

Rhetoric

The Department of Rhetoric offers an interdisciplinary PhD program focusing on the study of rhetorical theory and the interaction of the historical concerns of rhetoric with contemporary critical theory across a broad spectrum of disciplines. Crucial to the department's approach is an investigation into the rhetorical constitution of the arguments of such fields as law, politics, literature, philosophy, performative practices, global studies, critical race studies, and science, technology, and media studies. The interests of faculty and graduate students thus range throughout these fields and are informed by a critical interest in the rhetoric of disciplines. During their first two years, graduate students explore major areas in the history and theory of rhetoric and pursue a variety of special topics in seminars. Beginning in their fourth semester, they concentrate in greater depth on preparation for their doctoral qualifying examinations and dissertation research.

Admission to the University

Applying for Graduate Admission

Thank you for considering UC Berkeley for graduate study! UC Berkeley offers more than 120 graduate programs representing the breadth and depth of interdisciplinary scholarship. The Graduate Division hosts a complete list (<https://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/choosing-your-program/list/>) of graduate academic programs, departments, degrees offered, and application deadlines can be found on the Graduate Division website.

Prospective students must submit an online application to be considered for admission, in addition to any supplemental materials specific to the program for which they are applying. The online application and steps to take to apply can be found on the Graduate Division website (<https://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/steps-to-apply/>).

Admission Requirements

The minimum graduate admission requirements are:

1. A bachelor's degree or recognized equivalent from an accredited institution;
2. A satisfactory scholastic average, usually a minimum grade-point average (GPA) of 3.0 (B) on a 4.0 scale; and
3. Enough undergraduate training to do graduate work in your chosen field.

For a list of requirements to complete your graduate application, please see the Graduate Division's Admissions Requirements page (<https://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/steps-to-apply/requirements/>). It is also important to check with the program or department of interest, as they may have additional requirements specific to their program of study and degree. Department contact information can be found here (<https://guide.berkeley.edu/archive/2024-25/graduate/degree-programs/>).

Where to apply?

Visit the Berkeley Graduate Division application page (<http://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/apply/>).

Curriculum

Courses Required

RHETOR 200	Classical Rhetorical Theory and Practice	4
RHETOR 205	Contemporary Rhetorical Theory and Practice	4
RHETOR 220	Rhetoric Graduate Proseminar	2
RHETOR 221	Rhetoric Graduate Research Seminar	2
Four elective graduate seminars (three in Rhetoric and one outside of Rhetoric)		
RHETOR 375	Teaching Rhetoric	2

Rhetoric

RHETOR 200 Classical Rhetorical Theory and Practice 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Fall 2023, Fall 2022

An introduction to the questions around which classical rhetorical theory and practice are organized. Through analysis of materials drawn principally from the Ancient Greek and Roman periods, possibly including later revivals of classical rhetoric, the course will examine the formation of rhetoric in the West as an intellectual stance from which to practice a range of related fields, including but not limited to philosophy, history, literature, politics, religion, law, science, and the arts.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Graduate status

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

RHETOR 205 Contemporary Rhetorical Theory and Practice 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2025, Spring 2024, Spring 2023

An introduction to the questions around which contemporary rhetorical theory and practice are organized. Through an analysis of materials drawn principally from the 18th century to the present, the course will examine rhetorical inquiry in relation to critique as well as the disciplinary construction of knowledge-domains. The course will attend to rhetoric in relation to a range of fields, including but not limited to philosophy, history, literature, politics, religion, law, science, and the arts.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Graduate status

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

RHETOR 220 Rhetoric Graduate Proseminar 2 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2024, Spring 2019

What do we do when we do rhetoric? Seminar addresses methods, themes, and issues in the changing field of investigation known as rhetoric. Required for second year doctoral students in Rhetoric.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 2 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate

Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.

RHETOR 221 Rhetoric Graduate Research Seminar 2 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Fall 2024, Fall 2023

What are the possible forms of long-form (dissertation) research in the rhetoric department? Required for third-year doctoral students in Rhetoric.

Objectives & Outcomes

Course Objectives: To enable the formation of coherent dissertation projects.

Student Learning Outcomes: To have a draft of a prospectus at the end of the semester.

Rules & Requirements

Credit Restrictions: Students will receive no credit for RHETOR 221 after completing RHETOR 221. A deficient grade in RHETOR 221 may be removed by taking RHETOR 221.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 2 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate

Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.

RHETOR C221 Aesthetics as Critique 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2023, Fall 2020, Fall 2018, Spring 2015, Spring 2013, Spring 2011

A close reading and discussion of the major texts of modern aesthetics, from the 18th century to the present, with emphasis on the Continental tradition of Kant, Adorno, and Derrida.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Also listed as: COM LIT C221

RHETOR 230 Rhetoric and History 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2022, Fall 2020, Fall 2018

This course investigates both the concept of history and the practice of historiography, using an engagement with the literal and metaphoric archives of the past to consider their empirical and philosophical claims on the present. While the methods, themes, and historical reach may vary, the course requires Rhetoric graduate students to investigate pre-1900 material in some form and to consider both the pragmatics of conducting historical inquiry and the interpretive frameworks that structure them.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Graduate status

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

RHETOR 240D Rhetorical Theory and Criticism: Nonfictional Prose 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2010, Spring 1999, Fall 1997

Advanced investigation of the rhetorical dimensions of various modes of discourse. Specific topics to be announced.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Graduate status

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

RHETOR 240E Rhetorical Theory and Criticism: Political Discourse 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2011, Fall 2007, Spring 2006

Advanced investigation of the rhetorical dimensions of various modes of discourse. Specific topics to be announced.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Graduate status

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

RHETOR 240F Rhetorical Theory and Criticism: Legal Rhetoric and Philosophy 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2022, Spring 2018, Spring 2017

Advanced investigation of the rhetorical dimensions of various modes of discourse. Specific topics to be announced.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Graduate status

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

RHETOR 240G Rhetorical Theory and Criticism: Rhetorical Theory 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2025, Fall 2024

Advanced investigation of the rhetorical dimensions of various modes of discourse. Specific topics to be announced.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Graduate status

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

RHETOR 243 Special Topics in Film 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2014, Fall 2013, Fall 2012

A theoretical examination of a film topic which falls outside the purview of traditional categories of film analysis, such as "genre," "history," or "theory." Examples: Rainer Werner Fassbinder, The Essay Film, Feminist Film Practice, Cinema and the Phantasmagoria of History.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Graduate standing

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

RHETOR 244 Special Topics in Rhetoric: Limited study 2 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2008

This course studies various modes of rhetorical discourse. Specific topics to be announced.

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 6 weeks - 4 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

RHETOR 250 Rhetoric of the Image 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2023, Spring 2023, Spring 2021

A study of the visual image as a mode of discourse, together with an analysis of the terms in which images have been interpreted and criticized. Focus may be on the rhetoric of a particular image or set of images, or on more broadly theoretical writings about image.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Graduate standing and consent of instructor

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

RHETOR 295 Special Study 1 - 6 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2021, Summer 2018 3 Week Session, Summer 2017 3 Week Session

Open to qualified graduate students wishing to pursue special topics under the direction of a member of the staff.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Graduate adviser approval

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 6-34 hours of independent study per week

Summer: 8 weeks - 6-34 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

RHETOR 299 Directed Research 1 - 12 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2022, Spring 2016, Fall 2015

Open to graduate students who have passed their Ph.D. qualifying examinations.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Graduate adviser approval

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 0 hours of independent study per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 1-12 hours of independent study per week

8 weeks - 1-12 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

RHETOR 302 The Art of Tutoring Writing 1 - 2 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2020, Fall 2019

This is a required course for all undergraduates participating in the Art of Writing Departmental Tutoring program at UC Berkeley. This program supports students taking R&C in Comparative Literature, English, Film & Media, and Rhetoric. Upper-level majors with proven writing skills participate in discipline-specific composition and pedagogy workshops and in turn, provide one-on-one writing help to students taking R&C courses in participating departments. Tutoring is targeted and disciplinary-specific, responding to the parameters of R&C instruction and the challenges faced by R&C student writers in each department.

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit with instructor consent.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 0.5-1 hours of seminar and 2.5-5 hours of workshop per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Professional course for teachers or prospective teachers

Grading: Offered for pass/not pass grade only.

RHETOR 375 Teaching Rhetoric 2 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2025, Fall 2019, Fall 2017

Instruction in teaching argumentative writing and rhetorical analysis.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Appointment as teaching assistant

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Professional course for teachers or prospective teachers

Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.

Formerly known as: Rhetoric 300

RHETOR 601 Individual Study for Master's Students 1 - 6 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2016, Fall 2015, Spring 2015

Individual study for degree or language examinations in consultation with staff member.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Graduate status

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 0 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate examination preparation

Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.

RHETOR 602 Individual Study for Doctoral Students 1 - 6 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2022, Fall 2018, Spring 2016

Individual study in consultation with faculty director as preparation for degree examinations.

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Graduate status

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 0 hours of independent study per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 1-6 hours of independent study per week

8 weeks - 1-6 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate examination preparation

Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.