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
Minimum Requirements for Admission
The following minimum requirements apply to all graduate programs and will be verified by the Graduate Division:

1. A bachelor’s degree or recognized equivalent from an accredited institution;
2. A grade point average of B or better (3.0);
3. If the applicant has completed a basic degree from a country or political entity (e.g., Quebec) where English is not the official language, adequate proficiency in English to do graduate work, as evidenced by a TOEFL score of at least 90 on the iBT test, 570 on the paper-and-pencil test, or an IELTS Band score of at least 7 on a 9-point scale (note that individual programs may set higher levels for any of these); and
4. Sufficient undergraduate training to do graduate work in the given field.

Applicants Who Already Hold a Graduate Degree

The Graduate Council views academic degrees not as vocational training certificates, but as evidence of broad training in research methods, independent study, and articulation of learning. Therefore, applicants who already have academic graduate degrees should be able to pursue new subject matter at an advanced level without the need to enroll in a related or similar graduate program.

Programs may consider students for an additional academic master’s or professional master’s degree only if the additional degree is in a distinctly different field.

Applicants admitted to a doctoral program that requires a master’s degree to be earned at Berkeley as a prerequisite (even though the applicant already has a master’s degree from another institution in the same or a closely allied field of study) will be permitted to undertake the second master’s degree, despite the overlap in field.

The Graduate Division will admit students for a second doctoral degree only if they meet the following guidelines:

1. Applicants with doctoral degrees may be admitted for an additional doctoral degree only if that degree program is in a general area of knowledge distinctly different from the field in which they earned their original degree. For example, a physics PhD could be admitted to a doctoral degree program in music or history; however, a student with a doctoral degree in mathematics would not be permitted to add a PhD in statistics.

2. Applicants who hold the PhD degree may be admitted to a professional doctorate or professional master’s degree program if there is no duplication of training involved.

Applicants may apply only to one single degree program or one concurrent degree program per admission cycle.

Required Documents for Applications

1. Transcripts: Applicants may upload unofficial transcripts with your application for the departmental initial review. If the applicant is admitted, then official transcripts of all college-level work will be required. Official transcripts must be in sealed envelopes as issued by the school(s) attended. If you have attended Berkeley, upload your unofficial transcript with your application for the departmental initial review. If you are admitted, an official transcript with evidence of degree conferral will not be required.

2. Letters of recommendation: Applicants may request online letters of recommendation through the online application system. Hard copies of recommendation letters must be sent directly to the program, not the Graduate Division.

3. Evidence of English language proficiency: All applicants who have completed a basic degree from a country or political entity in which the official language is not English are required to submit official evidence of English language proficiency. This applies to institutions from Bangladesh, Burma, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Latin America, the Middle East, the People’s Republic of China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia, most European countries, and Quebec (Canada). However, applicants who, at the time of application, have already completed at least one year of full-time academic course work with grades of B or better at a US university may submit an official transcript from the US university to fulfill this requirement. The following courses will not fulfill this requirement:

   • courses in English as a Second Language,
   • courses conducted in a language other than English,
   • courses that will be completed after the application is submitted, and
   • courses of a non-academic nature.

If applicants have previously been denied admission to Berkeley on the basis of their English language proficiency, they must submit new test scores that meet the current minimum from one of the standardized tests. Official TOEFL score reports must be sent directly from Educational Testing Services (ETS). The institution code for Berkeley is 4833. Official IELTS score reports must be sent electronically from the testing center to University of California, Berkeley, Graduate Division, Sproul Hall, Rm 318 MC 5900, Berkeley, CA 94720. TOEFL and IELTS score reports are only valid for two years.

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 Units  
  Terms offered: Fall 2021, Spring 2021, Fall 2018  
  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.

- **RHETOR 205** Contemporary Rhetorical Theory and Practice 4 Units  
  Terms offered: Spring 2022, Fall 2020, Fall 2019  
  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.

- **RHETOR 230** Rhetoric and History 4 Units

- Three elective graduate seminars (two in Rhetoric and one outside of Rhetoric)

- **RHETOR 375** Teaching Rhetoric 2 Units

**Rhetoric**

Expand all course descriptions [+]Collapse all course descriptions [-]

**RHETOR 200 Classical Rhetorical Theory and Practice 4 Units**
Terms offered: Fall 2021, Spring 2021, Fall 2018  
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.

Classical Rhetorical Theory and Practice: Read More [+]

**RHETOR 205 Contemporary Rhetorical Theory and Practice 4 Units**
Terms offered: Spring 2022, Fall 2020, Fall 2019  
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.

Contemporary Rhetorical Theory and Practice: Read Less [-]

**RHETOR 220 Rhetoric Graduate Proseminar 2 Units**
Terms offered: Spring 2022, 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.

**Rules & Requirements**

**Prerequisites:** Graduate status

**Hours & Format**

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

**Additional Details**

Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Instructor: Constable

Rhetoric Graduate Proseminar: Read Less [-]
RHETOR 221 Rhetoric Graduate Research Seminar 2 Units
Terms offered: Fall 2020
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: Letter grade.
Instructor: Boyarin
RHETOR 221 Aesthetics as Critique 4 Units
Terms offered: Fall 2020, Fall 2018, Spring 2016
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.
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 - 3 hours of lecture per week
Additional Details
Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate
Grading: Letter grade.
Instructor: Boyarin
RHETOR 220 Rhetoric and History 4 Units
Terms offered: Fall 2020, Fall 2018, Spring 2016
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.
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 220 after completing RHETOR 220. A deficient grade in RHETOR 220 may be removed by taking RHETOR 220.
Hours & Format
Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week
Additional Details
Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate
Grading: Letter grade.
Instructor: Boyarin
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.
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 240D after completing RHETOR 240D. A deficient grade in RHETOR 240D may be removed by taking RHETOR 240D.
Hours & Format
Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week
Additional Details
Subject/Course Level: Rhetoric/Graduate
Grading: Letter grade.
Instructor: Boyarin
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.
Rhetorical Theory and Criticism: Political Discourse: Read More [+]
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.
Rhetorical Theory and Criticism: Political Discourse: Read Less [-]

RHETOR 240F Rhetorical Theory and Criticism: Legal Rhetoric and Philosophy 4 Units
Terms offered: Spring 2018, Spring 2017, Fall 2015
Advanced investigation of the rhetorical dimensions of various modes of discourse. Specific topics to be announced.
Rhetorical Theory and Criticism: Legal Rhetoric and Philosophy: Read More [+]
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.
Rhetorical Theory and Criticism: Legal Rhetoric and Philosophy: Read Less [-]

RHETOR 240G Rhetorical Theory and Criticism: Rhetorical Theory 4 Units
Terms offered: Spring 2022, Fall 2021, Fall 2020
Advanced investigation of the rhetorical dimensions of various modes of discourse. Specific topics to be announced.
Rhetorical Theory and Criticism: Rhetorical Theory: Read More [+]
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.
Rhetorical Theory and Criticism: Rhetorical Theory: Read Less [-]

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.
Special Topics in Film: Read More [+]
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.
Special Topics in Film: Read Less [-]
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: Spring 2021, Fall 2019, Spring 2019
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: Spring 2016, Fall 2015, Spring 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.
The Art of Tutoring Writing: Read More [+]
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.
The Art of Tutoring Writing: Read Less [-]

RHETOR 375 Teaching Rhetoric 2 Units
Terms offered: Fall 2019, Fall 2017, Fall 2015
Instruction in teaching argumentative writing and rhetorical analysis.
Teaching Rhetoric: Read More [+]
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
Teaching Rhetoric: Read Less [-]

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.
Individual Study for Master's Students: Read More [+]
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.
Individual Study for Master's Students: Read Less [-]

RHETOR 602 Individual Study for Doctoral Students 1 - 6 Units
Terms offered: Fall 2018, Spring 2016, Fall 2015
Individual study in consultation with faculty director as preparation for degree examinations.
Individual Study for Doctoral Students: Read More [+]
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.
Individual Study for Doctoral Students: Read Less [-]