

HISTORY

Instructions: You have eighty minutes to write on *one* (1) of the following questions

1. Aristotle identifies three persuasive appeals: ethos, pathos and logos. For Aristotle, logos is primarily about the *enthymeme*, or rhetorical syllogism, which he calls the “body” of persuasion. On the other hand, Plato’s preferred method for getting to the facts about a matter is dialectic, which Socrates describes as 1) the “perceiving and bringing together in one idea the scattered particulars,” and 2) “dividing things again by classes, where the natural joints are.” Dialogs such as the *Gorgias* and the *Phaedrus* are good demonstrations of Plato’s dialectical process. Aristotle criticizes the writers of other handbooks for not discussing enthymemes and for emphasizing emotions that move the jury but do not relate to the facts, likening this to warping the jury, and saying it is like making the straightedge crooked before using it. Yet elsewhere he defines rhetoric as the art of discovering “the available means of persuasion,” and he provides long sections on the use of *ethos* and *pathos*. Taking these differences and contradictions into account, compare the views of Aristotle and Plato on the role of truth, character and the emotions in rhetorical practice and in the legitimacy of rhetoric as an art.

OR

2. Roman rhetoricians divided rhetoric into five canons: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. Over the centuries, different strategies were developed under each canon, and the relative importance of each canon shifted. Discuss the functions of the five canons of rhetoric in the Roman system, and how they developed and shifted over time up to the present day.

PEDAGOGY

Instructions: You have eighty minutes to write on *one* (1) of the following questions

3. Imagine that you are being interviewed for a job teaching freshman composition at a local community college. A senior member of the hiring committee notices that your transcript includes coursework in composition pedagogy and begins to ask you about your understanding of the term. “I recognize that pedagogy is often associated with some connection between theory and practice,” she says, “but I’d like to hear from you about how you see *theory* being a part of your practice as a composition instructor. I have some understanding of what theory in science is, and certainly what literary theory is. But I’m not so convinced that someone needs theory to teach a writing course. After all, isn’t composition about giving

students challenging reading assignments, well-framed writing tasks, and lots of good feedback?”

Explain how you would respond to this committee member’s questions, taking care to define “theory” in the context of composition studies and explaining your own understanding of how theory might inform your own choices as a writing teacher. For the purposes of the essay, develop your response with extended reference to *at least two* theoretical perspectives, showing how they would provide (singly or together) a foundation that underlies the practical decisions you would make in designing your freshman composition class.

OR

4. At the conclusion of his bibliographic essay on rhetorical pedagogy, William A. Covino surveys the state of composition instruction today and ends with a question:

As the century turns, we have returned from the current-traditional compression of rhetoric to an expansive sense of its scope and a more fully inclusive and international appreciation for the range of backgrounds, needs, and desires that inform the teaching of reading and writing. The question, now as always it seems, is whether a rich conception of rhetorical pedagogy can be sustained in academic and institutional contexts that continue to value formulaic models of writing and learning (in Tate et al, *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*, 36).

What does Covino mean by a “rich conception of rhetorical pedagogy?” Do you agree with the way he frames the major challenge facing compositionists, i.e. to sustain this rich conception despite pressures encouraging “formulaic models of writing and learning?” Explain, developing an essay that discusses these issues and elaborates your own idea of what a “rich conception” might be for your practice as a writing teacher.

20th CENTURY

Instructions: You have eighty minutes to write on *one* (1) of the following questions

5. Develop a course—statement of objectives, an example of one or two reading and writing assignments, some suggested class activities, a sense of the course’s thematic progression—in language arts or composition (or any subject in the humanities), based on the theories, methods, and ideals of two or more of our theorists. Explain what good your course does, why, and for whom, comparing and contrasting the course you’ve developed to others you’ve taught or taken or avoided.

OR

6. Rhetorically analyze the passage below, writing a detailed commentary on how the design of the document is also a design *on* readers (i.e., designed to affect them in certain ways). Before you make your analysis, take two paragraphs or so to explain the philosophy behind the two or three rhetorical theorists whose ways of reading you plan to use. As you analyze, be sure to name, clarify, and make explicit use of the ways of reading these theorists have given us. (One way to justify your rhetorical analysis is to suggest how it either “corrects” or adds to a non-rhetorical [i.e., naïve] reading: While a quick and conventional reading of the passage would assume X, a close and rhetorical analysis reveals S, V, and Z, as well as a “corrective” understanding of X.):

“Speech on Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Death”

Robert F. Kennedy (in Indianapolis, Indiana, on the evening of April 4, 1968, Kennedy broke the news of King’s death to a group of African Americans who had gathered for a campaign rally for Kennedy’s bid to get the Democratic nomination for president)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have some sad news for you, and I think sad news for all of our fellow citizens and people who love peace all over the world, and that is that Martin Luther King was shot and killed tonight.

Martin Luther King dedicated his life to love and justice between fellow human beings, he died in the cause of that effort.

In this difficult day, in this difficult time for the United States, it is perhaps well to ask what kind of a nation we are and what direction we want to move in. For those of you who are black—considering the evidence evidently is that there were white people who were responsible—you can be filled with bitterness, and with hatred, and a desire for revenge. We can move in that direction as a country, in greater polarization—black people amongst blacks, and white amongst whites, filled with hatred toward one another.

Or we can make an effort, as Martin Luther King did, to understand and to comprehend, and replace that violence, that stain of bloodshed that has spread across our land, with an effort to understand compassion and love. . . .

What we need in the United States is not division; what we need in the United States is not hatred; what we need in the United States is not violence and lawlessness; but with love and wisdom, and compassion toward one another, and a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer within our country, whether they be white or whether they be black.