7. It's been said that "man is a rhetorical animal"—that is, that we only become fully human in dialogue with others. Is this true?
8. To what extent are you personally obligated to engage in a dialogue within the rhetorical tradition? (Note that *The Rhetorical Tradition* is the official title of the BBB.)

Second gateway paper: the door out of this course (Due Thurs, 20 April)

Write a personal reflective paper articulating your response to one of the following. See the first gateway paper assignment (still online) for details of how to approach it.

1. Define "rhetoric," its nature, function and scope. Over break, your aunt asks you what this "rhetoric" stuff you're studying possibly could be. What do you say?
2. Define "the rhetor (orator)," his/her nature, function and scope. Several of you are looking forward to a professional career as the modern-day equivalent of a rhetor/orator. What skills, knowledges, arts, ethics.... will it be your responsibility to cultivate? Who are you going to be?
3. Define "the rhetor (orator)," his/her nature, function and scope. The modern-day equivalents of rhetors/orators still play prominent roles in our society. What skills, knowledges, arts, ethics... is it their responsibility to cultivate? Who are they?