

Southeastern University
Steelman Library
Department of Classical Studies
COMM 2243 American Rhetorical Tradition
Official Syllabus

Catalog Description

This course teaches the art of rhetoric as derived from the classical world, but exposes students to this liberal art through the robust American tradition of oratory. Students will learn this art by being instructed in rhetorical theory, by imitating the best writings and speeches America has to offer, and by regularly producing original compositions (repeating the classical pedagogical cycle of theory, imitation, and practice). Moreover, throughout the course, students will take several passes through the five rhetorical canons: Invention, Arrangement, Style, Memory, and Delivery. The course begins by providing an introduction to each canon and then proceeds by moving through the elements of each again and again, digging deeper into each canon at each pass.

Prerequisite: None

Credit Hours: 3

Repeatable: Course not repeatable

Intended Learning Outcomes (4-7 required)

Students who successfully complete this course will:

1. Analyze and evaluate rhetorical texts from the American tradition, identifying the use of the five canons, rhetorical appeals, and structural elements of discourse.
2. Apply principles of classical rhetoric (invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery) to develop persuasive written and oral communication.
3. Construct well-organized and persuasive arguments using appropriate rhetorical strategies, including ethos, pathos, logos, and common topics.
4. Demonstrate effective public speaking skills, integrating voice, delivery, and memorization techniques to enhance message impact.
5. Compose original rhetorical works that reflect clarity, stylistic sophistication, and awareness of audience and purpose.
6. Critically assess arguments and identify logical structures and fallacies, including syllogisms and enthymemes.

Version History

04/05/2024 v1.0 Original course proposal.