

RhetCanada 2021 Conference Programme

June 2-4, 2021, University of Alberta

Note: For the latest updates on the programme, check the [online programme](#) on the RhetCanada website.

All times on this schedule are MDT (Edmonton) Time.
Adjust for your time zone: -1 BC | +1 MB | +2 ON & QC | +3 Maritimes (+3.5 NL)

Wednesday, June 2

Time	Sessions
9:00-9:15	Bruce Dadey, Welcome
9:15-9:45	New Perspectives on Ancient Rhetoric Chair: Sigrid Streit

Note: These are pre-recorded on-demand presentations. Please view the presentations *before* this session, which is a discussion about the papers.

Julie Dainville, Through the Sands of Time: the Rhetorical Training in Graeco-Roman Egypt

The aim of this presentation is to present the state of the art in the exploration of our most concrete sources on ancient rhetoric: rhetorical papyrus, and to explore what we can learn from them. I will particularly focus on rhetorical exercises.

Benoît Sans, Dispositio and Memoria through Ancient Rhetorical Training

Based on pedagogical experiments and difficulties encountered by students in rhetoric, this paper will explore the way the Ancient rhetorical training approach rhetorical arrangement (gr. taxis; lat. dispositio) and its links with memory (gr. mnêmê; lat. memoria).

Bruce Dadey, Pictura Rhetorica Silens: Resistance and Attention to the Visual in Classical Rhetoric

The practice of using visual artifacts for rhetorical purposes was well-developed in classical civilizations; the systematic application of rhetorical theory to visual phenomenon trailed behind. I argue that even as classical rhetoricians increasingly drew on the visual, there also developed within rhetoric a mounting tension between icon and logos, the image and the word.

10:00-
11:00

British and French Rhetoric, 1600-1800

Chair: Tracy Whalen

Tania Smith, The Rhetorical Canon of English Translations of Classical texts, 1650-1800

In this presentation I characterize the canon of English translations of Classical rhetorical works from 1650 to 1800. These texts disseminated and transformed classical rhetorical theory, criticism, and biography and wove it into the fabric of British rhetorical culture, both reflecting and influencing the rhetorical culture of the era.

Jonathan Doering, Externalism in the History and Theory of Rhetoric: When Rhetoricians and Their Decisions Don't Matter (Much)

Using the internalism-externalism distinction from the historiography of science, I reflect on why a largely externalist perspective proves necessary in sketching the institutional decline of rhetoric in France between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Generalizing, I sketch theoretical versions of rhetorical externalism and what they might mean for rhetorical studies.

11:30-
12:30

Civil Rhetoric

Chair: Randy Harris

Robert Danisch, Competing Obligations: Rhetorical Citizenship, Civility and Social Change

Competing Obligations intervenes in crucial current conversations about our political culture and public discourse. Addressing both the need for engagement among those who disagree as well as meaningful and vigorous dissent, this paper grapples with the problem of social change in a modern, mediated democracy. The essay proposes that rhetorical forms of civility are not simply a virtue but a functional set of tools that must be adapted to specific situations, asking us to weigh the long-term costs of rhetorical forms of incivility against the ability of dissent and protest to spur meaningful change.

Wendy Shilton, Rhetoric as Integrative Medicine? Surviving the Dynamics of Demagogic Rhetoric

Is rhetorical criticism a curative or a creative practice? This presentation discusses a course exploring the rhetoric of demagoguery and democracy through a dual pedagogy of critical rhetoric and reflective practice to surface the tensions between rhetoric as a "wedge" for distinctions and as a "bridge" for identifications.

12:45-
1:45

Rhetoric and Nature

Chair: Ryan McGucklin

Jen Clary-Lemon, Bridging Species Divides: Rhetoric between Humans, Nonhumans, and Things in the Sixth Extinction

This talk examines landscape infrastructure produced as mitigations mandated by the Species at Risk Act as material arguments of species in order to come to conclusions about how human and non-humans interface now, and will in future, on a species-reduced landscape.

Tim Michaels, The Rhetoric of Environmentalism in the Age of Hyperobjects

This presentation addresses the difficulties of contemporary environmentalism by introducing the concept of the hyperobject: an entity so massive in time and space that it eludes human conception, such as global warming or evolution. In bridging object-oriented ontology to rhetorical theory, hyperobjects represents the dominant challenge to environmental communication.

2:00-3:00 Colonial and Anti-Colonial Rhetorics

Chair: John Moffatt

Maša Torbica, Connective Activism: #Ottawapiskat and the Third Space of Sovereignty

This paper theorizes the dynamic interactions between discursive and embodied Indigenous challenges to settler colonialism by examining the rhetorical impacts of Twitter hashtags within the Idle No More movement. Specifically focusing on “#Ottawapiskat,” I argue that this satirical hashtag supported concurrent instances of on-the-ground Indigenous activism by successfully reframing neocolonial narrative bias.

Constance Cartmill, Rhétorique de la pitié et voix autochtones dans les écrits de la Nouvelle-France

Dans les écrits de la Nouvelle-France, on trouve plusieurs traces de la voix de l'Autre (autochtone), et notamment l'« éloquence sauvage », une rhétorique de la souffrance et de la vulnérabilité qui a souvent été mal comprise, avec des conséquences négatives dans l'histoire des rapports entre colonisateurs et Autochtones.

In the writings of New France there are often traces of the of the voice of the Indigenous Other, and notably of “l'éloquence sauvage,” a rhetoric of suffering and vulnerability which was often misunderstood, with negative consequences over the course of the history of relations between colonizers and Indigenous peoples.

Patricia Ofili, Communal Troping: Nelson Mandela's Strategy of Dissent

This paper examines the manner in which Nelson Mandela exploits communal troping, which is a rhetorical strategy of using tropes that unify a fragmented community within a complex socio-political landscape like apartheid South Africa. Mandela deploys this strategy within a braided rhetoric as a means of establishing dissent for the purpose of dismantling apartheid.

Thursday, June 3

Time Sessions

9:00-9:30 **The Bridging Power of Rhetorical Figures**

Chair: Benoît Sans

Note: These are pre-recorded on-demand presentations. Please view the presentations *before* this session, which is a discussion about the papers.

Kyle Gerber, Praedicandi Pop: The Mediatory Function of Rhetorical Figures in Public-Facing Evangelical Discourse

This paper analyses how popular Christian speakers and writers use rhetorical figures in public-facing social media as strategic efforts to bridge division between increasingly polarized audiences. I examine what the rhetorical tradition, and new work on rhetorical figures, reveals about the suasive function of highly figured theological expressions.

Chris Giannakopoulos, Between Poetry and Poetics: Parallel Rhetorical Figures in Jan Zwicky's *Lyric Philosophy* and *The Wittgenstein Elegies*

Note: Chris's on-demand presentation is available, but he is unable to attend the live Q&A.

Using research in cognitive poetics (Stockwell, Tsur, and Zunshine) and rhetorical figuration (Fahnsetock, Harris, and Turner) this paper explores the schemas common to both the language of poetry and philosophy in the early work of Jan Zwicky, a poet for whom philosophy and poetry share an epistemological, knowledge-producing function.

Mane Kara-Yakoubian, Danielle Bisnar Griffin, Alexander C. Walker, Konstantyn Sharpinskyi, Garni A. Assadourian, Jonathan. A. Fugelsang, and Randy Allen Harris, Chiasmus and the Keats Effect

We report on a study of the Keats effect, the claim that propositions are more readily accepted as true if they are expressed in aesthetically appealing ways. We test the judgements of English speakers for chiasmic sentences under several figurative conditions (including plosive, isocolon, and parison).

9:30-10:00 **Rhetoric and National Identity**

Chair: Benoît Sans

Note: These are pre-recorded on-demand presentations. Please view the presentations *before* this session, which is a discussion about the papers.

David Beard, Identity and Rhetorical Scholarship

Working with dozens of first person essays by junior and senior scholars from four continents, I map the ways that national identity affects research and pedagogy, with

attention to intersections with religious, ethnic, gender and disciplinary identity. Finally, I critically examine the impulse toward cosmopolitanism in rhetorical studies.

Shannon Lodoen, Where is “Here” and Who is “We”? Rhetorically Constructing a Unified Canada

This presentation investigates how a country such as Canada, which is often identified by its “multicultural attitude” and willingness to accept people from other nations, rhetorically constructs and perpetuates its own unique identity: the “us” that nonetheless sets itself off, implicitly and also explicitly, from a “them.”

Shivaun Corry, What’s Up with Americans and Their Constitution Fetish?

This paper seeks to explain to non-Americans (specifically, to Canadians) why Americans seem to treat the constitution as an infallible sacred document using the example of the debate over gun control in the USA.

10:15-
11:15

The Role of Rhetoric in Effective Communication

Chair: Bruce Dadey

Jocelyn Peltier-Huntley, Rhetorical Strategies for Transforming Saskatchewan’s Mining & Engineering Workplaces

Many traditionally male-dominated workplaces are becoming aware of the need to transform their workplaces to be inclusive and diverse. To lead the necessary changes, equity allies require an understanding of and skills in rhetoric to communicate the factual conditions and related interests (Bitzer, 1980) required to articulate the problem and implement solutions.

Jeffrey Orr, Feeling Better: Affect and Public Health in Dr. Bonnie Henry’s Covid-19 Communication

This paper examines the balance of statistics with affect and anecdote in the effective rhetorical style of Dr Bonnie Henry’s public health communication during the Covid-19 pandemic. This balance reaches multiple points on a political spectrum. The balance of logic and emotion is a classic rhetorical concern.

11:45-
12:45

Choric, Kairotic, Canadian: Rhetorical Approaches to Contemporary Historical Monuments in Western Canada

Chair: David Beard

John Moffatt, Reconciliation as Chōra and Kairos in Historical Statuary in Saskatoon

Recent monuments commemorating First Nations–Settler cooperation in Western Canada represent constructive problem-solving strategies in the rhetorics of Reconciliation. The artefacts engage with Reconciliation, not as a prescriptive programme but as a generative

attitude which resituates competing understandings of Canadian history within a re-imagined “ecology” of rhetorical space and time.

Andrew McGillivray, Convergence and Divergence: Matching Monuments in Reykjavik and Winnipeg

This paper analyzes Einar Jónsson’s two Jón Sigurðsson statues. The first stands in Reykjavik, exemplifying Iceland’s emancipation from Denmark; the second is in Winnipeg, where it too commemorates Iceland’s independence. The Winnipeg statue evokes additional meanings, however, including formation and preservation of settler identity in an ethnically-diverse Canada.

Jeanie Wills, Red Star Woman and the Dance of Reconciliation: An Exploration of Individual “Attunements” for Rhetorical Beings

This paper explores how the statue known as *Wicanhpi Duta Win (Red Star Woman)*, erected 2015 and located in front of new Saskatoon City Police station, functions rhetorically as an agent of Reconciliation. The statue depicts a young woman, arms upraised, one foot off the ground caught in mid dance step.

1:00-2:00 **The Rhetoric of Women’s Autobiography**
Chair: Maša Torbica

Maab Alkurdi, Bitterly Rhetorical: Terror in the Autobiography of Zainab Salbi

My paper rhetorically examines the autobiography of Zainab Salbi, which sheds light on the embedded rhetoric of terror and oppression that gives birth to forced silence. The suffering Salbi expresses does not come from being imprisoned or physically tortured, as the case in many other life writings of Iraqi women, but from psychological torture that cannot be cured, relieved or escaped from by the fact of being “friends” with Hussein.

Andrea Valente, Can Women’s Rhetoric Bridge The Divide Between the Scientific/Medical Community and the Vernacular? A Look into Autobiographies by Women with Neurological Conditions

This presentation explores rhetorical patterns in autobiographies by women living with neurological conditions. It claims that women’s life writings are interwoven, netting complex patterns which are discursive and experiential. It departs from feminist rhetoric to complexity theory to discuss the collaborative, dialogic and fluctuation elements that rhetorically mark those narratives.

2:15-3:00 **Burkean Parlor**
Chair: Bruce Dadey

Topic: How might rhetoricians productively intervene in contemporary crises like racism, political division, and climate change? What might RhetCanada do to respond constructively to these issues?

Friday, June 4

9:00-
10:00

The Rhetoric of Social Media and Technology

Chair: Julie Dainville

Monique Kampher, Masks and Caricatures: Prosopopoeia and Ethopoeia in Canada's 2019 English-Language Leaders' Debate

The effects of social media on leadership debates are unmistakable, in terms of structure and in terms of performance. What this also means is that the structure and performance of democracy is being (re)shaped by social media. This study centres on ethos, as represented and depicted in Canada's 2019 English-Language Leaders' Debate, and reveals the effect of social media on political debates through the lens of two rhetorical figures, prosopopoeia and ethopoeia.

Sarah MacKeil, Exploring the Rhetoric of Millennial-Targeted Brand Discourse

Millennials present a unique set of kairotic challenges to advertisers. Many brands have responded by mimicking young adults' internet discourse characteristics, including colloquialisms, sarcastic Twitter personas, and humorous memes. Is this a fleeting trend or a rhetorically grounded strategy? What are potential implications for evolving power dynamics in postmodern advertising?

Paula Nunez de Villavicencio, Preconditioning the Human to Enhancing the Selection, Storage and Processing of Information Through Reality Augmenting Glasses

This paper examines the discourse surrounding reality augmenting smart glasses to determine the problems and imagined solutions the technology answers to. Using a Foucauldian theoretical framework in combination with Barthes, Burke and Scott the paper addresses the development of our preconditioning to AR technologies through stories, films and advertising.

10:15-
11:15

On Another Note: Rhetoric and Music

Chair: Kyle Gerber

Ryan McGuckin, Disrupted Again: Kenneth Burke and Musical Life in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Unconsoled*

Prominent theorists remind us that music is a rhetorical force, upholding traditions yet also inciting reform. This talk argues that Kazuo Ishiguro's 1995 novel *The Unconsoled* underscores music as creating artistic zones where people must harmonize individuality and shared memory, highlighting music's rhetorical value in recognizing intolerances to necessitate reconciliation.

Tracy Whalen, Orchestrating Difference: The Limits of Hospitality in the Musical *Come From Away*

Come From Away celebrates the hospitality of Gander residents whose town was descended upon, literally, by almost 7000 passengers on September 11, 2001. The smash hit provides a rich rhetorical site to examine not only the character of hospitality celebrated in popular culture, but also the limits of that hospitality.

Lia ter Heide, “Tykie’s Coming Out”: A Dramatistic Analysis

Kenneth Burke’s dramatistic pentad enables critics to identify where the dramatic tension of a text originates, the hierarchy it suggests, and devices that can be used to transcend the hierarchy. Saskatchewan musician Jeffrey Straker’s “Tykie’s Coming Out”(2008) features a vocabulary of motives that locates the dramatic tensions between agent/scene and act/agency.

11:45-
12:45

Rhetoric and Race

Chair: Andy McGillivray

Randy Harris, Kairos and Racism: The Rise of Jagmeet Singh

From ongoing colonialism to dog whistles like “barbaric cultural practices” to the rise of the People’s Party, Canadian politics is endemically racist. The 2019 federal election, with the revelation of Trudeau’s blackface past, brought increased attention to the first racialized candidate for prime minister, Jagmeet Singh, and he shone.

Chitra Karki, Racing the Anti-racist Rhetoric in Classrooms

This presentation explores issues of racism on Canadian university campuses and emphasizes the necessity of anti-racist rhetoric as a praxis for racial justice, doing which entails the education and awareness of notions of intersectionality that are theorized and advocated in Critical Race Theory.

1:00-2:00

Questions of Authority

Chair: Shivaun Corry

Michael Dudley, Epistemic Injustice, Academic Freedom and the Shakespeare Authorship Question

This presentation critiques the divisive rhetorics that serve to marginalize, ridicule and defame scholars researching the Shakespeare Authorship Question. Such rhetoric and the academic taboo it reinforces is found to constitute a form of epistemic injustice harming all Shakespeare scholars, whereas rhetoric informed by epistemic fallibility could invigorate the field.

Patricia Balbon, Anjiya Sharif, and Ashley Rose Mehlenbacher, Bogus Experts and the Involvement of Heuristics When Assessing Expertise

Possessing expertise parallels specific social behaviours that inspire confidence in other experts. Our work investigates how experts are able to identify bogus experts, or those who are bluffing about what and how much they know.

2:15-3:00 **Burkean Parlor**

Chair: Bruce Dadey

Topic: From a rhetorical perspective, why is disinformation so common, and how might rhetorical studies help to combat it?

3:00-5:15 Bruce Dadey, **Closing remarks**