

Classic Rhetoric's Relation to Today

Student A

Rhetoric = Persuasion

- First and Foremost: Rhetoric is Persuasion.
- The Sophists of Ancient Greece believed Rhetoric could persuade almost anyone of anything.
- "... a single speech, written with art but not spoken with truth, bends a great crowd and persuades..." –Gorgias, *Encomium of Helen*
- The gift of persuasion is one of the most valuable assets you can have.
- Businesses are hiring for people with good social skills.
- Rhetoric can help you become a more persuasive and articulate person.

You + Rhetoric = Better Person

- Greek Sophists believed that good will always prevail, and that you become a better person with the skills of rhetoric.
- "... the man who wishes to persuade people will not be negligent as to the matter of character... he will apply himself above all to establish a most honorable name among his fellow-citizens..." –Isocrates, *Antidosis*
- Rhetoric can make you a better person.
- The truth will always come out.
- If people talk about something long enough, the truth will arise and be undeniable.
- One must be willing to become this better person and leave behind childish activities.

Rhetoric = Power

- The Sophists thought of rhetoric as a force of nature, something that couldn't be understood by the basic human.
- "... there is no institution devised by man which the power of speech has not helped us to establish." –Isocrates, *Antidosis*
- They believed rhetoric to have a hold over the human soul.
- Rhetoric is a force to be reckoned with.
- Speech over a person is as powerful as a drug over the body.
- Physis vs. Nomos: two types of power
 - Physis- Power you can't talk back to, natural power. Ex.- Gravity.
 - Nomos- Cultural power. Ex.- Power of Rhetoric.