Title of Course: Leaders of Social Change

I. Catalog Description and Credit Hours of the Course:

A course in rhetorical criticism, exploring how rhetorical theories help us process and appreciate the substance of speeches and the effectiveness of speakers. (3)

II. Interdisciplinary Nature of the Course: “Leaders of Social Change” will most notably integrate subject matter and approaches from areas catalogued under “Perspectives on Individual Expression” and “Perspectives on Human Institutions.” Material relating to Oral Expression and Written Expression will assist the analysis of message elements—elements such as structure, coherence, development, oral style, and language devices. Material relating to Development of a Major Civilization, Political Systems, and Social Systems will inform the analysis of contextual elements and the understanding of speaker and audience(s), as well as suggest the impact of a message. In other words, students will have to understand how past events as well as contemporary events impact a speaker’s rhetorical “mission” and choices, as well as to understand what impact the speaker seems to have had and on what basis.

The synthesis of knowledge necessary for analyzing rhetorical events (such as the instances described above) should sharpen students’ creative and critical/analytical abilities. They should exit the course able to apply this learning and skill throughout life as producers and consumers of messages. They should be more capable of producing effective, influential messages, as well as better able to process/analyze the messages of others who would seek to inform or influence them.

III. Prerequisite(s): None.

IV. Purpose or Objectives of the Course:

A. To provide students with a basic understanding of the major research and principles of rhetorical theory and rhetorical criticism. (University Studies Objectives 4, 5, 6, 8)

B. To increase understanding of the communication process and the ethics involved, as well as the impact of culture upon the process and what is deemed ethical or unethical. (University Studies Objectives 5, 7, 9)

C. To enhance students’ appreciation of public discourse and how it shapes and is shaped by events—both historical and contemporary, as well as influences from other societies/cultures. (University Studies Objectives 1, 2, 4, 6, 8)

D. To improve the ability of students to think critically about messages they encounter as well as those that they produce. (University Studies Objectives 2, 3, 7, 8, 9)

E. To improve speaking and listening/feedback skills. (University Studies Objectives 2, 3, 9)
V. Expectations of Students:

A. Complete all assigned reading material.

B. Participate in class discussions and activities.

C. Perform satisfactorily on examinations and quizzes.

D. Complete all assigned papers and presentations satisfactorily, including locating and gathering quality research materials upon which they base their analyses of particular instances of public discourse. As explained in VIII, below, students will gather materials that illuminate the historical setting/context as well as scholarly materials that assist their analysis of rhetorical elements.

E. Post their reports on-line in a timely fashion so the information is available when it is needed.

VI. Outline of Course Content:

Unit 1: The Nature of Criticism: An Overview
An examination of the role of criticism in democracy and the basic elements involved in sound criticism.
(University Studies Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8)

Unit 2: Constituents of the Rhetorical Act: Context & Audience
An examination of time and place factors with regard to a message, as well as for whom it is intended and how so.
(University Studies Objectives: 2, 4, 5, 6)

Unit 3a: Constituents of the Rhetorical Act: The Speaker
An examination of the source of a message, particularly the role of credibility factors and popular perceptions.
(University Studies Objectives: 1, 2, 4, 6)

Unit 3b: Constituents of the Rhetorical Act: The Text
An examination of argument, structure, style, narrative, language devices, tone, and other factors that impact the reception of a message.
(University Studies Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8)

Unit 4: Critical Reading of Abraham Lincoln’s “Young Men’s Lyceum Address”
A clear instance of how rhetorical texts arise from the press of events. Lincoln utilized the murder of Lovejoy to nurture an abolitionist mindset.
(University Studies Objectives: 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9)

Unit 5: Critical Reading of Dwight D. Eisenhower’s “Atoms for Peace”
Ike’s speech illustrates multiple goals and multiple audiences, with a very subtle principal goal. Careful analysis illuminates it.
(University Studies Objectives: 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)
Unit 6: Critical Reading of Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s “Solitude of Self” 3 hrs.
Stanton’s address preserves the ideology of nineteenth century feminism, and its lyric tone and tragic perspective transcend time.
(University Studies Objectives: 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9)

Unit 7: Deliberative Rhetoric I: Justifying & Opposing War 6 hrs.
(This type of rhetoric is that which debates public policy.)
(University Studies Objectives: 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

Note: We may or may not have time to examine the discourse for each of these periods of war. In addition, we may add the discourse of our latest military and diplomatic endeavors.

Jonathan Boucher, On Civil Liberty; Passive Obedience, & Nonresistance (1775)
John Dickinson, Declaration for Taking Up Arms (1775)
Thomas Paine, Common Sense (1776)
Samuel Adams, American Independence (1776)

Woodrow Wilson, War Message (1917)
Emma Goldman, Address to the Jury (1917)

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Declaration of War (1941)
Wendell Wilkie, Cooperation But Loyal Opposition (1940)

Eugene McCarthy, Denouncing the War in Vietnam (1967)
Richard Nixon, Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam (1969)

Osama bin Laden, Statement to the Infidel Nations (2001)
George W. Bush, Address to the Joint Session of Congress and the American People, (2001)
Barbara Lee, Speech in Opposition to Authorizing the Use of Military Force (2001)

Unit 8: Deliberative Rhetoric II: America’s Role in the World 3 hrs.
(University Studies Objectives: 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

Beveridge, March of the Flag (1898)
Theodore Roosevelt, The Strenuous Life (1899)
William Jennings Bryan, Imperialism (1900)

Unit 9: Deliberative Rhetoric III: The Question of Slavery 3 hrs.
(University Studies Objectives: 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

Wendell Phillips, The Murder of Lovejoy (1837)
Frederick Douglass, American Slavery (1850)
Stephen A. Douglas, Popular Sovereignty (1858)
Unit 10: Deliberative Rhetoric IV: Women’s Suffrage  
(University Studies Objectives: 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 )  
4 hrs.

Sojourner Truth, *Ain’t I a Woman?* (1851)  
Lucy Stone, *Woman’s Rights* (1855)  
Susan B. Anthony, *Right to Suffrage* (1873)  
Susan B. Anthony, *On Behalf of the Woman* (1884)  
Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Solitude of Self* (1892)  
Margaret Sanger, *The Children’s Era* (1926)

Unit 11: Deliberative Rhetoric V: Civil Rights  
(University Studies Objectives: 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 )  
4 hrs.

George C. Wallace, *Proclamation at the University of Alabama* (1963)  
Martin Luther King, Jr., *I Have a Dream* (1963)  
Malcolm X, *The Ballot or the Bullet* (1964)  
Martin Luther King, Jr., *I’ve Been to the Mountaintop* (1968)

Unit 12a: Forensic Rhetoric: Formally Passing Judgment  
(This type of rhetoric argues guilt or innocence.)  
(University Studies Objectives: 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 )  
3 hrs.


Unit 12b: Epidictic Rhetoric: Honorific Oratory  
(This type of rhetoric examines and perpetuates values.)  
(University Studies Objectives: 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 )  
3 hrs.

George Washington, *First Inaugural* (1789)  

VII. Textbook and Course Materials:


*Note:* Many of the speeches studied will be downloaded from websites. Also, despite the 1998 date of publication, the textbook is still widely used and widely available.
VIII. Basis of Student Evaluation:

A. Tests: There will be a quiz after each unit (12 @ 5%). Each quiz will cover assigned readings and class lectures, presentations, discussions and activities. In addition to testing students’ knowledge of terms, facts, and principles, each quiz will challenge the students by requiring that they apply the principles and contextual information they were to have learned. The final exam (@ 10%) will be comprehensive, testing their knowledge of facts as well as skills in application.

B. Course Papers: Each student will be required to research, draft, and post on line, two short reports, equivalent to two or three double-spaced pages (2 @ 10%). One of these will be to report on the context of one of the speeches to be studied. To prepare the report, the student will consult a minimum of five quality sources, drawing from various disciplines—such as accounts by historians, political scientists, journalists, biographers, and rhetorical critics. The student will post her or his report on the electronic bulletin board for the class, in a timely fashion, so that all can benefit from it as the speech/message is studied. The posting will include a listing of the references used. Students will sign up for a particular speech, ensuring that all speeches studied are properly introduced. Note: The instructor will also post contextual information. Note, too, that students will be required to revise the report based upon the instructor’s feedback in order to receive credit for the report. The revised draft can improve the final score for the assignment up to one-half of a letter grade.

The second report will be to produce original rhetorical criticism of a particular speech. To sharpen their critical eye, students will supplement the critical/analytical instruction provided in the textbook and in class with relevant scholarly articles that examine/utilize a similar analytical approach. For example, if the student detects rhetorical tactics to enhance credibility as a key strategy in a particular message, she or he would consult a scholarly article that provides some explanations/theory about the tactic. Students will sign up to critique a particular speech. Students will be required to revise the report based upon instructor feedback in order to receive credit for the report. The revised draft can improve the final score for the assignment up to one-half of a letter grade.

C. Oral Presentations: Each student will be required to present two (8-10 minute) extemporaneous presentations derived from their written reports (2 @ 5%). In addition to the usual concerns with content, research, and proper disclosure of sources, students will be evaluated on their ability to craft a presentation that exhibits appropriate structure, good audience adaptation, good oral style, effective delivery, and the ability to field questions.

IX. Justification for Inclusion in University Studies Program:

A. How Course Content, Teaching Strategies, Student Assignments, and Evaluation of Student Performance Addresses and Integrates University Studies Objectives

Objective 1: Demonstrate the ability to locate and gather information.

Emphasis: Significant

Content: Much of the content of this course relies on research from several disciplines, including but not limited to communication studies, history, political science, and journalism. Lectures and the text
include material from the most significant journals and books where research in rhetoric and public address is found, as well as sources that provide good contextual information (e.g., newspapers and newsmagazines from the time as well as accounts by historians, biographers, and political scientists). Students will see that credible analysis of a rhetorical event requires intense, interdisciplinary research. They will have to conduct intensive research themselves, as they prepare their reports and original analyses. They will have to be adept at researching a variety of databases and indexes and determining which ones are most appropriate/helpful.

**Teaching Strategies:** Lectures, discussions, and activities are designed to prepare students to study and research public discourse. Students are asked to identify the best sources for information and the best indexes/databases for locating and gathering information. One class session will be conducted in Kent Library’s Little Theatre utilizing the expertise of a faculty member schooled in Library and Information Science. I will work with that faculty member to devise an appropriate exercise for the students so they can more effectively locate and gather historical/contextual information as well as theoretical and critical materials.

**Student Assignments:** The assignments require the student to do considerable research utilizing library/database and credible on-line resources. Footnotes or endnotes are required in all of the written assignments, and sources must also be cited orally during presentations.

**Evaluation of Student Performance:** Part of the evaluation of written work is based on the extent and degree to which students demonstrate excellence in research skills.

**Objective 2: Demonstrate capabilities for critical thinking, reasoning and analyzing.**

**Emphasis:** Significant

**Content:** Understanding the various critical approaches and their merits and limitations/shortcomings will sharpen students’ critical awareness and ability. Reading various critical accounts of the same speech/message will illustrate how each approach can provide valuable insights into the artistry and impact of a particular text, even when critics clash.

**Teaching Strategies:** Lectures, readings, and discussions are designed to assist students’ understanding of rhetorical communication and prepare them for analyzing public discourse. Students are often asked to discuss and analyze a particular message, focusing on one or more of its particular elements while also displaying sensitivity about “who” is speaking and “whom” she or he is addressing and under what circumstances. The text, lectures, and discussions will help students learn to think critically and analytically about the interplay of these various elements.

**Student Assignments:** Written assignments require students to contemplate what researchers/scholars have discovered and or debated about one or more aspects of rhetoric and about the particular public discourse being considered/analyzed. Students will offer their own analysis and judgment, and they will have to justify their conclusions. To do so they will explain the textual, contextual, audience, and source factors that inform their thinking. In this manner, their ability to synthesize information and theory, from a variety of sources, to produce a defensible analysis, will be nurtured and evaluated.
Evaluation of Student Performance: A significant portion of student grades on the written assignments is based on their ability to critically contemplate research that informs our understanding and analysis of rhetorical events and to formulate and defend their own analyses.

Objective 3: Demonstrate effective communication skills.

Emphasis: Significant

Content: The major portion of the text and classroom instruction deals with what contributes to effective public communication. For example, we will explore elements central to the context, the audience, the speaker, and the message. We will also discuss impact, accountability, and ethics.

Teaching Strategies: The lectures, discussion, and activities are designed to encourage students to think about what comprises effective communication, including particular elements of the message, the speaker, and the speaker’s sensitivity to audience and context. As students study these elements, they will be encouraged to internalize them and apply them to their own communicative endeavors.

Student Assignments: Students will produce two written assignments and present two oral reports. The written assignments both require some revision, so to further develop students’ effectiveness with written communication. Students will receive specific directions for how to format each report as well as what sort of style is appropriate. Students will also receive specific directions for their oral presentations, including how they will be evaluated. Students will receive a written critique of their oral presentation, focusing on what they did well in terms of oral communication and what they could improve upon and ideas for making those improvements. As reporters, students will not only be displaying their ability to inform but they will also be attempting to persuade us that they have arrived at valid conclusions about the speaker and/or the rhetorical event they are addressing. As noted in VIII, above, students will be required to revise their major papers.

Evaluation of Student Performance: Students are evaluated on their written and oral communication skills as well as on their understanding of communication principles and their applications. They will also be evaluated on their revisions of their work.

Objective 4: Demonstrate an understanding of human experiences and the ability to relate them to the present.

Emphasis: Some

Content: The text and lectures will discuss past rhetorical events and relate them to present contexts. For example, declarations of war throughout our history face similar contextual constraints and exhibit common textual elements. Similarly, generic similarities exist in past and present speeches paying tribute to fallen heroes. The lectures and the text make inferences about present rhetorical situations and messages by examining past ones. Every unit examines the application of communication principles in various communicative settings, as well as considering the implications for subsequent public communication.
**Teaching Strategies:** The lectures, discussion, and activities are designed to help students identify and appreciate common patterns in contextual and textual elements. For example, in one activity students will compare the rhetoric of women in the mid-1800s with that of women in contemporary times, revealing striking similarities. Many issues (e.g., equal pay) persist and are identified/discussed similarly.

**Student Assignments:** Readings and assignments are designed to increase students’ understanding of human experience and what we learn about humans from their communicative behavior as a source and an audience. For example, fear appeals can contribute to effectiveness in communication or they can backfire. We study why. We also note how fear appeals may or may not constitute ethical communication. Throughout the course, students are asked to contemplate various rhetorical events, past and present, as well as evaluate them on ethical grounds.

**Evaluation of Student Performance:** The nature of the written assignments requires students to apply theoretical concepts and principles, derived from careful studies of past efforts by spokespersons to influence others’ thinking and behavior. Students will apply this learning/understanding to rhetorical events they investigate and analyze.

**Objective 5: Demonstrate an understanding of various cultures and their interrelationships.**

**Emphasis:** Some.

**Content:** The study of rhetorical communication includes consideration of intercultural factors. The text, lectures, and classroom discussion will entertain how cultural differences comprise an important contextual element and an important aspect of audience analysis. For example, persons from an individualistic society will respond more favorably to messages emphasizing personal freedom than will persons from collectivist cultures. In contemporary efforts for coalition building for combating terrorism, our leaders would need to employ appeals that cater to both of these major cultural types.

**Teaching Strategies:** The lectures, discussion, and activities are designed to help students detect and identify cultural nuances and the implications of those differences for effective communication.

**Student Assignments:** While students are not required to write papers specifically on intercultural communication, various intercultural issues (such as the one mentioned regarding individualistic vs. collectivistic cultures) could be considered as possible topics. It is expected that some students will choose to write papers on these topics. For example, to court the favor of certain demographics, such as the religious right, politicians have been known to use what are termed “code words.” One could analyze the presidential campaign of George W. Bush along these lines, as well as that of Rudy Giuliani during his bid for the 2008 election.

**Evaluation of Student Performance:** Some exam items are directly related to this area, as it comprises an element within audience analysis as well as a contextual constraint or opportunity. For example, students will need to demonstrate an awareness of collectivist versus individualistic cultures and apply this understanding by correctly identifying a multiple-choice exam item of the best appeal for each cultural type, or devising their own appeals in a short-essay exam item.
Objective 6: Demonstrate the ability to integrate the breadth and diversity of knowledge and experience.

Emphasis: Significant

Content: Texts in rhetorical criticism, including the selected textbook, provide scholarly investigations and material from a wide variety of academic disciplines, including but not limited to communication studies, history, political science, psychology, and journalism.

Teaching Strategies: The lectures, readings, and discussions specifically examine the integration of material from a wide range of academic disciplines and note how an interdisciplinary approach is necessary for a comprehensive study and full understanding of any rhetorical event. Events, after all, are not isolated but exist within an immediate and a larger context, and they likewise reverberate to become part of the context. In addition, the nature of the times may affect the mindset of a population, directly impacting the degree to which they will be receptive to a particular type of appeal. For example, during the Great Depression, Americans were arguably more receptive to the religiosity of Huey Long and Father Charles Coughlin than they otherwise might have been. Exam items reinforce students’ awareness of the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach and prompt students to demonstrate the ability to integrate material from various disciplines into logical and cohesive conclusions.

Student Assignments: The written assignments require students to sift through a wide diversity of information, consulting scholarly works from several academic disciplines in order to arrive at reasonable conclusions as they analyze particular rhetorical events.

Evaluation of Student Performance: A substantial portion of the grade students receive on their written assignments is based on their selection of research to support their conclusions. They are also graded on their ability to integrate and draw conclusions from relevant research, spanning an array of disciplines.

Objective 7: Demonstrate the ability to make informed, intelligent value decisions.

Emphasis: Some

Content: Throughout the text and lectures the importance and significance of communicative behaviors are discussed. Students will see how messages have an impact and will come to appreciate, more fully, how a speaker has great accountability.

Teaching Strategies: The lectures, readings, discussion, and activities are designed to help transport the students to the particular place and time when the message was given and what scholars have calculated its impact / consequences to have been.

Student Assignments: In written and oral assignments, students are to evaluate the significance and importance of particular rhetorical events and the extent to which the speaker seems to have been responsible. For each of these, students will explain the basis for their evaluation.

Evaluation of Student Performance: A substantial portion of the grade students receive on the rhetorical analysis paper and presentation will involve how they judged the source’s accountability.
Objective 8: Demonstrate the ability to make informed, sensitive aesthetic responses.

Emphasis: Some

Content: The text and instructor will discuss the quality and attractiveness of language choices and structures and their impact on how a message is evaluated. In addition, the instructor will discuss the impact of a speaker’s physical attributes as well as the aesthetic features of a speaking environment on message reception. Many contemporary illustrations exist, such as the televised address by Saddam Hussein, following the strike on the bunker in Baghdad where he was believed to have holed up. His dress and surroundings and artifacts each impacted how an audience might perceive him and interpret his words. The last presidential campaign in Mexico is another revealing example of how a candidate’s stature and other physical attributes affect ethos / credibility.

Teaching Strategies: The lectures, discussion, and activities are designed to help students identify verbal and nonverbal elements and how they are regulated and perceived / interpreted in light of a particular culture, a particular time, and so on.

Student Assignments: The written / oral reports specifically require students to consider the influence of environmental factors (and how they are managed by the source) upon the effectiveness of the communication. Similarly, students will contemplate / evaluate verbal style. Items on quizzes will also test a student’s ability to detect and evaluate these aesthetics and the powerful effect they can have.

Evaluation of Student Performance: Because the written / oral reports include factors related to aesthetic responses, students are evaluated on their ability to make informed, sensitive judgments.

Objective 9: Demonstrate the ability to function responsibly in one's natural, social and political environment.

Emphasis: Significant

Content: The text, lectures, and in-class discussions frequently focus on the ethical dimensions of communication, both in terms of producing messages and receiving them.

Student Assignments: Students will be required to consider the ethical dimensions of the messages they analyze. Students will also be expected to meet their accountability as an informed source—having located and gathered only the best materials to inform their reports.

Teaching Strategies: The lectures, discussion, and activities are designed to help students understand and appreciate their own accountability as a source. This instruction will be done explicitly when discussing their assignments as well as when studying the degree to which the sources we study seem to have been accountable and when they appear to have been remiss.

Evaluation of Student Performance: Students will be tested over what comprises an ethical source and an ethical receiver. Students will also be evaluated on the extent to which they acquired responsible knowledge in their characterization of a particular rhetorical event and their evaluation /analysis of the speaker and message.
X. Background:

The instructor assigned to this course should have a background in interdisciplinary studies with a special emphasis in communication and research methods. Extensive training in rhetorical theory, rhetoric and public address, communication theory, and social-psychological studies in persuasion is desirable. Ideally, the instructor will be an active scholar with a program of research in one of the areas identified as appropriate training.

XI. Class Size:

As noted in the University Studies Guidelines for Creating a Course Approval Document, the “maximum optimal size for 400- and 500-level seminars is considered to be 15, except at the discretion of the instructor.” The course objectives in this course can best be achieved with a class enrollment of 15 to 22 students. By no means should it ever exceed 22, especially because in-class presentations by students require a minimum number of days. Enrollment exceeding 22 would prohibit adequate speaking experiences. Enrollment of 15-22 would be optimal for allowing presentations and adequate discussion of them.