

Corbett Lecture Introduction

It has become a tradition of the English Department's AI/TA Orientation to include at least one speaker from outside the University of Texas as part of the program. In recent years, we have been fortunate in being able to introduce our new instructors and teaching assistants to scholars and teachers as distinguished as William Bridges, Hans Guth, Elizabeth Cowan, and Jim Corder. I am pleased that we are continuing the tradition in grand fashion this year, especially since the man our graduate students will be hearing from today and working with tomorrow was one of my own graduate professors a decade ago at Ohio State.

I want to take this opportunity to express my thanks first to Professor Edward Corbett for generously agreeing to be a part of our orientation this year, abandoning the humid oven that Columbus, Ohio becomes in the summer for several pleasant days in cool, zephyrous Austin. I would also like to thank Professor Robert Twombly, the Committee on Departmental Lectures, Trisha Stroud, and the College of Liberal Arts for finding the wherewithal to make Professor Corbett's trip possible, and Professor William Sutherland for approving a late and unexpected request for funds. My thanks, too, to Nancy Warrington for handling publicity and local arrangements for the visit, and to Don Weeda for handling just about everything else.

Several days ago I asked the Assistant Director of Freshman English to nominate one of her graduate student colleagues for the privilege of introducing Dr. Corbett to you this afternoon. I did this partly in tribute to a graduate professor who afforded

me a similar opportunity years ago, but also because one link between our English program at the University of Texas and Dr. Corbett's at Ohio State University has been a shared commitment to our graduate students. As a result of this concern that future scholars of rhetoric and composition be introduced fully and energetically to all the profession entails--to teaching, learning, writing, publishing, editing, speaking--our two programs have enjoyed enormous influence in the last two decades. Our faculty and our graduates have headed the national organizations, edited the influential journals, written the major books and the major texts, explored the newest and most exciting areas of research. (Three of Dr. Corbett's students, for example, are recent winners of the important Braddock Award.) It is not accidental, I think, that two such programs committed to excellence in the teaching of writing and literature should be similarly located in large state universities in the hearts of state capitals and within javelin range of the state legislatures themselves. For we recognize that it is through our students--both undergraduate and graduate--through what they come to know and what they produce, through the new areas they discover and explore, through the good writing they do, that we are paying our debts as scholars to those who generously taught us, and our debts as citizens to our fellow citizens who built these institutions for the invigoration of our society and the protection of our freedoms. Rhetoric itself has always been an art most vigorous where men and women are most free.

Without additional rhetoric, let me now introduce one of our graduate students, Gregory Lyons, who will present our guest lecturer to you this afternoon. Thank you.