



Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900 - 1985 (Studies in Writing & Rhetoric)

Professor James A. Berlin

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Berlin here continues his unique history of American college composition begun in his *Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century Colleges* (1984), turning now to the twentieth century.

In discussing the variety of rhetorics that have been used in writing classrooms Berlin introduces a taxonomy made up of three categories: objective rhetorics, subjective rhetorics, and transactional rhetorics, which are distinguished by the epistemology on which each is based. He makes clear that these categories are not tied to a chronology but instead are to be found in the English department in one form or another during each decade of the century.

His historical treatment includes an examination of the formation of the English department, the founding of the NCTE and its role in writing instruction, the training of teachers of writing, the effects of progressive education on writing instruction, the General Education Movement, the appearance of the CCCC, the impact of Sputnik, and today's "literacy crisis."

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