

Possibility and Paradox: On Rhetoric and Political Theory

**Northwestern University
Evanston, IL
April 2-5, 2009**

Co-sponsored by Northwestern University's Center for Global Culture and Communication and the International Conference for the Study of Political Thought

Co-organizers: Keith Topper, University of California, Irvine, and Dilip Gaonkar, Northwestern University

Description:

This conference brings together distinguished and emerging scholars in political theory, philosophy, communication, literature, history, and other areas of the social sciences and humanities who share an interest in the rhetorical character of political thought and discourse. Our discussions will focus on a wide range of issues regarding the pivotal function of rhetoric in the history of political thought and contemporary political theory. These include, but are not limited to, questions about the performative dimensions of language, the role of affect and emotion in political life, the poetics and aesthetics of political discourse and experience, the rhetorical structure of political texts, the relationship between the logic and style of political argument, between author and audience, and between what political texts say and what they do. To provide our inquiries with historical scope and interpretive depth, each of our nineteen speakers will focus on a single key figure in the history of social and political theory, from Thucydides and Plato to Hannah Arendt and Frantz Fanon. Our goal is to make the case that an understanding of rhetoric is not just relevant but central to an understanding of political thought and conduct.

We hope this event will appeal to scholars of political thought and rhetoric across North America and beyond its borders. To facilitate discussion, papers will be circulated among all participants two weeks prior to the conference and will be available to Conference for the Study of Political Thought members. **The event is free and open to the public.** Scholars planning to attend the 2009 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association should note that the Evanston campus of Northwestern University is easily accessible via public transportation from downtown Chicago. Using the "L," take the Red Line north to the Howard Street station. From the platform on which you exit the train, transfer to the Purple Line going toward Linden and get off at the Davis Street exit. Proceed east on Davis Street until you reach Chicago Avenue. Turn left on Chicago Avenue until you reach Sheridan Road, which borders Northwestern University. "L" maps can be accessed on-line at <http://www.chicago-l.org/index.html>

Additional information about the conference is available at the website of Northwestern University's Center for Global Culture and Communication: http://www.communication.northwestern.edu/global_communication/conference.php

For other queries about the conference, including questions about lodging, restaurants, and transportation, please contact Jesse Baldwin-Philippi (j.baldwin.philippi@northwestern.edu).

SCHEDULE:

****All talks on Thursday, April 2 and Saturday, April 4, will take place at Hardin Hall, Rebecca Crown Center, Northwestern University. All talks on Friday, April 3, will take place at Scott Hall, Room 212, Northwestern University.**

THURSDAY, APRIL 2

Location:
Hardin Hall, Rebecca Crown Center

12:15-12:45

Opening Remarks

SESSION I: 12:45-2:45

Moderator: *Keith Topper, University of California, Irvine*

Speakers:

“Thucydides in Baghdad”
Peter Euben, Duke University

“Rhetoric and Representation in Plato’s *Republic*”
Jill Frank, University of South Carolina

Coffee: 2:45-3:00

3:00-3:30

Welcoming Remarks

Henry Bienen, President, Northwestern University

Barbara O’Keefe, Dean, School of Communication, Northwestern University

SESSION II: 3:30-5:30

Moderator: *Robert Hariman, Northwestern University*

Speakers:

“Subdue the Senate: Machiavelli’s ‘Way of Freedom’ or Path to Tyranny?”
John McCormick, University of Chicago

“Fanon’s Revolutionary Rhetoric”
Anne Norton, University of Pennsylvania

FRIDAY, APRIL 3

Location:
Scott Hall, Room 212

SESSION I: 9:00-12:00

Moderator:
Penelope Deutscher, Northwestern University

Speakers:

“Spinoza’s Failed Rhetoric of a Supposedly Inconspicuous Transition to Secularity”
Ronald Beiner, University of Toronto

“Bringing Home the Case of the Poor: The Rhetorical Achievement of Adam Smith’s
Wealth of Nations”
Samuel Fleischaker, University of Illinois at Chicago

“Burke and the Rhetoric of Self Knowledge”
Uday Mehta, Amherst College

Lunch: 12:00-1:00

SESSION II: 1:00-3:00

Moderator: *John Wynne, Northwestern University*

Speakers:

“Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* as Political Philosophy”
Bernard Yack, Brandeis University

“Cicero and the Other Scene: Integrity and Instability in the Rhetorical Republic”
Joy Connolly, New York University

Coffee: 3:00-3:30

SESSION III: 3:30-5:30

Moderator:

Lars Tønder, Northwestern University

Speakers:

“Hobbes Reading Hobbes: Applying Hobbes’ Instructions for Reading Scripture to a Reading of *Leviathan* Itself”

James Martel, San Francisco State University

“Rhetorical Investments: The Topos of the Ages and Locke’s Narrative of Political Beginnings”

Kirstie McClure, University of California, Los Angeles

SATURDAY, APRIL 4

Location:

Hardin Hall, Rebecca Crown Center

SESSION I: 9:00-12:00

Moderator: *James Farr, Northwestern University*

Speakers:

“Rousseau and the Ends of Rhetoric”

Peter Meyers, Sorbonne Nouvelle and Princeton University

“Words as Weapons in Benjamin Constant’s Thought”

Bryan Garsten, Yale University

“Ambivalent Prophecy: the Rhetoric of Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*”

George Shulman, New York University

Lunch: 12:00-1:00

SESSION II: 1:00-3:00

Moderator: *Patchen Markell, University of Chicago*

Speakers:

“‘Hyperbolic Rhetoric and Polemics’: the Question of Nietzsche”
Tracy Strong, University of California, San Diego

“On Public Action: Rhetoric and Glory in Hannah Arendt’s *The Human Condition*”
Andrew Norris, University of California, Santa Barbara

Coffee: 3:00-3:30

SESSION III: 3:30-5:30

Moderator: *Dilip Gaonkar, Northwestern University*

Speakers:

“Political Philosophy as Rhetoric: the Case of Leo Strauss”
Miguel Vatter, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

“Quentin Skinner’s ‘Rhetorical Turn’ and its Implications for the Study of Political Thought”
Kari Palonen, University of Jyväskylä

SUNDAY, APRIL 5

SESSION I: 9:00-11:00

Breakfast Meeting at Orrington Hotel