

## **Persuasion in Public Address: A Rhetorical Perspective**

H121-F3 – First-Year University Honors Seminar, 3 Credit Hours

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University Honors Program

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**General Description:** This class examines the art of public persuasion in historic letters, proclamations, speeches, and videos by identifying rhetorical motives, strategies of argument, and style along with the effects of public address on particular audiences. This course is designed to increase the students' understanding of Aristotelian rhetorical theory and its uses both in analyzing public address and fashioning persuasive communication.

**OnlineTexts:** Aristotle, *The Rhetoric*, (<http://rhetoric.eserver.org/aristotle/>); Author Unknown, *The Rhetorica ad Herennium*, (<https://archive.org/details/adcherenniumdera00capluoft>); and Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis, *On Christian Doctrine: Book IV*, (<http://faculty.georgetown.edu/jod/augustine/ddc4.html>)

### **Online Public Address Works:**

Elizabeth I Speech to the Troops 1588;

“A Declaration by the Representatives of the United Colonies of North-America, Now Met in Congress at Philadelphia, Setting Forth the Causes and Necessity of Their Taking Up Arms” - July 6th, 1775;

“Remember the Ladies,” Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 31 March - 5 April 1776;

“Commander-in-Chief Resignation Speech and Presidential Acceptance” George Washington and President Thomas Mifflin, December 23, 1784;

"Ain't I a Woman?" Sojourner Truth, 1851;

“The Gettysburg Address,” Abraham Lincoln, November 19, 1863;

“Surrender Speech,” Chief Joseph, 1877;

“Duties of American Citizenship,” Theodore Roosevelt, January 26, 1883;

“Checkers Speech,” Richard Nixon, September 23, 1952;

“Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” Martin Luther King, Jr., April 16, 1963;

“Address to the People of Massachusetts on Chappaquiddick,” Edward M. Kennedy, July 25, 1969;

“Democratic National Convention Keynote Address,” Barbara Charline Jordan, July 12th, 1976;

"Women's Rights are Human Rights," Hillary Clinton, Beijing, China, September 5, 1995;

“Against Going to War with Iraq,” Barack Obama, October 2, 2002;

“How to Get Your Ideas to Spread,” Seth Godin, May 2007;

“How Great Leaders Inspire Action,” Simon Sinek, September 2009;

“Your body language shapes who you are,” Amy Cuddy, June 2012.

**Syllabus:** All public address readings and video-watching are to be completed at home prior to the discussion in class. One-page reading response papers are due at the end of each class.

**Week 1**      **Tuesday** – Student Introductions and Syllabus overview

**Thursday** – Lecture: Rhetoric of Western Thought

- Week 2**      **Tuesday** – Book One, [Aristotle’s Rhetoric](#)  
**Thursday** – Book Two, Aristotle’s Rhetoric
- Week 3**      **Tuesday** – Book Three, Aristotle’s Rhetoric  
**Thursday** - [Rhetorica ad Herennium](#) - Inventio and Dispositio
- Week 4**      **Tuesday** – Rhetorica ad Herennium - Elocutio, Pronuntiatio and Memoria  
**Thursday** - [De Doctrina Christiana – Book IV](#)
- Week 5**      **Tuesday** - [De Doctrina Christiana – Book IV](#)  
**Thursday** - Informative Speeches & Paper #1 due
- Week 6**      **Tuesday** – Informative Speeches and [Declaration by the Representatives of the United Colonies of North-America, Now Met in Congress at Philadelphia, Setting Forth the Causes and Necessity of Their Taking Up Arms](#) - July 6th, 1775 – Reading Response Paper: Analyze LOGOS  
**Thursday** - Informative Speeches & [Elizabeth I Speech](#) to the Troops 1588 - Reading Response Paper: Analyze PATHOS
- Week 7**      **Tuesday** – Informative Speeches and [“Commander-in-Chief Resignation Speech and Presidential Acceptance”](#) (George Washington and President Thomas Mifflin), December 23, 1784 - Reading Response Paper: Analyze ETHOS  
**Thursday** – Informative Speeches & *Aimée K. Thomas, Ph.D. speaking on Teacher Certification, Nancy Rowe, Assistant Director of Writing and “Ain’t I a Woman?” Sojourner Truth, 1851* – A Reading Response Paper: Analyze LOGOS
- Week 8**      **Tuesday** - [“The Gettysburg Address,”](#) Abraham Lincoln, November 19, 1863 - Reading Response Paper: Analyze ELOCUTIO [www.gettysburgaddress.org/](http://www.gettysburgaddress.org/)  
**Thursday** – [“Surrender Speech,”](#) Chief Joseph, 1877 – Reading Response Paper: Analyze ETHOS
- Week 9**      **Tuesday** - [“Duties of American Citizenship,”](#) Theodore Roosevelt, January 26, 1883 - Reading Response Paper: Analyze DISPOSITIO  
**Thursday** – [“Checkers Speech,”](#) Richard Nixon, September 23, 1952 – Reading Response Paper: Was Nixon convincing rhetorically: why or why not?
- Week 10**      **Tuesday** - [“Letter from a Birmingham Jail,”](#) Martin Luther King, Jr., April 16, 1963 – Reading Response Paper: Analyze INVENTIO  
**Thursday** – “Address to the People of Massachusetts on Chappaquiddick,” Edward M. Kennedy, July 25, 1969 - Reading Response Paper: Was Kennedy convincing rhetorically: why or why not?
- Week 11**      **Tuesday** - 1976 [Democratic National Convention Keynote Address,” Barbara Charline Jordan](#), July 12th, 1976 – Reading Response Paper: Analyze AUDIENCE

**Thursday** – "[Women's Rights are Human Rights,](#)" Hillary Clinton, Beijing, China, September 5, 1995 – Reading Response Paper: How would you implement Clinton's "call to action" in social media?

**Week 12 Tuesday** - "[Against Going to War with Iraq,](#)" Barack Obama, October 2, 2002 – Reading Response Paper: Analyze LOGOS and Audience

**Thursday** – Persuasive Speeches & "[How to Get Your Ideas to Spread,](#)" Seth Godin, May 2007 – Reading Response Paper: Share with the class an original idea and how you intend to use Godin's technique to spread it?

**Week 13 Tuesday** - Persuasive Speeches & "[How Great Leaders Inspire Action](#)" Simon Sinek, S - Reading Response Paper: Critique speaker's argument on which modes of persuasion leaders deem most effective to inspire action.

**Thursday** - Persuasive Speeches & "[Your body language shapes who you are,](#)" Amy Cuddy, June 2012 - Reading Response Paper: Analyze PRONUNTIATIO

**Week 14 Tuesday** – Persuasive Speeches & "[Remember the Ladies,](#)" Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams – Reading Response Paper: Analyze DEDUCTION.

**Thursday** – Dispositio Lecture: *America's Four United Republics: A Discovery Based Curriculum* - <http://www.americasfourrepublics.com/>

**Week 15 Tuesday** – Self-Help Persuasion Lecture: *Think and Grow Rich's 13 Steps*

#### **Grading policies – 100pts:**

- Syllabus Quiz: 5pts
- Public Speeches: Informative 10pts    Persuasive 20pts
- Participation and Reading Responses: 25pts = 1 point for each public address reading response paper and participation ½ point
- Paper #1: 15 points
- Paper #2: Candidate Policy Statement with cover letter: 25pts

**INFORMATIVE SPEECH ASSIGNMENT:** The purpose of the Informative Speech is to share knowledge or give information. An informative speech is designed to explain, instruct, define, clarify, demonstrate, and/or teach. Listeners are asked to attend, comprehend, and integrate information, but they are not challenged to change their beliefs and behaviors. The value of an informative speech is measured by how much the speaker extends the audience's present knowledge in useful ways. As a result, an informative speaker must have a thorough understanding of their subject and must make it relevant to the audience. Speaking Time Limit: 4-5 Minutes.

**PAPER #1:** Due October 1<sup>st</sup>, this paper asks you to consider whether or not you believe Augustine utilizes the theory in *The Rhetoric* and *Rhetorica ad Herennium* to instruct his audience on homiletics in Book IV of *De Doctrina Christiana*. The paper should include specific examples of the rhetorical canons and their components that Augustine employs in *De Doctrina Christiana*. Are they new to persuasive theory or merely a restating of the rhetorical theory from *The Rhetoric* and *Rhetorica ad Herennium*?

This paper should be six full pages in length (double-spaced type, Times New Roman 12 pt font, normal margins). Each student is required to have at least one other student peer review his/her paper before handing it in. The paper should include citations with endnotes and a bibliography, both following the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Failure to include citations and a bibliographic apparatus, or to use the right format in doing so, will result in a reduction of your grade.

**PERSUASIVE SPEECH ASSIGNMENT:** This speech is designed to apply all the rhetorical concepts learned in this course and to give you experience organizing, outlining, and presenting a compelling persuasive speech. There are many different kinds of persuasive speeches. In this assignment we will emphasize appealing to the audience's self-interests, building logical arguments to support your position, and arousing emotional commitment to your cause using Monroe's Motivated Sequence. Consider what you can do to make your presentation original, personal, compelling, engaging, interesting, and dynamic. Speaking Time Limit 6-7 minutes

**PAPER #2:** Due December 3<sup>rd</sup>, this assignment consists of three parts: a 1-page cover letter, a policy statement of approximately 6-9 pages (when read out loud, the statement should not take less than five nor more than ten minutes), and a 1-2 page outline of the policy paper designed for use by the candidate as an extemporaneous persuasive speech.

Please write a cover letter to a U.S. Presidential candidate explaining;

- a) why you view the candidate favorably;
- b) the nature of our seminar;
- c) explaining that you are respectfully submitting a policy paper for the use of the POTUS candidate in the upcoming primary election.

The paper is to be an authoritative policy statement informing the candidate's primary audience, in a concise manner, about a complex issue, while presenting solutions to its inherent challenges. The policy statement paper, above all, seeks to improve, reverse, or champion a POTUS candidate's political position that is expedient and induces DNC or RNC likely primary voters to cast their ballot for your candidate.

The paper should include citations with endnotes and a bibliography, both following the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Failure to include citations and a bibliographic apparatus, or to use the right format in doing so, will result in a reduction of your grade.

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