

English 540 Spring 2009: Rhetoric in Nineteenth-Century US Culture

Meetings: Tuesdays 2-3:15 in HUM 226; Thursdays on line.

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## Course Objectives

### Practical

- Assemble a bibliography of primary materials for future use in research and teaching
- Practice conjoint reasoning orally in class and in writing on line
- Use a particular text and rhetor to measure generalized cultural phenomena
- Develop a research question, plan its pursuit, and begin its execution

### Conceptual

- Examine the cultural, philosophical, practical, technological, and social imperatives that shaped the “classical tradition” in the nineteenth century
- Study nineteenth-century theoretical principles (e.g., perspicuity, taste) and their dissemination via educational publications
- Study nineteenth-century topoi for rhetorical action (e.g., abolition, gender, race, temperance, voting rights, women’s rights) as sites of invention, agency, and conflict
- Track nineteenth-century speaking, writing, and teaching traditions via contemporary scholarship that challenges dominant narratives and expands the database

## Course Requirements

20 points: oral presentations on adopted rhetors and textbooks or conduct books.

20 points: take-home exam

20 points: research proposal (includes well-developed question & annotated bibliography)

20 points: writing project

20 points: collaborative assignment-making

Attendance: mandatory, including weekly online participation

## Books Required

Jacqueline Bacon, *The Humblest May Stand Forth: Rhetoric, Empowerment, and Abolition*. University of South Carolina Press, 2002.

Jessica Enoch, *Refiguring Rhetorical Education: Women Teaching African American, Native American, and Chicano/a Students, 1865-1911*. SIUP, 2008.

David Gold, *Rhetoric at the Margins: Revising the History of Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1873-1947*. SIUP, 2008.

Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *Man Cannot Speak for Her Vol. I*. Greenwood Press, 1989.

Nan Johnson, *Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life, 1866-1910*. SIUP, 2002.

Shirley Logan, *With Pen and Voice: A Critical Anthology of Nineteenth-Century African-American Women*. SIUP, 1995.

Jacqueline Jones Royster, *Traces of a Stream: Literacy and Social Change among African American Women*. Pittsburgh Press, 2000.

## Books Recommended

Nan Johnson, *Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric in North America*. SIUP, 1991.

## Reading Schedule

Note: We'll take up Johnson's work on the New Rhetoric legacy (*Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric in North America*) and Royster's work on literacy paradigms (*Traces of a Stream*) piece by piece across the semester. I'll be supplementing the schedule below with articles in PDF format.

### Week 1: Introduction

Legacy of Republican Motherhood and True Womanhood

Contemporary populist rhetoric by Palin, Clinton, Obama, and Obama

### Weeks 2 – 6: Antebellum topoi and podium rhetoric

Bacon; Logan; Kohrs Campbell; Johnson *Nineteenth-Century* selections; Royster, selections.

### Weeks 7 – 11: Post-war scenes of education and the oral-to-literacy shift

Johnson, *Gender and Rhetorical Space*; Enoch; Gold; Johnson *Nineteenth-Century* selections; Royster, selections.

## Production Schedule

Across the semester: Collectively assembling lists of key terms and topoi; textbooks and conduct books; rhetors. This assembly and its process will constitute material for the exam and for your oral presentations on your adopted rhetors and books.

Across the semester: collaboratively constructed writing assignments grounded in principles of nineteenth-century rhetorical theory.

Weeks 12 – 15: Research Proposals; Writing Projects; Exam; Oral Presentations