

RHETORIC AND PUBLIC CULTURE CERTIFICATE

The following requirements are in addition to, or further elaborate upon, those requirements outlined in The Graduate School Policy Guide (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/academic-policies-procedures/>).

Certificate

Total Units Required: 5

The Rhetoric and Public Culture certificate addresses foundational problems in both the practice of democracy and the conduct of inquiry.

"Rhetoric" refers to systematic study of how texts, images, and other media operate as a mode of action, with particular attention to democratic politics. It comprises a civic art, a hermeneutical method, and a continuing challenge to all systems of classification. Due to the scope of the modern linguistic turn, rhetoric provides a pertinent basis for reflection on the discursive and organizational conventions of contemporary scholarship. Such reflection is becoming increasingly necessary as scholarship and democracy alike adapt to new communication technologies and related elements of globalization defining the 21st century.

"Public Culture" delineates a fundamental feature of modern civil society: the network of media and social practices organized around political participation. Because they are at once distinctively modern, inherently pluralistic, and inevitably contested, public cultures have become vital political forms in an increasingly interconnected world.

Thus, "rhetoric and public culture" denotes reflexive study of the communicative practices by which public culture is created, sustained, modified, and challenged. The program welcomes scholars who wish to be both attentive to rhetoric and engaged with important intellectual and political discourses that cross the disciplines and other institutional boundaries.

Course Requirements:

The Certificate in Rhetoric and Public Culture consists of five graduate seminars selected in consultation with and approved by the Cluster Director. Course selection should adhere to the guidelines provided below.

- The core course is COMM_ST 414-0 Classical Rhetoric and Its Afterlives. This core course provides an introduction to major texts on the art of rhetoric from Greek and Roman antiquity, as well as representative appropriations and commentaries from the early modern period through the contemporary era. Students are expected to develop hermeneutical strategies for productive use of the historical legacy in respect to contemporary theoretical interests, institutional practices, and research problems. Assignments emphasize reading the classical texts in translation, using the secondary literature, and integrating the classical tradition into the study of public culture.
- The five seminars should include the core course in classical theory and four additional courses. Three of the courses should be from faculty in the Department of Communication Studies, and two may be from affiliate faculty in the program. No more than two courses can be counted towards the certificate from the student's degree program.

Other Certificate Requirements:

Students also are expected to attend some of the lectures, reading groups, and other academic events sponsored by the Rhetoric and Public Culture program.