

# CMST 301 paper template

**FORMAT:** Shoot for ten pages, abstract is first page (no title page), bibliography/works cited is last page, 8 pages of intro/body/conclusion. Double spaced, 12 point font, one inch margins, Times New Roman (or other readable serif font), use of Sub-Headings strongly recommended (see below).

**Introduction:** Give some background on your campaign artifact. Explain why studying this artifact is **IMPORTANT** (the “so what question” of significance.) **Preview** the layout of the paper. Hint at your overall thesis/argument.

The **next section** is a good place to detail (and demonstrate your knowledge of) the particulars of the textbook concepts you are using as lenses to “see” your artifact. For example, if you chose FORM from chapter 5, here is where you’d talk about what form is and how it relates to your study. Explain how you’re going to use each concept and argue for why it’s a good match for what you want to discover about your artifact. **HINT:** It doesn’t hurt to quote from the textbook when explaining the concepts used.

Here is where the actual **analysis begins**. Apply your concepts to the patterns and themes your artifact revealed upon close analysis. For example, if you’re focused on political ideology, show how your artifact exemplifies the use of political ideology to persuade potential voters. Do this for **EACH** of your chosen concept “lenses.”

Student Name  
CMST 301 Rhetorical Theory & Criticism  
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Kick Ass Title: This Research is Awesome

Medieval and renaissance humanists were given to using allegory to portray the concerns and institutions of their time. They sometimes did so for the arts and sciences. One of the seven liberal arts was *rhetoric*, the study of persuasion, which is the ancestor and umbrella term for public relations, advertising, marketing, and their *spinny* brethren. Rhetoric was often depicted allegorically as *Lady Rhetoric*, “a woman of lofty stature and great assurance,” wielding great power in the affairs of people (Murphy, 1974, p. 45; Clark, 1957, frontispiece). Rhetoric has been studied and valued throughout the centuries as an “architectonic” art, managing the contributions of other arts and sciences toward the solution of important issues in human affairs (McKeen, 1987).

Let me think that the figure Rhetor of the Arts is out of date, take note of Michael Burgoon’s depiction of public speaking professors as “campus whores” (1989, p. 305) or Donald Ellis’s characterization of communication departments that teach public relations as “social science whorehouses” (1982, p. 2). Let me think that the figure Rhetor of the Arts is out of date, take note of Michael Burgoon’s depiction of public speaking professors as “campus whores” (1989, p. 305) or Donald Ellis’s characterization of communication departments that teach public relations as “social science whorehouses” (1982, p. 2).

Finally, this study will say why the charges against rhetoric are not only true, but actually virtues to be developed. There have been theorists who have defended Lady Rhetoric, such as Cicero (1942). But the defense often takes the form of denying the charge, of claiming that it does not apply to rhetoric, or of shifting the focus of discussion. I will offer a different defense—indeed, a scandalous defense—of scandal in which I celebrate the very charges made against rhetoric. Clutching the shield of rhetoric in an abandoned embrace, I will argue for why the very faults ascribed to it are in fact a communication (to be speak).

Student Last Name Shortened Paper Title Page 1

## The Analytical Method (The Used)

Arguments and disagreements over rhetoric and its place in society are complex. The schemes I am about to propose is therefore not meant to present a complete rhetorical theory. Instead, the scheme tries to organize three dimensions of rhetorical theory as scandalous. I want to identify just this one voice crying “thames,” even if the ongoing gossip about rhetoric has other accusations and justifications to make. We will hear this voice in three texts: First, Plato’s *Gorgias* (1960), his longest dialogue that centers on rhetoric; second, a letter by Donald G. Ellis to the editor of *Speech* (1982), the semi-annual of the Speech Communication Association, that provoked a great deal of controversy and response; third, an article by Michael Burgoon (1989) that is representative of a stance that Burgoon has argued vigorously in other publications and in conversation programs. These three representative anecdotes of scandal contain the essence of the *accusatory* method throughout history against Dame Rhetoric’s moral character.

As even more explicit attack on rhetoric’s applied offspring is found in Burgoon’s suit “divorcing Dame Speech” (1989, p. 303) Burgoon puts research on the side of application, as opposed to research, as indeed it is in most universities today. He is annoyed at courses that focus on training students for practical application of principles of speaking, interacting, and writing. Theory must be primary, he argues, or else “pedagogy of performance (especially defined) the central questions of scholarly inquiry” (p. 303). “Theory and research in communication have far outstripped what is presently being taught in Speech,” he complains (p. 303). Thus, departments of communication have rarely allowed themselves “to be solely identified with a pedagogy of performance (or skill development, if you prefer)” (p. 306), whereas they need to “be defined by its scholarship research” (p. 307). He does not call, however, for a rapprochement between research and speech, the latter term marked by its historical grounding in applied public speaking instruction. He calls for a divorce, with departments concentrating on the production of theoretical knowledge, canceling wholesome high-achievement performance courses, and teaching fewer students in favor of spending more time in laboratories.

The Sophists, of course, served their own interests by charging a fee for their advice. Rhetoric,

Student Last Name Shortened Paper Title Page 2

analyze my rhetorical artifact:

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a war, you get the point: This is a quote that exemplifies some features of the theory (1863, p. 100).

Let me think that the figure Rhetor of the Arts is out of date, take note of Burgoon’s descriptions of public speaking professors as “campus whores” (1989, p. 305) or Donald Ellis’s characterization of communication departments that teach public relations as “social science whorehouses” (1982, p. 2).

## Analysis of the Subject using the Chosen Method

The Sophists went about the Aegean world training people for public relations, decision-making of course. Sophists were not all the same, nor were their curricula. Many of them, such as Isocrates, set up schools that followed high standards in teaching the arts and sciences of the time, providing not only a broadly based education, but also philosophical training and technical expertise in particular subject matters. It is so true that the Sophists that Plato objects. He is scandalized at the primarily rhetorical Sophists, who were providing the masses of citizens with enough rhetorical training to be able to participate in public debate, but not with the technical depth of knowledge necessary to become experts in any particular subject. In other words, Plato was scandalized by Sophists such as Gorgias, who trained his students in his own lifetime, as being able to speak on any subject, the focus of the training was on the ability to speak rather than on the substance of the subject.

As Plato makes clear throughout his works, especially in *The Republic*, decisions should be made

Student Last Name Shortened Paper Title Page 3

by experts, by specialists in knowledge, rather than by ordinary citizens. When the general populace is enrolled in decision-making they will do so by arguing the issues. And since nobody is an expert on every issue, the populace will rely on rhetoric rather than on specializations of knowledge in making those decisions. In other words, rhetoric and democratic decision-making go hand in hand. In the *Gorgias* (Plato, 1960), Socrates makes this point clear: “A popular audience means an ignorant audience,” he opines (sec. 459). Place the orator before specialists in knowledge, and the orator’s power disappears: “He won’t be more convincing than the doctor before experts” (sec. 459). Because orators claim to speak on any subject, “the orator need have no knowledge of the truth about things; it is enough for him to have discovered a knack of convincing the ignorant that he knows more than the expert” (sec. 459).

Socrates contends that there are specializations of knowledge even for the moral or political issues with which public assemblies often deal. “It needs an expert” to distinguish between good and bad pleasures, he claims (sec. 500). Even in political matters, “this is a matter of expert knowledge” (sec. 503). That expertise is often more narrowly defined as *philosophy*. Calligias is made to come philosophy in favor of the active life of participation in politics (sec. 485).

pruning parties interests against the established term knowledge. But he leaps across dichotomies; the effect is also to assert the accumulation of knowledge that comes with a process of specialization. The theory is opposed to that of partisan, pleasurable interests, and thus it is common to the common interests. One must accumulate knowledge in the service of the community’s greater good. But one must also be happy to come out from pursuing partisan interests, but from pursuing the greater good. High attaining knowledge—in other words, from the theoretical side of the dichotomy is included in this web of linkages as well. “The good orator,” says Socrates, “being also a man of expert knowledge, will have these ends [of righteousness and justice] in view in any speech... his attention will be wholly concerned on bringing righteousness and every other virtue to birth in the souls of his fellow-citizens” (sec. 504). Here lies the obvious link between theoretical knowledge and expertise and use of that expert to serve community, rather than partisan, interests. Ellis (1982) likewise asserts linkages between the side of the dichotomies. In the same sentence, he attacks public relations as “without a doubt just as an aside, morally degenerate...” (p. 1). But it is not just an aside. The linkage is the lack of a research base. The same linkage occurs research in these areas will only come when public

and. The charges alleged to be shameful are actually desirable characteristics for public communication today.

## CONCLUSION

Should theorists, including public relations practitioners, be well informed in their subjects before they craft messages? Should their rhetoric be grounded in reasonably complex and accurate knowledge? Should one say with Plato (1960) in the *Phaedrus* that “a man must first know the truth about every single subject on which he speaks or writes” (sec. 277), grounded in the theoretical pastime of “leisurely discussion, by straggling, if you will, about the names of things” (sec. 270)?

To become “well informed” can only mean becoming aware of the deep seas of unfathomable knowledge upon which you merely bob about, scooping up half-measures—full as far as you can. Today, nobody can be well informed about the broad range of issues that affect people.

These questions are pointless. We live in an era of exploding knowledge and exponentially increasing databases, in which nobody can have any real knowledge of any depth on the range of important issues confronted each day. Read all the books, newspapers, and magazines you like; listen to the highest quality public radio and television shows you can find; expose yourself to information outlets from a wide variety of political perspectives. To become “well informed” can only mean becoming aware of the deep seas of unfathomable knowledge upon which you merely bob about, scooping up half-measures—full as far as you can. Today, nobody can be well informed about the broad range of issues that affect people.

## Works Cited

- Burgoon, M. R., & Sarver, C. R. (1999). Public speaking communication apprehension and self-perceived competence. *Communication Research Reports*, 16(1), 40-47.
- Burgoon, M. R., & Daly, J. A. (1999). What do people think causes stage fright? Attributional data on the reasons for public speaking anxiety. *Comm 63-72*.
- Cicero, T. (1942). *Analysis of research on the social sciences* (1st ed.). Edited by Hillis, J. A. (1997). *Avoiding communication: Ignorance, resistance, and communication apprehension* (2nd ed.). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

**Cite your sources: Put them on a separate page, despite how this example looks.** Don’t miss the opportunity to cite from your textbook. You may use other sources as well. And always identify where you got your “text” (pictures, speech manuscript, video URL, etc.)

At the end of your analysis, you’re ready to summarize the **RESULTS**. Next, you don’t have to label your **conclusion**, but you have to **HAVE** one. The conclusion works to summarize your main points and to (re)state your argument. For example, if you were using Burke’s Terministic Compulsion to analyze a campaign speech, you might conclude with an argument like this: “The candidate doesn’t state directly how he would solve this problem, but the theory of Terministic Compulsion indicates that the solution can only be understood in terms of the metaphors used to describe the problem. Therefore, the candidate would solve this problem by....” And, **so what? Why is it important to KNOW that?** It’s also important to leave the reader with a provocative thought that takes him/her out of the paper—perhaps something that (again) speaks to the significance of your research in the larger scope of political discourse, democracy, an informed electorate, lies and the lying liars that use them. etc.

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