

AMERICAN RHETORIC: SPEECHES THAT MADE (OR REMADE) AMERICA

SPEECH ANALYSIS PAPER (10% OF YOUR FINAL GRADE)

In this project you'll do something similar to what Garry Wills did for the Gettysburg Address in his essay "The Words That Remade America." Notice his technique: as the editors put it, "part historical investigation, part literary exegesis." Your paper should (on a smaller scale) accomplish the same goals. Choose a speech from the list below, and analyze it, setting it into historical context and exploring its main ideas, rhetorical technique, images, form, content and/or meaning (5-7 pages).

CHOOSE SPEECH BY FEB 13 and use it as the basis for your Journal #4

Read and research your chosen speech. Who gave it, when and why? You'll need to discuss the circumstances, the historical context, and the impact of your chosen speech – so this will require some research and digging on your part in reliable scholarly sources. We will have a library instruction session about this on Thursday, Feb 6th.

SUBMIT BIBLIOGRAPHY FEB 20 – priority order is scholarly peer-reviewed articles, printed reference works, university-press books, and lastly, anything else. Please do not use Wikipedia (or About.com or Ask.com or similar sites) as bibliographic entries. Should contain 3-5 quality sources, or more.

FINAL PAPER DUE FEB 27. Take the speech apart, piece by piece, discussing key passages and ideas in historical context, and applying literary/rhetorical analysis concepts – such as form, structure, word choice, literary techniques, narrative arc or theme. If you can listen to it on audio or video, even better – feel free to analyze emphasis, rhetorical technique, or verbal flourishes. If you only have a print copy, you may have to imagine how this speech would sound (as Wills did).

How does this speech define America or American values?

What is its vision of America?

In what way does it exemplify American idealism?

Final paper should have a title, footnotes, and an attached bibliography (Chicago Style).

Length: 5-7 pages long (double-spaced).

DUE DATES:

Feb 13 – choose your speech, write about it in Journal #4

Feb 20 – submit bibliography

Feb 27 – final paper due

SPEECH OPTIONS (LINKS TO THESE ARE ON THE COURSE WEBSITE)

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar," 1837

Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address," 1864

Chief Red Cloud, "Speech at Cooper Union," 1870

Booker T. Washington, "Atlanta Compromise Speech," 1895

Theodore Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life," 1899

Anna Howard Shaw, "The Fundamental Principles of a Republic," 1915

Woodrow Wilson, "Peace Without Victory," 1917

Eugene V. Debs, "Canton Speech," 1918

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "First Inaugural Address" 1932

Learned Hand, "Speech at 'I Am An American Day,'" Central Park NY 1944

John F. Kennedy, "Address to Houston Ministerial Association," 1960

Eisenhower's Farewell, 1961

Lyndon Baines Johnson, "We Shall Overcome," 1965

Jimmy Carter, "Crisis of Confidence" 1977

Barack Obama, "DNC Keynote Address" 2004

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg's dissent from the bench in *Shelby v. Holder*, 2013