

St Jerome's University
ENGL 309A: Classical to Enlightenment Rhetoric
Notionally Mondays 6:30–9:20pm Fall 2020
Lectures Available on LEARN for Asynchronous Learning

Contact Info:

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Course description (from the calendar):

A study of rhetorical theories and practices from late antiquity and the medieval, Renaissance, and Enlightenment periods, with an emphasis on how those theories and practices reflect changing attitudes towards language, society, and the self.

Course overview and objectives:

This course offers an introduction to rhetorical theory in the premodern period, primarily through Augustine's sophisticated theory of language and the inner word. It also traces changes in the understanding of what language is and how it works as part of the passage to modernity. Reference is made to contemporary philosophical hermeneutics as well, in a bid to show the enduring relevance of ancient wisdom and now unfashionable ways of thinking about the very nature of reality.

Required texts:

Augustine, *On the Trinity*, trans. Stephen McKenna (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002).
Josef Pieper, *The Silence of St Thomas* (South Bend: St Augustine's Press, 1999).

Course requirements:

Various dates:	Journals and discussions (2x5% + 10%)	(20%)
2 Nov*:	"In-class" mid-term	(25%)
7 Dec:	Second "in-class" test	(20%)
7 Dec:	Essay Outline*	(5%–10%)
14 Dec:	Essay	(25%–Outline%**)
	CERB	10%

*All deadline dates/times should be read as 11:59pm.

**See notes below.

Email correspondence:

By all means feel free to contact me regarding any aspect of the course.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

For the purposes of what follows, “readings” refers to the sorts of things you would ordinarily be asked to read or look at beforehand for a class. What I prepare in this “remote learning” scenario I will call lectures. It is my intention to post my lectures by 6:30 pm on Monday evenings, ie the time when we would be gathering for class in normal circumstances. For the first week, the assigned readings are especially short.

These lectures will generally probably be shorter than the typical time spent together in class. I am told that there is no 1:1 correlation between video lecture time and in-person lecture time and I believe it. Let’s make a virtue of necessity. It was always the case that the lecture was merely meant to supplement the reading that students were doing on their own. In Oxford, undergraduates aren’t even expected to go to lectures. A professor/reader/lecturer might offer a “lecture course” for a given term, consisting typically of eight one-hour lectures on a given topic. Students go if they’re interested in the person or the topic. Otherwise, they read and write and meet with their tutor individually or in small groups on a weekly basis. Often they read their essays aloud and receive minimal feedback, then go back to their own reading, reflection, and writing.

We won’t quite imitate that practice, but we’ll do something similar in spirit. The necessity of our time gives you the perfect opportunity really to focus on what it means to encounter texts for yourself. This may feel very solitary, but you’re never alone. You’re reading. You’re having one-on-one encounters with some great minds. I’m probably naïve in this, but I think ours could be a circumstance when students recover not only a vision for but the experience of quiet and sustained reflection.

IMHO, this is not the time for ramping up the technical interface. Ironically (given the hype around technological exigencies and possibilities), this is an opportunity for allowing the apparatuses of modern life to fall away and to give priority to the beautiful art of thoughtful conversation with people who may be anywhere in space and time. Having said that, I hasten to add that some time is also built in for the casual exchange of ideas (discussion groups, totally optional office hours). My task, as your professor, has always been to listen in and to suggest for you lines of inquiry. I see my role in these circumstances as becoming one that is less obtrusive. The signposting, though, is still important. Pay even more attention to what is said (or written) in the lectures, always taking it back to that precious interaction between you and the readings.

Week One (14 September): Introduction: Language and Ontology

Readings:

Richard Kearney, from *On Stories*, 12–13 (LEARN)
Hans Boersma, from *Heavenly Participation*, 21–24 (LEARN)
Rowan Williams, from *Grace and Necessity*, 28–31 (LEARN)

Week Two (21 September): The Classical Heritage 1

Readings:

Louis Dupré, *Passage to Modernity*, “Introduction,” 1–5 (right to the bottom) (LEARN)
Malcolm Guite, “Owen Barfield: Knowledge, Poetry, and Consciousness”
(Lecture at the Temenos Academy, esp. 20:00–40:00) (LEARN)

Augustine, *On the Trinity*, Bks 8–9

Week Three (28 September): The Classical Heritage 2

Readings:

Gregory Rocca, “Analogy in Aristotle,” 77–89, esp. 81–84 (LEARN)

Augustine, Bks 10–11

Week Four (5 October): The Classical Heritage 3

Readings:

H-G Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 405–18, esp. 405–7, 412–13, 416–18 (LEARN)

Augustine, Bks 12–13

Week Five (19 October): The Inner Word 1

Readings:

Jens Zimmermann, *Recovering Theological Hermeneutics*, 169–73 (LEARN)

Augustine, Bks 14–15 (esp. 15.10.19–15.11.20)

Week Six (26 October): The Inner Word 2

Readings:

Zimmermann, 173–75 (LEARN)

Dante, Chaucer, Herbert (LEARN)

Week Seven: (2 November)

“Take-home” Mid-term

Week Eight (9 November): Being and Creativity

Readings:

Pieper, 28–41; 45–56

Week Nine (16 November): Passage to Modernity 1

Readings:

Dupré, 42–50

Week Ten (23 November): Passage to Modernity 2

Readings:

Dupré, 65–70; 74–79 (LEARN)

Week Eleven (30 November): Inexhaustible Light and the End of “Pure” Philosophy

Readings:

Pieper, 94–99; 99–107

Week Twelve (7 December)

“In-class” Test

The Journal Entries and Discussion Groups:

I have organized you into groups of four (or three). Submit journal entries *before you discuss the reading* in question with one another; discuss the reading online by posting three comments each *before I post my own short reflection* (which I will do no earlier than 6:30 pm the following Monday).

For the journal entries, respond to *two* of the readings from Augustine by analyzing some aspect of his rhetorical strategy. Try not to get caught up in thinking about whether he “proves” his point. Rather, try to experience how he *inhabits* his argument and invites you to do the same. Apply the same strategy in your contributions to each of the 4 weekly discussions of Augustine (worth 10% taken together). Take turns getting the discussion started. Perhaps someone might post part of their journal entry.

Keep the journal entries *short* (no longer than 300 wds) and the discussion posts even shorter. Have fun with them. Journal entries will be marked on a modified pass/fail basis (i.e. A/B/NMR). I'll record your best two (5% each). *N.B. You only need to write two journal entries, but can do more if you want.*

The Mid-term:

The mid-term will test your understanding of the material covered to date. If we were meeting in person, I would be devoting an evening to this exercise, allowing you to bring in a sheet of notes and quotations and asking for an in-class essay. This term, you can write that “in-class” essay at your leisure; we’ll still count it as our meeting for the week. We’ll do the same again for the second test.

The Second Test:

The second test will focus on the second half of the course, though it may include questions (e.g. comparison/contrast) that draw on your familiarity with material covered earlier.

The Essay Outline:

By the night of the last class, submit an essay outline that includes a clear thesis statement and sub-thesis statements that address each of the three aspects of the essay introduced below. If the outline is sufficiently detailed, and it is to your advantage, I will give the outline a mark out of ten. Otherwise, I will give it a mark out of five. I will return your proposed outline asap (by Wednesday, barring extenuating circumstances).

The Essay (2000–2500 wds):

Write an essay on the literary work or cultural artefact of your choice from any time in the period covered in the course, deploying select critical vocabulary from the readings. One question you will want to ask yourself is: does this work suggest that its author subscribes to the ontotheological synthesis or not? Emphasis should be on the application of the terminology and habits of thought to engage in critical analysis of the work *rather than a critique of the theory itself*. Marks will be given for consistency and depth of engagement, for the level of believability or demonstrated commitment to the approach taken (limited to the confines of the essay itself, of course), as well as clarity and strength of thesis and, within the parameters of the theory, argumentation.

Cite your sources in appropriate format. I much prefer Chicago, but MLA is acceptable.

Paper submission and late policy:

Papers should be submitted to LEARN in the appropriate dropbox. Late papers are subject to a 2% per day penalty and will not necessarily receive comments. Papers will be returned electronically.

UW Policy Regarding Illness and Missed Tests:

The University of Waterloo Examination Regulations (www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/exams/ExamRegs.pdf) state that:

- A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the “University of Waterloo Verification of Illness” form or it will not be accepted. This form can be obtained from Health Services or at www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health_Services/verification.html.
- If a student has a test/examination deferred due to acceptable medical evidence, he/she normally will write the test/examination at a mutually convenient time, to be determined by the course instructor.
- The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the University community, some students may on religious grounds require alternative times to write tests and examinations.

- Elective arrangements (such as travel plans) are not considered acceptable grounds for granting an alternative examination time.

Official statements on other relevant University of Waterloo policies:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.]

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. [Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload_file/PLCY_AOM_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances_20151211-SJUSCapproved.pdf](http://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload_file/PLCY_AOM_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances_20151211-SJUSCapproved.pdf). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Discipline_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf](http://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Discipline_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties, check the Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances](http://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload_file/PLCY_AOM_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances_20151211-SJUSCapproved.pdf) (other than a petition) or the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline](http://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload_file/PLCY_AOM_Student-Discipline_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Appeals_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf](http://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload_file/PLCY_AOM_Student-Appeals_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf).

Note for students with disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/), located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term, www.uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/.