

SAMPLE SYLLABUS: RHETORIC I—PRINCIPLES OF PERSUASION

Although it is ubiquitous, rhetoric has not always been reputable. The sophists of the fifth century BC earned a bad name for rhetoric, and the Western world has been grappling with both its value and its dangers ever since.

The art—it is one of the three traditional language arts—has also been variously defined. Taking a cue from the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Zeno, we might picture rhetoric as an open hand, whereas dialectic (“logic”) may be portrayed as a closed fist. Plato, who compared rhetoric to the falsifying effects of makeup or cookery, in a more generous moment also called it the *art of soul-leading through language*. Aristotle’s definition is more technical: Rhetoric is “the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion” (1355b). Other thinkers have offered their own definitions:

Rhetoric is . . .

. . . that art or talent by which the discourse is adapted to its end.

—George Campbell

. . . that powerful instrument of error and deceit.

—John Locke

. . . wisdom, ornately and copiously delivered in words appropriate to the common opinion of mankind.

—Giambattista Vico

. . . the art of efficient communication by language.

—Adams Sherman Hill

. . . the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents.

—Kenneth Burke

. . . the study of misunderstanding and its remedies.

—I.A. Richards

. . . passionate, partisan discourse.

—Stanley Fish

. . . an art of emphasis embodying an order of desire.

—Richard Weaver

Aristotle and his definition will be your guide in this course, and you will step through his *Rhetoric* in your attempt to become better rhetors yourselves. Of course, the goal is to become the ideal orator, Quintilian’s “good [hu]man speaking well” (*vir bonus dicendi peritus*).

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

(as determined)

TEXTBOOK

Rhetoric Alive! Book 1: Principles of Persuasion. Camp Hill, PA: Classical Academic Press, 2016.

SCHEDULE

Week 1	(Chapter 1)	Introduction to rhetoric
Week 2	(Chapter 2)	The Three Appeals: <i>Ethos</i>
Week 3	(Chapter 3)	<i>Pathos</i>
Week 4	(Chapter 4)	<i>Logos</i> in the enthymeme
Week 5	(Chapter 5)	More on <i>Logos</i>
Week 6	(Chapter 6)	The Five Canons: Invention
Week 7	(Chapter 7)	Organization
Week 8	(Chapter 8)	Style
Week 9	(Chapter 9)	Memory
Week 10	<i>Review for and take midterm exam</i>	
Week 11	(Chapter 10)	Delivery
Week 12	(Chapter 11)	The Three Species: Deliberative rhetoric
Week 13	(Chapter 12)	Epidictic rhetoric
Week 14	(Chapter 13)	Judicial rhetoric
Week 15	(Chapter 14)	Fallacies and sophistry
Week 16	(Chapter 15 / Optional)	Prepare final speech project
Week 17	(Optional)	Prepare and deliver final speech project
Week 18	<i>Review for and take final exam</i>	

The following is a recommended format for a weekly teaching schedule:

Monday:	Reading of excerpt from Aristotle's <i>Rhetoric</i> and <i>Rhetoric Alive! Book 1</i> text
Tuesday:	Quiz covering material from the previous week, plus exploration of current week's discussion text (exemplary text demonstrating the week's focus)
Wednesday:	Workshop
Thursday:	Workshop, plus student presentations
Friday:	Student presentations

GRADING:

50%	Quizzes
25%	Presentations
25%	Homework/Classwork

Please sign below to indicate that you understand and agree to these policies:

DAY-BY-DAY SCHEDULE (ONE SEMESTER)

WEEK 1

Day 1: Chapter reading

Read and discuss chapter 1.

Day 2: Discussion text

Read and discuss Plato's allegory of the cave.

Day 3: Workshop

Complete and present the "Magazine Ad" workshop.

Day 4: Presentation preparation

Choose, prepare, and practice one of the speech excerpts from chapter 1.

Day 5: Presentation

Deliver the speech excerpt.

WEEK 2

Day 6: Chapter reading

Read and discuss chapter 2.

Day 7: Discussion text

Read and discuss "A Faithful Friend to the Army" address by George Washington.

Day 8: Workshop

Complete the "Just Trust Me!" workshop, the college application essay, or "The Rhetoric of E-Mail" assignment.

Day 9: Presentation preparation

Complete another one of the three workshops and practice another speech excerpt from chapter 1.

Day 10: Presentation

Deliver the speech excerpt.

WEEK 3

Day 11: Chapter reading

Read and discuss chapter 3.

Day 12: Discussion text

Read and discuss the excerpt from *Julius Caesar*, act 3, scene 2.

Day 13: Workshop

Complete the "Conjuring the Emotions" workshop.

Day 14: Presentation preparation

Prepare and practice the poetry recitation.

Day 15: Presentation

Deliver the poetry recitation.

WEEK 4

Day 16: Chapter reading

Read and discuss chapter 4.

Day 17: Discussion text

Read and discuss the "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death!" address by Patrick Henry.

Day 18: Workshop

Fashion enthymemes in workshop 1.

Day 19: Presentation preparation

Choose and prepare a book for Read Aloud Story Time. Compete in workshop 2, "Fill in the Enthymeme Competition."

Day 20: Presentation

Read stories aloud to younger students.

WEEK 5

Day 21: Chapter reading

Read and discuss chapter 5.

Day 22: Discussion text

Read and discuss excerpt from Plato's *Phaedrus*.

Day 23: Workshop

Complete either "A Duel between Maxims" or the Emily Dickinson *Imitatio* workshop.

Day 24: Presentation preparation

Complete the "Writing a Fable" workshop in preparation for presentation.

Day 25: Presentation

Deliver the school board address.

WEEK 6

Day 26: Chapter reading

Read and discuss chapter 6.

Day 27: Discussion text

Read and discuss “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Day 28: Workshop

Play “Commonplace Competitions.”

Day 29: Presentation preparation

Prepare and practice “Mr. Gorbachev, Tear Down This Wall!” selection.

Day 30: Presentation

Deliver selection from Ronald Reagan’s “Mr. Gorbachev, Tear Down this Wall!” speech.

WEEK 7

Day 31: Chapter reading

Read and discuss chapter 7.

Day 32: Discussion text

Read and discuss Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” or participate in the “Organizing Emily Dickinson” activity.

Day 33: Workshop

Complete the “Ordering an Essay” workshop.

Day 34: Presentation preparation

Prepare for the presentation using the “Organization Scramble” workshop.

Day 35: Presentation

Deliver the “Argument Sampler” speech.

WEEK 8

Day 36: Chapter reading

Read and discuss chapter 8.

Day 37: Discussion text

Read and discuss the “Ask Not What Your Country Can Do for You” address by John F. Kennedy.

Day 38: Workshop

Complete one of the following workshops: “Figures of Speech Match-Up,” “Stylish Sentences,” or “Figures of Speech Dress-Up.”

Day 39: Presentation preparation

Rewrite a chosen fairy tale for presentation.

Day 40: Presentation

Deliver the “Fairy Tale Retold” story.

WEEK 9

Day 41: Chapter reading

Read and discuss chapter 9.

Day 42: Discussion text

Read and discuss Augustine’s *Confessions* excerpt.

Day 43: Workshop

Complete one of the “Memory Palace” activities.

Day 44: Presentation preparation

Prepare the memory palace for poetry recitation.

Day 45: Presentation

Deliver the poetry recitation.

WEEK 10

Day 46: Catch up on any missing work.**Day 47: Review the three appeals.****Day 48: Review the first four of the five canons.****Day 49: Prepare for the midterm exam.****Day 50: Take the midterm exam.****WEEK 11**

Day 51: Chapter reading

Read and discuss chapter 10.

Day 52: Discussion text

Read and discuss “A Talk about Giving a Talk” by John Hilton.

Day 53: Workshop

Complete the “Liar! Liar!” activity.

Day 54: Presentation preparation

Prepare and practice a Shakespearean soliloquy or monologue.

Day 55: Presentation

Deliver the chosen soliloquy or monologue.

WEEK 12

Day 56: Chapter reading

Read and discuss chapter 11.

Day 57: Discussion text

Read and discuss Winston Churchill's "Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat" or "A Day That Will Live in Infamy" by FDR.

Day 58: Workshop

Complete the "Sales Pitch Grab Bag" activity.

Day 59: Presentation preparation

Prepare and practice the "Great Speech *Imitatio*."

Day 60: Presentation

Deliver "Great Speech *Imitatio*."

WEEK 13

Day 61: Chapter reading

Read and discuss chapter 12.

Day 62: Discussion text

Read and discuss "They Were Worthy of Athens" by Pericles.

Day 63: Discussion text

Read and discuss "Duty, Honor, Country" by General Douglas MacArthur.

Day 64: Workshop/presentation preparation

Write the tribute *imitatio* and/or *imitatio* of "Duty, Honor, Country."

Day 65: Presentation

Deliver the tribute *imitatio* and/or *imitatio* of "Duty, Honor, Country."

WEEK 14

Day 66: Chapter reading

Read and discuss chapter 13.

Day 67: Discussion text

Read and discuss "Judges to My Condemnation" by Sir Thomas More.

Day 68: Workshop

Complete the "You're on Trial" activity.

Day 69: Presentation

Begin the mock trial.

Day 70: Presentation

Conclude and discuss the mock trial.

WEEK 15

Day 71: Chapter reading

Read and discuss chapter 14.

Day 72: Discussion text

Read and discuss *Encomium of Helen* by Gorgias.

Day 73: Workshop

Complete the "Fashioning Fallacies" activity.

Day 74: Presentation

Prepare and practice the "Fallacious Speeches" presentation.

Day 75: Presentation

Present the fallacious speech.

WEEK 16

Day 76: Chapter reading

Read and discuss chapter 15.

Days 77–80: Optional capstone project^A

WEEK 17

Days 80–85: Optional capstone project (continued)

WEEK 18

Day 86: Review the three appeals.**Day 87: Review the five canons.****Day 88: Review the three species.****Day 89: Review fallacies.****Day 90: Take final exam.**

*Free Day suggested activity: Watch and rhetorically analyze a live or recorded speech.

^ADepending on the level of the student, you may wish to have students write and present their own speech as a final speech project. In doing so, they will gather together all that they have learned and put it into practice. This can be a "junior thesis" or "senior thesis" project or, if the students are younger, simply a longer version of the short speeches they prepared for chapter 7.

TWO-SEMESTER SCHEDULE

One way to use this textbook over the course of an entire year is to complete all of the workshop activities and deliver all of the possible presentations. Another option is to study one chapter a week, followed by a week of putting that idea into practice—either for a stand-alone rhetoric writing/speaking assignment or as an assignment for another subject, such as English or history.

A further possibility is to study rhetoric throughout the year but only two or three times per week. In this case, simply divide the activities into the chapter and discussion text one week, followed by workshops and presentations the following week.