

Public Discourse in American Communities, 1634-1900

Communication 460
Fall Semester 2014
Class Web Page:

<http://terpconnect.umd.edu/~jklumpp/comm460/home.html>
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Of all the things that people do with speech, perhaps the most important is making the communities within which they live. If you listen and study the speech that reaches your ear, you will hear a rich tapestry with which you and those around you accomplish the day-to-day acts that form your lives. To participate in a community is to understand how to use your voice to effect your life. Different communities – Americans in different times and different places – use different speaking habits and styles to accomplish these day-to-day activities. This course is about the variety of ways in which Americans have used their voices to live their lives in communities. Over the 265 years covered by this course, the variety is a rich mix of voices which in different ways understood and responded to the world experienced. We are interested in studying these voices.

If I were to recommend an attitude toward the course to you, it would be to try to learn about the communities that these people constructed, and the way in which their talk constructed these communities. Imagine yourself living in each community on an ordinary or a special day in their time and place. Hear what is being said and who is saying it. When you can generate the oral discourse which would allow you to be a part of that community, you will have mastered the material.

There are three major perspectives that we will commingle as we work with American public discourse. First, we will study the character of public discussion in each community. Who did the community recognize as legitimate *speakers*, granted authority to influence them? What was the *audience* these speakers would seek to influence and what was that audience's role in the community? How did the discourse construct *public space*, the places where the community would come to understand and decide on action? What parts of civic life were the *subjects* of public discourse?

Second, we will study the discourse forms with which each community shaped institutions. What was the *typical language* used to frame the experience of the community? What *metaphors*, *figures*, and *motivations* shaped the community's reaction to the experience? How do these rhetorical characteristics meld into the institutions of the society?

Finally, we will study great speakers and speeches which moved that community. You will read some of the most famous speeches of American history. We will discuss them.

A final word on the contradiction hidden in the three perspectives above. For decades history in this country was dominated by an elitist perspective that saw the sweep of history as controlled by great men. The history of public address was no different. Lately, the prominence of social history – a concern with how ordinary people accomplished their lives – has increased. We hope to make this move, but one of the problems in doing so in public address is that our documents tend to privilege the speeches of elites. Thus, we will be studying the third perspective as merely an element within the context of the first and second. Since you will naturally remember the

speeches most as you learn and study, you will need to work harder to project these great speakers into an image of the community which gave rise to their voice.

Who is the course for?

Some courses in Communication are heavily laced with pragmatic advice on the invention of messages. "What can I do with this stuff I am learning?" is easily answered. If that is what you are looking for, you are in the wrong course. *Drop immediately and find another course that will better meet your needs.* I will even help you look.

But if you treasure learning about how people live in other cultural settings, if you find history fascinating or love to hear the various ways which people talk about the events of their lives, you are definitely in the right place. This course is in the tradition of the humanities particularly history as a humanity. My objective is to give you a sense for other times and places – a sense for communication in the lives of Americans of earlier times and places.

There is a *practical* angle here, however. From an undergraduate organization to a concern about an unsettled world, the modes of effective participation in democracy are a constant problem for today's citizens. Often there is frustration with our current arrangements for democratic participation. This course is about how earlier communities of Americans met this problem. It provides some clues about how we might approach public problems today. If you are interested in such a quest, this course will be very practical.

So this course is for someone who is curious about other places and times, who marvels at the power of language to define our lives, who wishes to understand the potential of the human speaker in public life.

What knowledge should you have before you come into this course?

Some knowledge of American history will aid you. You may have acquired that knowledge in a history course or through some other method including your own reading. This is not a course in history but in the place of orality in American history. Your understanding of the material will be fuller if you have an understanding of the context.

Some understanding of how people use language to accomplish objectives by working with others will also give you a step up. If you do not understand this power, you probably will by the end of the course. If you do understand it, you may get into the swing of the course earlier. There are a number of courses in Communication that should have introduced you to that idea including COMM 401. If you have not had COMM 401, or another course analyzing discourse, drop by after class and talk to me a bit about other things you have had that may compensate.

What will a class session be like?

Classroom time will be spent in lecture and discussion. As we consider each community, we will work through two steps: (1) In lecture, I will try to set the scene for you, describing the speech community that gave rise to the discourse we will be studying. (2) We will discuss the discourse in class to learn its characteristics. I expect you to prepare for the discussions by taking the material from (1) and applying it to (2) to aid our discussion. In addition, for one of the units you will research beyond the normal class reading to contribute to the discussion.

Please note the essential contribution of the classroom. There really is not a *textbook* in this course in the normal sense. Our major book has only short background essays and speeches. The other will study a particular speech in depth. In short, your reading and the lectures will not duplicate each other. The lectures will contain unique material for which you will be responsible on exams and must make meaningful in studying the speeches. Most of the material you read will be speeches. Some of our class time will be spent in discussing and analyzing that discourse. Thus, the various material of the course – reading and class time – merges rather than duplicates. You will want the entire experience.

Where will the primary learning in the course take place?

In the discussions of particular speeches. That learning will start for you as you do your abstracts. You *must*, to do those well, pull together the material from the lecture, the introductions to the speeches contained in the book, and your studying the speeches (not just reading but reading and rereading) to see the things you have learned from the other sources come together in the speeches. When we get to class, we will add to that work the insights of those students assigned to that particular unit in the undergraduate unit assignment. And, your beyond the classroom assignment should add a dimension for you as well. Your learning will depend on all this coming together in the discussion. Your participation in that discussion – testing your understanding and creating a synthesis of understanding with other students – will determine how well you learn the material. Thus, it is your preparation for and participation in the discussions that will ultimately determine your learning (and your grade) in the course.

Learning Resources

Texts

- Ronald F. Reid and James F. Klumpp. *American Rhetorical Discourse*. 3rd ed. Long Branch IL: Waveland Press, 2005. ISBN: 1577663675
- Garry Wills. *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992. ISBN: 0671867423

Reid and Klumpp will be our primary book. You should generally bring this to class every day whether you anticipate our using it or not.

Website

The address of the course website is at the top of this syllabus. You may access it through ELMS or use the URL in any browser. Additional material for the course will be placed on the website. The website will also include outlines of lectures. You will not need to consult the website every day, but you will want to consult it some time between classroom sessions. If you encounter the need for an ID and a password they are at the top of this syllabus.

Office Hours

W 10-11; Th 2-3; and by appointment. Weekly exceptions indicated on my personal website.

I am in my office a lot more than these hours. Please just arrange your appointment. You may do so by email, voice mail, or by seeing me after class.

A word on email: Sometimes email is not the most efficient way to answer your questions even if it might be the most convenient. If your email implies a longer discussion do not be surprised if I

suggest a meeting to answer the question. In addition, I am not an email slave. If something is critical please use the phone rather than email.

I neither text, tweet, nor facebook. In addition, I do not monitor the alternative email on ELMS. Please maintain email contact at the email address at the top of this syllabus.

Assignments and Examinations

Examinations. There will be two exams (each 20 percent of your grade) plus a final (30 percent of grade). The exams will be objective; that is, they will ask you to identify speeches, answer multiple choice questions, and respond with some short answers. Another section on each test will award extra credit for your ability to reproduce text of famous speeches from memory. Additional description of the exams, recommendations for studying, study aids, and sample questions are available on the course website.

Make-up exams will only be available for excused absences. They will be a different exam and may have a different format than that described above. On eligibility for make-up exams, see the material below on requesting excused absences. All examinations are "closed book" and all rules of the Code of Academic Integrity (<http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/III-100A.pdf>) apply, including the use of the University Honor Pledge on each exam.

Speech Abstracts. You should acquire a notebook where you can keep abstracts of the speeches we read in class. I recommend a loose-leaf binder, but you can use a wire-ring binder if you wish. These abstracts should be very useful to you in studying for your exams. Write them with this in mind. For each speech you read this semester you should construct an abstract of 100-300 words (around a page in typeface, double-spaced, although they may be handwritten). The abstract should: (1) identify the speaker, the speech, and the occasion; (2) provide a sentence or two on what the speech does and/or is about; and (3) describe how the speech fits into the characteristics of its community and their public speaking.

Although these are primarily to prepare you for class discussions and the exams, I will sweeten the grading a bit for those who do these in preparation for discussion. I will select days at random to collect your abstracts on one of the speeches we discuss that day, will read the abstract and assign an appropriate "S" or "U" grade. *Please note I will accept the abstract only at the beginning of class before the discussion begins and, since the abstracts are preparation for the discussion, I will not grade an abstract if you must be absent from the discussion.* My criteria for an "S" will be: (1) does your abstract show evidence you have read the speech, and (2) does your abstract show evidence you are able to use the material from the lecture to study the speech. A grade for the semester, ten percent of the total grade, will be assigned based on your total number of "S's" out of the five possibilities. I will collect seven abstracts and grade your top five.

Undergraduate Unit Discussion Preparation. You will select or be assigned one of the communities we study this semester to explore in more depth. There will be from two to four students working on the unit with you. More on this assignment and specific suggestions for completing it are available on the class website.

Learning through experiences beyond the classroom. The objective of this assignment is to carry your learning about early American public life beyond the confines of your classroom into other resources that are available to you. You will earn your grade on these assignments by

applying the things you learned from the experience to your knowledge of early American public life being built in the course. There are a number of ways those living in our area can become more familiar with the communities and speeches we study this semester. See a category list of possible experiences on the website.

You will do three of these reports (based on experiences from at least two of the categories above) during the semester. You need to submit one report each month: September, October, and November. You get December off. Early reports are welcome, but no late reports will be accepted. The report should be from your printer, and be 250-500 words (1-2 pages). Reports will be graded S/U and specific criteria are explained online. The semester grade (ten percent of the total grade) will be calculated according to the following: one "S" = D; two = C; three = A.

Graduate Paper. Graduate students are exempt from the discussion and beyond the classroom assignment. In lieu of these they will write a paper that tells us something about the character of public orality in an American community. See specific options on the website.

Papers should be 2500 to 3000 words (ten to twelve pages of 12 point type). Please include word count with author information. Projects are due December 2. 20 percent of grade. Projects will be evaluated based on: (1) the quality of the insight contained in the project, (2) the quality of research, (3) the quality of the writing or site preparation, and (4) the following of proper form. Chicago (Turabian) or APA form will be accepted. This might also be an excellent time to use some of the archives in the Washington area, although that is not necessarily a requirement for the project.

Participation and Attendance

Participation in this course, and therefore attendance, are important. Let me convince you of this with multiple approaches.

Let me start by appealing to your intelligence. Attendance is more important in this class than some others because of three facts. First, material on the exams will not all come from the readings. You are responsible for material from lecture. Second, exams require understanding beyond information, and notes only record information. Although some portion of the exams will test your mastery of information, a large portion of the exam will go beyond information to require that you have mastered the feel for a time and are able to generate discourse that might have been heard in that community. To do this, you must acquire an *ear* and a *voice* of a historical moment. Written notes cannot capture nor communicate that. Third, the class asks you to analyze discourse. The only way to master that process is to articulate your analysis and the class will provide you that opportunity. You will need to aggressively take advantage of it.

If you cannot be reached by intelligent reasoning on the need for attending and participating, let me address you more frankly. There are students who settle on non-attendance based on: "I paid for it, so I can go or not, as I choose." This is *dumb* "consumerism." If you insist on a business metaphor for your education, the following variation governs: you have not paid for my performance; you have instead entered into a contract with me that says I will teach you about the oral tradition in American communities if you will seek to learn. Part of your obligation in that contract is to attend. Of course, you may opt not to enter such a contract. You do so, by dropping this course today.

Finally, there is the blunt side of this trauma that "consumerists" choose to ignore: the old saw – "if you fail to attend you will be punished with a lower grade" is true in this course. Over many semesters students have told me *after the semester is too far along for them to recover* they realize that this course is not the kind that merely requires mastering information. Statistically, they are correct. I calculated some statistics over several semesters of this course. The correlation between number of absences and grade is .80. Laid out more minutely:

Students with < 3 absences getting A or B – 84%; with > 10 absences – 13%. Thus, your chances of getting an A or B are 6 times as great with < 3 absences as with > 10.

Students with < 3 absences getting D or F – 1%; with > 10 absences – 29%. Students with < 3 absences have practically no chance of getting a D or F. One of every three students who miss > 10 times, only master the material at a D or F level.

Average absences for A students – 1.65; for B students – 3.68; for C students – 5.97; for D students 12.5. Number of absences predicts your grade in the course better than any other factor.

Remember, you are not graded on attendance, but attendance does affect what you learn and therefore your grade for the course.

The last time this course was taught the GPA in the course for those with 3 or fewer absences was 3.05; for those with > 9 absences was 2.0. So, there is a fairly simple way to improve your chances for a good grade. Your attendance does not assure an "A" but it will help you learn the material for the course more thoroughly because of the repetition that is a part of class discussion.

So, if you are in the "attendance optional" school of studenting, drop this course for another.

I will be taking attendance. My major purpose in doing so is to collect data that – along with test responses – help me identify problems mastering the class. Even if you have the best excuse for missing class, you are going to miss the same material as students who simply skip. So, no need to explain your absence *except for days when assignments are due, or exams given* (see below).

Of course, I spoke of participation, not just attendance. Being involved in the class, asking questions, and trying out your ideas is what participation in the class is about. You will master those aspects of the course that go beyond the acquisition of information with participation.

If I sound like your attendance is important to me, it is. I will put a great deal of effort into teaching this class and expect your effort in return. Other instructors may not care as much and may have developed methods of teaching that do not depend on attendance. Find those instructors if they fit your lifestyle better.

Requesting an "excused absence"

The university has a set of defined procedures designed to ensure fairness to all students in obtaining an "excused absence." I abide by these procedures as adapted for the special circumstances of this course.

- *On normal class days.* No excused absences are required; no documentation is required and thus no self-signed excuses.

- For “Major Scheduled Grading Events” (On days when exams are given, term papers due, or you are responsible for an undergraduate unit assignment). You will need to request an excused absence. University policy requires that you do so in writing and "provide *documentary* support for [your] assertion that absence resulted from one of the [approved] causes" (emphasis added). There are thus several obligations if you are going to be absent. (1) Notify me as soon as feasible of your upcoming or recent absence and provide documentation for the reason. I am serious about prompt notification. In general you should notify me before your absence. When that is not possible, you need to notify me as soon as you are near a telephone or email. I have voice mail and email that provides a timestamped documentation of your notification. (2) You need to request the make-up (an excused absence) in writing specifying the reason for your absence. The university has a limited number of legitimate reasons for absence (see <http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1540>) and these are the ones I accept. (3) You must document the validity of the reason you have provided for the absence. Such documentation must be signed by a person who testifies to the reason, and should contain information on contacting (phone or email) someone who can verify the reason.
- *Abstracts*. Since the abstracts are primarily designed to assist in your preparation for a discussion that begins and ends in your absence, and since documenting absences as the University requires for make-up of these abstracts is too complicated for the value of the assignment, I will use an alternative: I will collect abstracts seven times during the semester (grading your best five). Abstracts not handed in when I collect them cannot be made up. If you prefer the documentation requirement to this method of make-up, please notify me within the first week of class.
- *Beyond the Classroom*. This assignment carries no specific due date, just some time in the month. Of course, if you put it off until the last minute you will create a “drop dead date.” Don’t put them off until the end of the month.

Late Papers and Incompletes

Papers (including abstracts) are due at the *beginning* of class on due dates. Papers handed in after that hour will not be accepted, although comments will be made on them upon request. If you have not handed in the paper by the last day of class, or if you miss the final exam for any reason, you must contact Klumpp within 48 hours and sign an incomplete form. Without it, your grade will be calculated on the basis of an "F" on the missing material.

Academic Integrity

You are responsible for knowing the university's policy on academic integrity (see <http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/III-100A.pdf>). The principles governing that policy are two-fold: (1) the work that I should mark as yours is material that you have authored, and (2) you have the responsibility to give recognition to others whose work you incorporate in your projects. You should review the university's policy and make certain that you implement these two principles.

In our society's unique mix of individuality and cooperation, learning how to walk the often fine line between work for which you have responsibility and work that is shared is vitally important. In our system of education you are graded on your *own* work, not that of others. At the same time, I encourage you to work with fellow students in studying the speeches and in reviewing for exams. A good study group can be invaluable in this course. So where do you draw the line?

Obviously things like handing in papers you have purchased from internet sources or "paper mills" violates principles of academic integrity. So does bringing information into exams in forms other than memories and judgments in your head. But there are other important things you need to know and develop a feel for such as when to cite the work of others in papers and when information can be used without being attributed. The guidelines of the university policy will assist with your mastering that. I will be more than happy to assist at any time during the semester. If any of these suggestions or the University's material is unclear, I urge you to ask me. The responsibility for understanding academic integrity is yours.

Another wrinkle in the principle of individual work in this class are group projects. Although you are not required to do a group project, it is an option for you on the bibliography portion of the undergraduate unit discussion assignment. You are authorized to work with others in your group on this assignment. In this case the grade assigned to the group's work is assigned to each student who has participated in the group. By signing the honors pledge on the bibliography you hand-in, you are accepting this sharing of the grading. The discussion portion of the assignment will be graded individually.

Please, please do not take this issue lightly. It is my obligation as a professor and my ethical obligation as an academic to report any cases directly to the Student Honor Council and I will not hesitate to do so.

Disabilities and Religious Observances

The University of Maryland accommodates students with disabilities and recognizes the rights of students to exercise their religious rites. I ask only that you notify me during the *first week of classes* if you have concerns in either of these areas and require that I accommodate your needs in any way including alteration in the due date or manner of completing assignments.

A word on classroom etiquette

Since the opportunity to work in the classroom is so central to this course, I am concerned that everyone assume responsibility for enhancing the learning in the classroom. I prefer that you think of the necessary behavior as common courtesy – behaving so that, if others do the same, the classroom will be an environment for learning. Just in case, let me be more stern, however.

Following are some basic rules:

- No talking or whispering to other students during class time. If you have something to say, say it aloud and we will talk about it.
- Be on time to class. If you are late, sit in a chair as close to the door as possible and avoid disruptive behavior as you enter.
- Do not plan to leave class early. If you must, sit close to the door and leave with minimum disruption. Courtesy also suggests you let me know your need to leave early

before class begins. If you have problems with frequent rest room visits, take care of yourself before class begins.

- Keep your verbal and nonverbal comments about the ideas of other students considerate and be prepared to defend judgments that you make.

The University of Maryland subscribes to policies requiring respect for other students, including policies pertaining to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment and disruption of the class. Those disrupting the class in any way will be asked to leave the classroom after a first offense and to drop the course after subsequent problems. Disruptive behavior is defined as any behavior that distracts students concentrating on the normal operation of the class. According to university regulations I am the final judge of what behavior disrupts my classroom.

Electronics in the Classroom

Please observe the following with regard to electronics:

- Audial electronics (watches, cell phones, computers, etc.) should be turned off or silenced before all classes.
- Cell phones and text messaging devices are potentially disruptive and certainly inappropriate in the classroom. Those engaging them during class time may be asked to leave the classroom. Similarly, no ear phones may be worn during class. Your attention is important to mastery of the subject matter of the class.
- No laptops or other computers will be permitted in class. The most successful students in this course have reproduced the notes available on the website and modified them to reflect the material of class. Those who find this too restrictive typically reserve time after class to compose notes on class. I do not mind students taking notes on things we discuss in class, but mastering facts and information is only the first dimension of the material you need to get from the class. So, do NOT let the taking of notes distract from a more basic understanding of the communities and speeches we study. It is for this reason, that I prohibit computers in class: I do not wish for the things said in class to pass from your ear to your fingertips without your brain engaged.
- No disruptive audio or video recording will be allowed, and any recording at all can occur only with my permission. That permission will be granted only for extraordinary circumstances. Recording is no substitute for attendance.
- No electronic devices of any kind will be permitted in class on test days.

Course Copyright Restrictions

The lectures that I deliver in this class and course materials I create and distribute for your learning, including power point presentations, tests, outlines, content of the website, and similar materials, are protected by federal copyright law as my original works. You are permitted to take notes of lectures and to use course materials for your use in this course. You are not authorized to reproduce or distribute notes of lectures or my course materials or make any commercial use of them without my express written consent. persons who sell or distribute copies or modified copies of instructors' course materials or assist another person or entity in selling or distributing

those materials may be considered in violation of the University Code of Student Conduct, Part 9(k).

Changes in these policies, assignments, and procedures

Students will be notified in advance of important changes that could affect grading, assignments, etc. that are outlined herein. Notification may be orally in class or by announcement on the course website. The course website has additional policies, more details on assignments and procedures, and constitutes the official syllabus of the course.

What are the keys to success in this course?

You will learn the material a number of ways. Following are the keys:

- Attend class. People who do not, do not do well.
- Be prepared for class. Do not just read the speeches for class discussion, study them.
- Contribute to class discussion. Exams do not just demand recall they demand that you produce discourse. You practice that in class.
- Use the study aids on the website

Outline of Course

Specific daily schedule and reading assignments are posted on the Course Website.

- I. Introduction
 - A. Studying Communities
 - B. Studying Speeches
- II. Public Life in the Colonial and Revolutionary Eras
 - A. The New England Theocracy
 - B. Frontier Virginia
 - C. Creating the Revolution
 - D. Creating the National Community
- III. Public Life in the Early National Community, 1800-1860
 - A. The Silver Orators
 - B. Speaking on the Frontier
 - C. The Reform Community and Abolition
 - D. African American Communities: The Slave Quarters
 - E. The Cavalier Community
- IV. Abraham Lincoln
- V. Public Life after the Civil War, 1865-1900

- A. The Entrepreneurial Community
- B. The Labor and Immigrant Communities
- C. Women Seek a Place