

# **Rhetorical Vistas: Transcending Old Disciplinary Boundaries Into New Collaborative Territories**

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**Abstract:** This article utilizes the special issue theme to discuss old disciplinary boundaries in the study of rhetoric that has limited American and Eurasian academic connections, and to begin the process of creating new global collaborative territories. Current boundaries have produced several intellectual and scholarly gaps, including differences in institutional hierarchies, and economic challenges that are threatening higher education from a variety of standpoints. In addition, eclectic theoretical foundations, conceptual differences with the words *communication* and *communications* and differing institutional nomenclatures for American communication departments provide additional impediments. This article subsequently suggests five avenues for erecting global disciplinary bridges for new collaborative territories, including increased awareness of scholarly histories, international scholars, the perceptions of the relationships between rhetoric, argumentation, and persuasion, and scholarly organizations as well as taking advantage of synchronous and asynchronous technologies that can foster mutual global scholarly awareness and participation.

**Keywords:** rhetoric, communication, linguistics, philology, identity

## **Introduction**

The study of rhetoric enjoys a prestigious position in global academe. As an interdisciplinary field, its reach from written, oral, and visual perspectives intersects with numerous academic disciplines, including philosophy, history, linguistics, languages, communication, and English. Yet the study of oral, or spoken, rhetoric remains underdeveloped, including the

identification of Eurasian counterparts for mutual scholarly conversation and collaboration.

This article attempts to repair existing gaps created by old traditional boundaries to identify new paths for global oral rhetorical study. It first identifies several reasons for these gaps, like different international systems of higher education that result in the training of rhetorical scholars from seemingly incongruent disciplines, economic challenges to international post-secondary institutions, eclectic theoretical foundations toward the study of oral rhetoric, definitional or interpretive differences between the words *communication* and *communications* that complicate international scholarly connections, and American disciplinary nomenclature differences that make finding American colleagues difficult, in addition to identifying like-minded Eurasian scholars who are dispersed over several academic fields.

The article then examines ways to overcome these gaps through heightened awareness of our respective scholarly histories, becoming familiar with global scholars conducting rhetorical studies, explicating the relationship between rhetoric, argumentation, and persuasion, identifying several international scholarly rhetorical organizations where gaps can be reduced, and utilizing technology more as a means of closing the gaps.

Awareness of these divisive issues may foster greater understanding of our interdisciplinary rhetorical paths and commence the process of developing vistas connections between international oral rhetorical scholars from the American disciplines of Communication Studies with their global counterparts.

### **Institutional Differences and Economic Challenges**

The journey toward the end point of introducing rhetorical scholars from the US and Eurasia, Central and Eastern European,

and Central Asian countries first entails preliminary discussions of several obstacles that have deterred efforts to date. A logical starting point addresses our respective post-secondary educational systems. Two issues immediately stand out: (1) institutional differences and (2) economic challenges.

The U.S. post-secondary education system has 2-year undergraduate colleges that offer general education courses at lower costs. Students can transfer to a 4-year college or university to complete their bachelor's degree. Many of the 4 year institutions also offer post-baccalaureate degrees. The American system can be envisioned as "mega super centers" that contain a little bit of something for nearly everyone. Students can study a vast array of subjects, ranging from literature to mechanical engineering. In contrast, our Eurasian counterparts have traditionally been situated in institutions that specialize by subject or research area (like "Pharmacy" or "Arts"), or by intention or goal (e.g. "research", "pedagogical", "technological", and so on), and offer baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate degrees.

The different institutional layouts can sometimes create difficulties when looking for like-minded rhetorical scholars, particularly in challenging economic times. For example, American institutions are employing fewer full-time, tenure-track faculty members in favor of adjunct or contingent faculty. These part-time educators often earn low salaries and do not qualify for fringe benefits like their full-time counterparts. As a result, we are finding qualified scholars who traditionally would be suited for graduate degree-granting institutions now scattered across all types and levels of post-secondary institutions (Berlinerblau, 2017). A second economic change regards institutional funding for scholarly activities. Typically only those who are at the upper echelon of their respective institutions are often able to secure sustained funding for international conferences and seminars on a

regular basis that fosters global networking. The vast majority of us thus must rely on the occasional international conference travel or word-of-mouth recommendations from our ex-pat colleagues to create an international academic network of like-minded colleagues.

Eurasian institutions are also enduring economic challenges. Russia serves as an excellent example. President Vladimir Putin's 2020 plan to improve his country's institutional prestige globally (Alekseev, 2014) has resulted in institutional mergers and subsequent loss of academic jobs. Dvornikova (2016) indicates that Russian post-secondary institutions are projected to lose an additional 10,000 academic jobs by the end of 2019. She also notes that our Russian colleagues are in the same situation as many international ones as faculty are continually asked to do more work without additional compensation. Also, a long-standing "career" in academe is becoming rarer for our Russian colleagues with the introduction of yearly employment contracts. This approach fosters instability as well as financial insecurity since these contracts can end at any moment. Finally, global politics also threatens international higher educational institutions periodically, as most recently witnessed by the events surrounding Central European University in Budapest, Hungary (Goldstein, 2017; Karasz, 2017).

As a result, different international educational structures coupled with economic concerns has compounded an already existing difficult situation of meeting global rhetorical studies colleagues. But practical issues constitutes one aspect of the problem. Another aspect regards the disciplinary paths global rhetoric scholars employ in their scholarship.

### **Eclectic Theoretical Foundations**

A third issue addresses the eclectic theoretical foundations underscoring rhetorical studies globally. While scholars typically

study *rhetoric* (loosely labeled), germinating from the works of Plato and Aristotle, American and Eurasian disciplinary roots, philosophical perspectives, and scholarly applications toward rhetoric differ.

Eurasians traditionally study rhetoric from the fields of philology and linguistics; in the States, however, its foundation is philosophy. In the U.S. rhetorical studies occurs within dedicated Communication Studies and English departments, which corresponds to their respective interests of the oral word and the written word. On the other hand, as Tolstikova-Mast & Keyton (2002: 120) note, in Russia, communication is studied within several academic departments like sociology, psychology, management, cultural studies, and linguistics. As such, the different theoretical approaches serves as an additional impediment to amalgamating international rhetorical scholars. While there is some overlap from the literature, that overlap unites academics who study the written word, and those connections are often made with American counterparts in the disciplines of English and linguistics. Those who study the oral or spoken word do not share the same disciplinary foundation and subsequent networking opportunities, but can begin to connect through their written word counterparts. But these connections introduces an additional issues of the purpose and intention of rhetoric, namely communication. As the next section attests, defining communication and its counterpart of communications is complex and does not always enjoy a direct country-to-country translation when viewed from a transnational perspective.

### **What is Communication(s)?**

Problematizing further the desire to unite rhetorical scholars from the States and from Eurasia, Central and Eastern

Europe, and Central Asia is the between the study of communication and communications and its complicated ties to rhetorical study. A brief discussion of American and Russian conceptions of these two areas illustrates differing cultural interpretations.

### *American Conceptions of Communication and Communications*

Eadie (2015: 14-15) points out that the broad American perspective of communication as an academic discipline emerged in the early 20th century and was comprised of three different paths: (1) journalism; (2) speech; and (3) communication.

(1) *Journalism* eventually broke away to form its own standalone discipline, but as Eadie points out (13), the phrase *mass communications* was added in the 1980s as a means of encompassing the different forms of mediated communication. In Eadie's opinion, this generated the first true or legitimate *communication* department in American higher education. But what it also did was merge under one roof the various mediums that addressed communication directed toward the public.

(2) The second path, *speech*, eventually morphed into *speech communication* in 1970, and then to just *communication*, in 1997 ("National Communication Association"). This evolution resulted from the field expanding its *humanistic* scope of inquiry from textual speeches to other communicative forms. Cohen (1994: 58) argued that during the discipline's 20th century development, *communication* was used as an "umbrella" term that referred to those areas that addressed the "oral arts." As the field developed, other subfields also left to become separate departments of their own right, like theatre and communication disorders.

(3) The third path of *communication* refers to the *social science* side of the academic discipline. This area represents those fields that focus on hypothesis generation and testing, data

collection, various statistical analyses, and discussions of results. This path, like the *humanities* side of communication, can trace its lineage back to the 1914-1919 debate regarding how *communication* should be studied, and represents those scholars who desired to follow the lead of the physical sciences.

Cohen (1994: 32-36) traced this debate in his book, one of the first of several books delineating the history of *communication* as an academic discipline in U.S. The debate occurred between the group of founding scholars over their future research path upon separating themselves from their previous parent discipline of English and their literary research tradition. The founders became divided over future scholarly pursuits: continue the traditional approach of studying speech, or pursue a new direction by copying the practices of the “pure” sciences like sociology and psychology (37), which we now regard as the *social sciences*. Those in favor of the latter argued that the physical sciences were well respected in academe and emulating them could elevate the fledging discipline’s stature. As the group searched for the answer to “how to do research”[as opposed to “what to research” (38)], the founders realized that the new field would have “to be dependent on the research methodologies of other disciplines” (37). While initially focused on public speaking and research generation, the founders also suggested one research area as *communication*, a term which, as Cohen noted, did not become “common in the discipline” until after World War II (41).

Today, the U.S. academic conception of the word *communication* often serves to represent the humanities and the social sciences. The subfields that focus on the side of the *humanities*, or arts, include the newer subfields of performance studies, ethnography, and cultural studies in addition to the traditional subfields of rhetoric, persuasion, argumentation, and the qualitative side of political communication, although the latter

three have also crossed over into what we now refer to as the *social sciences* side of communication. That side also includes the more traditional subfields of interpersonal, nonverbal, gender, family, small group, organizational, and intercultural communication, as well as newer subfields like health and visual communication. *Communications*, on the other hand, includes the traditional journalistic subfields of newspapers, magazines, radio, and television (e.g. *mass communications*) and advertising and public relations in addition to the newer subfield of computer-mediated communication and its social media offspring.

As such, the traditional study of rhetoric in the U.S., in its oral word form and from the *communication* perspective, differs from other global rhetorical approaches. If an American scholar were to venture to places like Canada or the Netherlands, they would witness a more scientific and somewhat mathematical approach to rhetoric, particularly with the subfields of argumentation and pragma-dialectics. Noted rhetorical scholar Michael J. Hoppmann (personal communication, June 10, 2018) proffers an additional disciplinary wrinkle. He suggests that while German and American scholars see argumentation as a sub-discipline of rhetoric, other scholars like the Dutch view rhetoric and argumentation as two separate but related disciplines, with argumentation carrying more currency. In his opinion, the Dutch see the relationship between the two in three different ways: (1) argumentation without rhetoric (e.g. pure verbal reasoning); (2) rhetoric without argumentation (e.g. traditional studies based on Aristotle and Cicero); and (3) rhetoric and argumentation interacting with each other (e.g. strategic maneuvering). While American rhetorical scholars are gradually becoming more aware of these other perspectives and approaches, we remain wedded to our traditional practices and must become more globally aware in order to develop international connections.



### *Russian conceptions of communication and communications*

It is not surprising then that our foreign colleagues may be confused about the American study of *communication(s)*. But our lineage is not the only problem; the word *communication* itself poses issues, particularly in Russia. Klyukanov (2010: 14-15) notes the differences between *communication* and *communications* in the Russian context. He states that “obsheynie” and “kommunikatsiya” both refer to the English word *communication*, only the former is “understood as interaction, based on shared values,” whereas the latter is associated with “transfer of information.” Klyukanov argues that “kommunikatsiya” is more popular because its morphological structure and its derivatives are better formed from a grammatical perspective than “obsheynie.” Tolstikova-Mast & Keyton (2002: 121) point out that “kommunikatsiya” is often used in the plural form and is considered to be the U.S. equivalent of the study of *communications*. Collectively, these authors also note that the same word, in the singular form, can be used to reference the U.S. study of *communication*, due to its linguistic features.

*Rhetoric*, on the other hand, is fairly close to the English spelling when it is translated into other languages, like “retorica” or “риторика” (Katsev, 2017). Like *communication*, though, its definition can vary, depending on factors like the user or their intent. While Russian thinkers like Mikhail Bakhtin are well known to American rhetorical scholars, others like Roman Jakobson and Lev Vygotsky are not [although American scholar Frank E.X. Dance (1967) attempted to make connections in the late 1960s (see Beebe & Matyash, 2004: 17)]. The earliest American-authored article addressing rhetoric in Eurasia was Butler’s (1964) essay on communism’s influence on Russian rhetoric. Annushkin (2009: 259), who has penned a rare book

chapter tracing the Russian study of rhetoric into the English language, states that Russia has rediscovered rhetorical study, first due to changes in the political and social spheres after being ignored in favor of scientific linguistics and literature from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and second, as the result of newer communication works resulting from the post-1989 Revolutions across Central and Eastern Europe. Eurasian expats studying rhetoric in America have begun to expand traditional borders to include newer approaches, like Baranchuk-Hajiyev and her Lacanian psychoanalysis of the rhetoric of Putin and Zhirinovskiy (2009). But heightened awareness remains a critical issue that must be repaired.

Annushkin's (2009: 259) claim that "Modern Russia is currently experiencing a rhetorical 'explosion,' due to the changes occurring in both the political and social spheres". His claims are evinced by several Russian universities introducing various interdisciplinary courses that include speech and rhetoric. International scholars should capitalize on their renewed interest and begin to forge pedagogical and research relationships that will contribute to an enhanced global understanding of rhetorical theory and practice.

### *What's in a Name? Disciplinary Nomenclature Differences*

Rhetoric, as part of the U.S. communication field of study, is further complicated by the diverse nomenclatures used to identify its academic communication departments and thus establishes a fifth issue of concern. These disciplinary nomenclature differences results in difficulties locating American rhetorical scholars. For example, Syracuse University had the "Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies", the University of Maryland had the "Department of Communication", and the Pennsylvania State University has the "Department of

Communication Arts & Sciences”. Since the study of communication and communications are not known singularly like the “Department of English” or the “Department of Philosophy”, this American lack of “identity recognition” contributes to the larger problem of defining who “we” are in the U.S., an issue that several scholars view as a lingering problem stemming from our split with English in the early 1910s.

In addition, there are very few “Western-style” academic communication departments studying oral rhetoric in Eurasian, Central and Eastern, and Central Asian higher education, mostly due to different historical and political structures and ideologies. Communication is studied in these regions, but not from a central, disciplinary home. Instead it is often studied across several traditional fields, like linguistics, philology, world languages, and literature/literary studies. This further challenges connecting with international rhetorical scholars as we attend difference conferences and publish in different journals.

In the States, academics studying the written word are often housed in the “Department of English,” and other departments like “Modern Languages” or “Classics” that often combine the fields of literature, linguistics, and philology. Some American universities have separate “Linguistic” departments, which could also include philology.

Beebe and Matyash (2004: 17) noted that Russian scholars were often trained in programs that emphasized written textual analysis, including literary, stylistic, and critical analysis, but training in oral communication, and particularly rhetoric, was not commonplace in Russian education. But even this is slowly beginning to change. For example, Moscow State University was the first Russian post-secondary institution “to create a Chair of Theory and Practice of Speech Communication”, but it was housed within the larger Foreign Languages and Intercultural

Communication department. That department offered academic courses in “rhetoric, mass communication, public relations, lexicography, sociolinguistics, language and business, and language and education” (Tolstikova-Mast & Keyton, 1998: 125). But Moscow State remains a rare example.

While the U.S. does have a few “Departments of Rhetoric”, like the one at Sofia University in Bulgaria (V. Valiaticarska, personal communication, July 15, 2017), they often focus on either communication or English, and whose formal study primarily resides in Communication and English departments. Some similar ancillary U.S. rhetorical colleagues can also be found in the fields of Philosophy, History, and Political Science, thus erecting additional barriers.

Manchon & Rodero (2015: 73-74) have noted that the disciplinary and institutional issues associated with *communication* and related disciplines in the U.S. are also occurring internationally. Their comparison of different communication associations, ranging from regional and national ones in the U.S. as well as several international ones, has identified incongruent disciplinary foci, goals, and fragmentation under the *communication* umbrella. They argue that communication scholars need to resolve the disparities between scientists, academics, and professionals, and dialogues between scholars of various disciplines need to occur.

The broader study of communication in Russia, in Central and Eastern Europe, and in Central Asia has expanded greatly since the 1990s. But if a Eurasian rhetorician wanted to work with an American counterpart, they could have a hard time finding us, unless they were cognizant of American academic nomenclature. We would also have difficulties finding them as they are scattered across several interdisciplinary disciplines.

In sum, numerous issues exist that serve as impediments for connecting Eurasian and American rhetorical scholars, particularly those who study the oral word. Differences with post-secondary institutional infrastructures, theoretical approaches to rhetorical study, perspectives toward communication and communications, and disciplinary nomenclature, coupled with economic challenges, collectively have generated a complex web that has thus far impeded the ability for global rhetorical scholars to meet and engage each other. But opportunities exist to reduce boundaries.

### **Constructing Rhetorical Vistas**

The current research trend of transnationalistic studies encourages scholarly awareness and collaboration, such as this article, and international rhetoric scholars should embrace and engage this global movement. Journals offering transnational themes that foster the transcending of old disciplinary boundaries into new collaborative territories such as this one should continue as over time they will contribute immensely to the closing of current gaps. Understanding the differences between global academic institutions, disciplinary perspectives, nomenclature issues, and multiple academic homes from an American standpoint is a fruitful start but additional historical narratives tracing and explaining the study of rhetoric from additional international perspectives are needed. In addition, comparative examinations of the study of rhetoric internationally is underway, but more works are warranted. This essay concludes by proffering five ways to construct and transcend old rhetorical boundaries into new rhetorical vistas: (1) increase awareness of scholarly histories; (2) increase awareness of international scholars; (3) increase awareness of the relationship between rhetoric, argumentation, and persuasion; (4) increase awareness of each

other's scholarly organizations; and (5) increase technology usage.

*Increase awareness of scholarly histories*

Increasing awareness of each other's disciplinary roots and current research trajectory is needed. It is important to note here that there are multiple approaches to rhetoric, and one is not better than another. For example, this article has noted the issues and complications with the word "communication." Perhaps this word could promote further discussion from interpretative or meaning standpoints or from a linguistic perspective. Other words worthy of scholarly analysis include *messages* in addition to *rhetoric* (see Hazen, 2004).

A related question addresses historical and contemporary geographical boundaries: How does one refer to the regions of Eastern and Central Europe as well as Central Asia? Should we utilize words like "Slavic" or phrases like "post-Soviet countries?" Or is "Eurasian" - a term American scholar Alfred G. Mueller II (2009) coined in his publication examining the Treaty of Brest - satisfactory? Related is a 2015 online post made by Romanian expat scholar Ligia Mihut who asked, "Can we speak of an Eastern European rhetoric in a similar way in which we speak of Chinese, Indian, or Western rhetoric? Does a Eurasian rhetoric exist?" Perhaps Mueller and Mihut's questions could be explored by knowledgeable international colleagues.

*Increase awareness of the relationship between rhetoric, argumentation, and persuasion*

An additional area of future research addresses the relationship between the study of rhetoric, argumentation, and persuasion. As Hoppmann noted earlier, the Americans and the Dutch differently elevate one of the three over the other two.

Budzynska et al. (2014) indicates, the Polish see rhetoric as a subset of argumentation like our Netherland colleagues. Do other Eurasian, Eastern and Central European, and Central Asian countries view the three similarly? While our international colleagues undoubtedly are more familiar with these geographical connections, very few American scholars are not, and is most likely an intellectual error on our part that must be rectified.

With assistance from said international colleagues, perhaps another area of future research could be to fully map out the study of oral rhetoric and its related disciplines of argumentation and persuasion in Eurasian, Eastern and Central European, and Central Asian countries. Connected to this activity would be a second area of interest addressing American, Canadian, or European influences on the study of the three.

### *Increase awareness of international rhetorical scholars*

Part of the joy of being in academe is learning new ideas, scholars, and perspectives that better inform our collective scholarship. While awareness of international scholars who study written rhetoric is well developed, the same awareness level of oral rhetoric scholars and their works is another vista to bridge.

Several American academics study the rhetoric of Eurasia, Central and Eastern Europe, and Central Asia, like Marilyn Young, Michael Launer, and David Cratis Williams (see Williams and Young, 2015; Young and Launer, 2006; Young and Launer, 2002; Young and Launer, 1998) who have studied Soviet and Russian oral rhetoric for several decades and the aforementioned American scholar Alfred G. Mueller II (2009; 2004), who analyzes Ukrainian and Armenian rhetoric. In addition, there are several ex-pats who also examine oral rhetoric like Noemi Marin. A Romanian who defected in 1990, Marin is perhaps the most well-known Romanian-American oral rhetoric scholar studying

the presidential rhetoric of her homeland as well as political rhetoric of Eurasia (see Marin, 2006; Marin, 2007; Marin, 2008; Marin, 2015).

As transnational studies continue to populate the global academic consciousness, it is time to move away from “old disciplinary boundaries” and work toward “new collaborative territories” in the study of rhetoric, particularly with those scholars who study oral rhetoric. Within the U.S., stronger ties between written, and oral rhetoricians who have a mutual interest in rhetorical studies of Eurasian, Central and Eastern Europe, and Central Asia need to be further developed. Promoting international oral rhetoric scholars and their works is necessary, particularly of expats like Marin, and could serve as a means of creating new collaborative territories with our international colleagues.

#### *Increase awareness of international scholarly organizations*

Another vista to pursue is increased awareness of the various international scholarly rhetoric organizations. Depending on which aspect of rhetoric and communication one studies, some of this has already been accomplished. In Romania, for example, this increasing awareness is evinced by the scholarly organization *Argumentori*, who focus on post-secondary argumentation, debate, and rhetorical pedagogy, by Babes-Bolyai University and their Department of English, who host a biennial conference, and by the University of Bucharest, who sponsors a yearly linguistics conference. In addition, the Croatian Philological Association hosts its biennial rhetoric conference during even-numbered years, and the Polish Rhetorical Society sponsors their annual “Rhetoric in Society” conference.

In the U.S. there are several similar organizations. The National Communication Association (NCA), the largest



communication association in America, hosts an annual convention that averages attendance of 4,000-5,000 domestic and international scholars. NCA offers programming in numerous subdisciplines, including argumentation and debate, rhetorical and communication theories, political communication, and public address, among others. In addition, the Communication Association of Eurasian Researchers (CAER) sponsors panels at the convention, many of which are devoted to oral rhetorical study. NCA also offers a small “Promotion of Communication in Emerging Democracies” grant for foreign scholars wishing to attend U.S. communication conferences or for American scholars desiring to attend foreign conferences in emerging democracies to discuss the communication discipline.

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) sponsors the Conference on College Composition and Communication (i.e. “4Cs”), an annual gathering devoted to the study of written rhetoric. The Rhetoric Society of America (RSA) sponsors a biennial conference uniting written and oral rhetorical scholars in late spring of even numbered years. Through the efforts of Syracuse University’s Kendall R. Phillips, RSA has worked towards establishing connections with global rhetorical scholars, and was instrumental in the formation of the Rhetoric Society of Europe (RSE). RSE hosts a biennial conference in odd numbered years, and with their next gathering occurring in September 2019 in Milan, Italy. CAER joined RSA as an affiliate member as part of their desire to commence work on closing gaps between American and Eurasian rhetorical scholars, and recently held its inaugural panel session at the May 2018 RSA conference in Minneapolis, MN (USA). The panel drew together rhetoricians from communication and English, and included several ex-pats from Bulgaria, Ukraine, Romania, and Russia. Their continued association with RSA will work toward closing gaps between

American rhetorical scholars and their international counterparts. And the Southern Colloquium on Rhetoric (SCoR) hosts a yearly thematic meeting in the summer or fall months and also participates at the Southern States Communication Association's (SSCA) annual conference.

Two historical rhetoric societies also exist. The International Society for the History of Rhetoric (ISHR) sponsors a biennial conference in odd-numbered years, with their next one occurring in July 2019 in New Orleans, LA (USA). The American Society for the History of Rhetoric (ASHR) was established as an American offshoot of ISHR. They host a symposium before RSA's conference, and also sponsors panels at the NCA's annual convention. Society members come from a variety of disciplines, including Communication, English, World Language, Cultural Studies, History, and Linguistics.

Many rhetoric-related international scholarly associations also exist addressing argumentation, persuasion, linguistics, and philology, among others (a comprehensive list can be found at <https://eurasianresearchers.com/links/list-of-rhetoric-and-related-associations/>). As such, global rhetoricians have numerous opportunities to make connections with each other. Unfortunately, academic calendars and continual reductions of institutional funding for conference participation may limit international travel, particularly to and from the States. One potential solution is to "meet in the middle," and attend a geographically-beneficial conference like RSE's in Milan in where scholars can congregate in Europe and shorten travel time and distance for all. Another potential solution is to continue to use innovative technology.

### *Increase usage of technology*

As scholars we should capitalize further on the ubiquitous nature of technology to build bridges and crest vistas. Skype is

now used regularly for scholarly presentations when travel is not possible. However, we should also utilize other tools and programs.

For example, CAER has started to videotape its programming at various conferences and makes those videos available for viewing on YouTube for free. Although the videos are somewhat primitive in nature, they attempt to introduce the American approaches to the study of communication and rhetoric to Eurasian, Central and Eastern European, and Central Asian scholars. In addition, videotaped scholarly presentations can be used for foreign conferences. While they do not afford scholarly interactivity, they can be made available ahead of time to conference participants, or shown during the conference. This also assists American scholars who often are asked to Skype at early morning hours of 4:00 or 5:00 or foreign scholars who are asked to do the same during late night hours of 22:00 or 23:00.

A third solution would be to employ more asynchronous virtual conferences, either as a stand-alone entity or part of a F2F conference. Virtual conferences entail scholars posting papers online for other participants to read. A comment section allows the author and readers to converse with each other, answer questions, and respond to comments in real or delayed time. Its asynchronous nature also allows conferences to occur for as long as the planners desire, and are modular enough to accommodate most scholarly needs when international travel, timing, and funding would prevent F2F participation.

In summary, technology can be used in innovative ways that allow for global rhetoricians to interact with each other. While synchronous usage like Skype is already used, asynchronous activities like videos and virtual conferences can also be employed, particularly when time, travel costs, and

reductions of institutional financial support force scholars to carefully choose their yearly scholarly events.

## **Conclusion**

Rhetoric continues as an academic field whose roots and development have been grounded in and expanded from a variety of perspectives, some of which are emphasized more than others, depending on geographical region. Despite differing higher educational structures and goals, the path uniting Eurasian rhetorical scholars with American ones has been much easier with the English colleagues than the communication ones because of their common denominator focus on the written word. The communication discipline itself is a complicated one, with several distinct disciplines and subfields using the name, and words, definitions, language, and languages serve as additional complications.

Nevertheless, it is possible to transcend old disciplinary boundaries into new collaborative territories and forge stronger rhetorical vistas, but it will take time as like-minded scholars working diligently toward increased scholarly awareness, participation, and collaboration in mutual rhetorical activities.

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