

**The Crisis of Rhetoric - Renewing Political Speech and Speechwriting**  
**Workshop 6**

**April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2019**

**Institute for Advanced Studies (IAS) Common Ground (South Wing)**  
**University College London**

**Overview:** In September 2017 the Network met with speechwriters, speechmakers, political journalists and others to find out what they thought about the quality of political rhetoric and political speech making in Britain today. Since then we have been talking with experts across disciplines to learn more about how they understand, analyse and evaluate rhetoric. In this closing workshop the project team reports back to practitioners.

**Schedule**

10.00 Arrival and registration

10.15 Introduction to the workshop (Henriette van der Blom and Alan Finlayson)

In this brief opening presentation we will outline the goals of the project. We will also address a key question of the workshops - whether or not there is a 'crisis' of rhetoric, and if there is what exactly it entails.

10.30 Session 1: The Appeals of Rhetoric

In this first session we will discuss our findings concerning the 'appeals' of rhetoric and in particular 'ethos' and 'logos'. A theme, common in the workshops, was the ways in which the nature of twenty-first century political culture makes these appeals harder to use and, perhaps, induces 'bad' kinds of rhetoric.

Chair: Sophia Hatzisavvidou

Speakers: Alan Finlayson

Respondents: Phil Collins (*The Times*; former speechwriter to PM Tony Blair), Tony McNulty (former MP)

11.45 Coffee

12.00 Session 2: Speechwriters: Professionals or Amateurs?

An issue that has come up over the life of the project is the role of speechwriters – how they think about what they are doing and how well supported they are in what they do. In this session we will talk about the speechwriter's role and the ways in which, we think, it can be developed so that professionals can contribute to the renewal not only of political speech but also of politics itself.

Chair: Richard Toye

Speakers: Henriette van der Blom

Respondents: Simon Holder (Senior Campaign Manager, Civil Service Channels, PM's Office and Cabinet Office Communications), Sophie Adelman (speechwriter in Cabinet Office Communications), Sara Lodge (former speechwriter UN New York, Senior Lecturer in English including teaching rhetoric/speechwriting).

13.15 Lunch

14.00 Session 3: Rhetoric in the News

Media was the topic of just one workshop but kept coming up in our discussions. In this session we will talk about the ways in which broadcast and now digital media are changing rhetorical culture and consider some possible ways in which rhetoric and speechwriting might be revived.

Chair: Gesine Manuwald

Speakers: Alan Finlayson

Respondents: Gabriel Milland (former speechwriter to Michael Gove), Simon Kuper (*Financial Times*)

15.15 Closing Discussion and 'Next Steps'

16.00 End of workshop

Campus map: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/maps/downloads/ucl-bloomsbury-campus-map-2014.jpeg>

Look for 'South Wing' east of Gower Street.