

Rhetoric

Website: Rhetoric (<https://new.sewanee.edu/programs-of-study/rhetoric/>)

Rhetoric courses introduce students to the art of discourse and the application to many different disciplines of speech that informs, motivates, or persuades.

Faculty

Professor: O'Rourke (Chair)

Associate Professor: Lehn

Minor

Requirements for the Minor in Rhetoric

The minor requires successful completion of the following:

Code	Title	Semester Hours
Course Requirements		
RHET 101	Public Speaking	4
RHET 201	Introduction to Rhetoric	4
Select two courses in Rhetoric at the 300-level or above		8
Select one additional course in Rhetoric		4
Total Semester Hours		20

Courses

Rhetoric Courses

RHET 101 Public Speaking (4)

Study of the principles, precepts, and strategies of informative, persuasive, and ceremonial speaking. Emphasis is placed on assessing the rhetorical situation and researching, composing, practicing, and delivering a speech. Ethical, political, and social questions raised by speaking in public are considered. Students deliver speeches, practice effective listening, and serve as speech critics and interlocutors.

RHET 110 Argumentation and Debate (4)

Study of the precepts, theories, strategies, and ethics of argument. Students critically analyze arguments found in speeches, public debates, and controversies, newspaper articles and editorials, television news programs, and scholarly texts. Students write argumentative essays, present argumentative speeches, and engage in class debate.

RHET 201 Introduction to Rhetoric (4)

Topical survey of the major questions and controversies in rhetorical theory, criticism, and practice, including rhetorical situations, classical canons of rhetoric, the role of rhetoric in civic life, and the relationship of rhetoric to power, politics, law, education, and ethics. Students consider the rights and responsibilities of speakers and critics. Accordingly, readings include selections from a wide array of rhetorical theorists and critics as well as a diverse and open canon of orators and speakers.

RHET 220 Teaching Speaking and Listening (2)

In this survey of the expectations for successful speaking across several disciplines, students will explore the techniques, strategies, and precepts peer and professional tutors may employ to help student speakers and listeners attain their goals. Participants will examine samples of student speaking and listening, discuss possible responses, and develop model interactions between and among tutors and students. *Prerequisite: Only open to Speaking and Listening tutors.*

RHET 311 U.S. Public Address I: 1620-1865 (4)

History and criticism of American speeches and rhetorical texts. The course examines a broad range of historical and rhetorical factors that influenced the creation and reception of speeches from the colonial period through the end of the Civil War, focusing not only on the political, religious, legal, and social exigencies to which speeches responded but also on the place of those rhetorical texts in U.S. public controversies.

RHET 312 U.S. Public Address II: 1865-Present (4)

History and criticism of American speeches and rhetorical texts. The course examines a broad range of historical and rhetorical factors that influenced the creation and reception of speeches from the Civil War to the present, focusing not only on the political, religious, legal, and social exigencies to which speeches responded but also on the place of those rhetorical texts in U.S. public controversies.

RHET 321 Rhetoric in the Ancient World (4)

History of rhetorical theory and practice from Homer to Augustine. Primary focus on the relationship of rhetoric to politics, law, religion, philosophy, liberal education and culture in ancient Greece and Rome, along with an examination of the influence of ancient rhetoric on medieval rhetoric. Readings include selections from the Iliad, the sophists, Isocrates, Plato, Aristotle, Philodemus, Cicero, Quintilian, Tacitus, Augustine, and others. Texts are read in English translation.

RHET 331 Voices of American Women (4)

An examination of the history and criticism of American women's oratory and the history of women's public discourse in the United States from the colonial period through the present. Considers the historical, social, and cultural significance of women's rhetorical participation in civic life, as well as issues of authority, reception, and the nature of argument both within and about women's public address.

RHET 341 Rhetoric of Mass and Social Media (4)

This course surveys the key topics, questions, issues, and controversies surrounding the rhetoric of mass and social media. Students explore not only how this rhetoric helps us inform, persuade, and move others to action, but also how—and whether—they are informed, persuaded, and moved to act themselves. Topics surveyed may include rhetorical framing, message bias, propaganda, the rhetorical propagation and circulation of misinformation, freedom of expression, protest, and visual rhetoric.

RHET 351 Intercultural and Cross-Cultural Communication (4)

Intercultural Communication focuses on the importance of culture in our everyday lives, and the ways in which culture relates to and influences communication processes. With the goal of increasing students' Intercultural Communication Competence, this interdisciplinary course examines several topics including: identity, perception, culture shock, cultural adaptation, linguistic differences, nonverbal communication, among others. Through a practical application of theory and research, students will explore intercultural communication in a global context relating to the family, education, media, and business.

RHET 401 Speakers' Rights and Responsibilities (4)

Interrogation of the legal, constitutional, and ethical questions raised by the practice of speaking and listening. Primary focus on the sources of ethical standards, methods of ethical criticism, and perspectives on the ethics of persuasion, as well as the communication rights and duties of citizens in a constitutional democracy.

RHET 411 Rhetoric in the Age of Protest I: 1948-1973 (4)

Study of the discursive and non-discursive aspects of protest in the period 1948-1973. Focus on the forms and functions of rhetorics and counter-rhetorics in U.S. controversies over communism, civil rights, free speech, war, students' rights, women's rights, farm workers' rights, Native American rights, gay rights, the environment, and poverty. *Prerequisite: One course in rhetoric.*

RHET 412 Rhetoric in the Age of Protest II: 1974-2024 (4)

A study of the discursive and non-discursive aspects of protest from 1974-2024. Focus on the forms and functions of rhetorics and counter-rhetorics in U.S. controversies over civil rights, women's rights, LGBTQIA+ rights, the environment, anti-war protests, and disability rights, among other social movements. *Prerequisite: One course in rhetoric. Prerequisite: One course in rhetoric.*

RHET 431 Public Dialogue and Deliberation (4)

Investigation of theories and practices of public dialogue and deliberation as distinct forms of public discourse to promote mutual understanding and democratic action. Topics surveyed may include forms of constructive dialogue and democratic deliberation, expertise, representation, agency, voice, equity, issue framing, facilitation, and analysis of public values and adversarial perspectives. Students gain practical experience in forum design and facilitation by implementing a deliberative dialogue in the community.

RHET 440 Directed Research and Writing (2 or 4)

Directed research and writing in collaboration with and/or under the direction of a member of the rhetoric faculty. To meet the needs and particular interests of selected students who are prepared to conduct archival, oral history, digital humanities, and/or other types of research in rhetoric. *Prerequisite: Instructor prerequisite override required.*

RHET 444 Independent Study (2 or 4)

Independent study in consultation with and under the direction of a member of the rhetoric faculty. To meet the needs and particular interests of selected students who propose an acceptable course of study. *Prerequisite: Instructor prerequisite override required.*

RHET 491 Topics (4)

Concentrated study in a single area, topic, controversy, movement, or figure in rhetoric. This course may be repeated for credit when the topic differs. Prerequisites will vary by topic.