

**Criticism of Contemporary Public Address (CSS 4351)
Spring 2011**

Castellaw 142 T/R: 2:00-3:15

**Dr. Martin J. Medhurst
Marrs McLean 213 (710-7840);
Martin_Medhurst@Baylor.edu
Office Hours: T/R: 12:30-2:00; W: 2:00-5:00 and by appt.**

Course Description: This is a course in contemporary American public address. I am going to interpret “contemporary” to mean primarily 20th and 21st century, although we will look at a few 18th and 19th century texts. And I am going to limit “public address” to the study of oratory, even though I am fully aware that a case could be made for a broader definition. My belief is that people learn best if there is a discrete object of analysis. In this case our objects of analysis are going to be speeches. Some of these speeches take specialized forms (as with sermons and lectures), but they are all instances of spoken discourse designed to influence one or more audience. The art of producing discourse to influence an audience is called rhetoric. The art of analyzing those discourses that try to influence audiences is called rhetorical criticism. We will be drawing on theories of rhetoric and methods of rhetorical criticism during this course, but our focus will be on the texts themselves.

I want this course to be about what I call “rhetorical literature.” By rhetorical literature, I mean those oral discourses that have defined and shaped American culture. Just as written literature features such central texts as the Bible, Shakespeare, and Milton, as well as certain poets, essay writers, short story experts, and novelists, so rhetorical literature features such central speakers as Jonathan Edwards, Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, William Jennings Bryan, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Anna Howard Shaw, Huey Long, Mary Church Terrell, and many, many others. These are speakers and speeches that have helped to define what it means to be an American, to live in a democracy, to have certain rights, to exercise freedom of speech, to challenge injustice, and to adopt particular policies. The *topics* they have dealt with, the *ideas* they have expressed, the *language* they have used, and the ways in which they have *adapted* to particular audiences and situations are worthy of our study precisely because the topics are never fully resolved—they remain with us to the present day.

What are those topics? Women’s rights, civil rights, religion and morality in public life, war and peace, foreign relations, domestic relations, the rights of labor, the distribution of economic resources, and the like. The ways in which we think about these topics, discuss these topics, and ultimately try to resolve these topics owe a great deal to those who have debated them throughout American history. So this is a course in understanding the underpinnings of American culture—the culture that you and I share today—through the study of rhetorical literature.

Course Requirements: 1) attend class regularly, 2) read the daily assignments, 3) apply our template for discussion to each reading and come prepared to discuss each speech, 4) write a 12-15 page research paper on an orator, a genre of oratory, a particular issue we cover in class, or a

single speech. The paper should be 12-15 pages not counting endnotes. All endnotes should be in *Chicago Style Manual* form, 5) take eight quizzes on the assigned day, 6) take a final examination on the assigned day.

Course Evaluation:	8 quizzes at 5% each	40%
	1 final exam	20%
	1 research paper	40%

NOTE: Graduate students will not take the final exam, but will write a 20-30 page research paper that will count as 60% of the course grade.

Required Textbook: Stephen E. Lucas and Martin J. Medhurst, eds., *Words of a Century: The Top 100 American Speeches, 1900-1999* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Websites: *VoicesofDemocracy.com* This website grew out of an NEH-funded grant that I worked on. The full title is “Voices of Democracy: The U.S. Oratory Project.” It is designed especially for courses on American public address. It features complete units devoted to individual speeches. Each unit has 1) an authenticated text of the speech, 2) an interpretive essay that gives background about the speaker and that analyzes the speech, 3) a listing of other textual, internet, and media resources concerning the speech and speaker, and 4) some prompt questions that will help you think about the significant issues raised by the speech.

AmericanRhetoric.com This website reproduces hundreds of speech texts. Although most of our work will be through the VOD (Voices of Democracy) site, I will have you read a few speeches from AmericanRhetoric.com.

PresidentialRhetoric.com This is my website. We will use it primarily for the speeches of George W. Bush and Barack Obama. It also features many links to other helpful sites for rhetorical research on the American presidency.

Syllabus

Week 1:	January 11:	Introduction to the course
	January 13:	Rhetoric, Rhetorical Criticism, and Public Address READ: Lucas and Medhurst, “Introduction,” xv-xxxii.

- Week 2: January 18: Women’s Rights
READ: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Address on Women’s Rights” (1848) on VOD website.
- January 20: Women’s Rights
READ: Susan B. Anthony, “Is It a Crime for a U.S. Citizen to Vote?” (1873); Frances Watkins Harper, “Woman’s Political Future” (1893)—all on VOD website.
- Week 3: January 25: Women’s Rights
READ: Anna Howard Shaw, “The Fundamental Principle of a Republic” (1915) in Lucas and Medhurst, 43-56; Carrie Chapman Catt, “The Crisis,” (1916) in Lucas and Medhurst, 57-73.
- January 27: Women’s Rights
READ: Shirley Chisholm, “For the Equal Rights Amendment,” (1970) in Lucas and Medhurst, 508-511; Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Women’s Rights Are Human Rights,” (1995) in Lucas and Medhurst, 650-654. **Quiz #1**
- Week 4: February 1 Civil Rights
READ: Frederick Douglass, “What, to the Slave, Is the Fourth of July?” (1852) on AmericanRhetoric.com. (Click on “Online Speech Bank” then on “Get Speeches A-F.”); Ida B. Wells, “Lynch Law in All Its Phases,” (1893) on VOD website.
- February 3: Civil Rights
READ: Hubert H. Humphrey, “The Sunshine of Human Rights,” (1948) in Lucas and Medhurst, 279-282; Eleanor Roosevelt, “The Struggle for Human Rights” (1948) in Lucas and Medhurst, 283-290.

- Week 5: February 8: Civil Rights
READ: Malcolm X, "Message to the Grassroots," (1963) in Lucas and Medhurst, 379-388; John F. Kennedy, "Civil Rights: A Moral Issue," (1963) in Lucas and Medhurst, 369-374;
- February 10: Civil Rights
READ: Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet," (1964) in Lucas and Medhurst, 392-405; Lyndon B. Johnson, "We Shall Overcome," (1965) in Lucas and Medhurst, 427-433. **Quiz #2**
- Week 6: February 15: Civil Rights
READ: Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream," (1963) in Lucas and Medhurst, 375-378.
- February 17: Civil Rights
READ: Martin Luther King, Jr., "I've Been to the Mountaintop" (1968) in Lucas and Medhurst, 473-480. **Quiz #3**
- Week 7: February 22: Religion, Civil Society, and Morality
READ: Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," (1741) on VOD website; George Washington, "Farewell Address," (1796) on PresidentialRhetoric.com (under "Historic Speeches" tab).
- February 24: Religion, Civil Society, and Morality
READ: Abraham Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address" (1863) on VOD website; Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address" (1865) on VOD website.
- Week 8: March 1: Religion, Civil Society, and Morality
READ: William Jennings Bryan, "Against Imperialism," (1900) in Lucas and Medhurst, 10-24; Harry Emerson Fosdick, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" (1922) at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5070/>.

March 3: Religion, Civil Society, and Morality
READ: Abraham Joshua Heschel, "Religion and Race," (1963) on VOD website; Dorothy Day, "Union Square Speech," (1965) on VOD website. **Quiz #4**

Spring Break (March 5-13)

Week 9: March 15: Religion, Civil Society, and Morality
READ: John F. Kennedy, "Speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association," (1960) in Lucas and Medhurst, 333-336; Mitt Romney, "Faith in America," (2007) on AmericanRhetoric.com. (Click on "Online Speech Bank" then on "Get Speeches M-R.")

March 17: Religion, Civil Society, and Morality
READ: Edward M. Kennedy, "Tolerance and Truth in America," (1983) in Lucas and Medhurst, 565-571; Barack Obama, "Commencement Address at Notre Dame" (2009) on PresidentialRhetoric.com. **Quiz #5**

Week 10: March 22: War and Peace
READ: Abraham Lincoln, "First Inaugural Address" (March 4, 1861) on PresidentialRhetoric.com (under "Historic Speeches" tab); Jefferson Davis, "Farewell Speech" (January 21, 1861), <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=491>

March 24: War and Peace
READ: Woodrow Wilson, "War Message," (1917) in Lucas and Medhurst, 73-79; Eugene V. Debs, "Statement to the Court," (1918) in Lucas and Medhurst, 129-133.

Week 11: March 29: War and Peace
READ: Woodrow Wilson, "The Fourteen Points," (1918), in Lucas and Medhurst, 124-128; Woodrow Wilson, "For the League of Nations," (1919) in Lucas and Medhurst, 133-142. **Quiz #6**

- March 31: War and Peace
READ: Franklin D. Roosevelt, “The Arsenal of Democracy,” (1940) in Lucas and Medhurst, 256-262; Franklin D. Roosevelt, “The Four Freedoms,” (1941) in Lucas and Medhurst, 263-268; Franklin D. Roosevelt, “War Message,” (1941) in Lucas and Medhurst, 269-270.
- Week 12: April 5: War and Peace: The Cold War
READ: Harry S. Truman, “The Truman Doctrine,” (1947) in Lucas and Medhurst, 271-275; George C. Marshall, “The Marshall Plan,” (1947) in Lucas and Medhurst, 276-279.
- April 7: War and Peace: The Cold War
READ: Douglas MacArthur, “Old Soldiers Never Die,” (1951) in Lucas and Medhurst, 300-305; Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Atoms for Peace,” (1953) in Lucas and Medhurst, 322-327. **Quiz #7**
- Week 13: April 12: War and Peace: The Cold War
READ: J. Edgar Hoover, “Speech Before the House Committee on Un-American Activities” (1947) on VOD website; Margaret Chase Smith, “Declaration of Conscience” (1950) in Lucas and Medhurst, 294-298.
- April 14: **Diadeloso—No Class**
- Week 14: April 19: Conservative Voices and Values
READ: Ronald Reagan, “A Time for Choosing,” (1964) in Lucas and Medhurst, 415-423; Barry Goldwater, “Speech Accepting the Republican Presidential Nomination,” (1964) in Lucas and Medhurst, 409-415.
- April 21: Liberal Voices and Values
READ: John F. Kennedy, “Speech at American

University,” (1963) in Lucas and Medhurst, 362-368; Lyndon B. Johnson, “The Great Society” (1964) in Lucas and Medhurst, 405-408. **Quiz #8**

Easter Break: April 22-25

Week 15: April 26:

Rhetoric in an Age of Violence

READ: George W. Bush, “Our Mission and Our Moment” (September 20, 2001) on AmericanRhetoric.com and PresidentialRhetoric.com; Barack Obama, “The Plan for Afghanistan: Address at West Point” (December 1, 2009) on PresidentialRhetoric.com.

April 28

Rhetoric in an Age of Violence

READ: Barack Obama, “Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Address,” (December 10, 2009)—on PresidentialRhetoric.com.

Final Exam: Thursday, May 5: 4:30-6:30 pm.