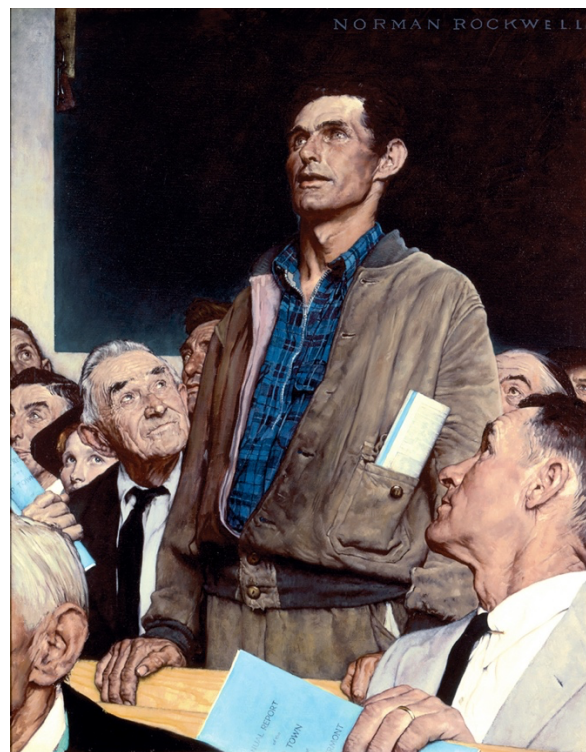




ILS 200

CRITICAL THINKING & EXPRESSION:
ARGUMENTS IN POLITICAL RHETORIC



Tuesdays, 2:25-3:15 pm
Educational Sciences 204

Instructor: Kirstin Anderson

Office: Meiklejohn House

Course Credits: 3.0, Option A

TAs: Emily Cole (eacole2@wisc.edu), Rini Tarafder (tarafder@wisc.edu), Joshua Kelly (jtkelly3@wisc.edu)

Office Hours: MW 10-11am

Email: keanderson32@wisc.edu

Format: Lecture & Discussion

¹ Image: *Freedom of Speech*, by Norman Rockwell

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What does it mean to think critically? In an 1894 report defending the freedom of professor Richard Ely to promote a Socialist agenda on campus, then-President of UW-Madison, Charles Kendall Adams, wrote: “Whatever may be the limitations which trammel inquiry elsewhere, we believe the great state University of Wisconsin should ever encourage that *continual and fearless sifting and winnowing* by which alone the truth can be found.” This process of “sifting and winnowing” is an excellent metaphor for critical thought. Over the course of the semester, we will learn what it means to “sift and winnow” in the pursuit of truth.

This course will achieve these goals by examining great historical speeches. We will learn to understand and practice critical thought and persuasion by reading, critiquing, and performing great speeches from history. We will learn through engagement with the content of this class what constitutes an effective argument, and we will learn to craft such effective arguments ourselves. In addition, we will learn to distinguish persuasive rhetoric from truth-seeking rhetoric. In the final classes of the semester, we will also turn our eyes toward threats to critical thinking – a topic of particular interest to ILS founder Alexander Meiklejohn.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Topping, Ryan N.S., *The Elements of Rhetoric: How to Write and Speak Clearly & Persuasively*. (Angelic Press, 2016). ISBN: 978-1621381969
2. Struck, William Jr. & White, E.B., *The Elements of Style, 4th Edition*. (Pearson Education, 2000). ISBN: 978-0205309023.
3. www.AmericanRhetoric.com (AR)

Recommended (Not-Required) Texts

1. Crider, Scott F., *The Office of Assertion: An Art of Rhetoric for the Academic Essay*. (ISI Books, 2005). ISBN: 978-1932236453.
2. Zinsser, William, *On Writing Well* (HarperCollins 2006). ISBN: 978-0060891541

Students must purchase the editions of the required texts above. Students should bring the text under consideration to both lecture and discussion. All PDFs are posted on the Home page in Canvas, as well as links to AR speeches. All speeches and videos linked to American Rhetoric are labeled (AR) on the syllabus.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Reading: Lecture and discussions will not summarize the content of the readings but seek to understand them more deeply through analysis and conversation. This will be most fruitful when students are prepared to analyze and engage with others in a meaningful way. Thus, this course is grounded in careful reading before each session.

Technology Policies: Computers and tablets (outside of McBurney accommodations) are permitted in lecture if, and only if, you write me an email making 3 arguments for why using a

computer or tablet is superior to taking hand-written notes. You must also acknowledge 2 counterpoints to your arguments. If you offer valid points, you will be permitted to use a computer or tablet during lecture. No cell phones may be used during class time. Infringements will result in reduced participation grades.

Instructor Meeting: Each student is **strongly encouraged** to meet with me at least once throughout the semester. I would love to put as many faces with names as possible, as well as chat about the class and how it might align with your interests. Please make note of my office hours. I am also happy to meet by appointment, either in person or via Zoom.

Assignments:

1. *Short Essays*: Students will write five short (3-5 page), double-spaced essays over the course of this class. More specific directions and requirements for each paper will be distributed a week before the assignment is due.
2. *Speeches*: Students will deliver three speeches throughout the semester:
 - a. *Recitation*: Each student must memorize 150-200 words of a speech and deliver it in front of discussion section.
 - b. *Debate*: Each discussion section will host one debate throughout the semester. This debate will be administered by the TA and cover a topical political issue.
 - c. *Final Speech*: Each student will write a 5-minute persuasive speech on a political essay. This assignment contains three components: written speech, performance, and peer critique. Additional instructions to come.
3. *Reading Quizzes*: During 10 of the lectures this semester (which will be randomly selected by me), students will complete a reading comprehension quiz at the end of lecture. These quizzes are not meant to trick you, but to reward students who effectively complete the reading. Each quiz is worth 1% of the overall course grade.
4. *Reflection Essay*: An essay written at the end of the semester in which you will detail to me what you have learned about political argumentation and rhetoric. Further instructions to come.

Late Work: Late work will be penalized for all assignments. A letter grade will be deducted from late work for each day late. If you must turn in an assignment late due to extenuating circumstances, please reach out to me or your teaching assistant at least 24 hours in advance of the due date.

McBurney Accommodations: Students with McBurney-verified accommodations must notify me and your teaching assistant during the first two weeks of the semester to arrange specific accommodations for assignments or exams.

Plagiarism: Instances of plagiarism will be investigated and reported to the Dean's Office in accordance with University policy.

GRADES

Participation -----	10%
Short Essays -----	25%
Section Speeches -----	10%
Reading Quizzes -----	10%
Final Speech -----	30%
Reflection Essay -----	15%

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Diversity & Inclusion Statement: Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

Academic Integrity Statement: By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Statement: The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy ([UW-855](#)) require the university to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to access and participate in its academic programs and educational services. Faculty and students share responsibility in the accommodation process. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations during the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible after being approved for accommodations. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to provide reasonable instructional and course-related accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#))

- (PDF)
The Elements of Rhetoric, Chapter IV
The Elements of Style, Elementary Rules 8 & 9, Misuse p. 47-48
Watch: *John Quincy Adams Addresses the Supreme Court of the United States of America* (AR)
Assigned: *Short Essay #3*
- Tuesday, 10/26 The Structure of a Speech
Read: George Washington, *Farewell Address* (PDF)
The Elements of Rhetoric, Chapter V
The Elements of Style: Elementary Rules 10 & 11, Misuse p. 49-50
Watch: Patrick Henry, *Give Me Liberty, or Give me Death!* (YouTube)
Due: *Short Essay #3*
- Tuesday, 11/2 The Garden of Eloquence
Read: Jefferson Davis, *On the Withdrawal from the Union* (PDF)
Abraham Lincoln, *Gettysburg Address, Second Inaugural Address* (PDF)
The Elements of Rhetoric, Chapter VI
The Elements of Style: Principles of Composition 12 & 13, Misuse p. 51-52
Assigned: *Short Essay #4*
- Tuesday, 11/9 Activism & Critical Thinking
Read: Frederick Douglass, *The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro* (PDF)
Sojourner Truth, *Ain't I a Woman?* (PDF)
Malcom X, *The Ballot or the Bullet* (PDF)
Due: *Short Essay #4*
- Tuesday, 11/16 Speaking from Outside Politics
Read: Christine de Pizan, *Speech of Lady Reason* (PDF)
Lady Astor, *Speech on Women in Politics* (PDF)
The Elements of Rhetoric, Chapter VII
The Elements of Style: Principles of Composition 16, Misuse p. 55-56
Watch: Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb* (YouTube)
Taylor Swift, *2019 Billboard Woman of the Decade Speech* (YouTube)
Assigned: *Short Essay #5*
- Tuesday, 11/23 The Power of Narratives
Read: Winston Churchill, *"Blood, Sweat, and Tears," Dunkirk, "Their Finest Hour"* (PDF)
King George VI, *Radio Address to the British Empire* (AR)
The Elements of Style: Principles of Composition 17 & 18, Misuse

p. 57-58

Watch: *Winston Churchill's Speech in The Darkest Hour* (YouTube)

Due: *Short Essay #5*

Debate Week

Threats to Critical Thinking

Tuesday, 11/30

Cowardice & Tyranny of the Majority

Read: Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (PDF)

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Harvard Commencement Address* (PDF)

The Elements of Style: Principles of Composition 19 & 20, Misuse

pg. 59-61

Assigned: *Final Speech Assignment*

Tuesday, 12/7

Formality & Freedom of Speech

Read: Alexander Meiklejohn, *Free Speech and Its Relation to Self-Government* (PDF)

Watch: Barack Obama, *Eulogy to John McCain* (YouTube)

Due: *Peer Review Critique*

Tuesday, 12/14

Where This Leaves You

Read: Plato, *Allegory of the Cave* (PDF)

Due: *Final Speech Written Submission*

FINALS WEEK

Due: *Final Speech Performance*
Reflection Paper