Rhetoric 101

What the heck is it?
Ethos

• Greek for “character”.
• Credibility and trustworthiness (Why does this person have the authority to argue about this?).
• Often emphasizes shared values between speaker and audience.
• Automatic Ethos- speaker’s title or status automatically brings ethos to a situation.
Rhetoric

• The art of finding ways to persuade an audience
• Those who understand and can use the available means to appeal to an audience of one or many are in a position of strength
Audience

- The listener, viewer, or reader of a text.
- Most texts will have multiple audiences.
Text

• Not just speeches.
• Essays, political cartoons, photographs, advertisements. All of these are argumentative texts.
• You can “read” each of these. Not just consume but investigate.
Our Duty

• It is our job as informed citizens and consumers to understand how rhetoric works so that we can be wary of manipulation or deceit, while appreciating effective and civil communication.
The Rhetorical Situation

- Rhetoric is always situational.
- Occasion - the time and place the text was written or spoken.
- This occasion exists within a specific Context - the circumstances, atmosphere, attitudes, and events surrounding the text.
- Purpose - the goal the speaker wants to achieve.
Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle

**Speaker**
- **Ethos**
  - The creator of the message positions him/herself as one who has the knowledge, is fair in its presentation, and is believable.

**Purpose**
- What is your aim or goal for creating this message?

**Message**
- **Logos**
  - This is the actual message the speaker is giving. Is the message logical? Is it presented with factual, credible information? Is the message clear and specific, organized in a logical well-reasoned order?

**Audience**
- **Pathos**
  - Who are you addressing? What are their concerns, values, beliefs? How can you appeal to their emotions and imagination? How can you move the audience to care bout your message?

**Context**
- The circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood and assessed.
The Rhetorical Triangle

- Illustrates relationships between different elements of a rhetorical situation.
- Speaker - person or group who creates a text. What is their description, not just their name. Persona - role speaker plays when delivering message.
- Audience - listener, viewer, reader of a text.
- Subject - the topic. Do not confuse with the purpose.
Ethos

- Greek for “character”
- Credibility and trustworthiness
- Shared values
- Automatic Ethos: when a speaker’s reputation immediately establishes ethos.
- King George V speech September 3, 1939
Logos

• Reason, thinking logically
• Greek for “embodied thought”
• Specific details, facts, examples, statistics, or expert testimony
• Creating a logical argument often involves defining the terms of the argument and identifying connections such as causality.
Logos, continued

- Counterargument- anticipate objections or opposing views
- In acknowledging a counterargument, you agree (concede) that an opposing argument may be true or reasonable, but then you deny (refute) the validity of all or part of the argument.
- Concession and refutation strengthens your own argument
Pathos

- Appeal to emotions, values, desires, hopes, fears, prejudices
- Appeals that rely exclusively on emotions are weak—they are considered propagandistic and polemic
- Polemic- aggressive argument that tries to establish the superiority of one argument over others—does not concede that opposing arguments have any merit
- Use words connotations- the associations of a word beyond its definition
Close Reading of a Text

Style Elements
alliteration

• Repetition of the same sound beginning several words or syllables in a sequence
allusion

• Brief reference to a person, event, or place (real or fictitious) or to a work of art
anaphora

• Repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or lines

• Example from *A Tale of Two Cities*: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.”
Antithesis

- Opposition, or contrast, of ideas or words in a parallel construction
- “That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.”
Archaic Diction

• Old-fashioned or outdated choice of words
• “Come hither and let me tell you a tale of a Snapchat gone wrong…”
asyndeton

- Omission of conjunctions between coordinate phrases, clauses, or words
- **IAGO**
  Call up her father.
  Rouse him. Make after him, Poison his delight, Proclaim him in the streets. Incense her kinsmen, And, though he in a fertile climate dwell…
Cumulative Sentence

- Sentence that completes the main idea at the beginning of the sentence and then builds and adds on.
- “The San Bernardino Valley lies only an hour east of Los Angeles by the San Bernardino Freeway but is in certain ways an alien place: not the coastal California of the subtropical twilights and the soft westerlies off the Pacific but a harsher California, haunted by the Mojave just beyond the mountains, devastated by the hot dry Santa Ana wind that comes down through the passes at 100 miles an hour and whines through the eucalyptus windbreaks and works on the nerves.” - Joan Didion [emphasis mine]
Hortative Sentence

- Sentence that urges, implores, or calls to action.
- “Let’s take care of our classroom and stop leaving trash everywhere!” – Reg, all the time
Imperative Sentence

• Sentence used to command.
• “Throw away that trash!” – Ms. Register, all the time.
Juxtaposition

• Placement of two things closely together to emphasize similarities or differences.
• Duke: If virtue no delighted beauty lack, Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.
Metaphor

- Comparison without using like or as
Oxymoron

- Paradoxical juxtaposition of words that seem to contradict one another.
- Open secret
- Seriously funny
- Awfully pretty
- Original copies
- Liquid gas
Parallelism

• Similarity of structure in a pair or series of related words, phrases, or clauses.
• Like father, like son.
• But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God."
Periodic Sentence

- Sentence whose main clause is withheld until the end.
- “In spite of heavy snow and brutally cold temperatures, the game continued.”
Personification

• Giving life-like qualities to an inanimate object or idea
• “History will be the final judge of our ideas.”
Rhetorical Question

- Figure of speech in the form of a question posed for rhetorical effect rather than for the purpose of getting an answer.
- Shylock: “If you prick us, do we not bleed?
  If you tickle us, do we not laugh?
  If you poison us, do we not die?
  And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?” -Merchant of Venice
Synedoche

- Figure of speech that uses a part to represent a whole
- All hands on deck.
- Roderigo: “What a full fortune does the Thick-lips owe If he can carry’t thus!”