

What is the New Rhetoric? conference

The rediscovery of rhetoric in recent decades has had a significant impact upon communication practices, language study and the scholarship of writing.

This first Australian conference on the New Rhetoric brings together Australian and international experts to explore the benefits of revisiting a classical art.

Proudly sponsored by the University of Sydney and the Plain English Foundation, the conference features keynote speaker Professor Andrea Lunsford of Stanford University and plenary speaker Professor George Pullman of Georgia State University.

Presenters will discuss:

- new directions in the study and practice of rhetoric
- new rhetoric and new technology
- the growing use of rhetoric in the teaching of writing and literature
- applying rhetoric to communication in the professions.

University of Sydney, Australia
Darlington Conference Centre
2-3 September, 2005

www.arts.usyd.edu.au/departs/english

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What is the New Rhetoric?

Conference program

Friday 2 September

5–5.45 pm: Registration

5.45–6.30 pm: Reception

6.30–7 pm: Welcome and introductions

7 pm: Keynote address. New Directions in Rhetorical Studies

Andrea Lunsford, Stanford University

Saturday 3 September

9–9.40 am: Plenary session. Rhetorically Speaking, What's New?

George Pullman, Georgia State University

9.45–10.45 am: Session 1. Perceptions of Rhetoric

Anne Surma, Murdoch University. Can I Call You 'Mate'? Rhetoric and Why It Matters as Social Practice.

Antonina Harbus, Macquarie University. Rhetoric is Not a Dirty Word: Bad Press, Semantic Change and Perceptions of Verbal Manipulation.

Claire Woods, University of South Australia. Perspectives in an Undergraduate Education: Rhetoric, Ethnography and Textual Culture.

10.45–11 am: Morning tea

11–12 pm: Session 2. New Rhetoric and Institutional Practice

Neil James, Plain English Foundation. No Minister: Intention and Reality in the Rhetoric of Government.

Lori Salem, Temple University. Data and Goliath: Genre, Accountability and the Rhetoric of Managerial Universities.

Brian Clarke, Clarke & Associates. Am I Being a Pain? Rhetoric and Medical Institutions.

12–1 pm: Session 3. New Rhetoric in Science, Law and the Academy

Joan Leach, University of Queensland. Rhetorics of the Sciences: Mediation and New Rhetorical Theory

Louis Beaudoin, Jurilinguist and Legal Translator. The Genius of the Legal Language — the Canadian Experience.

D Ross, University of Michigan. Voice Embodied: Putting Performance Studies (Back) into Rhetoric, or the Other Way Around.

1–2 pm: Lunch

2–3 pm: Session 4. New Rhetoric and Feminism/Gender Studies

Kate Lilley, University of Sydney. Rhetorical Sex: Early Modern Women's Poetry

Kate Mould, University of Sydney. Kiss the Fiction into Fact: Sidney's New Rhetoric.

Patricia Pender, Pace University. 'No Rhetoricke We Expect': Early Modern Women Writers and the Arts of Modesty.

3–4 pm: Session 5. New Rhetoric in the Curriculum

Eva Gold, English Teachers' Association NSW. The Rhetorical Model in Secondary English Classrooms.

Beth Kalikoff, University of Washington, Tacoma. 'The New Assessment' and the New Rhetoric.

Joanna Tapper, University of Melbourne. New Rhetoric and Genre: A Case Study of Undergraduates' Evaluative Reports.

4–4.30 pm: Afternoon tea

4.30–5.30 pm: Session 6. New Rhetoric and New Technology

Simone Marshall, University of Sydney. Engagement Theory, WebCT and Academic Writing in Australia.

Melissa Hardie, University of Sydney. Late Modern Blog.

Fergus Armstrong, University of Sydney. New Rhetoric and Millikan's, Mann's and Einstein's 'Messages for the Future'.

5.30 pm: New Voices of New Rhetoric

With students Alys Moody, Joel Meares and Cassie Murphy.

6 pm: Wrap up and cocktail party

Keynote address

Andrea Lunsford, Stanford University

New Directions in Rhetorical Studies

Although rhetoric has gained much ground since its revival in the 1960s, it is still a marginalised field, too often associated with remediation or gatekeeping, and faced with a series of challenges. The future of the discipline depends on how we respond to these challenges in ways that help to create and maintain a ‘new’ rhetoric.

First among these is location: where within the university should a ‘new’ rhetoric be housed? Then there is the relationship to new technologies, for the ‘new’ rhetoric is deeply technologised. We are also seeing the return of orality, performance and delivery to the classroom. The fifth canon of rhetoric is moving to the centre of our discipline, and students must now assess how they deliver the knowledge they produce. This asks for more expansive definitions of writing, along with a flexible critical vocabulary that evokes a new rhetoric and writing as epistemic, performative, multivocal, multimodal and multi-mediated.

The address will illustrate these issues with the recent experience of the Stanford Program in Writing and Rhetoric. We face the challenge of fulfilling our mandate to teach effective writing and speaking while allowing students the opportunity to author in the most compelling discursive modalities of their generation.

Biography

Recently named the Louise and Claude Rosenberg, Jr Fellow in Undergraduate Education and the Louise Hewlett Nixon Professor of English, Andrea Lunsford is Professor of English and Director of the Program in Writing and Rhetoric at Stanford University. She has designed and taught undergraduate and graduate courses in writing history and theory, rhetoric, literacy studies and intellectual property. Before joining the Stanford faculty, Lunsford was Distinguished Professor of English and Director of the Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing at Ohio State University. Currently also a member of the Bread Loaf School of English faculty, Professor Lunsford earned her BA and MA degrees from the University of Florida and completed her PhD in English at The Ohio State University.

Research interests

Rhetorical theory, gender and rhetoric, collaborative writing, cultures of writing, and technologies of writing.

Relevant publications

Andrea has published fourteen books, including *Everything's an argument*; *The everyday writer*; *Essays on Classical rhetoric and modern discourse*; *Singular texts/plural authors: perspectives on collaborative writing*; and *Reclaiming rhetorica: women in the history of rhetoric*. Her most recent books include *The St. Martin's handbook*, 5th edition, and with Lahoucine Ouzgane, *Exploring borderlands: composition and postcolonial studies*.

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Plenary address

George Pullman, Georgia State
University

Rhetorically Speaking, What's New?

The pretext for this conference is a deceptively simple question. What is the new rhetoric seems straightforward, but it is in fact complex because the two key words are polysemous and overdetermined. New can mean recent, innovative, better, improved, innocent, jejune and a host of other mostly positive adjectives, while rhetoric can mean nearly anything, although its connotations are typically negative: political lies, corporate spin, long lists of Greek and Roman terms for patterns of expression no one knowingly uses, purple prose, boiler-plate arrangement schemas, unimaginative reproductions of traditional topics and themes, emotional appeals offered in the absence of reason, bullshit and so on. Given the malodour of the word rhetoric, it makes sense to want a new rhetoric, in the sense of a practice and theory of discursive activity that effectively distance themselves from old rhetoric, exemplified for the most part, albeit in very different ways, by Plato and Aristotle. The problem for anyone who would posit a new rhetoric is that Plato invented the word and Aristotle so thoroughly described the phenomenon that it is very difficult for anyone to come up with anything that does not echo something from the past, which suggests that ancient rhetorical theory continues to influence rhetorical practice regardless of conscious efforts to the contrary. I will try to demonstrate the plausibility of this assertion by first contextualising the expression 'the new rhetoric', and then looking at how several electronic forms of communication clearly echo ancient rhetorical practices.

Biography

George L. Pullman is currently Director of Writing Across the Curriculum and Associate Professor of English at Georgia State University, where he designed and helped to develop the program of rhetoric and advanced composition. His interests include the history and theory of rhetoric and the intersection of traditional rhetorical lore and computer-mediated communications. His most recent publication discusses the relationship between data and text, and his current work involves online writing environments. His articles have appeared in *Computers and Writing*, *Rhetoric Review* and *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*.

Research interests

History of rhetoric, rhetorical theory, digital rhetoric.

Relevant publications

'From Greek to geek', Enculturation website, Issue 5.2, 2005.
<http://enculturation.gmu.edu/5_2/index52.html>

'Electronic portfolios revisited: the Efolios project', *Computers and Composition* 19 (2002) 151–69.

'A brief history and technical overview of the current state of JAC Online, with a few observations about how the Internet is influencing (or failing to influence) scholarship: Or, who says you can't find JAC Online?' Kairos website, Vol 7, Issue 10, 2002.
<<http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/7.x/index.html>>

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Session 1: Perceptions of Rhetoric

Anne Surma, Murdoch University

'Can I Call You "Mate"? Rhetoric and Why It Matters as Social Practice'

The idea of a new rhetoric – as discipline and as practice – can be mobilised for making us self-conscious about the idea that *rhetoric matters*: that it has both subjective significance and social substance. In this paper I argue that our tendency to privilege language and meaning as objectifiable entities inhibits the possibility for diverse views, ideas and arguments to circulate in the public arena. I go on to suggest that only through a simultaneous awareness of the subjective and objective dimensions of language can we write or speak a public rhetoric that engages others ethically in meaningful exchange. Thus, rhetoric can be considered as a potential instance of *objectivating*, a notion used by critical theorist Vivian Sobchack to explore the lived body in both its subjective and objective modes. Her approach can help frame our understanding of rhetoric – and why it matters so much – in contemporary culture.

Biography

Anne Surma is a senior lecturer in the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia, where she teaches in the areas of professional writing, public relations and literary studies. She has a special research interest in the imaginative and ethical uses of rhetoric, an interest reflected in her recently published monograph, *Public and professional writing: ethics, imagination and rhetoric* (Palgrave Macmillan 2005). Currently, Anne is exploring what she perceives as a crucial role for an ethical rhetoric in the public arena: as the embodiment of shared human and social ideas, visions and actions.

Research interests

The ethics of public and professional writing and rhetoric; the impact of metaphor and idiom in public language; 'hollow rhetoric' and meaningful language.

Relevant publications

Public and professional writing: ethics, imagination and rhetoric, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

'Text matters: an alternative perspective on the meaning and value of communicating in public relations', paper presented at the Centre for Public Communication, Bournemouth University, 27 June 2005.

'Defining professional writing as an area of scholarly activity', *TEXT* 4(2) (2000).
<<http://www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/oct00/surma.htm>>

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Rhetoric is Not a Dirty Word: Bad Press, Semantic Change and Perceptions of Verbal Manipulation

This paper will look at the fortunes of the term ‘rhetoric’ in a variety of discourses – including those undertaken in academic publications, the popular media and other contemporary contexts – to explore how the concept of verbal manipulation is perceived in these discourses. I will investigate notions of communicative propriety, clarity and honesty on which such ideas are apparently based, and consider how these shifting perceptions are reflected in the changing connotations over time and contexts of the term ‘rhetoric’.

In recent times, particularly in political debate and commentary on it in the Australian mass media, the term is used almost abusively, with connotations of ‘empty/meaningless language’ or ‘deceptive speech’, with the implied corollary that there is a more honest, straightforward mode of communicating which is somehow free of linguistic manipulation. The apparent acceptance of these implications by the general population, in their understanding and use of the term ‘rhetoric’, suggests that the semantic range of the term might indeed have become irrevocably narrowed to this negative connotation within this speech community, and probably more broadly too. If so, this situation poses a challenge of semantic recovery or renaming for scholars of ‘New Rhetoric’.

Within this general mood towards the term ‘rhetoric’, the perception of figurative or ‘poetic’ language and especially metaphor seems likewise to be deteriorating, even in academic discourses, but most particularly in the popular press. This paper will consider persistent prejudices concerning metaphor as a tricky element of rhetorical language, and expose resistance to the idea that ‘metaphoric’ language is part of everyday communication, including those instances where ‘rhetoric’ is used with negative connotations.

Biography

Antonina Harbus is a lecturer in the Department of English at Macquarie University, Sydney, where she convenes the first-year unit Introduction to English, and teaches other units on narrative, poetry and metaphor. Antonina Harbus received a BA (Hons) from the University of Queensland (1986) and an MA (1989) and PhD (1994) from the University of Toronto. Her publications include articles on dreams and subjectivity in literature; *Helena of Britain in medieval legend*, Brewer, Cambridge, 2002; and *The life of the mind in Old English poetry*, Rodopi, Amsterdam and New York, 2002. Antonina Harbus is co-editor (with Russell Poole) of *Verbal encounters in Old English and Old Norse literature: studies for Roberta Frank*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2005); and (with Karin Olsen and Tette Hofstra *Miracles and the miraculous in medieval Germanic and Latin literature*, Peeters, Louvain, 2004; and *Germanic texts and their Latin models: medieval reconstructions* Peeters, Louvain, 2001.

Research interests

Poetry and poetic language; literary rhetoric and semiotics; metaphor; constructing the self in narrative; dreams and the unconscious in English literature; ideas on the mind in early English discourses.

Relevant publications

‘Thinking in metaphors: figurative language and ideas on the mind’, *Sydney Studies in English* 30 (2004) 3–20.

The life of the mind in Old English poetry, Rodopi, Amsterdam and New York, 2002.

‘The medieval concept of the self in Anglo-Saxon England’, *Self and Identity* 1 (2002) 77–97

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Claire Woods, University of South
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Perspectives in an Undergraduate Education: Rhetoric, Ethnography and Textual Culture

The paper will describe the evolution of an interdisciplinary undergraduate program framed by perspectives derived *inter alia* from rhetoric (new rhetorical practice), cultural studies, ethnography, linguistics, sociolinguistics, and studies in textual cultures. The program allows students to engage in creative and professional communication practice and performance, developing an understanding of the theoretical and applied work involved in the *tekhné* of text production as readers, writers, makers and receivers of multi-genre textual forms. The staff in the program have a commitment to scholarship in teaching and to a reflective critical stance in relation to the program and their pedagogy. It is this that has driven the evolution of the program over the past 12 years.

Biography

Claire is Professor, Communication and Writing, and Director of International Programs, in the School of Communication Information and New Media, at the University of South Australia. As Teaching Team leader in Professional Writing and Communication, she is a member of the team that won the 2000 Australian Award for University Teaching in Humanities and the Arts, and the Prime Minister's Award as University Teachers of the Year. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society for Arts, Manufacturers & Commerce (UK) and was awarded the George Barton Fellowship and is currently Honorary Professor at the University of Queensland. She is a member of the Executive of the Australian Association of Writing Programs and the National Creative Writing Research Archive. A former ministerial appointment to the Australian National Language and Literacy Council, she is also a former President of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English and was honoured with Life Membership for her contribution to English teaching in Australia.

Research interests

The teaching of writing; literary practice; creative non-fiction; ethnography of writing; communication in professional, workplace and community contexts; issues in qualitative research and particularly in writing research; and English studies. Her current work is in biographical narrative.

Relevant publications

Communication and writing – footprints on a territory, Hawke Institute Monograph Series, No 3, University of South Australia, 2000. <<http://www.hawkecentre.unisa.edu.au/institute>>

'A program evolves: relocating writing, relocating literary studies', *TEXT* 6(2) (2000). <<http://www.gu.edu.au/school/art/text/oct02/woods.htm>>

'Altered geographies: ethnography, rhetoric, discourse and the construction of knowledge in a BA (Professional Writing and Communication) (Part1)', *Australian Journal of Communication* 23(3) (1996).

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Session 2: New Rhetoric and Institutional Practice

Neil James, Plain English Foundation

No Minister: Intention and Reality in the Rhetoric of Government

When government agencies describe the values that guide their communication with the public, they use terms such as openness, honesty, transparency, respect, fairness and accountability. Yet the rhetorical approaches they employ often run counter to these values.

This paper explores the gap between intention and reality in government writing by applying three concepts of rhetoric: style, composition and proof. Government style is highly formal and dense. It conveys a sense of ‘gravitas’ more readily than it conveys its actual content. Secondly, government writers commonly use narrative structures when arranging their text, burying key information in long chronologies of process. Finally, the types of proof in government documents fall into a narrow range: arguments of consequence, precedent and authority.

Reading government documents through rhetoric helps us understand why texts often fail spectacularly to achieve their purpose for their intended audience. I will discuss the implications this has for the accessibility of government services, the quality of decision-making, and the effective use of public resources. I will argue that the New Rhetoric has the potential, not just to help agencies to reinvigorate their writing, but also to improve the services they provide – to bridge the gaps between their current practices and the values they aspire to.

Biography

Dr Neil James has been Executive Director of the Plain English Foundation since 2003, applying the techniques of the New Rhetoric to improve professional communication. He has a doctorate in English from the University of Sydney. Neil has worked as a policy officer in the NSW Cabinet Office and as a program manager at the NSW Ministry for the Arts. His publishing experience includes a stint as Associate Publisher at Halstead Press and Managing Editor of *Boxkite*, a journal of poetry and poetics. He speaks regularly about public communication throughout Australia and internationally. In 2004, he was invited to give the keynote address at the 2004 Style Council, and in 2005 to present papers at the Clarity conference in Boulogne and at the PLAIN conference in Washington DC. He has published more than 50 essays, articles and reviews in outlets as diverse as the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *Daily Telegraph*, and in journals such as *Meanjin*, *ALS*, *Southerly* and *Publishing Studies*. His two books are *Writers on Writing* (1998) and *The Complete Sentimental Bloke* (2002). Neil is currently writing a book on the use of plain English in the professions, to be published by Allen and Unwin in 2007.

Research interests

Improving professional communication using plain English, rhetoric, document design, and traditional grammar; the history of the plain English movement; institutional histories and the impact of institutions on culture; Australian literature and Australian cultural history.

Relevant publications

'Flagship Angus and Robertson', in Munro and Sheahan (eds), *Publishing's Paper Empire: A History of the Book in Australian 1946–2001*, University of Queensland Press, 2005.

'The Rhetoric of Trust', Perspective, ABC Radio National, 7 October 2004.

<<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/perspective/stories/s1215319.htm>>

'No Knowns', *Times Literary Supplement*, 13 February 2004, p 12.

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Lori Salem, Temple University

Data and Goliath: Genre, Accountability and the Rhetoric of Managerial Universities

In this paper, I look at 'workplace' writing in managerial universities, following the modes of analysis initiated by Carolyn Miller and Anne Freadman and developed by Anthony Pare, Lars-Christer Hyden, Graham Smart and others. I focus in particular on two assessment reports written for an American university writing centre. Both of these texts are apparently aimed at convincing an administrator of the value of the writing centre by demonstrating productivity, effectiveness, accountability and so forth. But each text also has other social actions that are both camouflaged and enacted by the genre. The analysis of these texts reveals the subtle influence of managerialist ideologies on academic work, and it raises questions about the role of academic professional organisations (like NCTE and RSA) in the conflict between faculty and administration.

Biography

Lori Salem has been the Director of the Writing Center at Temple University since 1999. Her work has been presented at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, the Conference of the Council of Writing Program Administrators, and at the Thomas R Watson conference on Composition and Rhetoric.

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Am I being a pain? Rhetoric and Medical Institutions

Traditional rhetorical analysis is based on place, people, proof, plausibility and persuasion; however, with just these five Ps, we can not understand let alone predict outcomes. If we add power to the equation, we can understand and predict. A small set of vignettes drawn from my doctoral research is used to illustrate how rhetorical analysis can be advanced. These vignettes are based in several hospital treatment settings where I tracked the career trajectories of many doctors, nurses and patients. The underlying research question was, 'How do people make sense of their episodes in hospitals?' The usual normative literature is full of instructions on how to get ahead in a career – but the monolithic, overly psychologistic (navel-gazing), non-contextual approach leaves quite a bit to be explained. As a broader criticism of the rhetoric, it is wise to back up postulations with actual data. It is not clear that Aristotle ever carried out systematic research – in spite of the richness of his hypotheses. Nowadays, social research shows us that many of his hypotheses are not proven. And richer explanations that include political and contextual dimensions have emerged to fill that gap.

Biography

Brian first qualified in engineering. He started redesigning jobs for motor vehicle assembly workers and quickly moved on to organisation design and change in packaging and machine tool manufacture – this latter while completing an MBA specialising in finance and organisation. He has taught in the social science and technical areas in universities and technical colleges, here and abroad. While in the UK, he worked with such clients as Rolls Royce and Lucas Aerospace on organisational change projects. After completing his PhD in London, he joined Price Waterhouse in Sydney as a Senior Consultant in Marketing and Strategy, leading projects for such government agencies as the Australian Government Health Service, the Australian Securities Commission and the Joint Coal Board. Brian has provided technical writing services for over 12 years for such clients as AMP, Boeing Australia, Cochlear, Mitsubishi Electric, NSW Police, Optus, ResMed, Rockwell Australia and Siemens Plessey.

Research interests

Decision making under conditions of uncertainty; making sense in context; getting young people interested in reading, maths and science.

Relevant publications

'Socialisation into roles in the hospital setting', in M Colledge and D Jones, eds, *Readings in nursing*, Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, 1979.

Case studies: how to achieve effectiveness efficiently, Wolsey Hall, Oxford, 1986.

'A contextualist view of hospital operations', PhD thesis, University of London, 1988.

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Session 3: New Rhetoric in science, law and the academy

Joan Leach, University of
Queensland

Rhetorics of the Sciences: Mediation and New Rhetorical Theory

The heady days of putting all of science *sub specie rhetorike* have been replaced with more sober reflection on the use of rhetoric by scientists in the various sciences and between scientists and lay publics. This has yielded ample case material for the teaching and analysis of 'the rhetoric of science'. However, making sense of these case studies has pushed new questions of rhetorical theory to the fore. This paper examines 'mediation' as one such rhetorical theory, reconstructs its rhetorical history, and suggests contemporary uses in the rhetoric of science.

Biography

Joan Leach has convened the Science Communication Program at the University of Queensland since mid-2004. She is an associate in the new program in Biohumanities. She was co-founder and president of the American Association for the Rhetoric of Science and has published on the role of rhetoric in scientific medicine as well as on rhetoric in public scientific controversies. She is editor of the international journal *Social Epistemology*. She is completing a book on ideas of communication in medicine and how they structure medical epistemology.

Research interests

Rhetoric of science; social epistemology; biohumanities; public scientific controversies; classical rhetorical theory and classical science

Relevant publications

'Beyond Social Constructivism', *Social Epistemology* 2005, 20:2.

'Rhetorical Theories of Testimony', *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, forthcoming.

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The Genius of the Legal Language – the Canadian Experience

In bilingual countries like Canada, bijuralism and official bilingualism represent considerable challenges for lawyers and translators. This raises the question of the specific nature of the legal vernacular. Legal systems (common law/civil law) and the languages in which they are expressed (French/English) are inextricably linked to the culture, history and social system of the country to which they belong.

Legal languages (French/English) operate to a certain degree on different, parallel planes. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in metaphors and idiomatic phrases which abound in legal texts. Because it is pragmatic and visual, English frequently uses images to describe ideas and even legal concepts (e.g. the thin skull doctrine). French is more frugal when it comes to metaphors. One of the reasons for this situation is the fact that, as a general rule, the French language proceeds on a more abstract level to express ideas.

Legal English has always been a more technical, specialised language than legal French, which is closer to ordinary language. A cursory look at the Napoleonic Code shows that the terms used by the French legislator are more often than not everyday words. Which may be one of the reasons why the plain language movement started in English-speaking countries before spreading to other jurisdictions.

Those in charge of training professional legal translators and writers need to take these facts into account if they want to ensure clarity and to teach their students how to craft rigorous and elegant texts that capture the genius of the (French/English) language. To effectively communicate a message, legal translators and drafters need to be thoroughly acquainted with the expressions and turns of phrase characteristic of the legal vernacular.

Biography

After earning a civil law degree at the Université de Sherbrooke (Canada), Louis Beaudoin studied common law at the Université de Moncton, translation at Concordia University, in Montréal, and linguistics at the Université de Sherbrooke. A jurilinguist and legal translator for the past 20 years, he taught legal translation in the Master's Program offered by the University of Ottawa's School of Translation and Interpretation. He has also taught courses in legal drafting and terminology to English- and French-speaking lawyers and judges. He has designed courses in drafting legal decisions for the Canadian judiciary and has contributed to numerous reviews and publications, particularly the *Juridictionnaire*, a work examining the difficulties and resources of legal French.

Relevant publications

Expressions juridiques en un clin d'œil (Legal expressions in a wink), with Madeleine Mailhot, 3rd edition, 2005.

Les mots du droit (Legal thesaurus).

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Voice Embodied: Putting Performance Studies (Back) into Rhetoric, or the Other Way Around

In a body, words take on a whole different dimension from their disembodied existence on a page. Yet, somewhere along the line in the history of language in the West, practices of writing and practices of speaking got set on different, increasingly divergent paths. Though rhetoric has its roots in the art of oratory, students of rhetoric today are trained to write and to construct critical arguments, but they are rarely themselves trained in the delivery of the spoken word. Professional actor training programs, on the other hand, require little if any formal training in rhetorical analysis. Blind spots in both fields obscure the fact that neither is equipped to undertake the complicated task of locating and understanding the dynamics of ‘voice’ in text-based performance practices.

In this paper, I will use simple acting exercises and illustrations from observations of professional actors in rehearsal to demonstrate and hopefully start to bridge the gap between rhetoric as the study of written argument and rhetoric as the study of an embodied act of persuasion.

Biography

D. Ross is a visiting Fulbright Scholar at the Department of Performance Studies at the University of Sydney, where she is using rehearsal data to explore how theatre artists deal with bodily differences such as age, disability and body size in character-based performance. Her interest in body theory and acting has provided opportunities to study overseas in Finland and Australia, as well as to participate in and chair conference panels at home in the US. In her spare time, she has worked as a teambuilding facilitator and facilitator trainer for ‘low ropes’ experiential education activities, as well as occasionally directing and assisting with stage productions. In December 2005, she will return to the University of Michigan to complete her PhD in Theatre Studies and begin teaching.

Research interests

Critical theory; body theory; performance theory; disability studies; contemporary dramatic literature and theatrical performance; ethnography.

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Session 4: New Rhetoric and Feminism/Gender Studies

Kate Lilley, University of Sydney

Rhetorical Sex: Early Modern Women's Poetry

This paper considers the self-consciousness and subtlety of much early modern women's poetry, especially its acutely melancholy relation to questions of sex and knowledge, and the rewards of contemporary rhetorical readings of this material.

Biography

Kate Lilley is a senior lecturer in English at the University of Sydney, where she specialises in early modern and contemporary literature, especially poetry, poetics and rhetoric. After completing a PhD at the University of London on Figure and Narrative in Masculine Elegy, she began working on early modern women's writing as Julia Mann Junior Research Fellow at St Hilda's College, Oxford. Her first book of poems, *Versary* (Salt, 2002), won the Grace Leven Prize and was short-listed for the NSW Premier's Prize.

Research interests

Kate is currently completing a book on early modern women's poetry, 'Fruits of Sodom', and writing the chapter on sexuality for the 'Palgrave Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing'.

Relevant publications

Kate edited the Penguin Classics edition of *Margaret Cavendish* (recently revised), a groundbreaking contribution to the field, taught all over the world. She has published a number of chapters in leading collections on seventeenth century women's elegy, utopian writing, georgic verse epistle, Katherine Philips, Rachel Speght, Queen Christina and Margaret Cavendish. She has also published widely on contemporary poetry and feminist/queer theory.

Contact details

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'Kiss the Fiction into Fact': Sidney's New Rhetoric

In an experimental work, Philip Sidney's elaborate and elliptically styled romance incessantly fictionalises the possibilities of material realisation. Sidney's poetics pose a dilemma of literary authority within the late 16th-century intellectual domain that was audible among Sidney's cohort in the elliptical norms of pastoral song contest and love complaint. A brotherly arrangement of voices forming a refined mosaic of Ciceronian amicitia is silently joined here in the aptness each finds in the other's perfect lamenting style.

The relativity of aptness, or quick wittedness enclosing youth's proper hearing and distinction of the temporal Arcadian world, central to aristocratic interest at the latter stage of the Elizabethan monarchy, thrives in postmodern language poetry. Kate Lilley's eclogue engages in the apt realisation of the material nature of words with a feeling for structure. The minimalist persistence of the mode opens in chiasmus onto Sidney's elaborate poetics, making human experience intelligible at the deepest levels in speech-based prose.

Sidney's critical new humanism is transformative to its classical roots in historic relations with medieval romance and England's 'balde Rhymers'. The literary sensibilities he raised in measuring the capacity of spoken, or free, English under the jurisdictions of the early modern print era comment on the postmodern textual domain. In this current climate, what kind of a hearing might be anticipated?

Biography

Kate is a doctoral student of the University of Sydney.

Research interests

Kate is completing a PhD on the Sidney Circle.

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'No Rhetoricke We Expect': Early Modern Women Writers and the Arts of Modesty

Statements of apology, humility and self-incrimination constitute some of the most representative moments in early modern women's writing and have come to occupy a prominent role in scholarship that seeks to document patriarchal oppression in the period. The early modern woman writer's denial of authorship is frequently read as evidence that she has internalised the commands to silence so prevalent in her culture. Against a critical tradition that decodes the woman writer's strategies of self-effacement as evidence of her secondary or submissive status, however, I offer readings that examine the emphatically rhetorical nature of her authorial disavowals. My focus is the complex moment in which the woman writer disavows her own authorial agency, and the ways that this gesture has been interpreted, ironically and paradoxically, as a sign of her 'silence' and her complete submission before a hostile masculine literary culture. I suggest that the arts of modesty employed by early modern women are best understood less as the acknowledgement of exclusion and the literal assertion of ineptitude than as the very marks of literariness as they circulate among gendered protocols of textual modesty and authority.

Biography

Patricia Pender has just completed her first year as an assistant professor of English at Pace University in New York City, where she teaches courses in early modern literature, rhetoric and composition, and women's and gender studies. She earned her BA (Hons) from the University of Sydney and her PhD in English from Stanford University. She specializes in women's writing from the 16th and 17th centuries, focusing on traditions of rhetoric, discourses of modesty and institutions of authorship. She is currently revising her doctoral dissertation, 'Authorial Alibis: Early Modern Women's Writing and the Limits of Literature', for publication as a book.

Research interests

Patricia's teaching and research interests span early modern literature and culture, feminist literary history and theory, film studies and cultural studies. She has designed courses in early modern women's writing, 17th-century literature, the history of the book, and gender and popular culture. Current research interests include early modern discourses of authorial disavowal, the roles played by women in the history of the book, the phenomenon of 'third wave' feminism, and cinematic representations of girls and girlhood.

Relevant publications

'Competing Conceptions: Rhetorics of Representation in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*' (2001).

'Disciplining the Imperial Mother: Anne Bradstreet's *A Dialogue Between Old England and New*' (2001).

"'I'm Buffy and you're ... History': The Postmodern Politics of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*" (2002).

"'Kicking ass is comfort food": Buffy as Third Wave Feminist Icon' (2004).

Public and professional writing: ethics, imagination and rhetoric, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Contact details

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Session 5: New Rhetoric in the Curriculum

Eva Gold, English Teachers' Association
NSW

The Rhetorical Model in Secondary English Classrooms

This presentation outlines how the new rhetoric permeates the English curriculum in secondary schools. In doing so, it discusses some of the issues raised in the media recently about the dominance of postmodernism and the teaching of grammar.

Biography

Eva Gold is currently Executive Officer of the English Teachers' Association NSW, where she manages, writes and provides professional development for teachers of English. She was previously employed at the NSW Board of Studies as Senior Curriculum Officer English, where her main role was project manager and writer of the Advanced, Standard and Extension Courses for the current HSC, as well as various support documents, including the text and elective prescriptions. She was also a writer of the Stage 4 and Stage 5 English syllabus.

Relevant publications

Sawyer, W and Gold, E, *Reviewing English in the 21st Century*, Phoenix Education, Melbourne 2004.

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'The New Assessment' and the New Rhetoric

This paper takes as its starting point Brian Huot's assertion that 'writing assessment is the articulation of judgment. Because it's an articulation, writing assessment is always rhetorical.' Articulating our judgements about texts is inevitably context-specific, shifting as our audiences and purposes change. Using an interdisciplinary lens to examine assessment allows us – indeed, requires us – to develop a nuanced and robust understanding of what we value. It also gives us the ability to articulate, and then to bridge, what Bob Broad calls the gaps between what we say we value and what we really do value (2003).

I make three related points about assessment. First, the act of assessment is rhetorical. Second, the evolution of what I call 'the New Assessment' as a scholarly field mirrors in some ways the development of the New Rhetoric. Third, interdisciplinary assessment – using a mosaic of methodologies and emerging from shifting social, political and cultural contexts – can play a valuable role in teaching and learning across the curriculum. My gaze will light on summative and formative assessment when discussing interdisciplinary assessment and the New Rhetoric. I will focus on instructional assessment when talking about teaching and learning across the curriculum.

Biography

Beth Kalikoff's areas of scholarly interest in writing studies are assessment as democracy, writing education and popular literature. She studied at Johns Hopkins University (BA) and Indiana University (PhD). Her scholarship and creative work have won national prizes, including a Choice Outstanding Book Award for *Murder and Moral Decay in Victorian Popular Literature* (1986).

Beth's mystery novel, *Dying for a Blue Plate Special* (2005), has received strong reviews and is in its second printing. Articles on 'Berlin, New York, Baghdad: Assessment as Democracy' and, with psychologist Kima Cargill, 'Linked Courses and Democracy at the 21st Century University' are forthcoming. Current projects include a book on interdisciplinary assessment.

Writing for Teachers, Writing for Social Change, Writing Effectively, Writing Popular Literature, and Argument and Research in Writing are among the undergraduate courses Beth Kalikoff teaches. She also offers graduate courses, including Teaching Writing as Public Action.

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Joanna Tapper, University of
Melbourne

New Rhetoric and Genre: A Case Study of Undergraduates' Evaluative Reports

The paper traces the co-construction by instructor and students of evaluative reports as a sub-genre of the broad genre of academic assessment assignments. The reports were written by third-year undergraduates in an academic subject that includes a work placement. Students report on the projects they completed for the employers, and also reflect on their learning and their developing skills. In devising the assignment, I consulted the literature on experiential learning and the assessment of work placements. However, genre features were unclear until I read and analysed students' reports. A final step was to take a New Rhetorical approach to genre analysis, with its strong focus on genre as action within complex social and historical contexts. The evaluative report assignment is an example of how a genre develops over repeated instances of actions by students and instructor. Of particular interest is the unequal nature of this development. Each student writes only one report. But for the teacher, the accumulated reflection on setting and responding to these reports, together with feedback from students, contributes towards a refinement of the assignment, and increasing confidence in preparing students and in responding to their texts.

Biography

Joanna Tapper is a senior lecturer in the Department of Linguistics & Applied Linguistics at the University of Melbourne, where she teaches applied linguistics, communication and English as a second language subjects. Her PhD is in rhetoric and the teaching of composition, and she has taught many writing courses, including English for academic purposes, thesis writing, technical writing and business writing. She has published on varied aspects of the teaching of academic writing and communication skills.

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Session 6: New Rhetoric and New Technology

Simone Marshall, University of Sydney

Engagement Theory, WebCT and Academic Writing in Australia

The development of Engagement Theory for technology-based teaching and learning provides guidelines specifically for Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This article is drawn from a case study in which a popular educational software, WebCT, is used in an academic writing course at the University of Sydney, Australia. The study highlights both the benefits and difficulties of using technology when teaching academic writing, and shows how effective Engagement Theory has been in the design, implementation and outcomes of the website associated with the course. The website enhances the teaching and learning experiences of the students and the lecturer, and students participate actively in the unit, interact and collaborate with each other and with the lecturer, and do so within a safe environment. The students also work together on projects that are meaningful and directly relevant to their own disciplines. Significantly, the time associated with the development and maintenance of the site was a problem, an issue not addressed by Engagement Theory.

Biography

BA, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
BA (Hons), University of Waikato, New Zealand
MA (Hons), University of Waikato, New Zealand
PhD, University of Sydney, Australia.

Research interests

A specialist in medieval literature, I am also committed to teaching academic writing in higher education and the incorporation of online computing technology to enhance teaching and learning at university.

I am currently developing a research project to evaluate the effectiveness of online technology in higher education, with a view to improving the quality and integration of the technology in education and encouraging its wider use.

Relevant publications

'Academic Writing Skills: Enhancing the Learning Experience of Students', *Synergy* 21 (2005) 3-6.

'Engagement Theory, WebCT and Academic Writing in Australia', *Reflections* (under review).

'The Effectiveness of Online Learning and Assessment: Benefits for Students and Staff', *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* (under review).

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Late Modern Blog

An assortment of technological and social shifts conspired to create the postcard craze of the first two decades of the 20th Century. Precipitated by increasingly urgent literacies in the West; facilitated by the proliferating forms of cheap lithographic reproduction (pace Walter Benjamin); mandated by the postal system's expansion from parochial reach to 'World Wide Postage': although the possibility of the postcard preceded its adoption as a means of democratic and decentralised interaction and reportage, particular proximities of technology, aesthetics and rhetorical franchise made the craze cohere until the end of WWI, when the vicissitudes of international conflict, and colonial discomfort, enervated the form.

In this paper I want to pursue a rhetorical prehistory for the weblog through an analogical rephrasing of the picture postcard's waxing and waning. While weblogs are certainly readable in terms of Castell's notion of the 'dynamic networking' that structures 21st-century sociality, an understanding of the 'blogosphere' which speaks only of dynamism misses an opportunity to understand solitary, unidirectional, publicly enunciated but privately phrased intimacies and gifts within its discourse. In particular, I am interested in what I am calling the 'late modern blog', a recapitulation of modernity's fascination with the static: the collection, the archive, the lost letter, the allegorical moment Walter Benjamin associates with the image as dialectical arrest.

I will look at some specific, generic, and aesthetically troubling incidents of the weblog: Amazon wishlists, 'blinkies', lists of blogs, the desolation of 'Where is Raed?' during Gulf II. The 'emergent properties' of blogs, like the emergencies of WWI, remind us of the rhetorical complexities that all open systems adduce, of the unpredictability of discursive space, and the ambivalent relation of written word to visual image. Like Oedipa Maas in *The Crying of Lot 49*, I argue for weblog discourse as an 'underground of the unbalanced' in all its best senses. How do we gauge propinquity in the formerly undiscursive 'space' of the blogosphere, now that it approaches a plenum? One way, I argue, is to find an appropriately informal analogue in the mania of 'postcarding'.

Biography and relevant publications

I am a lecturer in English at the University of Sydney. I've published in a wide variety of journals, including *Journal of Modern Literature*, *Southerly* and *Australian Humanities Review*, and edited collections, including *Rhetorical Bodies* (Wisconsin University Press, eds Selzer and Crowley) and *Feminist Interpretations of Ayn Rand* (Penn University Press, eds Gladstein & Sciabarra). I have recently completed a manuscript entitled 'Shame Became Famous: Rhetoric of Disclosure in Public Life, 1989-2001', which includes chapters on the Starr Report, Liberace, Malcolm Forbes, and 'Outing', JonBenet Ramsey, Paul de Man and Hannibal Lecter.

Contact details

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Fergus Armstrong, University of
Sydney

The Westinghouse Time Capsule and Thomas Mann's 'message for the future'

The Westinghouse Time Capsule of Cupaloy, 'deemed capable of resisting the effects of time for five thousand years,' was installed in the grounds of the 1939 New York World's Fair on 23 September 1938. The capsule presently remains at the same site, buried fifty feet below a small monument, and is due to be exhumed and unsealed in AD 6939 (6939 CE).

Among the representative items closely packed into the torpedo-like capsule are three short 'messages for the future from noted men of our time': physicist Robert Millikan, literary author Thomas Mann and theoretical physicist Albert Einstein.

The noted men declaim modernity's anxious progress report to distant posterity in order to persuade, influence or impress an audience in the present (c. 1938). But, at the same time, the prerogative to interpret the messages belongs to the addressees - the 'citizenry' of the year 6939. In what way do these peculiar messages communicate the imprint of a more or less cryptic, affective reality? Is the 'new rhetoric' concerned with this cryptic topos?

Biography

Fergus is a postgraduate student in the Department of English at the University of Sydney. His research topic is the relation between posterity (the succession of generations-to-come) and literary texts or artifacts.

Research interests

Research interests include the writings of Francis Bacon, who heralded the age of technoscientific modernity, and ambitious multi-millennial time capsule and space time capsule projects of the mid and late-twentieth century, which exemplify poetically the cultural archive of modernity - the global mnemotechnical system. To what imaginary posterities is that system addressed? How does modernity dictate the meaning of posterity to posterity?

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New Voices of New Rhetoric

Cassie Murphy

Image, Text and Multimodality

Increasingly, with the publication of such books as *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* and *You Shall Know Our Velocity*, and with the growing ubiquity of computers and the internet, there has been a growth in attention paid to the visual experience of text and the role images play in making meaning in our texts.

My talk will look at different theories about the making of meaning through image and text, especially how the two modes interact with one another to make meaning. I will also speculate as to the impetus behind this resurgence in interest in textual visuality and images in texts.

Biography

Cassie attends the University of Sydney as an English Honours student, and is currently completing her thesis on gender and masculinity in *Fight Club* and *American Psycho*. After graduation, she plans to take a Grand Tour of the Continent and, upon return, attempt to acquire a Doctorate of Creative Arts. She aims to spend the rest of her life either teaching creative writing or actually writing creatively. She hopes the two are not mutually exclusive.

Research interests

The construction and transgression of gender identities; the visual experience of text; multimodality in literature.

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Joel Meares, University of Sydney

Reality Bytes: Discovering a Link between Reality Television and the Internet

Reality television and the internet have risen to prominence side by side. The correlations between the two have been their mutual use of each other. But at a narrative level the connection deepens. The structure of new reality television programs *Survivor* and *The Apprentice* draws heavily on a postmodern and hypertextual sense of interconnectedness and circular communication. If we follow the links that these programs offer, we find that they have much in common with the common hypertext. Does one phenomenon inform the other, or does something altogether different inform them both? Can hypertext theory be applied to reality television and offer viewers a theoretical framework through which to view this new and popular medium? This is the question asked in 'Reality Bytes'.

Biography

Joel Meares is a student at the University of Sydney. He was State Rostrum Public Speaking Champion in 2001 and 2002, and National Rostrum Public Speaking Champion in 2002.

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Alys Moody, University of Sydney

Online and On-Canon: Fan Fiction and Textuality on the World Wide Web

Fan fiction has flourished in an online environment. This paper considers how this phenomenon might relate to recent ideas about textuality and authorship, which have arisen among hypertext theorists and textual critics. It asks how fan fiction interacts with the popular texts on which it is based, and whether this relationship can really be understood as subversive or resistant, as many fan fiction theorists have insisted.

Biography

I am a third-year Bachelor of Arts student at the University of Sydney, with a double major in English and French. I'm working towards Honours in English in 2006. My interests include 20th-century literature, queer, feminist and postcolonial studies, and hypertext theory.

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Session chairs

1. Susan Thomas

Dr Susan Thomas is the conference convener of the ‘What is the New Rhetoric?’ conference. She has a PhD in Rhetoric and Composition from Georgia State University and teaches rhetoric and professional communication at the University of Sydney. Her research interests include rhetorical theory, communication theory and pedagogy, computer-assisted writing and learning, hypertext theory, the relationship between university and community, international discourse, American studies, digital rhetoric, political rhetoric, and rhetoric of the media. Recent conference presentations include the Modern Language Association Conference in Philadelphia in December 2004, and the Australian Style Council in July 2004. Her publications include ‘From Athens to Gettysburg: The Art of the Speech’ in *Creativity and Transformation*, ed. Richard Madelaine, English Association, Sydney, 2005; ‘Words are Failing Our Graduates’, *Australian Higher Education Supplement*, 14 July 2004; and ‘Teaching Academic Writing Using an Online Text’ with Robin Breault, ABC Conference, Nashville, TN, March 2000.

2. Michael Tilbury

Professor Tilbury has been the full-time Commissioner at the NSW Law Reform Commission since 2002. He was previously a full-time Commissioner from 1994–1996 and a part-time Commissioner between 1996–2000. He was also the Inaugural Director of the Centre for Commercial Law in the University of Zimbabwe (March 2000). His other appointments have included Edward Jenks Professor of Law at the University of Melbourne, Head of the Law School at the University of New South Wales and Professor of Law at the University of Tasmania.

3. Antonina Harbus

Dr Antonina Harbus is a lecturer in the Department of English at Macquarie University, Sydney, where she convenes the first-year unit, Introduction to English, and teaches other units on narrative, poetry and metaphor. Antonina Harbus received a BA (Hons) from the University of Queensland (1986) and an MA (1989) and PhD (1994) from the University of Toronto. Her publications include articles on dreams and subjectivity in literature; *Helena of Britain in medieval legend*, Brewer, Cambridge, 2002; and *The life of the mind in Old English poetry*, Rodopi, Amsterdam and New York, 2002. Antonina Harbus is co-editor (with Russell Poole) of *Verbal encounters in Old English and Old Norse literature: studies for Roberta Frank*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2005); and (with Karin Olsen and Tette Hofstra *Miracles and the miraculous in medieval Germanic and Latin literature*, Peeters, Louvain, 2004; and *Germanic texts and their Latin models: medieval reconstructions* Peeters, Louvain, 2001.

4. Melissa Hardie

Dr Melissa Hardie is a lecturer in English at the University of Sydney. She has published in journals including *Journal of Modern Literature*, *Southerly* and *Australian Humanities Review*, and edited collections including *Rhetorical Bodies* (Wisconsin University Press, eds Selzer and Crowley) and *Feminist Interpretations of Ayn Rand* (Penn University Press, eds Gladstein & Sciabarra). She recently completed a manuscript entitled ‘Shame Became Famous: Rhetoric of Disclosure in Public Life, 1989-2001’.

5. Peta Spear

Dr Peta Spear is the managing director of the Plain English Foundation. She has a doctorate in writing from the University of Western Sydney and her publications include poetry, *My Sweet Sex* (Five Islands Press, 1994); short stories, *Sex Crimes* (Picador, 1996) and a novel, *Libertine* (Vintage, 1999). She has worked at the Centre for Professional Development at Macquarie University, and in government and in film. Peta has extensive experience in authoring and editing reports, style guides and document templates for government departments and in developing plain language writing course materials for professionals.

6. Bruce Gardiner

Dr Bruce Gardiner is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Sydney, and Coordinator of Special Entry, Advanced, and Honours Units in the Department of English. His research interests include education and erudition; literature and scripture; poetry and poetics; American literatures; and literature and royal courts.