

What Dr Alloggio says about his appointment:

I received my Ph.D. in Contemporary Philosophy from the University of Bari, Italy, in April 2008. The subject of my dissertation is Richard M. Rorty, from his early epistemology to his last socio political works. The aim of my dissertation was to demonstrate that Rorty is a contemporary sophist, a neo-sophist. The reconstruction of his thought, combined with French poststructuralists, led me to discover a link between neopragmatism and Ancient Greek sophistry. The common ground is the rhetorical analysis of discursive regimes which I found both in postmetaphysical philosophy and sophistry. According to my examiners, the “results of my work are very interesting and the analyses are conducted with a highly rigorous method.” My doctoral supervisor Professor Francesco Fistetti, whose books and articles on postcolonial democracies have been translated in French and Spanish, wrote that “the dissertation shows Alloggio’s mature method and his extraordinary historiographical knowledge.”

After my semesters as Visiting Scholar at the University of Virginia, U.S.A., and then at the University of British Columbia, Canada, my attention for postcolonialism and multiculturalism have led me to cross Rhetoric Studies and the nexus between rhetoric, social sciences and cultural genealogy. In this sense, my present research, named “Neo-Sophistry and Postcolonial Democracies,” focuses on the hermeneutic role played by rhetoric in the cultural practices of postcolonial democracies. My aim is showing how both rhetoric and sophistry are essential in shaping public arguments and cultural debates between dominant and subordinated communities.

Even though I am neither South African nor black, the context of a society such as South Africa, with its rising class of Afropolitans, is the perfect frame to link Rhetoric Studies and postcolonial practice. The multi-dimensional Africans of the twentieth century, with their mixed dimensions of culture, race and nation, represent an exacting challenge for a “postcolonial rhetoric.” I will study this cultural complexity following the Afropolitan perspective and trying to inscribe the richness of Afropolitanism in a rhetorical paradigm.

*Dr Alloggio will hold seminars in public argumentation and help mentor doctoral students. The Centre is proud to have been awarded one of only five such university-wide Fellowships.*