

This is supplementary material for the Julianne Newmark and Tiffany Bourelle webtext “Fostering Community through Metacognitive Reflection in Online Technical Communication Courses,” published in *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*, 26(2), available at <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/26.2/praxis/newmark-bourelle/index.html>

Student Learning Outcomes video script

SLIDE ONE

This video will explain the learning outcomes for this class. It’s important for you to watch this video to ensure that you have a clear understanding of the course outcomes. You will be reflecting on these outcomes throughout the semester. By the end of the term, you should have reflected thoroughly on all of the outcomes, demonstrating to yourself and to your teacher what you learned this semester.

SLIDE TWO

For this course, we’re going to use the rhetorical canons as course outcomes. The syllabus contains an explanation of how we want you to look at each of these outcomes. We’ve created this video to give you even more detail.

The rhetorical canons are invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. They were established more than 2,000 years ago, and used in ancient Rome by public officials such as Cicero and educators such as Quintilian. Originally, the canons were primarily used for oratory. Communication was primarily through the spoken word, and therefore the canons were used for developing and delivering speeches.

SLIDE THREE

Even though they were used primarily for oratory, the canons apply to all forms of rhetoric. The genius of the canons is their adaptability. Long after oratory faded from prominence, the canons have remained relevant to writing. Today, in our modern digital age where communication happens via the Internet, television, texts, tweets, and podcasts—in addition to the written word—the canons remain as important as ever.

In fact, we chose the canons as our course outcomes because they work well when considering multimodal communication. When we say multimodal projects, we mean projects that use more than one mode to communicate, such as visual images, video or audio components, and design elements. In this class, your projects will consist of doing more than writing papers—you’ll be composing multimodal projects using other elements. The canons, because of their adaptability, provide a perfect framework for developing multimodal projects.

SLIDE FOUR

The first of the canons is invention.

To the ancient Romans, invention consisted of conceiving, planning, and developing

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what was to be said in a particular speech. It’s easy to see how this translates to modern written or multimodal projects. Invention, from a modern perspective, is about the processes one can use for devising what to write about and how to create the composition, whether written, oral, or digital. In our courses, the invention stage starts the process of designing a multimodal text and can include brainstorming as well as revising throughout the course of the project.

Remember: Technical communication is audience centered. Part of the invention process is thinking about your audience and considering what your purpose is. An important part of the invention process is asking yourself, who is my audience, what do they need to know, and how can I best provide that information to them?

SLIDE FIVE

The next canon is arrangement.

Think of arrangement as organization. To Quintilian, arrangement and invention went hand in hand; the material one invents “will remain a confused heap until arrangement orders and interrelates it”

Whether giving a speech or writing a paper or developing a video, you have to think about how to arrange—or organize—the information you’re presenting. You might have a lot of great information, but if you present it to your audience in a disorganized and messy way, what good is it?

Arrangement in this class applies not only to the organization of what you write, but also to the arrangement of your multimodal elements. Similar to the design of a speech, each multimodal text should maintain a clear and logical progression. In this course, you must consider balance and alignment of visual elements when designing your projects.

SLIDE SIX

The next outcome is style.

The ancient Romans discussed style in terms of word choice and sentence structure. Style was typically broken into three different types. Quintilian defined these as plain, grand, and intermediate; however, he recognized that there are “countless different possible styles from the plainest to the grandest, just as there are countless possible gradations in musical pitch or in the direction of the wind. Every possible style has its proper use.”

Modern technical writing borrows closely from the ancient Romans, typically breaking style into three types. Our textbook, for example, discusses three possible styles: plain, persuasive, and grand—with plain and persuasive being the most commonly used style in

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technical communication.

Because our class requires you to create multimodal projects, we want you to think of style beyond simply the style you choose for the text. Think about how voice, sound, and images work together to persuade your audience. These are all part of your multimodal projects’ style.

SLIDE SEVEN

The fourth canon, memory, is often seen as memorization. To the ancient Romans, they had to memorize what they were going to say. However, the canon has always been more complex than that. Orators in Rome had to be able to speak extemporaneously on a variety of subjects. In other words, they had to be able to make an argument at a moment’s notice—so memory was not just memorization of what they wanted to say, but being knowledgeable and skilled enough to call up information from memory at any given moment. Memory was not simply memorization—it was learning.

In the digital world, memory may be thought of in a broader capacity. For this class, think of the canon of memory as metacognition and learning. Metacognition is when you think critically about what you’re learning. We believe that metacognitive reflection can encourage the transfer of knowledge so that what you learn will be helpful in the future. This is why we’re asking you to write reflections for each major project and for the final portfolio.

Please consider how your memory of technical writing concepts improves this semester (i.e., how you build upon concepts learned early in the semester and apply them to other projects) and how you can use what you have learned in the future.

SLIDE EIGHT

The final canon is delivery. To the Romans, this was often seen as how you deliver a speech. It was about pronunciation, enunciation, elocution, etc. Orators had to consider the volume, pitch, and rhythm of their voices. They even considered gestures as a part of delivery.

However, in a broader sense, delivery is about how your message is delivered to your audience. In our modern world then, delivery has a lot to do with medium. When you think of your intended audience, you have to think about the best way to deliver your message to that audience. Should your message come in the form of a video, a written report, a PowerPoint presentation? What is the best way to communicate to a particular audience in a certain situation? These kinds of decisions should not be made arbitrarily. Your audience, context, and purpose are important to consider when it comes to deciding how to *deliver* your message to your intended audience.

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SLIDE NINE

That’s a summary of the rhetorical canons and how we want you to view them for the purposes of this class.

Ultimately, all five canons are interrelated and work in conjunction with one another. We argue that the five canons of rhetoric—invention, arrangement, style, delivery, and memory—can help students design rhetorically effective multimodal projects, a skill that is needed and valued in the contemporary workplace.

This is why we have decided to use them as the outcomes for the course.

SLIDE TEN

Don’t forget that the syllabus has a brief explanation of the course outcomes as well. If you have any questions about the outcomes that the syllabus and this video don’t answer, please let us know.