MULTIMODALITY

Rhetoric is a multimodal art, which means that rhetoric teaches us to approach each document as a multimodal document. That is, every document contains multiple modalities (or modes) of communication (either deliberately or unintentionally).

The Five Modalities:
1. Linguistic (referring to things like words, sentences, paragraphs, and all of the concerns associated with these elements, including word choice, grammar, punctuation, style, etc.)

2. Aural (referring to tone, volume, emphasis, accent, rhythm, silence, and all of the concerns associated with these elements)

3. Visual (referring to things like color, size, shape, layout, perspective, etc.)

4. Gestural (referring to things like bodily movement and expressions)

5. Spatial (referring to things like organization, arrangement, proximity, location, etc.)

Multimodality also refers to the genres which are comprised of these modes:

1. Aural forms (such as sound, speech, music, etc.
2. Written forms (such as text, documents, websites, etc.)
3. Visual forms (such as images, graphics, charts, maps, animations, etc.)
4. Gestural forms (such as dance, body language, walking, etc.)
5. Mixed/Blended/Hybrid Forms (e.g., motion pictures, which have may have all of these modalities).

The more complicated the genre, the more modes permeate (or are included) in the document.

Your job as a student of rhetoric is to learn and to apply these different concepts into the creation of various compositions (text, speech, graphics, etc.) for this course and beyond.

GENRE BY MODALITY (LIST)

Genre refers to the placement or categorization of a document/project, which is made distinct by its style, its content, and its form.

DIGITAL GENRES

WEB-BASED SUBGENRES
Conventional Websites
Webpages

Blogs
Web-Based Applications
Social Media Sites
Search Engine

COMPUTER-BASED SUBGENRE
Desktop Applications
-Spreadsheets
-Word Processors
-Slideshow Creation
Games
-Arcade
-Racing
-Role-Playing
-Shooter/Fighting
-Strategy
-Simulation
Web Browsers

WRITTEN GENRES
Nonfiction
Fiction
Poetry
Drama/Plays/Theatrical Works/Scripts
Other

NONFICTION SUBGENRES
Scientific Writing (abstracts, articles, conference proceedings, lab reports, etc.)
Technical Writing (manuals, reports, usability tests, etc.)
Narratives (autobiographies, biographies, memoir, personal narratives, historical nonfiction, etc.)
Academic Writing (argument essays, expository themes, etc.)
Marketing Writing (business cards, brochures, advertisements, white papers, etc.)
Business Writing (grants, letters, prospectuses, proposals, etc.)
Medical Writing (case studies, patient records, etc.
Philosophical
Political
Satire

FICTION SUBGENRES
Absurdist/Surreal
Action
Adventure
Comedy
Crime
Drama

Fantasy
Historical Fiction
Horror
Mystery
Romance
Science Fiction
Thriller
Urban
Western

POETRY SUBGENRES
Dramatic
Epic
Narrative
Lyrical

DRAMA/PLAYS/SCRIPT SUBGENRES
Comedy
History
Tragedy

OTHER WRITTEN SUBGENRES
Calligraphy
Geometry
Script

VISUAL GENRES
Architecture
Beading
Cartoon
Casting (cement, plastic, resin, etc.)
Ceramics/Glass/Pottery
Collage
Costuming (cosplay, etc.)
Drawings (abstract, chalk, charcoal, conté, crayon, graphite, ink, pastel, pointillism, etc.)
Digital Compositions (3D graphics, vector, bitmap, etc.)
Films/Cinematic
Interior Design
Metalworks
Paintings (cubism, expressionism, impressionism, surrealism, etc.)
Photography (digital, etc.)
Printmaking (lithography, relief making, woodblocks, etc.)
Pyrotechnics
Sculpture (clay, stone, wood, etc.)
Tattoo
Textile

FILMS/CINEMATIC SUBGENRES
Any Literary Genre
Documentary
Educational/Instructional
Animated
Live-Action Scripted
Live-Action Unscripted
Television
-Children's Programming
-Commercials
-Infomercials
-Game Shows
-Soap Operas
-News/Sports/Entertainment
-Reality
-Talk Show

AURAL GENRES
Speech
Music
-Classical & Opera
-Country & Western (folk, bluegrass, Americana, etc.)
-Electronic
-Jazz
-Popular
-Rap
-Rhythm & Blues
-Rock
-World

GESTURAL GENRES
Dance (ballet, flash mob, modern, etc.)
Performance Art