

COMM 518: American Public Address

Tuesdays 5:30-8:20 p.m.

ASC 230

Instructors:

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Description:

This course constitutes the rhetorical history of the United States. Public address offers discursive windows into the issues, practices, political and social relationships of a time. The course features studies of speech in context. We will read addresses that were heralded as statements of significance in relation to war and peace, progress and prosperity, change and reform. We also analyze speech from those representing alternative points of view by championing the causes of counterpublics and articulating social change. A goal of the course is to enrich the ability of students to conduct contemporary public address analysis. This is accomplished through developing a working understand of the history of American public address. The course will begin briefly with visiting the division and loss of Civil War. We analyze select speeches addressing race and Reconstruction, gender and women's rights, populism and progressivism, imperialism and the first war, the New Deal, the Cold War, Kennedy and King, the Great Society, Reagan's America, and the Clinton and Bush triangulations.

Required Readings:

- ☐ Safire, William. *Lend Me Your Ears: Great Speeches in History*. New York: Norton, 2004.
- ☐ Morison, Samuel Eliot. *The Oxford History of the American People, Volume 3: 1869 to the Death of John F. Kennedy 1963*. New York: New American Library, 1972.
- ☐ Substantial additional readings as assigned; most will be made available as PDFs on the course website, on Blackboard.

Assignments:

☐ Seminar Paper

The paper should select a contemporary public address of significance. The student should conduct a rhetorical analysis of the speech. Why is the address important in itself? What are the contexts that set expectation? How does the language of the speech perform? What are the strengths and limits of the address? How and what publics are called into being? Students also should consider their analysis in relation to one or more current public address projects of Gerard Hauser, J. Michael Hogan, Stephen John Hartnett and Greg Goodale; Shawn Parry-Giles, and David Zarefsky (see their essays in Todd F. McDorman and David M. Timmerman, *Rhetoric and Democracy: Pedagogical and Political Practices* [East Lansing: Michigan State UP, 2008]). How does your project engage, illustrate, expand, revise, challenge? Analyses will be presented in class on December 2 and final written projects are due at the final examination time.

☐ Public Address Research Report

Students will be requested to do one report in class. There are five options. First, discover, present and assess American historical archives that include magazines and newspapers that permit developing an idea of speeches and issues in context. Second, identify presidential library research opportunities as well as presidency discourse projects. Explain how to use whitehouse.gov. Third, assemble right wing blogs, news sites, and party places. How does the internet permit discovery of speeches and mapping responses? Fourth, assemble left wing blogs, news sites, and party places. How does the internet permit discovery of left wing speeches and mapping responses? Fifth, teach the class how to use Jefferson and/or CSPAN to recover public speech and discourse.

☐ Participation

Of course: In a doctoral seminar, we expect everyone to add to the quality of the conversation in class. Frequency does not necessarily equate to quality, especially when pursued as a compensatory strategy by the ill-prepared. What does add to the conversation are incisive questions, carefully reasoned arguments, and, most importantly, direct engagements with the day's readings. To facilitate same, and to give your instructors some advance warning, we ask that you post reactions (questions, comments, observations, criticisms, etc.) to the weekly Blackboard Discussion fora created for this purpose, *no later than 9:00 p.m. on Monday evenings*.

Academic Integrity:

The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's academic integrity code as detailed in the *SCampus* guide. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violation or pattern of violations of the academic integrity code will result in the student's expulsion from the Communication major or minor.

If you have any doubts about what is and is not an academic integrity violation, please

check with us. The University presumes that you are familiar with its standards and policies; should you be found to have committed a violation, ignorance of these standards and policies will **not** be accepted as an excuse.

Disabilities:

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please have the letter delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. DSP's phone number is (213) 740-0776.

Tentative Weekly Schedule

The following schedule is largely topical. Details regarding readings and other materials will be provided in due course. Speeches filled in soon.

August 26

Introduction to the course. The American Crucible—the Civil War. Lincoln's First Inaugural and Gettysburg Addresses. Analyses by Marie Hochmuth Nichols and David Zarefsky. Essay by Ernest J. Wraga.

September 2

Reconstruction and Race. Morison, "Reconstruction 1865-1877" (II, 498-522).

September 9

The Gilded Age. Morison, III, 29-103. Russell Herman Conwell, "Acres of Diamonds."

September 16

Gender and Moral Reform.

September 23

Populism Meets Monopoly. Morison, III, 104-153.

September 30

Internationalism, Imperialism, Pacifism. Morison, III, 154-222.

October 7

Progressivism into the Roaring '20s. Morison, III, 223-298.

October 14

The Great Depression and New Deal. Morison, III, 299-358.

October 21

World War to the Cold War. Morison, III, 359-447.

October 28

JFK and MLK. Morison, III, 481-500.

November 4

The Great Society and Social Movements.

November 11

From Goldwater to Reagan.

November 18

Post-Reagan Politics: Bushes and Clintons.

November 25

Our (and Obama's) Moment.

December 2

Presentation of student papers.