In the introduction to *Inclusion and Democracy*, feminist political philosopher Iris Marion Young laments that we live in “a paradoxical historical moment when nearly everyone favours democracy, but apparently few believe that democratic governance can do anything. Democratic process seems to paralyse policymaking” rather than effecting change. Young’s remark echoes exactly the kinds of frustrations voiced in a meeting of my department’s service-learning instructors last month. Well versed in approaches to critical pedagogy and excited about teaching courses that connect students with the larger community, most of us nonetheless felt stymied by the difficulties we and our students had faced in trying to enter public processes fraught with bureaucratic obstacles, limited resources, exclusions, and indifference. No one in the group was ready to abandon the ideal of civic participation (although some of our students undoubtedly were), but we wished we had begun the semester with a better idea of what we were getting ourselves and our students into.

My colleagues and I are not alone. As the notion that college writing courses should engage students with community issues becomes widely accepted in our field, rhetoric and composition specialists are increasingly seeking scholarship that will help them understand the broad social, institutional, and political structures that shape public discussion. Serendipitously, this trend has developed at the same time that political theorists and philosophers—the group of scholars concerned with describing such structures—are showing renewed interest in communicative processes. *Inclusion and Democracy* is one of the most recent and most evocative contributions to this movement in political thought. The book contributes to discussions in our field on two levels: for practitioners, it offers valuable descriptions of the broader contexts within which
public debate operates; at the same time, it works on a theoretical level to expand the traditional scope of political models to incorporate explicitly rhetorical concerns.

Young—along with Benjamin Barber, Jürgen Habermas, Nancy Fraser, and others—is one of a group of theorists who subscribe to a "deliberative" view of democracy, which, unlike traditional "aggregative" models focused on competition among individual interests and the corresponding distribution of goods, holds that democracy is most fundamentally a set of deliberative practices by which people negotiate in order to solve public problems. In this view, democracy is all about persuasion. Young's contribution to this school of thought has centered on examining what constitutes ethical democratic practices, drawing insights from feminist and postmodern social theories of difference.

In Inclusion and Democracy, she seeks to articulate a democratic ideal of inclusion: the principle that in a democracy all those affected by a policy should be "included in the decision-making processes" and should have the opportunity "to influence the outcomes." The book's seven chapters explore three overlapping dimensions of inclusion: the first three consider what norms and conditions should guide inclusive public discussion; the next two discuss which processes of representation and association are most inclusive; and the last two consider how the scope of the polity should be defined when decision-making affects multiple jurisdictions and communities. All but one of the chapters have been previously published in some form, but most are so substantially revised that even faithful readers of Young's work will find plenty of new material. Novices to political theory will also find the book accessible, since Young grounds her discussions in clear definitions of key terms and careful accounts of competing views.

The book’s first three chapters are the most interesting from the perspective of rhetorical theory because they take up the project of incorporating traditionally rhetorical considerations into political models of democracy. Chapter 1, "Democracy and Justice," lays compelling ethical groundwork for this interdisciplinary move. Here, Young draws on Jean-François Lyotard's concept of the differend to critique existing theories of deliberative democracy for their tendency to assume that public deliberation is limited to formal arguments presented in official state forums. She points out that foregrounding the role of formal argumentation privileges the contributions of highly educated speakers, falsely assumes the existence of shared premises in public disputes, and emphasizes consensus at the expense of difference. Thus, meeting the
ethical norm of maximum inclusion requires a broader account of the various shapes public discourse can take.

Chapter 2, "Inclusive Political Communication," constructs just such an account. In addition to formal argument, Young identifies three modes of communication as especially important to promoting inclusion: greeting, which she defines as communicative gestures in which "people acknowledge one another in their particularity" and which serve in public forums to recognize and promote respect for "all those who should be included in the debate"; rhetoric, characterized as "the way content is conveyed as distinct from the assertive value of the content," including tone, figurative language, and the use of nonverbal media. (Because rhetoric involves attention to audience and occasion, its use can help get issues on the agenda for deliberation and help to motivate political action.); narratives, on the other hand, are important devices for "giving voice to the kinds of experience which often go unheard in legal discussions and courtroom settings."

Chapter 3, "Social Difference as Political Resource," further justifies the importance of these alternate modes of expression by elaborating how particular social structures and positions influence public debate. In an argument that extends the stance she takes in her earlier book Justice and the Politics of Difference (Princeton UP, 1990), Young refutes scholars who fear that public discussions that foreground difference will become mired in divisive "identity politics" rather than work toward the common good. She maintains that the recognition of social differences—especially structural differences that affect people's opportunities for self-development and self-determination—actually serves positive political purposes. Citing a range of relevant examples, Young argues convincingly that, to the degree that democratic justice involves "coordinating diverse goods and interests" across a shifting terrain of group identifications and needs, recognition of difference is a necessary condition of inclusive decision-making.

Yet, precisely because they venture into familiar theoretical and disciplinary terrain, I find Young's formulations in these first three chapters not only provocative and valuable, but also problematic. While I'm excited to see a political theorist embrace rhetoric as a key dimension of democratic process, Young's sense of what "rhetoric" involves seems at times too limited and at times amorphous. Rhetoric fits awkwardly into Young's categories of "communication modes," the other three of which are genres (argument, narrative, greeting). Recognizing that rhetoric is not exactly a genre, Young explains it as the emotional and stylistic
flourishes that can be added to statements in any genre—a definition that suggests a Platonic separation of rhetoric and truth that seems a bit of an anachronism in a book that’s otherwise so thoroughly grounded in postmodern suspicion of these sorts of binaries. At several points, Young does suggest a wider purview for rhetoric, admitting that her categories overlap, that no statement is entirely arhetorical, and even consigning several kinds of activity—including the use of visual imagery and mass protest—entirely to rhetoric. Yet, these broader connections are never explored. For readers in our field who are steeped in a theoretical landscape that sees rhetoric as the rich and diverse persuasive influences at work in all discourse, Young’s account of rhetoric may seem thin and uneven.

As Young pursues this important line of thought, I hope that she will continue to think through the nature and scope of her categories and the interrelations among them, particularly in relation to rhetoric’s place in the schema. Such rethinking might involve drawing on a wider spectrum of resources from our field. Kenneth Burke, for example, has much to say about the rhetorical functions served by greetings and other epideictic rituals, and Walter Fisher convincingly documents the fact that narratives wield persuasive force. Such sources could supplement and enrich the relatively few sources from our field that Young cites in her book. Indeed, the small number of citations from rhetorical studies (five) in a book so interested in rhetorical concerns surprised me and lends credence to the concern voiced by many in our field that few outside our discipline read our work. This complaint does not negate the importance of Young’s project; rather, it underscores the necessity of continuing and deepening our interdisciplinary conversations. And it opens opportunities for researchers in our field who wish to contribute to the conversation that Young has started.

The final sections of the book move outward from theorizing particular communicative interactions to delineating the larger structures within which public deliberation takes place. And, as I suggest above, they hold the most interest for rhetoric and composition specialists looking to better understand the political and civic structures that influence their work as teachers and public intellectuals. Chapter 5, “Civil Society and Its Limits,” is my favorite essay in this section and the one I found most useful in thinking about my own teaching. A significant contribution to the ongoing debate over what constitutes “the public sphere,” this chapter carefully distinguishes among the functions served by the state, the economy, and civil society (which include voluntary forms of association
and deliberation) in democratic governance. For example, while civil society provides rich opportunities for people to promote self-determination, state institutions have unique capacities to coordinate and regulate policymaking in ways that promote inclusion. For this reason, Young rejects the popular idea that civic society is a preferred alternative to state-sponsored channels for promoting justice and social change. Rather, these sectors of democracy support and balance each other: “Citizens in a deep democracy must be aware of these ever present tensions and liabilities, be vigilant in monitoring the actions and effects of state, economy, and civil society, and actively promote the limitation and balance of each by the others.” Young’s clear discussion of these factors is both instructive and comforting to those who, like the service-learning instructors in my department, have grappled with the complexity and slow pace of public participation.

The remaining four essays are perhaps less directly relevant to the practical concerns of composition teachers and scholars, but they are nevertheless valuable, since they round out Young’s discussion of deliberative inclusion. Chapter 4, “Representation and Social Perspective,” takes up the question of how models of political representation can ensure maximum inclusion of disenfranchised perspectives. Emphasizing that representatives must be both authorized by and accountable to their constituents, she illuminates the different ethical factors involved in guiding the representation of group interests and opinions. Chapter 6, “Residential Segregation, Regional Democracy,” examines the related problem of determining the proper scope of the policy. Here, Young finds that the existence of geographical segregation thwarts inclusive decision-making by marginalizing non-mainstream groups, promoting misunderstandings among differently positioned groups, and discouraging public talk and public spaces. Because a mathematical notion of “integration” can perpetuate the same problems, Young instead endorses regional governance that encourages mutual ties (or “differentiated solidarity”) across small communities while enforcing policies against coerced segregation. In Chapter 7, she applies the principle of differentiated solidarity on a global scale. While efforts to ensure justice for oppressed peoples worldwide have often been articulated as claims for the right to an independent, sovereign state, Young believes that justice for such groups is more appropriately conceived of in terms of non-domination rather than noninterference. A global model of differentiated solidarity would create a key role for global governance institutions like the United Nation to enable these conditions of inclusion.
Ambitious and provocative, carefully and informatively argued, and ethically charged, Young's book has much to offer both practitioners and theorists in rhetoric and composition. Because her discussions are positioned within ongoing conversations in political theory, *Democracy and Inclusion* serves as a primer on current thinking about the public and political spheres, even as it proposes critiques of and additions to that thinking. At the same time, Young's reach to combine political and rhetorical models of public discourse opens possibilities for new connections between political and rhetorical theory. Like most scholarship that crosses disciplinary boundaries, the book combines and juxtaposes the two traditions in ways that are not always completely satisfying. Nonetheless, as books like this remind us, these differences in our disciplinary perspectives are less important than what we share—an ethical commitment to taking our work public and an optimism about the power of language to enact social justice.

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Reed Way Dasenbrock's *Truth and Consequences* is a complex and prophetic book, simultaneously an indictment of the incoherence of what he calls the "New Thematics" paradigm governing English studies and its underlying conventionalist or anti-foundationalist approaches to meaning, truth, and aesthetic value; an argument that the decline of English studies is attributable to its taking "the wrong positions" about conventionalism; a warning of the dire consequences that will likely follow from the continuation of such a program; and a proposal—though perhaps offered with little hope of its implementation—intended to revitalize the field and restore public confidence in it.

According to Dasenbrock, the New Thematics is a kind of literary criticism that is "overwhelmingly oriented toward discussing themes in literary works, themes that overwhelmingly have to do with groups and communities." For theorists of the New Thematics, "group ideology [is]