

"You enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending on the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress."

---Kenneth Burke, *Philosophy of Literary Form*, 110-11 (1941)

About the exams

1. ID Section (50%): "Identify the author and approximate date (within a century) for NINE of the following ten passages. Draw a line through the passage you're skipping. If you answer all nine, only the first eight will be graded."

A good answer:

-is accurate.

Example: "Sacred incantations, sung with words are bearers of pleasure and banishers of pain, for, merging with opinion in the soul, the power of the incantation is wont to beguile it and persuade it and alter it by witchcraft. There have been discovered two arts of witchcraft and magic: one consists of errors of soul and the other of deceptions of opinions. All who have and do persuade people of things do so by molding a false argument."

2. Essay Section (50%): "Answer TWO of the following three essay questions (on your own paper). If you answer all three, only the first two will be graded."

A good answer:

-takes a strong position

-develops it clearly

-using strong arguments drawn from authorities (suggestion: 2-3)

-and responds to a significant objection against it (also drawing from authorities).

Examples:

"1. The rhetorical tradition includes a variety of ideas about the role of the *speaker* in persuasion. What's your view?--state and defend it."

"2. Is classical rhetorical theory—the texts from ancient Greece and Rome—out of date? State and defend your view."