

Syllabus
CCPA 5301 Special Topics:
The Rhetoric of President George W. Bush
MTuWThF 1:00PM – 5:00PM
Dr. Ben Voth
Umphrey Lee - room 244
May 16 – May 31, 2019

Instructor: Dr. Ben Voth
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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
- engage in classroom discussions regarding the principals of rhetorical study as they apply to Presidential Rhetoric— especially as found in the two presidential terms of George W. Bush
- be able to explain the major aspects of the George W. Bush center
- be able to explain and utilize the archival research tools found in the George W. Bush library

Textbook: *The George W. Bush Presidency: A Rhetorical Perspective* edited by Dr. Robert Denton (2013).

Assignments:

Research Presentation (200): Students will produce a 20-30 page rhetorical analysis of an aspect of the Bush presidency. They will make a 10-15 minute presentation of this research.

Quizzes (100): Students will regularly receive five or more current event questions designed to stimulate regular study of the news. Review of popular websites such as: [realclear politics](http://realclearpolitics.com), CNN.com, Fox news, the Dallas Morning News, and the BBC will help with these daily quizzes.

Descriptive analysis (200): Students will do regular analysis of public speeches by President Bush. Analysis will be two pages single spaced. The analysis will answer the following questions: 1) situation, 2) purpose, 3) rhetorical problems, 4) strategies and 5) effect.

Grading Scale:

450-500 = A

400-449 = B

350-399 = C

300-349 = D

Course Calendar:

Week 1 12-13 Understanding the American Presidency

May 16 **Why** we study rhetoric?/ MLK
 What is rhetoric?
 Presidential Rhetoric
May 17 Presidential Libraries/ Using the Bush Library
 Rhetorical analysis/ Communication Study
 President George H. W. Bush—The Father

Week 2 20-24 Understanding the Bush Presidency

Monday Meet Bush Library Director
Tuesday **Rhetorical Analysis 1-- Bush Inaugural #1**
 Rhetorical Analysis 2-- Bush Inaugural #2

Wednesday *9/11 rhetoric*
 Rhetorical Analysis 3-- 2007 SOTU speech
Thursday Archival research at the Bush Library
Friday **Rhetorical Analysis 4-- George W. Bush at Senegal**
 The War on Terror/ Iraq

Week 3 27-31 Presidential Rhetoric Conference

Monday NO CLASS
Tuesday Presidential Rhetoric/ Rhetoric of President George W. Bush
Wednesday Bush & Methodist Faith- Abraham
Thursday Conference Presentation of Final Papers

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 measure for your own judgment.