The purpose of this seminar is to introduce:

1. rhetoric as an analytical tool for studying religion,
2. religious discourse as a distinctive form of and problem for the study of rhetoric, and
3. ancient Near Eastern literature as a resource for the study of both comparative rhetoric and religion.

Ancient Near Eastern texts offer abundant material for studying comparative religious rhetoric. These works from Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria and Israel often invoke religious ideas for overtly persuasive goals. Yet their various physical and literary forms illustrate the complicated roles played by texts in ancient (and later) cultures, while their distinctive rhetorical forms relativize and contextualize the history of Greco-Roman rhetorical theories. Their interaction provides a basis for creative scholarship in comparative rhetoric and religion.

This seminar will train students to:

1. interpret ancient Near Eastern texts in translation with sensitivity to their original cultural contexts, their religious roles, and the conditions of their preservation and publication in modernity;
2. analyze the rhetoric of ancient texts to understand their persuasive effects on ancient and contemporary audiences;
3. evaluate claims for the distinctiveness of religious rhetoric(s) in comparison with other forms of social discourse.
Course Requirements:
Students are expected to be prepared to discuss in class all the required readings (listed below under Sources and Analysis). In addition, each student will (1) prepare and present a report on one additional book or set of essays (listed after Report), and (2) write a substantive and original research paper on a subject related to the course topic, presenting the class with a summary during the last class meeting. (The finished research papers are due on or before December 19th.) Late papers and reports will not be eligible for "A" grades.

Required Texts:

- Lipson, Carol and Roberta Binkley (eds.). Rhetoric Before and Beyond the Greeks. Albany: SUNY Press, 2004 (= RBBG below).

All students are required to read Snell before the first class meeting. The ancient texts other than the Bible, as well as the articles in rhetorical theory and analysis, are available on-line through Blackboard. * marks readings not online. For a full list of resources relevant to the topic of this course, consult the Bibliography below.

Topics and Readings (for full citations, see bibliography below; all source readings except biblical texts are on Blackboard; analysis readings not found in the required texts are also on Blackboard):

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Texts:</th>
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| Sep 1 | Introductions in Lemke Room, Special Collections, 6th floor Bird Library | - * Snell, Life in the Ancient Near East (all)  
- "After 90 Years, a Dictionary of an Ancient World" (NYT 6/6/11)  
- Hauser, "Philosophy and Rhetoric" |

**Ancient Rhetorical Settings**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Sources:</th>
<th>Analysis:</th>
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| Sep 8 | Instruction & Persuasion | Ptah-hotep, Satire on the Trades, Eloquent Peasant, Turin Judicial Papyrus (Egyptian)  
Debate between Sheep & Grain, Gilgamesh and Akka (Sumerian)  
* Genesis 18; Exodus 32; Judges 9; 1 Samuel 8; Proverbs 15-16 (Hebrew)  
Aristotle, Rhetoric 1.1-3, 2.1 (Greek) | - Fox, “Ancient Egyptian Rhetoric.”  
- Wills, “Speaking Arenas of Ancient Mesopotamia.”  
- Sweeney, “Law, Rhetoric, and Gender in Ramesside Egypt,” RBBG 99-113  
- Zulick, “The Active Force of Hearing: The Ancient Hebrew Language of
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Report</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 29</td>
<td>Literacy &amp; orality: Myths &amp; Epics</td>
<td>- Beard, &quot;Writing and Religion&quot;</td>
<td>- Enuma Elish, Tukulti-Ninurta [scroll to bottom] (Akkadian) Kirta [scroll down] (Ugaritic) Shipwrecked Sailor, Horus &amp; Seth (Egyptian)</td>
<td>- Baines, &quot;Interpreting the Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor&quot; - Mifsud, &quot;Storytelling as Soul-Tuning .. Ramayana&quot;</td>
<td>on Ong, <em>Orality and Literacy</em></td>
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<td>Sources: Osiris, Aten, Hymns to Sesostris III, Amun-Re (Egyptian) Exaltation of Inanna, Lament over Ur (Sumerian), Neo-Assyrian prayers,</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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| Oct 27 | The Divine Audience: Hymns & Prayers       | Neo-Babylonian lament, prayers to personal gods (Akkadian)                                 | * Psalms 6, 11, 18, 46-49; Isaiah 38 (Hebrew); Hodayot: Qumran Hymns (Hebrew) | - * Binkley, “The Rhetoric of Origins and the Other: Reading the Ancient Figure of Enheduanna,” *RBBG* 47-63  
|        |                                            |                                              | - Newsom “Kenneth Burke Meets the Teacher of Righteousness” [at end of Hodayot] |                                          |
| Nov 3  | Problem of Persuasive Texts: Letters       | Sources: Personal correspondence (Sumerian, Egyptian), Royal correspondence (Sumerian, Egyptian), Letters to the dead (Egyptian), Letters to gods (Sumerian, Egyptian)  
|        |                                            |                                              |                                                                          | - Poster, "Economy of Letter Writing" [at end of Letters]  
|        |                                            |                                              |                                                                          | - Baines, "Egyptian Letters of the New Kingdom"  
|        |                                            |                                              |                                                                          | - * Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart* 1-14, 47-61 | Paper topics and texts |
| Nov 10 | Problem of Persuasive Texts: Royal Inscriptions | Sources: Kadesh Inscription of Ramses, Merneptah Stela, Piye Stela (Egyptian), Sargon, Rim-Sin, Hammurapi, Iahdun-Lim, Shamshi-Ilu, Sennacherib (Akkadian), Mesha Inscription (Moabite), Azatiwada, Yehawmilk (Phoenician)  
|        |                                            |                                              |                                                                          | - * Judge, “The Rhetoric of Inscriptions”  
| Nov 17 | Problem of Persuasive Texts: Rituals       | Sources: Installation Ritual from Emar (Akkadian), Daily Ritual of Amun-Re (Egyptian), Rites of Vintage (Ugaritic), Marseilles Tariff (Punic)Instructions to Priests and Temple Officials (Hittite)  
|        |                                            |                                              |                                                                          | - * Leviticus 1, 6, 9-10, 16 (Hebrew)  
| Dec 1  | Problem of Persuasive Texts: Scriptures    | Sources: * Genesis 1-3, Judges 4-5, Proverbs 31 (Hebrew)                                    | - Kugel, *The Bible As It Was*, 17-24, 53-82  
|        |                                            |                                              |                                                                          | - Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 72-143  
|        |                                            |                                              |                                                                          | - * Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart* 273-97 |                                          |
| Dec 8  | Paper presentations                        |                                              |                                                                          |                                          |
| Dec 19 | Research Papers Due                        |                                              |                                                                          |                                          |

Course Bibliography: *Comparative Rhetoric, Theories of Rhetoric & Religion, Ancient Rhetoric, Primary Texts* (starred * items are on reserve in Bird Library; for the abbreviations *RBBG* and *ANGR*, see the section on *Comparative Rhetoric*)
Comparative Rhetoric:

- * Lipson, Carol S. and Roberta A. Binkley (eds.). *Ancient Non-Greek Rhetorics*. West Lafayette, IN: Parlor, 2009. (= *ANGR*).

Theories of Rhetoric and Religion:


Studies of Ancient Rhetoric:

- Binkley, Roberta A. “The Rhetoric of Origins and the Other: Reading the Ancient Figure of Enheduanna,” *RBBG* 47-63.

**Ancient Near Eastern Texts in Translation** (grouped by original language):

**Multi-cultural anthologies:**


**Sumerian:**

- ONLINE: *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature*

**Akkadian:**


**Hittite:**


**Ugaritic:**


**Egyptian:**

- ONLINE: [Ancient Egyptian texts and papyri](http://www.egyptarchive.com)

**Hebrew, Aramaic & Greek:**

- ONLINE: [Common English Bible](http://www.commonEnglishBible.com) (Bible)
- ONLINE: [Perseus Digital Library](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper) (Greco-Roman)