In the western hemisphere, between the Renaissance and the 20th century, the rhetoric that fueled public persuasion gave way to composition courses taught (often reluctantly) in American colleges. This course inhabits this volatile landscape of wars, revolts, witch burnings, religious persecution, origins of disciplines, liberties, mechanical revolutions, empire building, rise of both mass education and modern universities, and so on. Perhaps as Dickens proclaimed somewhat late in the period, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.”

From our perspective, as scholars of Rhetoric and Composition in the twenty-first century, these times are particularly important because they lay the disciplinary foundations for our field. But, the history is not a single, simple, uncontested one. So, we take up the task of historicizing our field, and we begin with British authors’ decisions to write vernacular rhetorics in English, move through to the flowering of the Enlightenment, its great accomplishments of liberty, disciplines, mass education, personal freedoms, and so on.

We are particularly interested in some main historiographic themes appropriate for this period:

- discipline formation (literature, speech, and composition)
- attitudes of period scholars toward education
- origins of modern teaching practices
- nature and spread of universal literacy
- development of the twentieth century university (and decline of formal rhetoric)
- connections of rhetoric to liberty and later democracy (the public deployment of rhetoric)

We are also interested in what is excluded by these inclusions and focuses. So we seek themes we can reasonably assemble... and what they miss.

**Course Goals**

1. Build a critical vocabulary for historical work
   - review theories of history
   - question origin stories for modern rhetoric and composition

2. Increase your understanding of both the development of and the status of rhetoric and composition
   - survey primary texts from 1600-1900
   - examine those texts' treatment of rhetorical concepts (e.g., audience, purpose, style, delivery, language, truth, arrangement, invention, eloquence, genres, kairos, ethics)
   - review germane developments in politics, religion, education, logic, economics, the arts, etc.

3. Develop as a scholar
   - complete exercises in building scholarly practices (grids for ideas in the readings; reports on online historical resources; etc.)
   - complete a take home exam (with a scaffolded question and another question similar to those in the 24-hour prelim)
   - draft a scholarly paper

4. Consider how the study of history in rhetoric and composition has been used/is used/should be used to construct its identity.
Workload

20% Reading
20% Class Participation and Exercises
20% Exam [completed before 2/3s of semester done]
40% Own Project [proposal due before break; paper due by end of semester]

Texts to Purchase [available at Von’s Books]


Other Texts will be downloaded from online repositories.

Projected Topics (will change as I get a feel for the class’ interests)

January 15: course introduction; work with Walter Ong’s renaissance works;
Introduction to Early English Books Online; work with technology for doing history

January 22: Theorizing historical work/writing [de Certeau; White; Royster; Poster; Howell] & transition from Renaissance

January 29: Hiding from Religion? Or Building to Enlightenment:
Bacon, from Advancement of Learning
Hobbes, from Leviathan
Locke, from An Essay Concerning Human Understanding
Some readings about encyclopedias

February 5: Education Treatises
Locke, from Some thoughts Concerning Education (1693)
Sheridan, British Education (1756)
Priestley, An Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for a Civic and Active Life (1765)
Edgeworth, Practical Education (1798)

February 12: More Enlightenment
Hume, from An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding (1758)
Hume, Of Essay Writing; of Eloquence; On the Standard of Taste (1742)
Priestley, from Essays on Oratory and Criticism (1777)
Ward, from A System of Oratory (1759)

February 19: Scottish Enlightenment & Rhetoric
Smith, “Of the expence of institutions for the education of youth” (V.1.) from Wealth of Nations
Campbell, excerpts from Philosophy of Rhetoric in Golden and Corbett;
Smith, excerpts from Theory of Moral Sentiments
Smith, from Lectures on Rhetoric and Belle Lettres

February 26: More on Rhetoric particularly (continue Campbell and Smith)
Blair (in Golden and Corbett)

March 5: Colonial America (Are we really rewarmed Scots?)
revolutionary readings to come; Puritan Rhetoric
history of princeton essay by Smith;
Jefferson
Witherspoon

March 12: catch up [by now we will have fallen behind and will need to catch up]
Proposal for final paper due
March 19: No Class --- Spring Break

March 26: British Romantics (not utilitarians)
Coleridge, excerpts from Biographia Literaria
Wollstonecraft—Vindication of the Rights of Women
de Quincey—Letters to a Young Man whose education has been neglected

April 2: 19th c America before the Civil War
John Quincy Adams; Channing
Carr, Carr, & Schultz
Emerson, The American Scholar and other Essays

April 9: theorizing the rhetoric of 19th c America
Carr, Carr, & Schultz; Berlin; Clark and Halloran; Whately

April 16: Post Civil War America
Authors in Brereton
Frances Watkins Harper; Hallie Q. Brown; Anna Julia Cooper; Fannie Barrier Williams; Ida B. Wells

April 23: alternative composition in the late 19th and early 20th c; complete Brereton; Connors; Royster

April 30: presentations and course review

Detailed References

week 1

week 2
If you are interested in the dispute in History, consult:

week 3
Richard Yeo, “John Locke’s ‘New Method’ of Commonplacing: Managing Memory and Information” Eighteenth-Century, 2 (2004), 1-39. [sent to you or on the GoogleGroup]


Exercise 1: Using Early English Books Online [EEBO]

A database you can reach through the Purdue Library [http://www2.lib.purdue.edu:3328/home], EEBO “contains digital facsimile page images of virtually every work printed in England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and British North America and works in English printed elsewhere from 1473-1700 - from the first book printed in English by William Caxton, through the age of Spenser and Shakespeare and the tumult of the English Civil War.”

The purpose of this exercise is to familiarize you with the database and with some of the sources available for the study of rhetoric in England before the 18th century.

Each of us will select a title from the database that is about rhetoric and in English [we’ll do that together] and develop a short report on that title. That report should include:

- Location material: the complete title, author, publishing information, and pointer to the place in the database
- TOC: almost all of these books do not have tables of contents, so the main part of this exercise is to assemble that aid
- Response: a paragraph about the book. Connect it, if you can to Howell or to Ong [as purveyors of received wisdom about rhetoric]

Update on Reading:

Week 4: Education Treatises [excerpts announced next week]

John Locke, Some Thoughts Concerning Education, [1693]
Sheridan, British Education (1756)
Priestley, An Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for a Civic and Active Life (1765)
Wollstonecraft, Thoughts on the Education of Daughters (1787)
Edgeworth, Practical Education (1798)