



**Dr. Ben Voth** is an associate professor of communication study and director of debate at Southern Methodist University. He is an advisor for the Bush Institute and the debate fellow for the Calvin Coolidge Foundation. He has worked with global dissidents in the Human Freedom part of the program as well as the Global Health initiative and the Economic Growth Unit. He has consulted with a variety of national organizations including the *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* in Washington DC. He has coached numerous national speech and debate champions. His research focuses on empowering individual human voices and his most recent book "The Rhetoric of Genocide," focuses on the role of communication in preventing and ending genocide worldwide.

**Syllabus**  
**COMM 5301 Special Topics:**  
**The Rhetoric of President George W. Bush**  
**MTuWThF 12:00PM - 1:50PM**  
**Dr. Ben Voth**  
**Umpfrey Lee - room 243**  
**May 12 - May 27, 2016**

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**Purpose:** This course increases student understanding of the rhetoric of American Presidents. The particular focus in this course is to focus on the Presidency of George W. Bush and master the local resources surrounding this President at SMU.

Learning outcomes:

Students will:

- create a scholarly rhetorical analysis of a political argument rooted in the Bush Presidency
- demonstrate attention to the details of current events pertaining to the American public sphere with a particular emphasis on politics
- demonstrate recognition of basic techniques in rhetorical analysis through written assignments
- demonstrate mastery of course content through exams



Monday May 26  
Tuesday  
Wednesday

**Rhetorical Analysis 2-- George W. Bush at Senegal**  
Presidential Rhetoric/ Rhetoric of President George W. Bush  
**Midterm exam**

## Descriptive Analysis questions

Each week, you will complete a descriptive analysis of a selected advocacy artifact. Your purpose is to provide an initial, descriptive and complete detailing of the artifact you are examining. A good analysis will include textual references to the artifact to justify responses. Your analysis will be a two paged single space typed response to the artifact answering the following questions:

1. What is the **situation** of the artifact?

What important history leads to the creation and dissemination of the message? It is recommended that you utilize internet news sources such as LEXIS/NEXIS to detail important historical matters going on at the time of the message.

2. **Purpose**

A primary thesis should be indicated in this portion of the analysis. Other sub purposes and implicit purposes may also be detailed here.

3. What **rhetorical problems** does the speaker face in accomplishing their purpose?

Rhetorical problems are obstacles to the accomplishment of a persuasive purpose prior to the creation of the message. These problems are rooted in the minds of an audience. Rhetorical problems are NOT problems within the artifact itself. Problems may include expectations the audience holds toward the speaker and an associated history with the speaker and/or the message. I typically expect to find at least 3-5 rhetorical problems in a given rhetorical situation.

4. What **strategies** are employed in the message?

What is the tone of the message (superior to inferior/ peer to peer/ or inferior to superior)?

The tone answer may also include metaphors for describing the demeanor

Metaphors	Figurative language	Repetition
Allusions	Argumentative forms	Visual elements or cues
ideological content	slogans	themes
narratives	delivery style	Humor religious appeals

5. **Effectiveness:** How well does the speaker match strategies to the rhetorical problems identified? From this question derive an assessment of the success of this advocacy? Feel free to insert research results about polls or other external indicators, but do not rely on these measures for your own judgment.