Discuss the impact of the work of three authors from the History II course reading list on the “rhetorical landscape” (Royster, 2003). You may focus your argument on rhetoric itself or on a related aspect, including but not limited to agency, audience, invention, pedagogy, access, epistemology, and silence. Remember to make explicit (1) your rationale for grouping the three authors, and (2) the significance of their work in their respective contexts and as it continues to be influential in the discipline today.

The works of Alexander Bain, Albert R. Kitzhaber, and James Berlin contributed to writing pedagogy in their respective times, and continue to be important figures in the field today. The purpose of this paper is to examine the ways in which Bain, Kitzhaber, and Berlin contributed to writing pedagogy by providing a definition of rhetoric, and demonstrating the ways in which specific understandings and/or definitions of rhetoric influence writing pedagogy.

Bain’s“English Composition and Rhetoric” provided a definition of rhetoric that continued to move away from faculty psychology. His definition moved towards communication and writing, while simultaneously addressing the role and purpose of the teacher, as well paying close attention the paragraph. Kitzhaber’s (1950) dissertation *Rhetoric in American colleges* provided a historical overview of curriculum and pedagogical practices from 1850 to 1950, which resulted in a deeper understanding of previous practices, and informed works that followed. Berlin’s (1987) “*Rhetoric in American colleges, 1850-1900*” contributed in similar fashion to Kitzhaber by providing his own historical overview of writing pedagogy. These three scholars are grouped together because it is Bain’s work that resulted in greater attention given to the paragraph and a more practical method of teaching writing. Paragraph theory dominated rhetoric and composition for many years, and in response to Bain’s work and those influenced by him, scholars eventually shifted towards whole composition. The works of Bain, Kitzhaber, and Berlin represent shifts in both rhetoric and writing pedagogy, and are significant in moving the field of rhetoric forward.Bain, Kitzhaber, and Berlin provide specific definitions of rhetoric in their respective works that were influential during their time, which continue to be read in the present.

Bain defines rhetoric as “the means whereby language, spoken or written, may be rendered effective” (p. 1146). Bain’s definition of rhetoric moves it beyond oratory, because this definition specifically views rhetoric as an art practiced in both oral and written forms. In oral form the “three principle ends, —to inform, to persuade, to please” align with three departments of the mind “understanding, the will, and the feeling” (p.1146). Also present in Bain’s definition is an attempt to “methodize” instruction of composition. If the purpose of rhetoric is to be effective, then it is understandable that his view of the teacher is of a trainer of students. Bain believes improving the writing of students is difficult, as a result of limited and/or limiting knowledge of language on account of language “resulting from the practice of a life” (p. 1145). As such Bain recognizes a need for composition instructors to find ways to condense lessons to combat the issues with students working with limited language.

Understanding this issue as a limitation to writing instruction, Bain pushes for instructors to focus on the paragraph as a means to teach writing effectively. The paragraph, according to Bain, “handles and exhausts a distinct topic,” and “conditions essential to the effect of any succession of statements directed to a give purpose” (p. 1147). What this amounts to is Bain’s urging to focus on teaching the paragraph because doing so will allow for the student to “fully comprehend the method of the paragraph” and by doing that the student can also “comprehend the method of the entire work” (p.1147). By restraining students to topic sentences, and an explicit plan “dictated by the nature of composition” (p. 1147). He sees this practice as leading to the student understanding in their mind what is good composition. These paragraphs that exemplify good composition would not only help students understand what is good composition, but also how the entire work is composed. For Kitzhaber (1950), Bain’s work is significant to the field of rhetoric because of his impact on writing pedagogy, which Kitzhaber (1950), examines more closely in his dissertation.

 Kitzhaber’s dissertation *Rhetoric in American colleges* touches on the impact of Bain’s work. While Kitzhaber does point out that Bain was not the first to write on paragraph theory, he does note that Bain’s six rules for the paragraph, according to Kitzhaber were “the greatest importance in the subsequent development of paragraph theory” (p. 156). Not long after Bain’s work on paragraph theory, explicit attention was given to the paragraph in the rhetoric texts in the United States of America. Hepburn in *Manual of English Rhetoric* provides a similar definition and rules of the paragraph as found in Bain’s work. D.J. Hill in 1877 provides another version of Bain’s definition of the paragraph, and provides rules for paragraph writing. Kitzhaber continues to trace the authors that continue Bain’s work on the paragraph. However, Kitzhaber notes that during this time not much is added to it, and by the 1890s it fell out of favor for whole composition. Whole composition gained attention as an approach closer to “the real nature of the writing process” and in 1897 Pearson’s *Freshman Composition* this included reversing the order, so “beginning with the whole composition, then taking up the paragraph, then the sentence, and finally individual words” (p. 165). The amount of attention given to the paragraph, and the influence of Bain’s rules regarding paragraph composition demonstrate the impact of his work on the paragraph, as other scholars continued to build on his initial work. The years of focusing on paragraph theory, as it was thought to be vital to writing pedagogy and instruction, as it was the key to a student understanding the writing process, and the whole work, eventually leads to a shift towards teaching whole composition first. This is the result of very few new ideas and approaches published on paragraph theory. Therefore, scholars eventually favor teaching whole composition first, and then focusing on the paragraph, sentences, and word choice after the student is more familiar with the concept of whole composition.

 Kitzhaber does more than provide a historical overview of the changes in writing curriculum and pedagogy from 1850 – 1900. He, like Bain, provides his own definition of rhetoric. Kitzhaber’s definition of rhetoric is linked to language and human communication, which allows for a different understanding and approach to language. If “language is the medium of human communication,” then rhetoric is the “art which shows how to make this communication most effective” (p. 141). Rhetoric as communication is as significant to the field then, and now, because it moves away from rhetoric’s perception as only concerned with persuasion and allows for rhetoric to be linked and applied to both writing and the language that is used to communicate. This definition of rhetoric moves it from being “predominantly abstract” to a discipline that is more concrete, and visible within writing practices implemented in university curriculums (p. 205). The attention is now directed at writing made rhetoric practical.

Awareness of the discourse that makes up the definition of rhetoric also aids in understanding the discourse that makes up a theory, or discipline. To better understand the discipline of rhetoric we must take into account the numerous definitions and writing pedagogies that created the knowledge that informs rhetorical theory. James Berlin (1987) attempts to categorize rhetorical theories associated with writing pedagogy in *Rhetoric and Reality.* Similar to Kitzhaber, Berlin (1987) contributes to writing pedagogy by providing his own definition of rhetoric, and then discussing how it can be implemented in the teaching of writing composition.

Berlin defines rhetoric as a term that “refers to a diverse discipline that historically has included a variety of incompatible systems” (p. 3). These systems, according to Berlin, are eventually replaced, and as result rhetoric should be deemed rhetorics. Berlin argues that rhetoric should be plural due to the fact that there always exists a dominant system of rhetorics in play, and other competing systems of rhetorical ideas and theories. These theories eventually replace one another, and so his specific understanding of rhetoric informs his approach to writing pedagogy, similar to the work of Bain and Kitzhaber. The work of Berlin on writing pedagogy from 1900-1985 is a more complex approach than Kitzhaber. Whereas Kitzhaber provides the historical overview of writing pedagogy, Berlin does a similar trace of a different time period, but also provides three epistemological categories to organize how it is that each “rhetorical system is based on epistemological assumptions about the nature of reality” (p. 4).

Berlin’s chooses an epistemological approach in his work over an ideological approach, because doing so “allows for a closer focus on the rhetorical properties” (p. 6). This differs from the works of Bain and Kitzhaber. Berlin’s work reflects an attempt at categorizing how we know, and how that reality influences what we know. Berlin breaks up the theories into three categories: “objective , subjective, and transactional” (p. 6). Theories categorized as objective “locate reality in the external world,” while the subjective “place truth within the subject,” and transactional “locate reality at the point of interaction of subject and object” (p. 6). These theories fall in line with Berlin’s understanding of the writing course as an attempt to provide “students with a set of tacit rules about distinguishing truth from falsity” (p. 7).

Later in his book Berlin explains that rhetoric is moving in the direction of epistemic accounts for its role as “a method of discovering and even creating knowledge” (p. 183). He connects this approach to rhetoric with the writing course because of what he believes the writing course should do. Specifically, a writing course must “prepare students for citizenships in democracy,” in which case understanding how “often-unstated assumptions on which their being are built” is vital to their participation within and outside academia (p. 189).

Bain, Kitzhaber and Berlin contributed to writing pedagogy, despite their different approaches to both rhetoric, and composition. For Bain the writer must be an effective communicator, and to achieve this he must master writing a paragraph before moving on to whole composition. Kitzhaber also defines rhetoric in terms of communicating effectively, but his approach to teaching writing aligns itself more with whole composition, as there are many elements, or pieces, to teaching writing. Kitzhaber’s work is helpful in providing a historical overview, but also with continuing to move rhetoric out of the realm of abstract and make it more practical. Like Kitzhaber, Berlin provides a historical overview of rhetoric, but unlike Kitzhaber Berlin views rhetoric as systems that are replaced, or fighting for dominance. Berlin is not as concerned with creating effective communicators as Berlin and Kitzhaber. Rather for Berlin, the goal of rhetoric and composition is for students to understand how knowledge is created or discovered through rhetoric. The impact of Bain, Kitzhaber, and Berlin on writing pedagogy is clear despite their seemingly different approaches to both rhetoric, and writing pedagogy, as each scholar greatly contributed to rhetorical theory and writing pedagogy. Through their works, and those they influenced, we see rhetoric and writing pedagogy grow, and move forward from training students to be effective communicators to understanding how knowledge is discovered and created.

**References**

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