

Vita

Thomas M. Lessl

I. Academic History

Ph.D. in Speech Communication, University of Texas at Austin, 1985

Academic Positions

| | |
|----------------|--|
| 1993 - present | Associate Professor Department of Speech Communication University of Georgia |
| 1985 - 1993 | Assistant Professor Department of Speech Communication University of Georgia |
| 1989 - 1990 | Visiting Assistant Professor Communication Arts Department University of Wisconsin |

II. Resident Instruction

| | |
|------------|--|
| SPCM 1101 | Communication in Human Society |
| SPCM 2150H | Honors Public Speaking |
| SPCM 2100 | Advanced Public Speaking |
| SPCM 3310 | Case Studies in Public Communication: Science and Religion |
| SPCM 3500 | Introduction to Communication Theory |
| SPCM 3300 | Introduction to Rhetorical Criticism |
| SPCM 4200 | Introduction to Rhetorical Theory |
| SPC M 4520 | Persuasion |
| SPCM 4340 | Communication and Religion |
| SPCM 4700 | Modern Rhetorical Theory |
| SPC M 4900 | Environmental Communication |
| SPCM 8300 | Seminar in Rhetorical Criticism |
| SPCM 8350 | Seminar in the Rhetoric of Science |
| SPCM 8200 | Seminar in Rhetorical Theory |
| SPCM 8210 | Seminar in Classical Rhetoric |
| ECOL 9000 | Scientific Communication |

III. Scholarly Activities

A. Publications

Articles

Lessl, Thomas, M. "The Culture of Science and the Rhetoric of Scientism: From Francis Bacon to the Darwin Fish," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* (In press).

Lessl, Thomas M. "The Mythological Conditioning of Scientific Naturalism" *Journal of Communication and Religion* 28 (2005): 23-46.

Lessl, Thomas M. "The Legacy of C. S. Lewis and the Prospect of Religious Rhetoric." *Journal of Communication and Religion* 27 (2004): 117-137.

Lessl, Thomas M. "Scientific Rhetoric as Religious Advocacy: Evolution and the Public Schools." *Journal of Communication and Religion* 26 (2003): 1-27.

Lessl, Thomas M. "Gnostic Scientism and the Prohibition of Questions." *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 5 (2002): 133-157.

Hubler, Michael, and T. M. Lessl. "The Establishment Clause and the Problem of Religious Symbolism: How Metaphor Theory Might Guide First Amendment Jurisprudence." *Free Speech Yearbook* 38 (2001): 81-97.

Lessl, Thomas. M. "The Galileo Legend." *New Oxford Review* (June 2000): 27-33.

Lessl, Thomas M. "Darwinism, Dawkinism & Christian Accommodationism." *New Oxford Review* (February, 2000): 28-33.

Lessl Shively, Ruth M., and T. M. Lessl. "The Abolition of Value in the Classroom: Some Observations from the Language Arts." *The Christian Scholar's Review* (Winter, 1999): 347-360.

Lessl, Thomas M. "The Galileo Legend as Scientific Folklore." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 85 (Spring 1999): 146-168.

Lessl, Thomas M. "Intelligent Design: A Look at the Literature." *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 1 (Winter 1999): 617-636.

Lessl, Thomas M. "The Social Implications of Genre: A Burkean Interpretation of Aristotle." *Speaker and Gavel* 34(1997): 1-10.

Lessl, Thomas M. "Conceptualizing Rhetoric Through Analogy." *The Speech Communication Teacher* 11(1997): 11-12.

Lessl, Thomas M. "Naturalizing Science: Two Episodes in The Evolution of a Rhetoric of Scientism." *Western Journal of Communication* 60 (1996): 379-396.

- Lessl, Thomas M. . “Toward a Definition of Religious Communication: Scientific and Religious uses of Evolution.” *Journal of Communication and Religion* 16 (1993): 127-138.
- Lessl, Thomas M. “Punctuation and the Constitution of Public Identities: Primary and Secondary Sequences in the Scopes Episode.” *Communication Theory* 3 (1993): 91-111.
- Lessl, Thomas M. “Francis Bacon and the Biblical Origins of the Scientific Ethos.” *Journal of Communication and Religion* 15 (1992): 87-98.
- Lessl, Thomas M. “The Priestly Voice.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75 (1989): 183-197.
- Lessl, Thomas M. “Heresy, Orthodoxy, and the Politics of Science.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 74 (1988): 18-34.
- Lessl, Thomas M. “Science and the Sacred Cosmos: The Ideological Rhetoric of Carl Sagan.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 71 (1985): 175-187.

Book Chapters

- Lessl, Thomas M. “Incommensurate Boundaries: The Rhetorical Positivism of Thomas Huxley in *Rhetoric and Incommensurability*, edited by Randy Harris West, 198-237. Lafayette, Ind.: Parlor Press, 2005.
- Lessl, Thomas M. “William Whipper.” In *African American Orators: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook*, edited by Richard Leeman, 143-52. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996 .
- Lessl, Thomas M. “Andrew Jackson.” In *U.S. Presidents as Orators: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook*, edited by Halford Ryan, 65-76. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1995.
- Lessl, Thomas M. The Scopes trial: 'Bryan vs. Darrow' vs. 'Darrow vs. Bryan.' In *Oratorical Encounters*, edited by Halford Ryan, 13-20. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1987.
- Lessl, Thomas M. “Andrew Jackson.” In *American Orators Before 1900: Critical Studies and Sources*, edited by Halford Ryan and B. Duffy, 238-244. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1987.
- Lessl, Thomas M. “Science and the Sacred Cosmos: The ideological Rhetoric of Carl Sagan.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 71 (1985): 175-187. Reprinted in *Contemporary Literary Criticism* Detroit edited by Debbie Schmitt, Farmington Hills, Mich: Gale Research, 1999.

Book Reviews and Other Publications

- Lessl, Thomas, "Science and Rhetoric," *The Galilean Library*, <http://www.galilean-library.org/academy/> (2005)
- Lessl, Thomas M. Review of *Darwin, Design, and Public Education* edited by John Angus Campbell and Stephen Meyer and *Rhetoric and Dialectic in the Time of Galileo* by Jean Dietz Moss and William Wallace. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 90 (2004): 366-369.
- Lessl, Thomas M. Review of *Preacher: Billy Sunday and Big-Time American Evangelism* by Roger Bruns. *Argument and Advocacy*, 40 (2003) 58-59.
- Lessl, Thomas M. Review of *God in the Details: American Religion in Popular Culture*, edited by Eric Michael Mazur and Kate McCarthy. *Review of Communication*. 2003.
- Lessl, Thomas M. Review of *Stations of the Cross: Adorno and Christian Right Radio* by Paul Apostolidis. *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 4 (2001): 563-566.
- Lessl, Thomas M. Review of *Huxley: From Devil's Disciple to Science's High Priest*, by Adrian Desmond. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84 (1998): 522-523.
- Lessl, Thomas M. "Behe Comes to Georgia" *Access Research Network* <http://www.arn.org/docs/behe/mblr22698.htm> 1998.
- Lessl, Thomas M. Review of *Between Two Absolutes: Public Opinion and the Politics of Abortion*, by Elizabeth Adell Cook, Ted G. Jelen, and Clyde Wilcox. *Journal of Church and State* 24 (1994): 169.
- Lessl, Thomas M. Review of *Religion and the State: Essays in Honor of Leo Pfeffer*,. edited by James E. Wood Jr. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 254-256.
- Shively, Ruth M., and T. M. Lessl. "The Abolition of value in communication Instruction: Some observations and suggestions." In *Faith, Story, Community: Proceedings of the 1993 Conference on Christianity and Communication*. edited by Helen Sterk and William Thorn, Marquette University 1993.
- Lessl, Thomas M. (1991) The scientization of nature: Jacob Bronowski's *Ascent*. In Donn Parson (Ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh SCA/AFA Conference on Argumentation*, edited by Donn Parson, 294-298. Annendale, Virginia: Speech Communication Association, 1991.

Work in Progress

Book Manuscript: Lessl, Thomas M. *Rhetorical Darwinism: The Social Evolution of Scientific Culture, 1600-1900*. (Under revision for MSU Press Public Address Series)

B. Grants and Monetary Awards

NEH Summer Seminar (3,700.00)
 John Templeton Foundation Course Award (\$500.00)
 John Templeton Foundation Course Award (\$10,000.00)
 Karl Wallace Memorial Fund, 1989 (\$1,200.00).
 Humanities Center Travel Grant, 1993 (\$900.00).

C. Recognitions and outstanding achievements

Article Award, Religious Communication Association, "The Mythological Conditioning of Scientific Naturalism," 2005
 Excellent in Teaching, University of Georgia Student Government, 2004.
 Karl Wallace Memorial Award, 1989.
 Nominated for Speech Communication Association Dissertation Award 1986.
 Elected to Phi Beta Kappa, 1978.
 Elected to Phi Kappa Phi, 1984.
 Top five paper in free speech, National Communication Association Convention, 1997.
 Top paper in public address, Speech Communication Association Convention, 1991.
 Top paper in public address, Speech Communication Association Convention, 1986.
 Top student paper in Mass Communication, Speech Communication Association Convention, 1985

D. Research Areas

The research program in the **rhetoric of science** has dealt mainly with the public presentation of science and has emphasized the following concerns: (1) the syncretistic features of public science--its tendency to draw together a metaphysics taken from Western religion and a secular ideology created by the post-enlightenment cultures of the West. (2) the constraints placed upon scientific communicators due to the complexity of their discourses and the heterogeneity of their audiences.

A related body of research is concerned with the social construction of institutional and public identities through conflict: (1) the dialectic of heresy and orthodoxy as the basis by which institutional identities are adjusted and affirmed; and (2) the introduction of causal attributions in public discourse as an attributional mechanism of social constitution.

Closely tied to the work done in the area of scientific rhetoric are explorations of the special problems associated with **religious communication** in a world dominated by scientific rationality. This research has often been concerned with the problem of scientism, the tendency of scientific patterns of thought to play a religious role in secular societies.

E. Supervision of student research

1. Doctoral committees served

Robert Frank, Marouf Hasian, Kimberly Kline, Hilary Wilson, Patrick Wheaton, Kris Sheedy, Enid Sefcovic, David Sutton, Joanna Ploeger-Tsoulos, Lynette Long, Gayle Garner, Chris Herzog, Doyle Srader, Michael Hubler, Caitlin Wills, Paul Achter, Windy Lawrence, Ilon Lauer, Ken Rufo, Benjamin Bates, Tasha Dubriny, John Lynch, Nneka Ofulue, Eric Jenkins

2. Dissertations Directed

Ilon Lauer, (2006) "Ceremonial and Religious Functions of Roman Epideictic Genres."

Lilla Gayle Garner, (2001) "A Rhetorical Investigation of Energy-Related Environmental Issues and Proposed Modeling of Variables Influencing the Employment of Domestic Solar Water Heaters With a Focus on Mobilizing Information."

Sutton, David Lee, (1994) "The Fullest Possible Accounting: The Myth of American Pow/Mias in Southeast Asia, 1973 to 1993."

3. Masters Theses Directed

Smith, Patrick, (2003) "Fashioning Identity and Memory of the World War II Generation: An Analysis of Tom Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation*."

Hayne, Caroline, (2001) "Types and Anti-Types: Biblical Symbolism and Rhetoric."

Bates, Benjamin, (2000) "Capital and Clash: A Bourdieusian Analysis of Muammer Qadafi's Green Book."

Neighbors, Len, (1997) "The Three Trials of Ezra Pound."

Hubler, Michael, (1997) "The Rhetorical Other in Constitutive Discourse: An Analysis of Interaction Between the Christian Right and Secular Humanist Groups."

Brooks, Sean, (1996) "No Gorillas in our Midst: A Rhetoric of Separation."

Hyatt, John S. (1995). "A Burkean Analysis of the Anti-Gay Rhetoric of the Christian Right."

Shumate, Robbie G. (1995). "Emotion, Reason, and the Tao of C. S. Lewis: A Theory of Pathos."

Sanchez, Gregory X. (1993) "Symbolic Similarities Between Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and Vietnam Rhetorics: Suggestions of a Single Ideology at work in the Construction of Two Very Different Discourses."

Reindl, Darren S. (1991). "Myth and Meaning in C. S. Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia: Master's and Pupil's Metaphors in Christian Narrative."

Kraig, Robert A. (1989). "The Mission Myth in American Foreign Policy: The Carter Years."

Janus, Michael J. (1989). "The Confederate Battle Flag: Southern Myth an Historical Narrative."

Towler, Valerie C (1987). "The Nursling Metaphor and the Caretaking Public: Public Opinion in Local Newspapers During the Jan Kemp Trial."

F. Editorial service

Baylor University Press, Rhetoric and Religion Book Series, 2004-present.

Journal of Communication and Religion, associate editor, 1999-present

Quarterly Journal of Speech, associate editor, 1998-2000

Quarterly Journal of Speech, guest referee,

Communication Theory, guest referee

Rhetoric and Public Affairs, guest referee

Western Journal of Communication, guest referee

Southern States Communication Journal, guest referee

Social Studies of Science, guest referee

Manuscript referee for SCA Rhetoric and Comm. Theory division.

G. Invited Presentations

"Crossroads," Film Documentary, October, 2006. For release in 2007.

"Rhetoric and the War between Science and Religion," Eastern University, April, 2006.

"Media Matters: The Role of Journalists in Covering the Evolution Controversy," sponsored by The Constitution Project, Texas A & M University, November 5, 2005.

"Galileo and the Warfare Legend," Von Mises Institute, Auburn University, June 24, 2000.

H. Selected Conference Presentations

Scientific Demarcation and Meta-science: The National Academy of Sciences on Greenhouse Warming and Neo-Darwinism, ISSA Conference, Amsterdam, 2006

- The Public Speaking Class as Company Town, National Communication Association Convention, Chicago, 2004.
- The Darwin Fish: Militaristic and Spiritual Scientism, National Communication Association Convention, Miami, 2003.
- Science and Religion: The Rhetoric of Levine and Miller, National Communication Association Convention, New Orleans, 2002.
- The Darwin Fish: Scientism, Secularism and the Family Culture of the Modern West, National Communication Association Convention, Atlanta, 2001.
- Scientific Rhetoric as Religious Advocacy: Evolution and the Public Schools, National Communication Association Convention, Seattle, 2000
- Gnostic Themes in the Rhetoric of Science: Scientism and the Prohibition of Questions, Southern Communication Conference, New Orleans, 2000.
- Literary displacement and the Secular Millennium in Condorcet and Saint-Simon, National Communication Association Convention, Chicago, 1999.
- The Darwin Fish: Survey: A Critical Analysis, National Communication Association Convention, New York, 1998.
- The Galileo Legend and the Social Construction of Science's Secular Identity, National Communication Association Convention, New York, 1998
- Francis Bacon and the Rhetorical Roots of Scientism, National Communication Association Convention, New York, 1998.
- (With Mike Hubler) The establishment Clause and the Problem of Religious Symbolism, National Communication Association Convention, Chicago, November, 1997
- The Galileo Episode in Scientific Folklore, Speech Communication Association National Convention, San Diego, November, 1996.
- Constructivism in the Classroom: The Epideictic Requirements of Scientific Pedagogy. Presented at the Temple Discourse Analysis Conference, Temple University, April, 1995.
- Naturalizing Science: Two Episodes in the Evolution of a Rhetoric of Scientism. Presented at the Speech Communication Association National Convention, San Antonio, November, 1995.
- Religion as Symbolic Form: Some Judicial Implications of C. S. Lewis's Theory of Metaphor. Presented at the Speech Communication Association National Convention, San Antonio, November, 1995
- The Constitutive Bearing of Rhetorical Discourse. Presented at the Annual Meeting, Eastern Communication Association Convention,

Washington, D. C. April, 1994

The Abolition of Rhetoric. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting, Speech Communication Association, Miami, 1993

Respondent for program on the The Rhetoric of Social Constitution, Annual Meeting, Speech Communication Association, Miami, 1993

Respondent for program on the Rhetorics of Power, Order, and Control, Rhetorical and Communication Theory Division, Annual Meeting, Speech Communication Association, Chicago, 1992.

Punctuation and the Constitution of Public Identities: Primary and Secondary Sequences in the Scopes Episode. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting, Speech Communication Association, Chicago, November, 1992.

The Scientization of Nature: Jacob Bronowski's Ascent. Paper presented at the seventh annual conference on argumentation, August, 1991.

Francis Bacon and the Biblical Origins of the Scientific Ethos. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting, Speech Communication Association, Atlanta, November, 1991.

Jacob Bronowski and the Rhetoric of Scientific Ideology: The Ascent of Man. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting, Speech Communication Association, Chicago, 1990.

The Rhetoric of Scientism: Three Instances from the Pro-Space Movement. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting, Speech Communication Association, San Francisco, 1989.

Symbolic Action/Symbolic Reaction: Punctuation and the Relativity of Causation in the Scopes Trial. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting, Speech Communication Association, New Orleans, 1988.

The Religious Voice of the American Pro-Space Movement: Natural Theology in a Space Age. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting, Speech Communication Association, Boston, 1987.

The Rhetoric of Romantic Science in Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting, Speech Communication Association, Boston, 1987.

The Public Communication of Scientists as Priestly Discourse. Paper presented in the Rhetorical Practices in Science Seminar, Speech Communication Association, Boston, 1987

Heresy, Orthodoxy, and the Politics of Science. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting, Speech Communication Association, Chicago, 1986.

Axiological Meanings in the Rhetoric of the Final Frontier: The Public Voice of the American Space Movement. Paper presented at the Annual

Meeting, Speech Communication Association, Chicago, 1986.

Priestly Rhetoric in Sagan's Cosmos. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting, Speech Communication Association, Denver, 1985.

IV. PUBLIC AND UNIVERSITY SERVICE

A. Public Service

Chair, Nominating Committee, Religious Communication Association, 2005-6.

Chair, Editorial Search Committee, Religious Communication Association, 2005.

President, Religious Communication Association, 2004-5

First Vice President, Religious Communication Association 2003-4

Second Vice President, Religious Communication Association, 2002-3

Referee and advisor for United States Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, 1990

National Communication Association Dissertation Awards Committee, 1997-8

Franklin College Faculty Outreach Program: Presentation on the "History of Conflict Between Science and Religion," presented at Piedmont College, February, 1997, St. James Methodist Church, January, 1999, Mercer University, May, 1999, Center for Disease Control, Atlanta, January, 2000, Georgia Humanists, July 2000.

Christian Faculty Forum: Served on committee organizing a University-wide lecture series by Professor Michael J. Behe, February 1998.

Christian Faculty Forum: Served on committee organizing a University-wide lecture series by Professor J. Budziszewski, March 1999, William Lane Craig, 2000, William Dembski, 2001.

Outside reviewer: program review of the Department of Communication at Mississippi State University, April, 1999.

B. Administrative Service

Area Committee for Humanities, 2005-present

Basic Course Director, 2000-2001.

Social & Behavioral Sciences Area Committee, 1998-2000.
Chair, 1999-2000.

Assessment of Major Committee, 1998-2002.

Graduate Coordinator, 1993-1998.

Chair of Rhetoric Committee, 1993-1994; 2005-present.

Chair of Ad Hoc Committee to Review Doctoral Program.

Chair of Head Search Committee, 1994.

Chair of Discretionary fund Committee, 1991-94.

Departmental committee to develop and coordinate graduate student internship program.

Franklin College Program Review Committee, 1994-1995.

Graduate admissions committee, Speech Communication Department, 1990-1991, 1993-1998, 1999-present.

Departmental library representative, Speech Communication Department, 1985-1989.

Personnel Committee, Speech Communication Department, 1985 -present.

Rhetoric Curriculum Committee, Speech Communication Department, 1985-present.

Interpersonal Curriculum Committee, Speech Communication Department, 1985-1988.

Departmental Library Representative, 1985-1988.