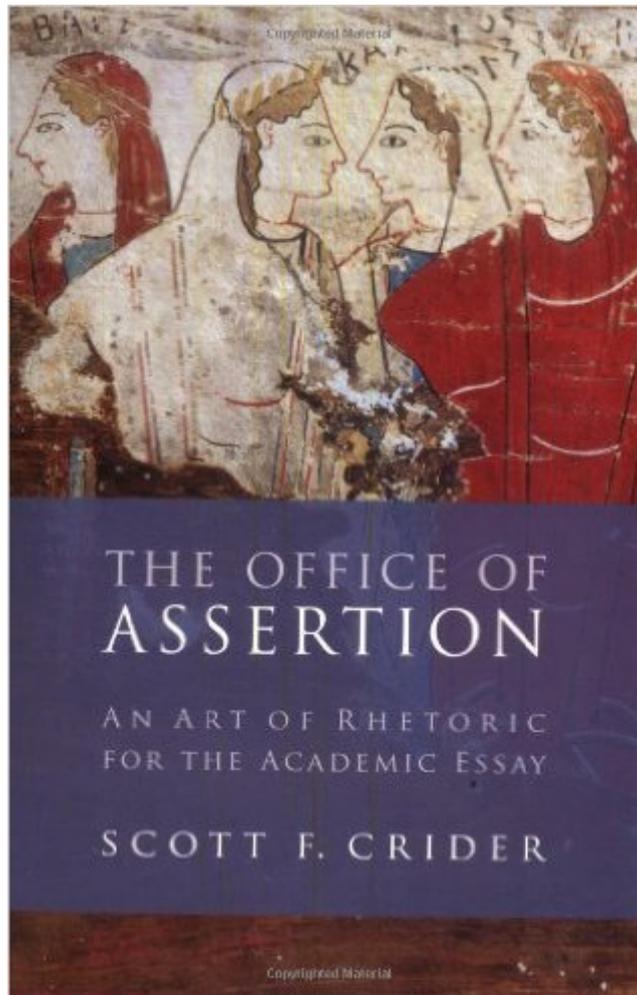


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# Office Of Assertion: An Art Of Rhetoric For Academic Essay



## Synopsis

Scott F. Crider addresses the intelligent university student with respect and humor. A short but serious book of rhetoric, it is informed by both the ancient rhetorical tradition and recent discoveries concerning the writing process. Though practical, it is not simply a how-to manual; though philosophical, it never loses sight of writing itself. Crider combines practical guidance about how to improve an academic essay with reflection on the purpose--educational, political, and philosophical--of such improvement.

## Book Information

Paperback: 170 pages

Publisher: Intercollegiate Studies Institute; 1 edition (May 1, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1932236457

ISBN-13: 978-1932236453

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.6 x 7.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (24 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #140,816 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #13 in [Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Writing > Academic & Commercial](#) #236 in [Books > Textbooks > Reference > Writing Skills](#) #447 in [Books > Reference > Words, Language & Grammar > Rhetoric](#)

## Customer Reviews

There are lots of books on writing, but Scott Crider wrote a book aimed to help college students understand why they write (to learn, explore, and persuade) and how they should write. He follows Aristotle's definition of rhetoric as "the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion ..." (5), and then suggests how to "discover" arguments, how to organize a paper (he advocates replacing the "5-paragraph-essay" with the six-part (not paragraph) "Classical Oration"), how to use language to say what you mean ("Style"), and how to evaluate and rework (and rework and ...) what you have written, returning at the end to his opening point that "rhetoric moves an audience" and good rhetoric moves an audience--as it has already moved the rhetor--toward that which is true. This is a gem of a book, not a word, sentence, or paragraph out of place, and every facet cut to lighten the student's way.

A fine little text on rhetoric. It is a must read for all undergraduates before they write their first academic essay. Students are introduced to the basic meaning and understanding of rhetoric beyond its misuse in today's media.

I've use this book for several semesters, and it is the handiest, most concise, and most illuminating text I've seen. Far too many comp textbooks are full of trendy drivel about free-writing, process writing, etc..., as well as being stuffed with silly useless graphics. Consequently, the texts cost \$70 or more, and they are hardly opened. Do your students a favor, and have them go refer back to the ideals of classical rhetoric. If they master the skills in this book, they'll be ready to handle the demands of actual academic writing.

Scott Crider's book is a model of economy. Forget expensive books filled with trite essays and flashy pictures--this slender volume is solid meat from beginning to end. Crider moves seamlessly through his chapters on invention, organization, style, and re-vision, constantly cross-referencing his material throughout. The chapter on organization is particularly good, providing practical and well-conceived strategies to escape the limits of the five-paragraph essay. Crider's book produces thoughtful in-class discussion as well, and for that alone, I am thankful.

Many books have been written on the topic of writing. Still more have been written on the topic of rhetoric. I've read a handful of each, and I can confidently say that this book is one of the better ones I've read. The strengths of this book are many. I'll list only a few: 1. It is clear, concise, and precise 2. It is neither superfluous nor pedantic (if you don't know what those words mean, you'll have no trouble reading this book!) 3. It is a great example of the author's own instructions I could go on. To conclude: This is the perfect book to read if you're looking for a brief but serious rhetoric. It abounds with very helpful--and much needed--instruction for refining one's academic essay from start to finish. Although it was written primarily for undergraduate students, even graduates can profit from this book. So if you're soon to enter college, read this book! If you're going on to graduate school and want to refine your writing skills, read this book! If you just like reading and you want to read a fine example of the office of assertion, read this book!

This little book will prove a classic. It shapes Rhetoric into a most useful tool for facing down the academic essay. Clear and spare, it's a keeper.

I was delighted to find in such a tiny book such a wealth of useful information. Crider is an academic with a soul. His selection of Homer, in particular, was stylish and psychologically useful as well as technically appropriate. A harmony that results from discipline, that's what good writing is about. Crider shows you the way by encouraging the reader to write his own truth as he/she sees it. The caveat is this: Your truth should convey an "image of a writer who is intelligent, but not pretentious, well educated but not pedantic, and able to relax without becoming slack and slovenly" (p.75). In short, a soul leading style in a soulful little book.

I've been using Crider's little book this semester to teach my introduction to composition classes, and the wonderful thing is that such an inexpensive and brief book can pack in so much of classical rhetorical theory and translate it for students in the twenty-first century. On its own the book would probably be a hair too technical for most classes, but having students dwell on a chapter for a few class days, accompanied by exercises in online environments, has been dynamite. My students this semester are making revision moves and thinking in sophisticated terms about their practices of invention and revision that have me convinced that, for my own interactive style of composition teaching, Crider's book is just what the doctor ordered.

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