

COM 426

Political Communication

Instructor:

Office Hours:

Phone:

Office:

Course Location:

Required Reading and Materials:

Edelman, M. J. (1988). *Constructing The Political Spectacle*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Campbell, K. K., & Jamieson, K. H. (2008). *Presidents creating the Presidency: deeds done in words*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Course Overview:

The focus of this course is the illumination, interpretation, and criticism of political communication. In particular, this class will investigate Presidential Rhetoric as well as rhetoric surrounding the institution of the Presidency. We will use the institution of the Presidency to examine how it is that we, the citizens of the United States, define ourselves and our country through the construction of politics. Undoubtedly, we will have many differences in opinion as we seek to uncover the relationships between politics, national identity, and ourselves. Our purpose is to embrace and understand these differences so that we can add greater complexity and richness to the tapestry of American culture.

Course Goals:

Over the course of the next 15 weeks, it is my goal that you will accomplish the following:

1. Articulate relationships between politics, the presidency, identity, and social change.
2. Perform criticism of the social construction of politics embodied in particular events or incidents related to the Rhetorical Presidency.
3. Become more critical consumers of rhetorical discourse.
4. Improve your skills in argument and written and oral expression.

School note: This is an upper division course and has certain pre-requisites. If you do not meet these pre-requisites you will be asked to drop the class and/or will be administratively withdrawn from the class. If you have questions about your eligibility, please consult your advisor or take other steps to determine your status.

Course Assignments:

1) **50 points total**-- Critical Essay: Writing is a process. And writing well requires careful attention and diligent effort at multiple stages in the process. In a series of writing events, you will present the results of your semester long engagement with a social issue/group. I will expect thoughtful and rigorous discussion of salient aspects of history, context, and argument

as well as analysis of a specific socio-political phenomenon. Furthermore, in your writing you should demonstrate your ability to synthesize and apply ideas, concepts, and arguments that emerge from class readings and discussion. The Critical Essay process has four components:

- a. 6 pts. Paper proposal: A two-to-three (2-3) page essay (not including references) in which you identify the organization/social issue, justify its selection as a topic for this paper, and identify possible contextual and theoretical topics for further development. The point of this proposal is to provide me an opportunity to give you feedback and guidance on your project before you have invested extensive time and energy, thereby avoiding problems down the road.
- b. 6 pts. Bibliography: Ten (10) annotated sources about your specific political communication.
- c. 8 pts. Context Essay: A four to six (4-6) page essay (not including references) in which you describe historical and contemporary aspects of the political messages that you wish to analyze.
- d. 10 pts. Analysis Essay: A five-to-seven (5-7) page essay (not including references) in which you perform rhetorical analysis on the political communication you select.
- e. 20 pts. Final Essay: A fifteen-to-twenty (15-20) page essay (not including references) that builds upon your revised Context and Analysis Essays, engages in further analysis of your political communication, and frames your research project with an introduction and conclusion.

2) **20 points**—Midterm exam. On October 3rd you will take an in-class examination. This exam will challenge your understanding of political communication, theory, and analysis of rhetoric. Material for the exam will come from *Constructing the Political Spectacle*, lectures, and in-class announcements and activities.

3) **20 points**—Final exam. On December 12th, you will take an in-class examination. This exam will challenge your understanding of political communication, theory, and analysis of rhetoric. Material for the exam will come from *Presidents Creating the Presidency*, lectures, and in-class announcements and activities.

4) **10 points**—Critical Essay presentation: Your presentation should convey the results of your research into the issue/organization that you have chosen for your critical essay. These presentations will occur in class during the last few weeks of class. We will assign presentation dates in advance.

Grading Scale:

A+:	97-100	B+:	87-89	C+:	77-79	D+:	67-69
A:	93-96	B:	83-86	C:	73-76	D:	63-66
A-:	90-92	B-:	80-82	C-:	70-72	D-:	60-62

Course Expectations:

- 1) Attend class regularly. Every class session will provide unique and useful information. If you do not attend class, you will quickly fall behind.
- 2) Sign In: At the beginning of each class, I will send around a sign-in sheet. After the first 10 minutes of class have passed, the sheet will no longer be available for you to sign. You may not sign in for other people in the class.

- 3) Attendance: You are permitted 2 class absences, no questions asked. After that, each unexcused absence will cost you 10% of your overall grade. The only excused absences are for Religious Holidays, University Sponsored Events (academic or athletic team competitions for instance), and extreme illnesses or emergencies. You will need to provide documentation for any of these three reasons. If you are going to miss class for Religious Holidays or University Business, you need to inform me at least 1 week in advance of your planned absence.
- 4) Turn off your cell phones before every class. Do not text during class. If you have an emergency that requires you to respond to your cell phone, excuse yourself from class and do so. Few things are more annoying and detrimental to class productivity than the ringing of a cell phone.
- 5) Come to class prepared, on time, and ready to learn. If the class has to cater to anyone that has not read the material, it will slow everyone down. Lack of preparation will be reflected in your participation score. Don't expect to spend the entire time on Facebook or the internet. This class requires active participation and learning.
- 6) Turn your assignments in on time. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class identified in the syllabus or on the assignment handout. Turning an assignment in at the end of class is the same as turning it in a day late – this will result in a 10% reduction in the total possible grade. Each day that an assignment is late after the first day, another 10% will be deducted from the total possible score.
- 7) Laptop use is only permitted for note taking. You are welcome to take notes on your laptop, but if you intend to sit in the back of the classroom, play around on facebook, and pay no attention to class, you will be barred from using laptops in the class in the future.

Student Conduct:

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/PLAGIARISM

ASU policy states “The highest standards of academic integrity are expected of all students. The failure of any student to meet these standards may result in suspension or expulsion from the university and/or other sanctions as specified in the academic integrity policies of the individual academic unit. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, fabrication, tampering, plagiarism, or facilitating such activities.” For more information see <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>.

Each student must act with honesty and integrity, and must respect the rights of others in carrying out all academic assignments. Students are responsible for knowing the rules governing the use of another's work or materials and for acknowledging and documenting the source appropriately. “Plagiarism” means using another's words, ideas, materials or work without properly acknowledging and documenting the source. Plagiarism and cheating on assignments may result in failing this class, suspension, or expulsion. “All forms of student academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism” are prohibited conduct as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and will be taken very seriously. To further review the Code, please refer to the following ASU website: www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/sta/sta104-01.html. Copies of the Student Code of Conduct can also be obtained on the first floor of the Student Services Building.

HARASSMENT

ASU policy prohibits harassment on the basis of race, sex, gender identity, age, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, Vietnam era veteran status and other protected veteran status. If you feel you are being harassed for these reasons, contact Student Life:

- Downtown campus: 522 N. Central Ave., Post Office Room 247, 480-496-4111
- Polytechnic campus: Administration Building suite 102, 480-727-1060
- Tempe campus: Student Services Building room 263, 480-965-6547
- West campus: UCB 301, 602-543-8152

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Acceptable use of university computers, internet and electronic communications can be found in the Student Code of Conduct (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi104-01.html>) and in the University's Computer, Internet, and Electronic Communications Policy (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd125.html>).

Accommodations:

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS

Students who feel they may need disability accommodation(s) in class should obtain the necessary information from the Disability Resource Center on campus

(<http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/>).

It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the DRC. Instructors may provide accommodations only as specified by the DRC documentation.

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS

Students who need to be absent from class due to the observance of a religious holiday or participate in required religious functions must notify the faculty member in writing as far in advance of the holiday/obligation as possible. Students will need to identify the specific holiday or obligatory function to the faculty member. Students will not be penalized for missing class due to religious obligations/holiday observance, but must make arrangements for making up tests/assignments within a reasonable time as determined by the instructor.

MILITARY PERSONNEL STATEMENT

A student who is a member of the National Guard, Reserve, or other U.S. Armed Forces branch and is unable to complete classes because of military activation may request complete or partial administrative unrestricted withdrawals or incompletes depending on the timing of the activation. For information, please see <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi201-18.html>.

