

Landmark Speeches in Democracy and Dissent

Spring 2021 Syllabus

Instructor: Caroline Koons

Tuesday/Thursday 1:35 - 2:50 pm on Zoom

Office Hours: Thursdays 12 - 1:30 on Zoom and by appointment. Sign up for an office hour timeslot at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050A4EA5A92AA0F49-caroline>

Course Overview:

This course surveys the landmark primary texts in American public address that shape our notions of democracy and dissent and their role in national and everyday life. The reading schedule proceeds in roughly chronological order from 1776 to 2021. Taking a rhetorical approach, students will critically read these primary texts with an eye to how they persuade, construct, suggest, or move their audiences to see their citizenship and national identity in a particular light.

Learning Objectives:

- Engage key rhetorical texts in American cultural history
- Identify principles underwriting democratic theory and practices
- Understand the various forms and roles dissent takes within American democracy
- Write analyses of democracy and dissent in American Public Address
- Craft well-rounded and rigorously supported arguments in their writing and course discussions

Required Materials:

There are no required texts for this course. All readings will be posted to Canvas. A computer with internet access, a webcam, and microphone are required for class participation.

Assignments:

Weekly Text Briefs: 25 points each, 300 total

For each week you will select one of the texts assigned for class to complete a text brief, **due before class on the day that reading is assigned**. Text briefs should be 1-2 pages long and include a full bibliographic citation for the chosen text, brief list of who/what/when/where/why that text was written or delivered, one sentence thesis or main argument of the text in your own words, and 4-5 key quotes or ideas from the reading that demonstrate the importance of the speech or help extend your understanding of American democracy and dissent. No text briefs week 1 or 15, and you are permitted one additional week where you can forgo submit a text brief without a penalty to your grade.

Context Presentation: 200 points

In the 5-10 minute presentation, you will provide a brief overview of the historical context and speaker biography for that day's readings. Each presentation should be accompanied by a one page handout, distributed to the class on the Canvas module 24 hours before the class presentation, containing the brief structural outline of your presentation and a brief (3-4 entries) bibliography of further reading. Speak to the rhetorical situation, both broadly and specifically construed. You may use a visual aid but it is not required. Visual aids should not make the argument for you--they should supplement and contain few words. The speaker's camera and microphone must be turned on for the duration of the presentation. Presentations are given at the beginning of class without exception. Sign up for context presentation weeks will take place Thursday January 21st in class. Rubric is posted to Canvas.

Democratic Rhetoric Essay: 250 points Due Feb 28 by midnight

How is democracy rhetorically constructed This 5-7 page essay should focus on a specific element of democratic rhetoric found in the texts analyzed in class. Avoid platitudes and broad sweeping claims: Select a narrow framework and specific rhetorical argument and focus on supporting that claim with evidence and your own interpretations. Each essay should draw from at least two texts studied in class and at least two scholarly secondary sources to help support your argument.

Dissent Rhetoric Essay: 250 points Due May 2 by midnight

What role does dissent play in American democracy? This 5-7 page essay should focus on a specific element of dissent in democratic rhetoric found in the texts analyzed in class. Avoid platitudes and broad sweeping claims: Select a narrow framework and specific rhetorical argument and focus on supporting that claim with evidence and your own interpretations. Each essay should draw from at least two texts studied in class and at least two scholarly secondary sources to help support your argument.

Course Schedule:

Note that the readings listed are due for that day's class.

January

Week 1

Tu 19 - course overview, discussion of democracy and dissent

Th 21 - *Dissenting Beginnings*

Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1776), Bill of Rights (December 15, 1791)

Week 2

Tu 26 - *Democratic Appeals*

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (January 10, 1776)

Th 28 - *Federalist Papers and Anonymous Dissent*

Publius (Alexander Hamilton), *Federalist Paper 84* (July 16, 26, and August 9, 1788)

February

Week 3

Tu 2 - *Musical Dissent*

Revolutionary Music Parodies

Th 4 - *Indigenous Refutation* (Context Presentation by _____)

Petalesharo, "We have Plenty of Land, if You will Keep your People off of it" (Feb 4, 1822) **OR** Tecumseh, "Let the White Race Perish" (October 1811)

Week 4

Tu 9 - **No class, PSU Wellness Day**

Th 11 - *Sojourner Speaks* (Context Presentation by _____)

Sojourner Truth, "Ar'n't I a Woman?" (June 21, 1851) **AND** "Snakes and Geese" (September 8, 1853)

Week 5

Tu 16 - *Reclaiming National Independence* (Context Presentation by _____)

Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave, Is the Fourth of July?" (July 5, 1852)

Th 18 - *Lincoln's Emancipation* (Context Presentation by _____)

Abraham Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address" (November 19, 1863), **AND** Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address" (March 4, 1865)

Week 6

Tu 23 - *Civil War Union and Division* (Context Presentation by _____)

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, "We Are All Bound Up Together" (May 1, 1866)

Th 25 - *Feminism Dissent* (Context Presentation by _____)

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Solitude of the Self" (February 18, 1892) **AND** Declaration of Sentiments (July 1848)

Sun 28 - Democratic Rhetoric Essay due by Midnight to Canvas

March

Week 7

Tu 2 - *Jim Crow Suppression* (Context Presentation by _____)

Ida B. Wells, "Lynch Law in All Its Phases" (February 13, 1893)

Th 4 - *Caricature and Racism in Immigration*

Collection of Immigration Cartoons

Week 8

Tu 9 - *20th century outlooks* (Context Presentation by _____)

Anna Howard Shaw, "The Fundamental Principle of a Republic" (June 21, 1915) **OR** Crystal Eastman, "Now We Can Begin" (December 1, 1920)

Th 11 - **No class, PSU wellness Day**

Week 9

Tu 16 - *World War Citizenship* (Context Presentation by _____)
Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The Four Freedoms" (January 6, 1941) **OR**
Douglas MacArthur, "Duty, Honor, Country" (May 12, 1962)

Th 18 - World War I and II posters

Week 10

Tu 23 - *Racial Separation and Uprising* (Context Presentation by _____)
Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet" (April 12, 1964)

Th 25 - *Black Power Defiance* (Context Presentation by _____)
Stokely Carmichael, "Black Power" (Oct 29, 1966)

Week 11

Tu 30 - *MLK's Civic Outlook* (Context Presentation by _____)
Martin Luther King Jr, "I have been to the Mountaintop" (April 3, 1968)
OR Martin Luther King Jr., *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* (April 16, 1963)

April

Th 1 - *What is a Common Good?* (Context Presentation by _____)
Barbara Jordan, "Who Then Will Speak for the Common Good?" (July 12, 1976)

Week 12

Tu 6 - *Cities and Hills: Democracy Ideals* (Context Presentation by _____)
Mario Cuomo, "A Tale of Two Cities" (July 16, 1984) **OR** Ronald Reagan,
"The Evil Empire" (March 8, 1983)

Th 8 - *International Feminism* (Context Presentation by _____)
Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Women's Rights are Human Rights" (Sept 5, 1995)

Week 13

Tu 13 - *Constant Vigilance* (Context Presentation by _____)
Elie Wiesel, "The Perils of Indifference" (April 12, 1999)

Th 15 - *Parody and Parrhesia* (Context Presentation by _____)
Stephen Colbert, "The Word: Truthiness" *The Colbert Report* (2005)
AND "Congressional Testimony at House Judiciary Hearing" (2010)

Week 14

Tu 20 - *Union and Democracy* (Context Presentation by _____)

Barack Obama, "A More Perfect Union" (March 18, 2008) **OR** Robert Gates, "Address to the World Forum on the Future of Democracy" (Sept 17, 2007)

Th 22 - class selection

Week 15

Tu 27 - class selection

Th 29 - Last Class. Recap of Democracy and Dissent

May

2 - Dissent Rhetoric Essay due by Midnight to Canvas

Course Policies:

Attendance: Attendance is expected for this course. Due to the nature of an online synchronous class, I will not be taking attendance as part of your grade to allow for technological mishaps or extended illnesses but I expect everyone to attend and take an active role in the course discussion. I reserve the right to reduce grades based on poor attendance and lackluster class participation.

Late Work: Late work is not accepted for credit. Should you require an extension, you must contact me in advance (preferably by email) and arrange a later due date that we will mutually agree upon. I am happy to grant extensions on a case by case basis, but they must be arranged at least 24 hours in advance of the assignment due date.

Cameras and Microphones in Zoom: I do not require cameras to be on, but appreciate those who might choose to turn their cameras on to help get to know one another better and craft a class community in spite of the digital divide. Microphones are necessary for participation in class discussions, though the chat function can also be used in case of microphone failure.

Pet Policy: If a pet enters the camera frame during class, we will pause our discussion for an introduction to that pet and admiration by all. Dogs, cats, rabbits, hamsters, birds, snakes, iguanas, ferrets, etc. are all welcome.

University Policies:

Academic Integrity

Penn State defines academic integrity as "the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner." ([Senate Policy 49-20](#)). Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another

person or work previously used without permission from the instructor or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students facing allegations of academic misconduct who drop the course will be returned and will be expected to complete course work and meet course deadlines until the allegations are dismissed and the drop is permitted. Students responsible for academic misconduct often receive academic sanctions, which can be severe, and put themselves at jeopardy for disciplinary sanctions assigned by the University's Office of Student Conduct (see [Senate Policy G-9](#)).

Unless your instructor tells you otherwise:

- Always include an in-text citation that includes the author(s) last name(s) and the year the source was published at the end of any sentence or below any image that includes words, images, or ideas you found in a source, always included quoted text within quotation marks, and always include a reference for any source at the end of your paper (ask your instructor about the format you should use).
- All of your graded coursework must be created by you without help from anyone in the course or otherwise. If you have questions about this, you should ask your instructor before submitting work for evaluation.
- All course materials you receive or access are protected by copyright laws. You may use course materials and make copies for your own use, but unauthorized distribution and/or uploading of materials without the instructor's express permission is strictly prohibited. Students who engage in the unauthorized distribution of copyrighted materials may be held in violation of the University's Code of Conduct and/or liable under Federal and State laws.

Disability Access

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. The Student Disability Resources website provides [contact information for every Penn State campus](#), at <http://equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources/disability-coordinator>. For further information, please visit the [Student Disability Resources website](#).

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, [participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation](#). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

Counseling and Psychological Services

Penn State's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) office offers residential and distance-based Penn State students **non-emergency** mental health services in the form of case management, community resource referrals, supportive listening, care giver support, and much more.

Students may request assistance from CAPS regarding a variety of common mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, relationship difficulties, and stress. CAPS

services are designed to enhance students' ability to fully benefit from the University environment and academic experience. Call CAPS at 814-863-0395 (8 am-5 pm, Monday-Friday EST) or [submit an inquiry online](#), at <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/form/caps-contact-form> to schedule an appointment with a mental health advocate, who can help you address mental health concerns that may interfere with your academic progress or social development. This appointment will include a one-on-one session that can be conducted via telephone, teleconference (Skype, FaceTime, etc.), or locally at Penn State University Park. For more information on services provided through CAPS, please visit the [Penn State CAPS website](#), at <http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>. Students enrolled at the World Campus are also encouraged to visit its [Mental Health Services page](#) at <http://student.worldcampus.psu.edu/student-services/mental-health-services>.

*Reminder: These services are for **non-emergencies** only. If you or someone you know is experiencing a crisis situation, please call your local crisis center or 911.*

Nondiscrimination

Penn State is committed to equal access to programs, facilities, admission and employment for all persons. It is the policy of the University to maintain an environment free of harassment and free of discrimination against any person because of age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, marital or family status, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, physical or mental disability, gender, perceived gender, gender identity, genetic information or political ideas. Discriminatory conduct and harassment, as well as sexual misconduct and relationship violence, violates the dignity of individuals, impedes the realization of the University's educational mission, and will not be tolerated. For further information, please visit the [Affirmative Action Office website](#) at <https://affirmativeaction.psu.edu/>.

Reporting a Bias Incident

Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity via the [Report Bias webpage](#) at <http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>.

TEACH Act

The materials on the course website are only for the use of students enrolled in this course for purposes associated with this course and may not be retained or further disseminated.

University Emergency Procedure

In the event of a University-wide emergency, the course may be subject to changes. Exigent circumstances may require alternative delivery methods, class materials, and interactions with the instructor and/or classmates. In addition, there may be revisions to grading policies and the Calendar, including assignments and their due dates.

In the event of a University-wide emergency, please refer to the Canvas website at <https://psu.instructure.com> for specific information related to the course. For more general information about the emergency situation, please refer to the [Penn State](#)

[website](https://www.psu.edu) at <https://www.psu.edu> or [Penn State News website](https://news.psu.edu) at <https://news.psu.edu>.

To register with PSUAlert, a service designed to alert the Penn State community when situations arise that affect the ability of a campus to function normally, please go to the [PSU Alert website](https://psualert.psu.edu/) at <https://psualert.psu.edu/>. Subscribers can receive alerts by text message to cell phones, and also can elect to have alerts sent to an email address.

Syllabus Subject to Change

The class will likely adhere to the information outlined in this Syllabus and the Calendar, but adjustments may be made based on what actually transpires during the semester. Particularly during a semester where there is so much uncertainty, Remaining in the course after reading this Syllabus will signal that you accept the possibility of changes and responsibility for being aware of them.