

Rhetoric in Mexico Retoryka w Meksyku

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SPRAWOZDANIE/REPORT

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**Sprawozdanie/Report: The 4th International Rhetoric Workshop (June 18-20, 2024),
University of Dubrovnik, Croatia**

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Sprawozdanie/Report: The 4th International Rhetoric Workshop (June 18-20, 2024), University of Dubrovnik, Croatia

For the fourth time, the International Rhetoric Workshop (IRW) successfully brought together PhD students, junior scholars, established researchers, and renowned academics from all over the world to collaborate on rhetorical studies. This year's edition was hosted by the University of Dubrovnik in Croatia from June 18th to the 20th of 2024. The workshop provided the opportunity for 47 participants from 13 countries to learn from and interact closely with 9 faculty mentors within the context of different academic formats, including lectures, workshops, roundtables, presentations, and informal conversations.

The IRW was conceived in 2015 by Erik Bengtson and Frida Buhre of Uppsala University, David Miguel Molina of Northwestern University, and Robert Topinka of the University of Sussex. Backed by the endorsement of rhetorical organizations worldwide, including the Rhetoric Society of Europe and the Rhetoric Society of America, the first edition of the IRW was held in 2016 at Uppsala University in Sweden. Two years later, the IRW was organized by and held at Ghent University in Belgium. Due to the COVID pandemic, the 2021 IRW was held online in collaboration with the College of San Luis in Mexico. Over the years, the IRW has fostered an interactive and nurturing format that connects nascent academics with senior scholar mentors who help them to design, develop, and bring to fruition their papers, research, and projects. Workshops provide a supportive space for substantive discussions of works-in-progress with senior scholars. These same encouraging spaces also provide venues for productive conversations between participants and their peers from throughout the world. Keynote addresses feature prominent scholars in the field of rhetoric who give insights into and share their expertise regarding the chosen IRW theme. Additionally, roundtables enable participants and faculty mentors to collaboratively engage topics related to the IRW theme and tie any insights derived to their own research.

The 2024 IRW's theme was *Border and Crossroads*. This theme encompassed the many ways in which conceptions of borders and/or crossroads inform research in the field of rhetoric. The theme focused especially upon the notions of borders which serve to separate, disconnect, and distinguish conceptions of crossroads that function as places of intersection, confrontation, and transcendence. The workshop's broad theme and particular focus called into question how rhetoric helps shape thinking about and construct responses to crisis, injustice, inequality, limitation, violence, and disorder. The workshop explored as well the role of rhetoric in shaping our understanding of geopolitical borders, cultural intersections, linguistic barriers, economic constraints, and interdisciplinary research. Some questions addressed include: How do borders constrain and contain human thinking? Is it possible for borders to exist as crossroads that promote rather than deter innovation, interdisciplinarity, and the collaborative building of a better world? How do narratives about borders and crossroads affect the processes of democratization, digitalization, and identity construction? How are borders and crossroads represented within and across literatures, arts, media, and philosophies? How do borders affect the rhetorical education of students of different ethnicities, races, abilities, religions, and sexual and gender identities? In what ways do verbal and visual rhetorics close or open possibilities for overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers?

Endorsed by the University of Dubrovnik and co-sponsored by the Croatian Philological Association and the International Society for the History of Rhetoric, the 4th International Rhetoric Workshop opened with a keynote address by Dr. Dimitris Serafis of the University of Groningen entitled "Hatred Rhetoric and Authoritarianism: Critical Perspectives on Multimodal Argumentation in the 'Refugee Crisis.'" Prof. Serafis spoke about implicit narratives of hate speech as they appear in the texts of newspaper front pages, which are used to justify hatred against migrant populations during the current so-called "refugee crisis" in Europe. The second day started with a talk by Dr. Karma R. Chávez of the University of Texas, Austin. In "Throwing Stones: Weapons of the Weak and Lethal Violence on Borders of Mexico/US and Palestine/Israel," Prof. Chávez considered the rhetorical impact of rock throwing in militarized border zones and discussed how acts of non-lethal violence used by the oppressed and the colonized often provide putative and spurious justification for the use of lethal force by imperial states and their agents. The third and the final day concluded with a keynote speech by Dr. Lisa Flores of the Pennsylvania State University. In "Urgency, Care, and the Spatio-Temporalities of Spectacular Border Crisis," Prof. Flores discussed the concept of urgency as a temporal frame for border crises, pointing out that frame's

range of roles, possible benefits, and potential meanings within the context of border crises and other national and international concerns.

At the heart of the IRW 2024 were two rounds of workshop sessions dedicated to discussion and review of the drafts of participants' ongoing research. The sessions were led by the invited keynotes and 6 additional faculty mentors: Prof. Michael Burke of Utrecht University, Prof. Annie Hill of the University of Texas, Austin, Prof. Matthew Houdek of Rochester Institute of Technology, Prof. Gabrijela Kišiček of the University of Zagreb, Prof. Brent Lucia of the University of Connecticut, and Prof. Kris Rutten of Ghent University. The third day featured a super session in which participants shared key takeaways they had gained from their IRW 2024 experience.

The workshop program was complemented by two roundtables. The first roundtable, titled "Rhetorics of Borders/Crossroads," featured 6 panelists: Prof. Carlos Abaunza of Nazarbayev University, Prof. Hill, Prof. Houdek, Prof. Shuzhen Huang of Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania, Bloomsburg Campus, Prof. Kišiček, and Prof. Siang Ting Wong of Pennsylvania State University, Brandywine Campus. These roundtable participants discussed, among many things, the topics of the construction and imagination of border rhetorics, challenges and opposition to the language of border rhetorics, and the relevance of digital borders and state borders in relation to rhetoric. The "Rhetorical Pedagogy across Borders" roundtable, featured 5 panelists – Prof. Burke, Prof. Andreas Karatsolis of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Prof. Lucia, Prof. Rutten, and Prof. Kelly Scarf of Virginia Tech University – who explored the theme of borders within the contexts of contemporary practices of rhetorical education and challenges to rhetorical pedagogy.

The IRW continues to develop as an informal organization dedicated to organizing and hosting events for both emerging scholars and established researchers with the goal of bringing young and experienced academics of different backgrounds together to create a community committed to sharing knowledge, skills, and experiences in researching and teaching in the field of rhetoric.

Anyone interested in the current activities and future plans of the IRW is welcome to visit our website, <https://www.internationalrhetoric.com>, and/or contact us at internationalrhetoricworkshop@gmail.com