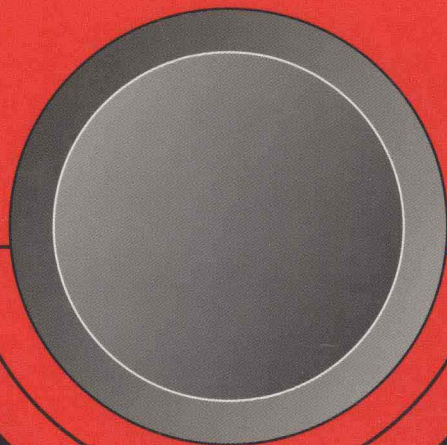


AN INTRODUCTION TO RHETORICAL COMMUNICATION

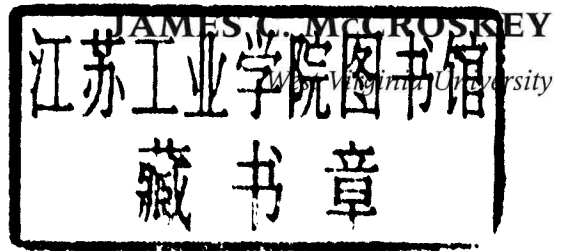
EIGHTH EDITION



JAMES C. McCROSKEY

EIGHTH EDITION

AN INTRODUCTION TO RHETORICAL COMMUNICATION



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PREFACE

The eighth edition of *An Introduction to Rhetorical Communication* appears as the world enters a new millennium. The study of communication is entering its sixth millennium. The study of rhetorical communication is well into its third millennium. When we reference anything in terms of millennia, we are considering time on such a massive scale it is difficult to bring it into the context of our own brief existence. And yet, maybe this is the appropriate context for understanding the place of communication in the history of human existence. The study of communication is among the most ancient of human concerns.

When the first edition of this book was written, my purpose was to draw on both classical rhetorical theory and contemporary social science to provide a coherent introduction to the study of rhetorical communication. That remains the purpose of the eighth edition. However, the eighth edition is born into a world that has changed dramatically from the world of the first edition. We now live in a world society. The days of the insular national society have past. The monocultural existence lived by most people in both the developed and underdeveloped worlds of the 1960s has given way to the multinational, multicultural existence most people experience today. These changes have not changed the core nature of rhetorical communication. However, they have made effective rhetoric even more difficult. With the major advances of opportunity experienced by minorities and women, the expansion of the internet, the World Wide Web, the development of dominant multinational corporations in most aspects of the world economy, and the free flow of international travel, there are many, many more rhetorical communicators than ever before. And the diversity of both sources and receivers of rhetorical communication makes classical theory's injunction to "analyze and adapt to your audience" a much more profound, and difficult, demand than ever before. This book is designed to assist you in developing your abilities to meet that demand.

The book is organized in four sections. The first section is devoted to getting started. Chapter 1 traces the long and distinguished history of rhetorical theory. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the elements inherent in rhetorical communication. Chapter 3 focuses on the most serious problem many students face when attempting to learn to be effective speakers: stage fright. I have attempted to synthesize the latest thoughts generated from work on self-perception of communication competence, willingness to communicate, and communication apprehension with both the older and the newest work in the area of stage fright, including the new communibiological approach. I believe it is the most thorough and up-to-date

explanation of the problem available. Understanding stage fright will not magically make it go away, but such understanding is a vital step in controlling this problem.

The second section is devoted to basic theory about rhetorical communication. The concern of this section is the traditional concern of scholars in rhetorical communication: the audience (Chapter 4); the speaker (Chapter 5); and the message, both verbal (Chapter 6) and nonverbal (Chapter 7). In keeping with the times, an important chapter has been added to this section, a chapter on Diversity and Culture (Chapter 8). These chapters form the foundation upon which the remainder of the book is based.

The third section of the book focuses specifically on rhetorical communication in one-to-many contexts. The section opens with a discussion of the basic steps in developing a message (Chapter 9). This is followed by a chapter on informative messages (Chapter 10). The remainder of the section is directed toward four of the five classical rhetorical canons—*invention* (Chapter 11), *disposition* (Chapter 12), *style* (Chapter 13), and *delivery* (15)—and to the problems of introducing and concluding messages (Chapter 14).

The final chapter (16) is the only one included in Section 4. It has remained virtually unchanged through all eight editions. It focuses on “Ethics and Rhetorical Communication.” Its purpose in this edition, as it has been for each previous edition, is to provoke discussion of the important ethical choices facing people as rhetorical communicators. While many will prefer to read this chapter last, it is written purposefully so that it does not require reading the previous chapters for full understanding. Hence, you are encouraged to read it earlier and use it to help you evaluate the other aspects of rhetorical communication. Some readers have been enthusiastic in their praise for the views expressed in this chapter. Others have been equally enthusiastic in their condemnation of these same views. It is clear that the chapter accomplishes the purpose for which it was written.

Appendix A contains six examples of verbal messages employed in rhetorical communication. The first five speeches, all of which have appeared in previous editions, provide a wide variety of speaking styles and topics. The “newcomer” to this edition is a timely speech by actor and outspoken leader of the National Rifle Association, Charlton Heston. This speech was addressed to college students, but caused quite a stir in many political camps. The topic, “Winning the Cultural War,” is particularly relevant to the cultural stress felt on many college and university campuses today.

I want to express my appreciation to several individuals:

To David A. Frank, Glenn Kuper, and James Vickrey for providing particularly useful pre-revision reviews of IRC’s seventh edition.

To Robert Stephen Reid for catching an error printed in all previous editions. Hermagoras now has his rightful place in Chapter 12.

And, to Karon Bowers for being one the best editors with whom I have had the pleasure of working over the past 35 years of book-writing.

Thank you all for making this edition the best one yet.

James C. McCroskey
Morgantown, W. V.

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PART I



GETTING STARTED

