

CMN 4820: Political Communication Spring 2014

Dr. Marita Gronnvoll

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Class meets: M/W/F 9:00-9:50; Coleman 1210

Office Hours: M: 12:00-1:00 & 3:30-4:30, W: 10:00-10:50, F: 10:00-10:50

Course Overview

The purpose of this course is to explore various aspects of political communication in the United States. Our first topic will be presidential rhetoric and the rhetorical presidency. As we explore this topic, we will investigate the historical development of presidential communication and the major genres which help shape and structure that communication. Our second topic will be political campaigns and the evolution of the "long campaign," particularly its inescapable connection to mass media. Our third topic will be grassroots and resistance political communication. Here, our focus will be on the nontraditional approaches taken by ordinary citizens and citizen groups as they strive to have their voices heard and impact policy.

Objectives

- ✓ To understand the connection between rhetoric and the formation of the presidency
- ✓ To explore the evolution of American political communication
- ✓ To analyze some of the major rhetorical texts in political communication
- ✓ To compare and contrast the circulation of political power from "above" and "below"
- ✓ To apply class concepts to a major project involving analysis of political rhetoric

Readings

This is an upper-division class intended for experienced, serious students. There is a lot of reading assigned for this class, and I expect everyone to come to class everyday having completed their reading assignment. Being current on national politics is crucial to the success of this class, so not all of our readings will come from your textbooks. Therefore, I am requiring you to come to class having read, or at least browsed, the politics section of a major newspaper (not the DEN, not local newspaper, not Yahoo News). Almost every newspaper is available online and accessible free of charge.

I trust students who are qualified for this class to do their reading without my forcing you to, but depend upon your holding up your end of the bargain in insuring successful class discussion. Most classes will begin with a short writing assignment called "question of the day," where you will apply the assigned reading to some current event. If you haven't read or kept up with the news, you will not be able to participate.

REQUIRED READING

Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Presidents Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words*

Thomas Hollihan, *Uncivil Wars: Political Campaigns in the Media Age*, 2nd ed.

Other readings uploaded to D2L

Politics section of a high-quality daily newspaper

Class Climate

One of the topics people can have a strong opinion about is politics. That's fine! Strong opinions are wonderful and, when expressed with respect and sensitivity, can result in stimulating class discussion. I ask all students to think about how best to frame their comments so as to promote respect and civility in the classroom. Always check your assumptions—not everyone has the same political beliefs or supports the same party/candidate. Constructive criticism and responses are welcome and expected. Disrespect of any kind that creates a hostile environment will not be tolerated. At the same time, don't be overly sensitive. You do not have a constitutional right to not be offended.

Cell Phones, Text Messaging, and other Electronic Annoyances

Turn off cell phones, don't text message, don't IM during class. It's disrespectful, distracting, and extremely annoying. You may think you can multi-task but trust me, you can't.

Disability Concerns

If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services at 581-6583.

E-mail Policy

You are expected to check your official EIU e-mail everyday. I will, on occasion, send out e-mail reminders and announcements, so please stay current with your inbox. You have the responsibility to recognize that certain communications may be time-critical. "I didn't check my e-mail," errors in foreign mail accounts, or e-mail that is returned with "mailbox full" are not acceptable excuses for missing communications sent via e-mail.

Attendance & Participation

Your presence, both physical and mental, is needed in order for this class to be successful. You begin this class with 100 participation points and they are yours to lose. You keep them by coming to class everyday, on time, and prepared. Not everyone will be equally vocal, but I expect everyone to at least make an effort at vocal participation. I also value active listening and urge you find a balance between commenting during class discussion, and actively listening to me and to each other. You begin to lose participation points by being habitually late, by engaging in prohibited activities during class (e.g., texting, IM'ing or internet surfing, sleeping, doing homework for other classes, etc.), or never participating in class discussions.

Please note: participation points are given at my discretion and are not subject to dispute.

Grade Disputes

There are times when students receive a grade that they genuinely believe to be in error and/or unfair. Should this occur, there is a strict procedure that must be followed. First, we will abide by the "24-hour

rule.” This means that after I’ve returned your assignment (NOT after the grade has been posted on D2L), you must reflect upon it for 24 hours before you attempt to e-mail me or talk to me about your grade. Second, after 24 hours have passed, you must contact me to request an appointment to talk about your grade (don’t make your argument in an e-mail; I want you to talk to me in person). Finally, you must meet with me with your argument for why you think your grade should be higher. Be specific in your argument if you want a fair hearing.

After one week all grades are final.

A Note About Grades: I realize that grades are a high priority for most students. Please be aware of where you stand throughout the semester. Do not wait until the last few days of the semester and then suddenly have a panic attack because your grade is not where you thought it would be. Once the semester is over, it’s over, and no more points will be allotted. I will not accept appeals for more points, or to be “bumped up” to the next letter grade.

Grading scale and criteria

630-700 = A
560-629 = B
490-559 = C
420-489 = D
0-419 = F

Deadlines

Assignments are due on the date they’re due, at the beginning of class, handed to me by you, printed off and stapled. I will not accept e-mail attachments, or work handed to me by a classmate unless you arrange it with me ahead of time and have a good reason for not following procedure. By the way, a malfunctioning printer or computer does not constitute a “good reason.” Don’t wait until the last minute to print off your assignment; printers break all the time, especially when assignments are due.

Academic Integrity

It is expected that all students have read and understood the University Student Conduct Code. If you have misplaced your copy, you can obtain one at <http://www.eiu.edu/~judicial/conductcode.pdf>. It is of utmost importance that you understand what is meant by cheating, facilitating academic dishonesty, fabrication, plagiarism, etc. It is also important for you to understand your rights should I, or any other instructor, accuse you of academic dishonesty. Every graded assignment, unless otherwise indicated, requires you to do original, independent, and creative work. In addition to copying someone else’s words or ideas, reusing your own work from other courses is considered academic dishonesty. At various times in the semester, you will be asked to summarize the materials of others—if you are using more than 3 words of that text, they need to be in quotations marks and include the corresponding page number. Violation of the Code will result in swift and severe consequences—typically failure for both assignment and the course. All cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs where they will become part of your permanent academic record. Cheating is just not worth it.

Assignments

Question of the day (20 @ 10 points ea. = 200 points): At the beginning of class, I will pose a question that asks you to connect some current political event to the reading for that day or that week. You will take 10 minutes to write a substantive response to the question. The question will help to spur our discussion for the day and to keep you current with your reading. Questions of the day assignments may not be made up for any reason.

Genre analysis (100 points): You will select a presidential speech that fits into one of the genres we will be discussing, and you will write a 5-6 page rhetorical analysis of that speech. Detailed information will be provided in class.

Class facilitation (100 points): You will select one day where you will lead class discussion. You will select the text for the class to read, clear it with me, and ***post it to D2L no later than one week prior to your facilitation***, and apply class concepts to your discussion. To aid discussion, you will also upload discussion questions to D2L no later than one class period prior to your facilitation. You are encouraged to use multi-media in your facilitation.

Course Paper & Presentation (150 paper, 50 presentation): This 8-12 page research paper will examine a particular political controversy, campaign, or presidential speech of your choosing (although you will clear your topic with me ahead of time). Your research will center on the rhetoric emerging from the issue, or on the chief rhetorical text in the case of a presidential speech. Detailed information will be provided in class.

Class presentation: 50 points of your course paper will rest upon your presentation of your work to the class. Presentations are mandatory, and no final papers will be accepted without accompanying presentations. Presentations will be scheduled for the last week of class.

Active participation (100 points): This course will be a challenging one and will benefit students who are motivated to read, write, and engage in discussion. Merely attending class is not the same as actively participating. If you attend everyday but rarely engage in the materials in a way that is responsive to others in the class, you will earn a poor participation grade by the end of the semester. Likewise, if you are not in class, you certainly cannot engage our discussions fully. So, come to class PREPARED – meaning that you have read and are ready to speak about what you have read in an engaged manner. You will lose 5 points for every day missed (not including University sanctioned absences).

Class Schedule

Note: It is expected that you will read the assigned reading BEFORE coming to class for the day, that you will take appropriate notes, and that you will bring the readings with you to class so that we can discuss them fully. We may alter some of the readings as the semester progresses depending upon the needs of the class.

PCP: Presidents Creating the Presidency

UW: Uncivil Wars

D2L: Desire2Learn

QOD: "Question of the Day"

UNIT #1: THE RHETORICAL PRESIDENCY

1/13: Course introduction

1/15: Politics and Communication

UW: Ch. 1

1/17: The Rhetorical Presidency

PCP: Ch. 1

1/20: NO CLASS, MLK DAY

1/22: Presidents and National Identity

D2L: Beasley

1/24: Inaugural addresses

PCP: Ch. 2

1/27: Lincoln's second inaugural

D2L

(1/28: WATCH THE STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS)

1/29: State of the Union addresses

PCP: Ch. 6

1/31: Discuss Obama State of the Union

D2L

2/3: Presidential eulogies

PCP: Ch. 4

2/5: Reagan, Clinton, Obama

D2L

2/7: War rhetoric

PCP: Ch. 9

2/10: FDR Pearl Harbor OR Presentation

D2L

2/12: Lincoln at Gettysburg

D2L

2/14: NO CLASS, LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY

2/17: Farewell Addresses

PCP: Ch. 12

2/19: Washington

D2L

2/21: Online QOD

UNIT #2: POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS IN THE MEDIA AGE

2/24: "The Long Campaign"

UW: Ch. 2
Genre Paper Due

2/26: Film: *Game Change*

2/28: Film: *Game Change*

3/3: Finish *Game Change*, and discuss

3/5: "Crafting Political Images"

UW: Ch. 4

3/7: Online QOD

3/10-3/14: NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

3/17: News Media and Political Campaigns

UW: Ch. 5

3/19: Money and Politics

UW: Ch. 10

3/21: "Crisis in American Democracy"

UW: Ch. 12

UNIT #3: GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM

3/24: "What is a Social Movement?"

D2L: Stewart, Smith, & Denton

3/26: Presentation

3/28: EIU and sexual assault

D2L

3/31: Conservative movements

D2L: Wideman

4/2: Civil rights/Civil disobedience

D2L: Berry

4/4: Presentation

4/7: Feminist movement

D2L: Campbell

4/9: Environmental movement

D2L: Pezzullo

4/11: Presentation

4/14: Gay rights movement

D2L: Rand

4/16: Occupy Wall Street

D2L: DeLuca

4/18: Flipped classroom: Watch film TBA

4/21: Discussion

4/23: NO CLASS, COMMUNICATION DAY

4/25: Wrapping up

4/28: Presentations

4/30: Presentations

5/2: Presentations

FINAL PAPER DUE MONDAY, MAY 5, 2014