Master’s & Doctoral Study

Language, Writing & Rhetoric

LWR brings together leading faculty and students passionate about the research and teaching of the power of language, diverse writing practices, and media forms in academic, public, and professional contexts, past and present. The strengths of our program include:

1. A flexible course of study that allows you to cultivate your scholarly interests to fit your professional goals and needs.

2. Nationally renowned faculty committed to student mentoring.

3. Outstanding job placement record.

4. Options to teach multiple advanced classes in the new professional writing minor, rhetorical theory, public writing, digital composition, linguistics, and writing center theory.

5. Leadership opportunities to co-direct Academic Writing, Professional Writing, and the Writing Center with faculty.

6. Options for interdisciplinary research and collaboration on digital humanities, comparative study, and critical theory through the Maryland Institute of Technology in the Humanities (MITH) and the Center for Comparative Literary Studies.

In particular, our program features award-winning faculty with expertise in:

- Histories & theories of rhetoric
- Women’s rhetoric & historiography
- Composition theory and pedagogy
- African American rhetoric
- Professional writing
- Language policy studies
- Linguistics: semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis
- Usage-based grammatical theory
- Stylistics
- Comparative global rhetoric
- Genre theory
- Multimodality and digital media
- Writing center theory

Beyond our faculty’s areas of expertise, students can pursue cross-disciplinary studies from Linguistics; Communication; Classics; Education; Women’s Studies; African American Studies; Asian American Studies; American Studies; Philosophy; Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies; and other relevant departments.

The Department of English also offers a lively guest speaker series every academic year. Recent speakers include Patricia Bizzell, Jay Dolmage, Vershawn Ashanti Young, Stephanie Kerschbaum, Bruce Horner, and Jeffrey Walker.
OUR DOCTORAL STUDENTS: PROFILE

Our flexible, student-centered program allows emerging scholars to develop their chosen fields of expertise—ranging from transfer studies, to workplace writing, to disability rhetoric, to feminist rhetoric, to environmental rhetoric, to linguistics. Our faculty work closely with students to help them cultivate a unique scholarly ethos as a scholar-teacher in their chosen areas.

Oliver Brearey
obrearey@umd.edu

My research interests focus on business communication and professional and workplace writing. Specifically, my dissertation explores rhetorical and writing practices in outplacement, a service that trains unemployed professionals to find new jobs. I also serve as the Assistant Director of the Professional Writing Program.

Courses taught: ENGL 280 The English Language, ENGL 291 Intermediate Writing, ENGL 393 Technical Writing

Elizabeth Ellis
eaellis@umd.edu

My research explores the intersections of genre studies and rhetorics of social movements. My dissertation analyzes the genres of the civil rights mass meeting. As a teacher, I seek to motivate students to see the possibilities latent in their everyday rhetorical endeavors. I also serve as the Assistant Director of the Academic Writing Program.

Courses taught: ENGL 101 Academic Writing, ENGL 282 Intro. to Rhetorical Theory, ENGL 293 Writing in the Wireless World

Danielle Griffin
griffind@umd.edu

My research examines the history of rhetoric and feminist historiography. Focusing on early modern Europe, my interests include Renaissance rhetorical theory, women’s literacy practices, social and economic class, and the history of poverty and social reform.

Courses taught: ENGL 101 Academic Writing, ENGL/WMST 255 Reading Women Writing, ENGL 444 Feminist Critical Theory (co-instructor)

Nabila Hijazi
nabila.hijazi@gmail.com

I am an Assistant Director of the Writing Center. My research interests revolve around studies of second language acquisition. Specifically, I focus on the effects of first language and culture on composing in a second language.

Courses taught: ENGL 101 Academic Writing, ENGL 281 Standard English Grammar, Diction and Usage, ENGL 388 Writing Center Internship, JOUR 181 Grammar for Journalists

Cameron Mozafari
moz1@umd.edu

My research asks how we create emotionally persuasive arguments. By examining language usage and emotive inferences, I study the various ways rhetors deploy intersubjective lines of reasoning to arouse audiences’ feelings. I ground my work in classical rhetorical theory, cognitive linguistics, and emotionology. I also serve as an Assistant Director of the Academic Writing Program.

Courses taught: ENGL 101 Academic Writing, ENGL 280 The English Language, ENGL 281 English Grammar, ENGL 282 Intro. to Rhetorical Theory, ENGL 291 Intermediate Writing

Ruth Osorio
ruthieoo@gmail.com

I study intersectional disability studies, digital writing, and activist rhetoric. Specifically, I look at disability rights rhetoric online and offline and how teachers can learn about access, embodied learning, and diversity from disability activism.

Courses taught: ENGL 293: Writing in the Wireless World, 101 Academic Writing

Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones
gvlahovi@umd.edu

My research interests focus on the visual rhetoric of ancient coin iconography. Specifically, I am interested in how male political authorities in the ancient world use feminine imagery to construct a propaganda message.

Nathan Tillman
ntillman@umd.edu

My research focuses on rhetorical education in medieval Europe, especially the teaching and learning of Latin and rhetoric in medieval classrooms.

Course taught: ENGL 101 Academic Writing
Seminar in Modern Rhetorical Theory: Rhetoric and Writing at Work  
Professor Scott Wible

In this course, we'll pursue a variety of answers to the questions, “How do rhetoric and writing shape and how are they shaped by professional workplaces?” We will examine several theoretical and methodological approaches to professional writing and rhetoric (e.g., literacy theory, genre theory, activity theory, actor-network theory) as a means to better understand how contemporary workplaces are rhetorically constructed, how professionals interact with tools and technologies for writing, and how they manage projects, collaborations, and legal and ethical constraints. Students will develop an annotated bibliography around a particular professional writing and rhetoric concept, define that concept in a literature review, and develop a seminar paper that applies professional writing and rhetoric theory in depth to one or more workplace texts and contexts.

Readings in the History of Rhetorical Theory  
Professor Vessela Valiavitcharska

This course will introduce you to what we think of as the foundational texts of rhetoric as a discipline, i.e., those texts from Greek and Roman antiquity – as well as their creative appropriation in the Middle Ages and Renaissance – which claim to define the nature, function, goals, substance, tools, and teaching of rhetoric. We will begin with the accounts of the Older Sophists about the civilizing power of the spoken word, then move on to Plato and Isocrates’ conflicting ideas about the character and goals of rhetoric. Isocrates’ views and pedagogical attitudes toward rhetoric will lead us to Aristotle’s attempt to “correct” the shortcomings of his predecessors, define rhetoric as a discipline, and build a comprehensive theory of its substance and methods.

Moving into the Roman imperial and early medieval period, we will discuss the complicated, at times quarrelsome but more often productive, relationship between rhetoric and philosophy and its role in the practical toolbox of the rhetorician. Then with Boethius, John of Sicily, Michael Psellos, Geoffrey of Vinsauf, Ramus, and Erasmus, we will explore the medieval and Renaissance response to ancient theory and practice, as well as the subsequent shift in epistemology, exemplified by a “divorce” between rhetoric and dialectic in the west as well as a heightened attention to style and figurality. With Madeleine de Scudéry, we will also look at the rise of a women’s tradition of conversational rhetoric in rhetorical theory.

Finally, with Vico and Blair we will look at the Enlightenment appropriation of the classical rhetorical tradition and its transformation into an epistemic philosophy anticipating modern developments.

One of the premises behind the course is to look at the history of rhetoric as a history not only of theory but also of pedagogical goals and attitudes – which could potentially serve our own teaching practice.
Topics in Language: Affect, Emotion, and the English Language
Professor Michael Israel

How does language (logos) contribute to human affective experience (pathos) and social identity (ethos)? These questions, once central to ancient linguistic and rhetorical theory, remain vitally relevant if deeply complicated in today's densely interconnected, multimedia world. At the same time, modern advances in linguistics, anthropology, and the cognitive sciences give us new ways of thinking about and finding answers to these questions.

This course introduces students to basic tools of corpus linguistics, discourse analysis and linguistic stylistics that can be used to study ways that affect and identity get performed, encoded and transmitted through language use. Course work will consist of three main parts: a guided course of readings, some short analytic exercises, and a short research project.

The readings—drawn from a wide range of disciplines including rhetoric, linguistics, anthropology, social psychology, and computer science, inter alia—will provide a framework for thinking about linguistic meaning, conceptual structure and communication in general. Major topics include prototype theory, frame semantics, conceptual metaphor theory, discourse analysis, and construction-based theories of grammar, and embodied cognition. We will explore these topics through a series of case studies on the structure and history of English, with a particular focus on verbs speech, thought, perception and emotion.

Exercises will focus on building skills for analyzing lexical and grammatical patterns in language, both across texts (for example, in electronic corpora) and within particular communicative acts. Finally, all students will devise a research project of their own, presumably focusing either on a single linguistic construction or a single text of some sort, and examining the relation between language use and affective, ethical, and extra-logical forms of experience.

Technologies of Writing
Professor Melanie Kill

In this course, we examine writing through the technologies and associated practices used to produce it. We will begin at the beginning, considering writing itself as a new technology and working through the significance of this and subsequent shifts in the ways that rhetors mediate, compose, and circulate texts, broadly conceived. Over the course of the semester we will engage in critical reading, discussion, writing, and as well as critical experimentation with the production of texts in workshops exploring themes like non-alphabetic writing, typography, images, and design. Readings in the history of writing systems, print, and digital technologies—with attention to the communities and cultures that develop(ed) and maintain(ed) them—will position us to develop informed and critical rhetorical analyses of texts in and across various media.
Approaches to Teaching College Composition  
Professors Jessica Enoch (fall), Shirley Logan (spring)

This course will introduce you to some of the major pedagogical conversations in composition studies that should inform and energize your work as a teacher of writing. Over the course of the semester, we will consider and explore key principles and practices at the heart of effective college-level writing instruction, including emphasizing the rhetorical nature of writing, recognizing the complexity of students’ writing processes, enabling students to analyze and practice writing in a variety of genres and for a variety of audiences, highlighting the relationship between writing and technologies, providing timely feedback on student writing, and developing critical reflection about one’s pedagogical approach and classroom practices.

Upcoming Classes:  
English  
2016-2017

• Contemporary Rhetorical Theory  
• Historical/Critical Methods in Communication Research  
• Communication and Social Change

Upcoming Classes:  
Communication

• Approaches to Women’s Studies I  
• Approaches to Women’s Studies II  
• Feminist Theories and Women’s Movements: Genealogies

Upcoming Classes:  
Women’s Studies

Independent Study Recently Offered

• Ancient Rhetoric in Theory and Visual Practice (Valiavitcharska)  
• Service-Learning Theory and Pedagogy (Wible)  
• Disability Rhetorics (Enoch)  
• Language and Emotion (Israel)  
• Apophtaticism in Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Christian Theology (Valiavitcharska)  
• Linguistic Diversity and Language Policy in Composition Studies (Wible)  
• Rhetoric of Elizabeth I (Donawerth)  
• Literacy Narratives (Donawerth)  
• Readings in Advanced Composition (Logan)  
• Performativity, Discourse Modes, and Prayer (Israel)  
• Theories of Authority and Expertise in Writing Studies (Wible)  
• Readings in the History of Rhetoric (Valiavitcharska)  
• Women’s Rhetoric (Donawerth)  
• Research Methods in Composition Studies (Wible)  
• History of US Women’s Rhetoric (Logan)  
• The Role of Emotions in Composition-Rhetoric (Enoch)
GRADUATES’ OUTSTANDING JOB PLACEMENT RECORD

Our program has great success placing doctoral students into tenure track and professional positions. Each year we offer job search preparation workshops to help candidates enter the market with confidence.

GRADUATES
Heather Lindenman 2015 Assistant Professor, Elon University
Martin Camper 2014 Assistant Professor, Loyola University, Baltimore
Mark Hoffman 2014 Director of Communications, High Lantern Consulting Group
Andrew Black 2013 Assistant Professor, Murray State University
Maria Gigante 2012 Assistant Professor, Western Michigan University
Heather Brown 2010 Assistant Professor, Monmouth University, ELI-MP Instructional Designer of Online Writing Courses
Lisa Zimmerelli 2009 Assistant Professor, Loyola University, Baltimore
Jonathan Buehl 2008 Associate Professor, Ohio State University
Barbara Cooper 2008 Professor, Howard Community College
Vera Tobin 2008 Assistant Professor, Case Western Reserve University
Wendy Hayden 2007 Associate Professor, Hunter College CUNY
Andrea Shanklin Dardello 2007 Professor, Howard Community College
Maurice Champagne 2007 Assistant Professor, Stevenson University
James Wynn 2006 Associate Professor, Carnegie Mellon University
Sonya Brown 2005 University of North Carolina, Fayetteville
Caleb Corkery 2004 Associate Professor, Millersville University
Elizabeth Driver 2003 Director, Maryland English Institute, University of Maryland
William Fitzgerald 2002 Associate Professor, Rutgers University, Camden
Timothy Brown 2000 Director of Corporate and Media Relations, self-employed
Stanley Dambroski 1999 Speechwriter, US Department of Agriculture
Alisse Theodore Portnoy 1999 Associate Professor, University of Michigan