



A Rhetoric of Style

Professor Barry Brummett PhD

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Exploring style in a global culture

In *A Rhetoric of Style*, Barry Brummett illustrates how style is increasingly a global system of communication as people around the world understand what it means to dress a certain way, to dance a certain way, to decorate a certain way, to speak a certain way. He locates style at the heart of popular culture and asserts that it is the basis for social life and politics in the twenty-first century.

Brummett sees style as a system of signification grounded largely in image, aesthetics, and extrarational modes of thinking. He discusses three important aspects of this system—its social and commercial structuring, its political consequences, and its role as the chief rhetorical system of the modern world. He argues that aesthetics and style are merging into a major engine of the global economy and that style is becoming a way to construct individual identity, as well as social and political structures of alliance and opposition. It is through style that we stereotype or make assumptions about others' political identities, their sexuality, their culture, and their economic standing.

To facilitate theoretical and critical analysis, Brummett develops a systematic rhetoric of style and then demonstrates its use through an in-depth exploration of gun culture in the United States. Armed with an understanding of how this rhetoric of style works methodologically, students and scholars alike will have the tools to do their own analyses. Written in clear and engaging prose, *A Rhetoric of Style* presents a novel discussion of the workings of style and sheds new light on a venerable and sometimes misunderstood rhetorical concept by illustrating how style is the key to constructing a rhetoric for the twenty-first century.

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