

## Speech, Communication, and the Public Self

Autumn 2018

Instructor: Jeremy David Johnson

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Class Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

### Course Description

Drawing on the ancient tradition of rhetoric, this course considers the potentials and perils of public speech and communication. Offering historical context, theoretical critique, and practical applications, this course asks students to contemplate what makes speech distinct from other forms of communication, and what the role of speech can and should be in a digitally networked world. Students will be expected to practice speaking and to write essays that explore the rich tradition of rhetoric and the power of the public self.

### Course Texts

To diversify our conversations and to reduce costs for students, this course does not require a textbook. Most of our readings are articles linked in the syllabus. Some readings are marked with asterisks (\*); I will provide these supplemental readings via the course management system.

Should you wish to consult a public speaking textbook with relevant information, I recommend: [\*Public Speaking and Civic Engagement\*](#), by J. Michael Hogan, Patricia Hayes Andrews, James R. Andrews, and Glen Williams.

### Course Assignments

**Written assignments should be delivered in Microsoft Word or PDF format, double-spaced with 12-point Times New Roman font and standard 1” margins.**

Written assignments are due via the course management system at noon on the date indicated on the course schedule.

**Essays (300 points total):** You will compose three essays throughout the course of the semester, each 3-5 pages in length. I have provided some details in the syllabus and will offer more description in assignment sheets distributed via the course management system.

*Parrhesia position essay (100 points):*

In this essay, you will choose a current controversy (active in the last couple years) related to free speech. Providing some historical and critical context, you will take a position as to how the controversy should be handled: is the status quo acceptable? Are extant responses to the controversy sufficient? Should there be policy implemented to address any problems? This essay should demonstrate your skills in research and argumentation.

*Speech analysis essay (100 points):*

This essay should offer critical analysis of a speech. The essay should briefly cover the context and reception/uptake of the speech, then offer critique as to the speech's merits, faults, or implications.

*Social media habits essay (100 points):*

For this essay, you should reflect on your social media habits and how they shape the discourse you engage in online. Consider a few questions: how do you perform online? Do you perform differently in various online spaces? How much data do companies have about you (e.g., Facebook)? In the essay, you might address some of these questions and assess what they mean for how you communicate. You may also choose to offer some ideas for how you can or should change your online presence.

**Multimodal Advocacy Project (400 points):**

This project asks you to use multimodal advocacy to argue for social or political change. You are free to choose the topic and your method of advocacy, but you should utilize oral communication in some form. Because multimodal projects vary in degree and difficulty, you should consult with me prior to beginning your project. You are welcome to work together in groups, but the amount of work should scale with the number of group members—thus, a solo project would be much smaller, whereas a group project would be more ambitious. On the final day of class, you will either present your project or a synopsis of it to the class, not to exceed two minutes.

**Exams & Participation****Quizzes (200 points):**

At approximately the mid-way point of the semester and on the penultimate day of class, you will take two quizzes. These quizzes will follow an essay format, asking you to reflect on course readings and discussions as you consider a rhetorical problem I will provide on the exam day.

**Class Participation (100 points):**

This is a discussion-based class, so your participation is necessary. I will not lecture, but will rather ask for your thoughts as we work through the course material together. You'll be expected to give impromptu speeches and engage in debates together. You should be active and courteous, contributing to a healthy and insightful classroom environment.

Part of class participation is having familiarity with the reading and being able to discuss with the class. I am not expecting that you have read every single word of every single article, but I expect you to understand each article's main arguments and to engage each article critically.

**Attendance:**

You are expected to attend each class. You may miss up to two days without penalty. Beyond two absences, for each unexcused absence, I will deduct 2% from your overall grade. If you need to miss class, please let me know in advance. You will be expected to get notes and catch up on work in a timely fashion.

**Grading**

This course will use a 1000-point system for tracking your grades. This should make it easy for you to track your own grade and to identify any discrepancies.

### **Access**

If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation or have questions about physical access, please notify me as soon as possible. A disability can be defined as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.” This includes a variety of invisible disabilities, including chronic physical and/or mental illness. I will work with you to make sure you can succeed in this class, and welcome you to use any necessary university resources to make your success possible.

### **Academic Integrity**

Dishonesty of any kind is unacceptable. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: plagiarism, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Academic dishonesty will result in academic sanctions and may result in automatic failure of the course. For more information on this policy, please see information from the university handbook: ([url here](#))

### **Classroom Climate**

In this course, we will be discussing a variety of topics, some of which are highly debated, very personal, and sometimes outside of your comfort zone. I encourage you to stretch your comfort zone and to use the concepts discussed in class to think about your experiences and position in the world. Many of our beliefs (including mine) may be challenged this semester. This process has enormous potential and usefulness. However, I expect you to treat your classmates with respect and care.

While you may disagree with each other or with me, I expect that you value your classmates' opinions and ideas in class. At no point this semester should any student feel silenced or muted. I take the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of students very seriously, and will work to create an inclusive, safe, and challenging classroom environment.

### **Electronic Devices Policy**

As someone deeply invested in technology, I understand that many of us are connected constantly via cell phones, tablets, laptops, etc. However, during this class, I ask that you do not use electronic devices for purposes outside the parameters of the class. I encourage students to use laptops and tablets to take notes, to look up information relevant to our discussions, and to generally supplement the classroom experience using technology. If I find your technology use to be disruptive (eg. if you are doing something you should not be doing, or if your technology is distracting your classmates), I will ask you to turn it off or sit in the very back of the classroom. I reserve the right to dock points from your participation grade if you are not using technology appropriately.

If you ever need to leave on your cell phone or electronic device, you must communicate that with me prior to class. I understand that emergencies arise and that some communications are vital. I will be flexible with such occasions if and only if you tell me first.

## Course Schedule

### Unit 1: Critical Contexts for Communication

<b>Week 1</b> Rhetorical origins	<b>Tuesday</b> Ancient roots of rhetoric	<b>Thursday</b> Rhetorical canons and constraints
<b>Reading</b>		<a href="#">“The Canons of Rhetoric”</a>
<b>Class activities</b>	Introductory speeches	

<b>Week 2</b> Power, <i>parrhesia</i> , and <i>isegoria</i>	<b>Tuesday</b> Stepping into the square: embodiment and voice	<b>Thursday</b> Free speech and its limits
<b>Reading</b>	<a href="#">“What Science Says About ‘Sounding Presidential’”</a>  <a href="#">“Your body language may shape who you are”</a> (TED Talk)	<a href="#">“The Two Clashing Meanings of ‘Free Speech’”</a>  <a href="#">“College students support free speech – unless it offends them”</a>
<b>Class activities</b>	Impromptu speeches	Free speech forum

<b>Week 3</b> Identity and performance	<b>Tuesday</b> Gender, sexuality, and race	<b>Thursday</b> Performing the self
<b>Reading</b>	<a href="#">“Emma Watson to United Nations: I’m a feminist”</a> (video)  <a href="#">“#SolidarityIsForWhiteWomen”</a>  “The Trouble With White Feminism: Whiteness, Digital Feminism, and the Intersectional Internet”*	Excerpts on <i>ethos</i> , <i>tropos</i> , and <i>persona</i> *  Rosa Eberly & Jeremy Johnson, “Isocratean <i>Tropos</i> and Mediated Multiplicity”*
<b>Assignments</b>		<b>Due: <i>parrhesia</i> position essay</b>
<b>Class activities</b>	Impromptu speeches	

## Unit 2: The Practice of Public Speech

<b>Week 4</b> Genres and purposes	<b>Tuesday</b> Deliberative rhetoric and political contestation	<b>Thursday</b> Forensic and epideictic speech
<b>Reading</b>	<a href="#">“Deliberative Rhetoric”</a> (podcast)  <a href="#">Malcolm X: “The Ballot or the Bullet”</a>	Ursula Le Guin, <a href="#">“A Left-Handed Commencement Address”</a>  Ronald Reagan, <a href="#">“Challenger Address”</a>
<b>Class activities</b>		Ceremonial mini-speeches

<b>Week 5</b> Logic, argumentation, and evidence	<b>Tuesday</b> Enthymemes, Toulmin’s model, and logical fallacies	<b>Thursday</b> Objectivity, normativity, and persuasive ethics
<b>Reading</b>	<a href="#">Your Logical Fallacy Is...</a>	<a href="#">“The Age of Post-Truth Politics”</a>  <a href="#">“LOL Something Matters”</a>
<b>Assignments</b>		<b>Due: Speech analysis essay</b>
<b>Class activities</b>	Argument diagramming	Fallacy debates

<b>Week 6</b> Style, language, decorum, and class	<b>Tuesday</b> Language and identification	<b>Thursday</b> Vernacular power and local voices
<b>Reading</b>	<a href="#">“Inescapably, You’re Judged by Your Language”</a>  <a href="#">“3 Ways Language Oppression Harms Us (And How We Can Heal)”</a>	<a href="#">“How Y’all, Youse and You Guys Talk”</a> (Take the quiz)  <a href="#">“The Real Meaning of <i>Ich Bin ein Berliner</i>”</a>
<b>Class activities</b>	Impromptu speeches	<b>Quiz #1</b>

### Unit 3: Networked Power and Public Selves

<b>Week 7</b> Publics and networked identity	<b>Tuesday</b> Publics, counterpublics, and digital spaces	<b>Thursday</b> The networked self
<b>Reading</b>	Selections from John Dewey and Walter Lippmann*  danah boyd, “Social Network Sites as Networked Publics”*	<a href="#">“Leave my iPhone alone”</a>  <a href="#">“Facebook’s War on Free Will”</a>
<b>Class activities</b>	Impromptu speeches	Discovering what the internet knows about us (bring an internet-capable device if possible)

<b>Week 8</b> Digital promises and perils	<b>Tuesday</b> Incivility and polarization	<b>Thursday</b> Networked social movements
<b>Reading</b>	<a href="#">“Red Pilled”</a>  <a href="#">“Google’s Anti-Bullying AI Mistakes Civility for Decency”</a>  <a href="#">“The only guide to Gamergate you will ever need to read”</a>	Excerpts from Zeynep Tufekci, <i>Twitter and Tear Gas</i> *  <a href="#">“The Surprisingly Short Life of Viral Social Movements”</a>
<b>Assignments</b>		<b>Due: Social media habits essays</b>

<b>Week 9</b> Speaking multimodally	<b>Tuesday</b> Multimodal critique	<b>Thursday</b> Digital tools and techniques
<b>Reading</b>	Watch four to five YouTube videos of your choice	Peruse <a href="#">“Multimodal Guide”</a>
<b>Class activities</b>	Show us a video or clip	Analyze & critique multimodal advocacy

**Unit 4: Tying Loose Ends**

<b>Week 10</b> Course wrap-up	<b>Tuesday</b> The future of speech and communication	<b>Thursday</b> Student presentations & course reflections
<b>Reading</b>	<a href="#"><u>"I Have Seen the Future of Public Speaking and It Is..."</u></a>	
<b>Assignments</b>		<b><u>Due: Multimodal advocacy project</u></b>
<b>Class activities</b>	<b><u>Quiz #2</u></b>	<b><u>Project/synopsis presentations</u></b>