

Study Guide for March 7, 2006

1. Each group or individual should submit to Stellar a short proposal for the First Major Project by 3 pm, March 7. Each group or individual should also bring 3 hard copies to class. The proposal should describe the text or texts that will be analyzed and the approaches used (e. g. specific *topoi*, enthymemes, pathos, logos, ethos, points-at-issue).

2. Discussion of *Gorgias*

The Gorgias is a Socratic dialogue written by Socrates' pupil Plato. As in all of Plato's dialogues, Socrates uses what is known as the "Socratic method" of question and answers to arrive at "truth." As in all the other dialogues, Socrates always wins the argument.

Read until these lines:

Pol. As though you, Socrates, would not like to have the power of doing what seemed good to you in the state, rather than not; you would not be jealous when you saw any one killing or despoiling or imprisoning whom he pleased, Oh, no!

Reading Questions

- a. What is the definition of Rhetoric that Socrates and Gorgias agree upon at the beginning of the dialogue? Is it similar to or different from the definition given by Aristotle and the beginning of *The Rhetoric*?
- b. What is the importance of the concept of "ignorance"? For the audience? For the rhetorician?
- c. What is the importance in the dialogue of the distinction between the *knowledge vs. persuasion*?
- d. What is the importance in the dialogue of the distinction between the *just* and the *unjust*?
- e. What is the importance in the dialogue of the analogies with medicine, physical training, and cooking?
- f. Is there any similarity between the rhetorician as described by Socrates and the bullshitter described by Harry G. Frankfurt in the following passage from his monograph *On Bullshit*.

The fact about himself that the bullshitter hides . . . is that the truth values of his statements are of no central interest to him; what we are not to understand is that his intention is to neither to report the truth nor to conceal it.

3. **The Rhetoric to Alexander.** This work is the sole example of the *teckne*, the "Rhetoric for Dummies" manuals that were quite common in Greece. Greek society was extremely litigious and there were no lawyers; individuals had to plead their own cases. Consequently, "how to" manuals like this one were extremely important.

Reading Outline & Questions:

- a. How does this categorization of types of oratory differ from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*? What category is brand new?
- b. What are the common topics?
- c. What is amplification and minimization?
- d. What are the two modes of proof?
- e. What are arguments from probability?
- f. What are the essential proofs?
- g. What are the supplementary proofs?
- h. What is a maxim?
- i. How does the overall approach of the *Rhetoric to Alexander* differ from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*?