

**Presidential Rhetoric**  
**HONS 3199: Readings**  
Fall 2015, Section HN8 (W, 4-4:50 p.m.)

**Dr. John Gooch**

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**Course Description**

Rhetoric has always been integral to the American presidency in that no one person's speeches and writings receive more attention and criticism than those of the individual holding this office. From George Washington's writings to Abraham Lincoln's speeches to Barack Obama's use of social media, the rhetoric of the American president continues to advance domestic and foreign policies, set political agendas, and embody the values of a nation. This semester, we will study these written, spoken, and digital examples as well as examine the rhetorical strategies different American presidents have used to persuade audiences throughout the nation's history.

**Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes**

Upon completing the class, students will be able to:

- Describe the function of argument and language in presidential speeches and writings
- Explain the context of instances of presidential rhetoric in American history
- Analyze the political, social, and/or economic controversies surrounding each example of presidential rhetoric
- Demonstrate in writing the skills of rhetorical analysis as applied to examples of presidential rhetoric (e.g., speeches, writings, social media)

**Required Text**

Waldman, Michael, editor. *My Fellow Americans: The Most Important Speeches of America's Presidents, from George Washington to Barack Obama*. Second edition. Sourcebooks MediaFusion, 2010. ISBN: 978-1-4022-4367-7

**Recommended Texts and Readings**

Eldermuller, Michael E., editor. *AmericanRhetoric.com*.

Longaker, Mark Garrett, and Jeffrey Walker. *Rhetorical Analysis: A Brief Guide for Writers*. Pearson Education Inc., 2011. ISBN: 978-0-205-56570-2

Medhurst, Martin, and Paul Stob, editors. *PresidentialRhetoric.com*.

### Other Required Readings (Uploaded to E-Learning)

Jefferson, Thomas. "Expedition to the Pacific: Instructions to Captain Lewis." *Thomas Jefferson: Writings – Autobiography, Notes on the State of Virginia, Public and Private Papers, Addresses, Letters*. Merrill D. Peterson, editor. The Library of America, 1984. 1126-32.

Lincoln, Abraham. "First Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Ottawa, Illinois." *Abraham Lincoln Speeches and Writings, 1832-1858: Speeches, Letters, and Miscellaneous Writings/The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*. Don E. Fehrenbacher, editor. The Library of America, 1989. 495-536.

Madison, James. "The Federalist No. 10, November 22, 1787." *James Madison: Writings*. Jack N. Rakove, editor. The Library of America, 1999. 160-68.

Washington, George. "Proclamation Concerning the 'Whiskey Rebellion,' September 25, 1794." *George Washington: Writings*. John H. Rhodehamel, editor. The Library of America, 1997. 882-84.

### Assignments

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Rhetorical Analysis #1	30%	October 11 <sup>th</sup>
Rhetorical Analysis #2	30%	December 13 <sup>th</sup>
Attendance and Participation	40%	N/A

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### HONS 3199 Schedule, FALL 2015

Aug 26	<b>Introduction to the Course</b> What is Rhetoric? What is "Presidential Rhetoric"?
Sep 2	<b>George Washington</b> "First Inaugural Address," pages 3-8, <i>My Fellow Americans</i> "Proclamation Concerning the 'Whiskey Rebellion,' September 25, 1794" (E-Learning)
Sep 9	<b>Thomas Jefferson</b> "First Inaugural Address," pages 17-21, <i>My Fellow Americans</i> "Expedition to the Pacific: Instructions to Captain Lewis," (E-Learning)
Sep 16	<b>James Madison and Andrew Jackson</b> "The Federalist No. 10, November 22, 1787" (E-Learning) "Veto of the Bank of the United States," pages 25-29, <i>My Fellow Americans</i>
Sep 23	<b>Abraham Lincoln</b> "First Lincoln-Douglas Debate" (E-Learning) "Gettysburg Address," pages 53-56, <i>My Fellow Americans</i> "Second Inaugural Address," pages 57-60, <i>My Fellow Americans</i>

Sep 30	<b>Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson</b> "Speech at Osawatomie, Kansas," pages 68-76, <i>My Fellow Americans</i> "Address to Congress on Peace Terms," pages 87-92, <i>My Fellow Americans</i>
Oct 7	<b>Franklin Roosevelt</b> "First Inaugural Address," pages 95-101, <i>My Fellow Americans</i> "Request for Declaration of War Against Japan," pages 118-121, <i>My Fellow Americans</i>
Oct 14	<b>Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower</b> "Address to Congress on Greece and Turkey," pages 129-135, <i>My Fellow Americans</i> "Farewell Address," pages 153-157, <i>My Fellow Americans</i>
Oct 21	<b>John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson</b> "Inaugural Address," pages 161-165, <i>My Fellow Americans</i> "Address to Congress on Voting Rights," pages 193-202, <i>My Fellow Americans</i>
Oct 28	<b>Richard Nixon</b> "Address to the Nation on Vietnam," pages 213-223, <i>My Fellow Americans</i> "Farewell Address to White House Staff," pages 224-228, <i>My Fellow Americans</i>
Nov 4	<b>Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter</b> "Address on U.S. Foreign Policy, April 10, 1975," from <a href="http://millercenter.org/president/ford/speeches/speech-5500">http://millercenter.org/president/ford/speeches/speech-5500</a> "Speech on Energy and National Goals," pages 237-242, <i>My Fellow Americans</i>
Nov 11	<b>NO CLASS</b> I am away for an academic conference this week.
Nov 18	<b>Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush</b> "Address to Members of British Parliament," pages 252-261, <i>My Fellow Americans</i> "Remarks on the Iran-Contra Scandal," pages 267-272, <i>My Fellow Americans</i> "Acceptance Speech, Republican Convention," pages 275-282, <i>My Fellow Americans</i>
Nov 25	<b>NO CLASS</b> <b>Fall Break</b>
Dec 2	<b>Bill Clinton and George W. Bush</b> "State of the Union Address, January 27, 1998," pages 295-302, <i>My Fellow Americans</i> "Address to Congress...September 11," pages 305-313, <i>My Fellow Americans</i>
Dec 9	<b>Barack Obama</b> "Remarks in Philadelphia," pages 323-335, <i>My Fellow Americans</i> "Remarks to the House Democratic Caucus," pages 336-345, <i>My Fellow Americans</i> Examples of Obama's use of social media as rhetoric – TBD

## Policies

### *General Policies and Course Expectations*

- Students who fail to submit one or both of the major essay assignments will fail the course.

- Cell phones or PDAs must be switched to 'silent' during formal class hours. You may use laptop computers for note taking, but please make sure your activities using the computer are confined to class-related matters.
- A published and recognized style guide (e.g., MLA, Chicago, Turabian) in its most recent edition is required for source citation and bibliographic, "References," or "Works Cited" pages.
- Students will attend class prepared by completing the reading and participating actively in discussions.

#### *Attendance*

Successful completion of this course depends upon your regular attendance. More than one (1) unexcused absence will negatively affect your "attendance and participation grade." If you need to miss class, then please notify me beforehand. I will determine excused absences on a case-by-case basis. I will circulate a roll sheet at the beginning of each class. Your signature must appear on the roll sheet for any given class day to be counted in attendance.

#### *University Policies*

Refer to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for further information.

#### **Assignment Expectations**

In general, you will submit written essays that reflect:

- Clear thesis and focus
- Effective organization that demonstrates discrete main ideas and supporting premises (good coordination and subordination)
- Good transition between sentences, paragraphs, and major areas of discussion (cohesion and coherence)
- Strong introductions and conclusions
- Varied and cogent stylistic choices related to both diction and sentence structure
- Adherence to conventional grammar and mechanics
- Thorough proofreading
- Attention to formatting concerns (page formatting or formatting for presentation aids/electronic slides)
- Accurate and appropriate citation according to an academically recognized and accepted style guide (e.g., MLA, Chicago)

I will automatically reduce your grade on any assignment by one letter grade for the following:

- Significant errors in formatting in-text citations and/or "Works Cited" or "References" pages (i.e., general sloppiness with formatting for citations)

- Carelessness in proofreading for typos and/or errors in punctuation or spelling
- Multiple sentence-level grammatical and mechanical mistakes

(**Note:** I will make use of plusses and minuses (e.g., A-, B+) for grades as stipulated by UTD.)

### **Expectations for Engaged Class Participation**

This readings course requires that you participate actively in class activities and discussions. I am necessarily more concerned with the *quality*, not quantity, of the comments you make in class. I need to see evidence that you are engaged with the reading and also the conversation. Although it may go without saying, paying more attention to your cell phone or laptop computer will suggest to me the opposite of “engaged participation.”

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