PHD READING LIST
RHETORIC AND LANGUAGE THEORY

The following is a fundamental reading list for doctoral students preparing for comprehensive examinations in the field of Rhetoric and Language Theory. One purpose for the exam is to acquaint students with major theories and writers in the field; another is to assemble key texts underpinning dissertation research. The list is suggestive rather than definitive and should be used as a starting point for consultation with members of the Committee on Studies. The list has five sections:

- General Studies
- Grammar, Style, and Language History
- Classical Rhetoric
- Medieval to Enlightenment Rhetoric
- Nineteenth-Century and Contemporary Rhetoric

GENERAL STUDIES

GRAMMAR, STYLE, AND LANGUAGE HISTORY


**CLASSICAL RHETORIC**

Note: Consult with a member of your Committee on Studies to select appropriate editions of Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, Isocrates, Quintilian, and Augustine. We’ve suggested critical editions for some of these works. The Loeb Classical Library (Harvard University Press) publications are in Greek and English.

Works marked with the symbol † may be found in *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. Ed. Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg. 2nd ed. New York: Bedford-St. Martin’s, 2000.


Gorgias. “Encomium of Helen” †


Isocrates. “Against the Sophists.” †


Plato. *Cratylus*.
---. *Gorgias*.
---. *Phaedrus*.
---. *Protagoras*.

Quintilian. *Institutes of Oratory*. Books I, II, XI, XII.

**MEDIEVAL TO ENLIGHTENMENT RHETORIC**

Note: Works marked with the symbol † may be found in *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. Ed. Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg. 2nd ed. New York: Bedford-St. Martin’s, 2000.


Updated 2/2003.
Locke, John. “An Essay Concerning Human Understanding.” †
“Longinus.” “On the Sublime” †
Nietzsche, Friedrich. "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense"†
Ramus, Petrus. “Arguments against Quintilian”†

**Nineteenth-Century and Contemporary Rhetoric**

Note: Works marked with the symbol † may be found in The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present. Ed. Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg. 2nd ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2000.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. "Problems of Speech Genres."†
Cixous, Hélène. “The Laugh of the Medusa”†
Gates, Henry Louis, "The Signifying Monkey and the Language of Signifyin(G): Rhetorical Difference and the Orders of Meaning."†

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Weaver, Richard. "Language is Sermonic."†

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