

Rhetoric Studies in the Republic of Bulgaria

Department of Rhetoric, Faculty of Philosophy, Sofia University

The Department of Rhetoric is established in 1976 as a separate division of Sofia University. The Department became a part of the Faculty of Philosophy in 1998. The Department of Rhetoric has been accredited for master degree and for PhD.

The lecturers from the department of Rhetoric teach courses at all the 12 faculties of Sofia University. Students from five departments in the Faculty of Philosophy (Public Administration, Political Science, Cultural Studies, Librarian and Information Studies, Psychology) learn rhetoric. The staff of the department of Rhetoric give lectures to the undergraduates doing the following university subjects: Law, International Relations, Bulgarian Philology, Slavic Studies, Public Relations, Business Administration, Economics, Public Administration, Political Sciences, Cultural Studies, Psychology, Sociology, Pedagogy, Librarian and Information Studies, European Studies, Tourism, Regional Development and Policy, Mathematics, Statistics, Software Engineering, Chemistry, Biology, and other. Each academic year 1000 B.A. students from Sofia University learn rhetoric in a number of courses designed for different purposes.

Our Master Class of „Rhetoric" was launched in 2004 with training in regular and part-time courses, public order and paid form, as well as in summer classes. By 2012 about 100 students have enrolled and 80 of them have graduated. Since 2011 the Department of Rhetoric offers programs for postgraduate studies in Rhetoric. Between 2007 - 2012 there were enrolled 13 PhD students at the Department of Rhetoric and 6 of them already defended doctoral dissertations.

The curriculum contains the following blocks:

- General education - Basic Social Sciences (Philosophy) required for a specialist in contemporary rhetoric (History of Philosophy, Ethics, Aesthetics, Logic etc.).
- Specialised courses - disciplines that form the professional competencies required for special rhetoric: History of Bulgarian Rhetoric, Ancient rhetoric, Contemporary Rhetoric, Public Speaking, Political Rhetoric, Non-verbal Communication, Orthoepy etc.
- Profiled courses - Business Communication, Negotiations, Public Relations, Advertising, Political Studies, Forensic Rhetoric, Rhetoric of the Ancient East, Rhetoric in Cyberspace or Virtual Rhetoric and some more.
- Practice - 3 - Debating, Presentation skills, Speaking and behaviour in front of camera and microphone. Workshops are compulsory for the students.

The Master class program aims at training future professionals, experts, consultants, lecturers and researchers in the field of rhetoric in the following areas: ancient, medieval and modern rhetoric.

Graduates develop and defend Master theses, based on theoretical research. They are trained in practical skills that apply to perform various professional duties required by professions in various fields such as politics, business, entrepreneurship, management, marketing, social work, advertising, public relations, media diplomacy, cultural institutions, government organizations and institutions, NGOs, foundations, associations and others.

The training focuses on the formation and development of rhetorical communication and presentation skills in various genres and formats: speeches, presentations, debates, conferences, press conferences, involvement and opportunities of ICT and Internet in the study of the manifestations of rhetoric on social networks and social media.

The electronic scientific journal “Rhetoric and Communication” – rhetoric.bg – was launched in 2011. The editorial board includes representatives from five countries.

Rhetoric in the Bulgarian Universities

Rhetoric is a part of the syllabi of 7 Universities:

Sofia University

University of the World and National Economy

Shumen University

South-West University

New Bulgarian University

Varna Free University

Burgas Free University

There are three kinds of courses: compulsory, elective and optional. Rhetoric is on the list of compulsory subjects for the subjects like PR, Public Administration and Journalism, while specialised courses are offered everywhere in Bulgarian Academia. An example is the syllabus for BA and MA classes in English and American Studies and Applied Linguistics at the Philology Faculty of the South West University where elective courses of *Persuasive Discourse* and *Rhetorical Analysis* have been offered for 4 years now and have become favourite with the BA undergraduates, while the Master class involves as compulsory subject *Socio-cultural aspects of translation*. There are also the training courses of *Spoken and Written English, Business Translation, Official documents and letters* where presentation skills are trained for the needs of language teachers, translators and editors. Such courses are designed to develop the research and practical skills of linguists as cultural mediators and are set about fulfilling course project where each of the trainees works on an individual portfolio of 4 to 8 specific tasks. In the fall semester of 2011-2012 academic year there were 452 such portfolios contributing to a course project on the ethos, pathos and logos as dominating features in e-discourse. A longitudinal project on the Roots of Nostalgia started with the Master classes in February 2012 and is expected to be completed in 2014.

Bulgaria has always valued public speaking as a high-class skill. Rhetoric is seen as a necessary course for university graduates in all its specific objectives and forms. Sofia University is the undisputable leader in Rhetorical education while the other High Schools of Bulgaria find their specific paths in answering the needs of their trainees whether they be engineers or medical managers or linguists or politicians.

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