**Rhetoric and Forms of Persuasions**

## Prof. Elisabetta Matelli

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

In the first module, the course introduces the key notions on the art of persuasion born and formulated in Ancient Greece and subsequently elaborated by Roman culture, showing how these archetypes have reached contemporary communication and are still in existence. The objectives include the development of practical skills in recognising and using the mechanisms of the rhetorical method, with a special focus on argumentation and on the structuring of thought in the different parts of the speech with proper language. Particular emphasis will be placed on the acquisition of argumentative techniques in controversial and decision-making situations, through practical exercises. Oratorical controversies are analysed with reference to the notions of written and unwritten laws of justice and equity.

In the second module (optional and following the first, awarding a further 6 ECTS credits), there is an in-depth study, related to the theories which have already been learned, of the theory of the different styles, referring to specific treatises and to the critical literary analysis of various texts. Seneca the Elder’s *Declamations* provide the model for exercises which guide in the creation of present controversies. Finally, students are introduced to the basics of the art of public speaking, controlling 1) elocution 2) the arrangement of thoughts 3) argumentation 4) speech memorisation 5) delivery.

***COURSE CONTENT***

first Module(30 hours, 6 ECTS credits)

1. Introduction to the notions of rhetoric, persuasion, truth and verisimilitude.

2. The forms of persuasion in political, legal and epideictic speech genres.

3. Rhetoric’s historical background, with a focus on the origins and key concepts / methods of this discipline which are still used in the present day.

4. Introduction to the classical rhetoric system with particular reference to the speaker’s character, the listener’s disposition towards the speaker, the building and oral or written presentation of the speech, through the principles of *argumentation* */ arrangement in parts / elocution / memory / delivery.*

5. Recognition of the argumentative techniques in Gorgias’ *Helen,*  *Palamedes* and in contemporary prayers.

6. Books 1-2 of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*.

7. Reading and comment of Antiphon’s *First Tetralo*gy.

8. Participation in a mock trial.

ADVANCED MODULE (30 hours, iteration, 6 ECTS credits)

1. The theory of style and of parts of speech in Book 3 of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*.

2. The different speech styles, with reference to the theories of the treatises *On Style* by Demetrius and *On the Sublime* by Dionysius Longinus, still applicable to contemporary texts.

3. Seneca the Elder’s Latin declamations and the Second Sophistic’s Greek declamations as models for the writing of a contemporary controversy.

4. Reading and rhetorical comment on contemporary speeches selected by students, with exercises of practical recognition of the learned theory.

5. Workshop on a controversial speech, along the lines of Seneca’s *Controversiae*, to be proposed orally.

6. The art of effective speech delivery.

7. Participation in a mock trial.

***READING LIST***

A detailed reading list is presented during the first lectures and is available on the *Blackboard* page.

***TEACHING METHOD***

*Module 1*

A 30-hour module held in the first 5 weeks of the second semester, with interactive lessons in the classroom. Some in-depth seminars, the participation in a mock trial and workshops are planned. It is stongly recommended to attend lessons.

*Module A*

A 30-hour module held in the first five weeks of the second semester, with interactive lessons in the classroom. It is stongly recommended to attend lessons. Some in-depth seminars, the participation in a mock trial and workshops are planned.

*Note*

Students interested in learning the practice of *actio* are invited to attend the Ancient Drama Workshop (3 ECTS credits, First semester a.y. 2023-2024), during they will learn about how to communicate a text through the art of speech delivery, which connects thoughts, words, body and voice.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Assessment takes place in presence by means of an oral exam organized as a series of ‘round tables’ to which students will bring the texts on the syllabus and in which they must participate.

Students must complete a written task, to be submitted to the lecturer at least 48 hours before the examination.

Students will be assessed on their knowledge of lecture contents (published on Blackboard) and all texts on the syllabus, as well as their critical and presentation skills.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no specific prerequisites apart from the basic historical-cultural understanding expected of university students and an interest in deepening knowledge of the Greek and Latin world from which the art of rhetoric was born.

Specific content will be taught throughout the course.

To access course materials and information, students are invited to register on the Blackboard page for the current academic year, using their @iCatt email address (no other email addresses are accepted).

Students in the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy can only officially enrol on the second module as a ‘repetition’ of the first module.

The title of a three-year degree dissertation will be granted to students who pass the exam with at least 27 marks. Master’s theses are granted to students who pass both modules with at least 27 marks. Students will attend mandatory practical classes on techniques for writing their papers.

Graduating students must complete their paper at least one week before the submission date and, before the discussion, submit the complete paper to the supervisor and co-supervisor, including in hard copy.

Lectures and oral exams will only be conducted online where health emergencies (or similar) require it.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG