

Syllabus
American Political Rhetoric
(3 ECTS)

Authors:

- Anna Plisetskaya (anna.plisetskaya@gmail.com)
- Yulia Badryzlova (yuliya.badryzlova@gmail.com, yubadryzlova@hse.ru,
<https://www.hse.ru/org/persons/95904036>)

Department: Faculty of Humanities, School of Linguistics

Meeting Minute # 18 dated 23.08.2019

1. Course Description

a) Pre-requisites

The course places some demands on students' skills in spoken and written English, and is aimed at those students who have acquired the level of English proficiency no lower than CEFR B2.

b) Abstract

The course is intended for students whose main interest is political journalism and political communications both in the historical and the current perspective. The course focuses on the leaders of political action in the USA during the 20th and 21st centuries. The rhetorical tools used by the political actors as well as their public images of are analyzed through the key concepts of political communication and the rhetoric theory. Specific tools and techniques are studied in detail. The course will be interesting for those who want to work in political journalism as well as for any student wishing to understand the nuances of the past and the current political process in the USA.

2. Learning Objectives

The objectives of the course are:

- to familiarize students with the key aspects and specific tools of developing a debate in English;
- to expose students to the historical approach to modern presidential rhetoric in the broader academic context;
- to acquaint students with the basics of political rhetoric within the framework of content analysis as well as discourse analysis and debates theory;
- to demonstrate the interconnection between the history of a nation, its politics, and the rhetorical strategies of its leaders using case studies of American political rhetoric;
- to introduce students to the basics of various rhetoric types and genres within political rhetoric;

- to enhance students' communication skills, the ability to reason and discuss, as well as to target various types of potential audience;
- to enable students to develop their ability to debate and cooperate in such issues as conflict resolution, tolerance, and social adaptation.

These goals are achieved through watching debates on the Intelligence Squared platform, as well as short lectures on the Ted Talks platform, reading specialized materials from academic prose and the media, and finally applying the skills observed in the recommended materials in writing students' own speech analyses. Some of the subject areas throughout the course involve writing of an opinion essay stating a student's attitude to the motion offered by the instructor.

3. Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, the students are expected to:

- know: the goals, objectives, and functions of modern political rhetoric in the context of the latest linguistic theories, as well as the role of presidential rhetoric in forming national identity;
- be able to: analyze public speech in English, apply rhetoric methods in practice, conduct debates in English using argumentation theory; to write essays on political topics in English;
- build up: the skills in group work, group management in decision-making, conducting debates, public speaking, targeting specific audiences; the skills of "conquering" the audience, the ability to capture the audience's attention; clarity of expressing oneself; rhetorical proficiency, using all elements of public speech (content, emotion, and ethics).

4. Course Plan

Topic 1: Self-presentation; Introduction to the course. The definition of rhetoric and its place within the Humanities. Genres of rhetoric. Stages of preparing a speech. The ancient rhetoric canon. The New rhetoric. Gricean maxims.

Topic 2: Political rhetoric. History of American political rhetoric. Founding of the American government. Philosophy of the American nation. American politics and Puritan religion. Manifest Destiny, American Dream, Founding Fathers and other symbolic expressions forming the national identity.

Topic 3: Basic features of American political rhetoric. Democrats and Republicans. System of values in American politics. American school of debates. American rhetoric versus European rhetoric. Political linguistics as a science (A.P. Chudinov). Western and Russian schools in political linguistics. American school of political rhetoric. Presidential rhetoric.

Topic 4: American presidential rhetoric: past and present. The Founding Fathers: A. Lincoln, T. Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, M.L. King, J. F. Kennedy, R. Reagan, George H. W. Bush, B. Clinton, G. W. Bush, B. Obama.

Topic 5: Political rhetoric and cognitive linguistics. Archetypes and metaphorical concepts in American political rhetoric. Tropes and figures of speech. Alliteration. Tricolon. Chiasmus. Anaphora, repetitions, allusions, rhetorical questions, periphrases.

Topic 6: Political manipulation and propaganda. Rhetoric and NLP. Manipulative tricks in politics and advertising.

Topic 7 Political rhetoric and intercultural communication. Ethnorhetoric. Types of professional cultures according to R. Lewis. Role of national and ethnic aspects of rhetoric in international communication and diplomacy. Body language. Technique of speech.

5. Reading List

c) Required

- Lawler P.A., Schaefer R.M., American Political Rhetoric: Essential Speeches and Writings on Founding Principles and Contemporary Controversies / P.A. Lawler, R.M. Schaefer. — Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. — 2010. (and later editions) — URL: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hselibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=662294> (ProQuest Ebook Central)
- Benson T. W., The Rhetoric of the New Political Documentary / T. W. Benson. — Southern Illinois University Press. — 2008. — URL: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hselibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1354623> (ProQuest Ebook Central)
- Cap P., Legitimation in Political Discourse: A Cross- Disciplinary Perspective on the Modern US War Rhetoric Second Edition / P. Cap. — Cambridge Scholars Publishing. — 2010. — URL: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hselibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1114308> (ProQuest Ebook Central)

d) Optional

- Vaughn J.S., Mercieca J.R., The Rhetoric of Heroic Expectations: Establishing the Obama Presidency / J.S. Vaughn, J.R. Mercieca. — Texas A&M University Press. — 2014. — URL: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hselibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1637621> (ProQuest Ebook Central)
- de Velasco A., et al. Centrist Rhetoric: The Production of Political Transcendence in the Clinton Presidency / A. de Velasco. — Lexington Books. — 2010. — URL: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hselibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=500761> (ProQuest Ebook Central)

- Terrill R.E., *Double-Consciousness and the Rhetoric of Barack Obama: The Price and Promise of Citizenship* / R.E. Terrill. — University of South Carolina Press. — 2015. — URL: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hselibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=2054935> (ProQuest Ebook Central)
- Lim E.T., *The Anti-Intellectual Presidency: The Decline of Presidential Rhetoric from George Washington to George W. Bush* / E.T. Lim. — Oxford University Press USA — OSO. — 2008. — URL: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hselibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=415828> (ProQuest Ebook Central)
- Chapp C.B., *Religious Rhetoric and American Politics: The Endurance of Civil Religion in Electoral Campaigns* / C.B. Chapp. — Cornell University Press. — 2012. — URL: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hselibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3138382>. (ProQuest Ebook Central)

6. Grading System (tentative, may be subject to change on an as-needed basis)

The final control is administered in the second module. The final grade is cumulative, comprised of students' work in class (20%, **cannot be retaken**), their homework (20%), participation in debates (20%) and the final Power Point presentation (analysis of an American presidential speech) – 40%:

$$G_{\text{final}} = 0.2 * G_{\text{class_work}} + 0.2 * G_{\text{homework}} + 0.2 * G_{\text{debates}} + 0.4 * G_{\text{presentation}}$$

During the final control a student must demonstrate that s/he has fully mastered the material covered in the course, is able to analyze and creatively interpret the rhetorical text, to generate spoken and written rhetoric genres as well as to conduct debates in English.

The student's analysis of political speech should be clear, accurate, complete and comprehensive. The analysis should deal with the subject matter and reflect the student's understanding of various aspects of the problem. The final grade is rounded up according to the arithmetic rules.

7. Examination Type

No examination is administered in the course. The final course grade is computed as shown in the Grading System section above.

8. Methods of Instruction

The course is aimed at developing students' understanding of the role of rhetoric in shaping modern presidency and national identity. The course consists of a theoretical and a practical part. Lectures are combined with discussions of the reading assigned, followed by speech analysis or debates. During the lectures students are exposed to various types of training in the field of self-expression and public speech, as well as to in-class training in rhetorical analysis. Students are also required to write an essay

(analyzing a public speech) and make an oral presentation, as well as participate in group debates on relevant topics.

9. Special Equipment and Software Support

All parts of the course require technical support for Power Point presentations in class: a personal computer with the Office suite, a sound system and an overhead projector for demonstration purposes.