

Rhetorical Analysis Spring 2010

In 1000-1500 words, construct an argument evaluating how well a chosen cultural text uses rhetoric to inform or persuade its intended audience. This analysis will stand in place of a formal final exam.

First, research the classical rhetorical terms you select by lottery. Consider the terms' definitions, histories, and practical usages in contemporary writing or composition theory. In the end, you may drop one or more terms for your paper: your goal there will be simply to argue that some contemporary text depends on one or more rhetorical devices that you have researched. In that paper, you should devote a section to simply presenting the background research, taking care to cite authoritative sources.

While the rhetorical terms are chosen for you by lottery, you will choose the contemporary cultural text your paper discusses. You may choose a film, television program, song/album, website, advertisement, brand item, event, celebrity or other public figure, etc: anything with both verbal and nonverbal elements that allow you to consider rhetoric in linguistic and non-linguistic ways. Though you may make other rhetorical claims about your cultural text, you should primarily analyze its rhetorical strategies relevant to your researched term(s).

1. **antanaclasis** (a word is used in at least two different senses) and/or **antihimera** (one part of speech is used as another)
2. **anadiplosis** (the same word ends one phrase, clause, or sentence and begins the next), **anaphora** (the same word repeats at the beginning of several successive phrases, clauses or sentences), and/or **antistrophe** (the same or similar words repeat in successive phrases or clauses)
3. **epaniphora** (one word used in different senses repeats after successive colons), **epiphora** (a word repeats at the end of successive clauses), and/or **symploke** (epanaphora and epiphora combined)
4. **antimetabole**, or **chiasmus** (expressing contrasting ideas in juxtaposed structures), and/or **dialectic** (a heuristic that proceeds by question and answer)
5. **antonomasia** (a descriptive phrase substitutes for someone's name) and/or **apostrophe** (addressing some absent person)
6. **ethopoeia** (describing a kind of person with a set of traits) and/or **prosopopoeia** (depicting the character of a fictional person)
7. **asyndeton** (eliminating normal connectors between words) and/or **polysyndeton** (inserting all possible connectors between words, phrases, or sentences)
8. **eidolopoeia** (depicting the character of a spirit or an image) and/or **enargeia** (creating a vivid scene)
9. **catachresis** (intentionally substituting a like or inexact word in place of the correct one) and/or **circumlocution** (avoiding naming an unsavory issue or term)
10. **encomium** (praising someone or something), **imitation** (copying and elaborating on the work of revered or admired authors), and/or **hypophora** (asking what can be said in favor of opponents)
11. **enthymeme** (a proof that places probable premises together to establish a probable conclusion), **ethos** (character or reputation), and/or **sylogism** (a deductive logical argument)
12. **hesitation**, or **indecision**, or **debatio** (pretending to be unable to decide what to say or write) and/or **paralepsis** (refusing to mention something, all the while doing so)
13. **homoteleuton** (words with similar endings repeat), **synonymy** (similar words repeat), and/or **zeugma** (the same word repeats in different senses but in grammatically similar constructions)
14. **hyperbaton** (transposing a term to somewhere other than its usual place), **paratactic style** (a string of loose sentences), and/or **periphrasis** (substituting other words for the term under discussion)
15. **hyperbole** (exaggeration) and/or **litotes** (understatement)
16. **irony** (an audience understands the opposite of what is being expressed) and/or **paranomasia** (a funny juxtaposition of words or phrases that sound alike but have different meanings, like a pun)
17. **metonymy** (naming something by words frequently associated with it) and/or **synecdoche** (referring to a part of the whole as through it were the whole)

All terms and definitions taken from Sharon Crowley's and Debra Hawhee's *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students* (2nd ed, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999).