

21W.747 Sec 1

Classical Rhetoric and Modern Political Issues

Class Introduction

Class 1

Les Perelman, Ph. D.

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Agenda

- Enrollment
- Description of the Class
- What is Rhetoric, anyway?
- Short Biography of Instructor
- Introduction to Classical Rhetoric
- Enrollment

Enrollment

- 18 student maximum
- Call “official roll”
- Students not on roll will enter lottery
- Lottery students may be added at start of class on Monday

Class Content

- Classical Rhetoric
- Modern Politics

- **Background of classical rhetoric**

Structure

- Background of Classical Rhetoric
- Great Practitioners
- Current Issues

Read the Heavyweights

- Aristotle
- Plato
- Marcus Tullius Cicero

Analyze

- Advertisements
- Political Speeches
- Debates

Analyze Rhetoric

Health Care

Health Care

Health Care

Learn Rhetorical Techniques

- The Topics
- Figures of Thought
- Figures of Style

Differentiate Between “Good & “Bad” Rhetoric

Learn to Recognize Bullshit

Learn the Dangers of Bullshit

The Assignments

- Two Postings
 - First one due this Sunday at 5 pm
- Three minute oral presentation
- One group rhetorical analysis papers
- Two individual papers
- One persuasive oral presentation
- Team Debate on topics selected by class & instructor

Defining Rhetoric

- **Plato:** Rhetoric is "the art of winning the soul by discourse."
- **Aristotle:** Rhetoric is "the faculty of discovering in any particular case all of the available means of persuasion."
- **Cicero:** Rhetoric is "speech designed to persuade."
- **Quintillian:** "Rhetoric is the art of speaking well."
- **Francis Bacon:** Rhetoric is the application of reason to imagination "for the better moving of the will."
- **George Campbell:** "[Rhetoric] is that art or talent by which discourse is adapted to its end. The four ends of discourse are to enlighten the understanding, please the imagination, move the passion, and influence the will."

Defining Rhetoric

- **John Locke:** [Rhetoric,] that powerful instrument of error and deceit.
- **Sappho:** Persuasion is Aphrodite's daughter: it is she who beguiles our mortal hearts

Rhetoric is both

- Seduction
- Consensus building

Who is Les Perelman?

Born in West Hollywood

UC Berkeley '70

Ph.D. in Medieval Studies

- Beowulf
 - Not the Movie

Post Doc In Rhetoric & Linguistics at USC

Taught at Tulane in New Orleans

Have Been At MIT For 23 Years

Current Research is on Trashing the SAT Writing Test

Now Back to Enrollment

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

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