

Criticism of Public Discourse  
Spring 2001

Course Number 26000:11722-002

TTH 3:15 – 4:40 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Rozell Duncan

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Office Hours: Tues. and Thurs 1:00 – 3:00 and 4:45 – 5:45 p.m. and By Appointment

Text: Campbell, K. K. (1996). The rhetorical act (2nd. ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth

Course Description: This course presents a critical examination of selected public speeches representing diverse viewpoints on a variety of historic and contemporary issues, emphasizing methods of evaluating public oral communication and the role of rhetoric in free societies.

Purpose of the Course: The purpose of this course is to train students to be critics of public discourse in a diverse society. As a Liberal Education Requirement, the course will emphasize methods of rhetorical criticism and the role of public discussion and debate in the resolution of selected issues. As a Diversity course, it will examine rhetorical responses to significant historical and contemporary controversies with particular attention to minority voices and vision; and it will focus on the analysis of persuasive appeals that are grounded in the cultural history, values, and attitudes of the participants. Students will prepare oral and written critiques that analyze the use of rhetorical principles and that identify and evaluate constructive ways of resolving differences.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of the course, each student should have acquired knowledge, attitudes, and skills that enable them to:

- know the purposes, processes, and methods of rhetorical criticism
- understand the role and value of public oral communication in the development and resolution of selected controversies in a diverse society
- analyze rhetorical problems faced by speakers emphasizing those created by differing audiences perceptions, ideologies, and values
- discover the rhetorical resources available for dealing constructively with rhetorical problems that grow out of social diversity
- evaluate public oral communication by applying criteria to judge effects, ethics, truth, and aesthetic (artistic) quality
- communicate critical insights about rhetorical events.

Attendance Policy: **READ THIS CAREFULLY**. You are expected to be present for every class. Two unexcused absences will be permitted without penalty. Each unexcused absence beyond two will cost the student the loss of an increment in grade for each absence over the limit up to six absences. Miss seven classes and you cannot complete this course. Excused absences are determined by university guidelines and must be documented. Attendance Sheets will be circulated at the beginning of class; therefore, it will be wise to arrive on time. Arriving late disrupts the class and is discourteous to other students and the instructor. Any tardiness of more than 15 mins. will be considered as an absence. *It is **YOUR** responsibility to sign the Attendance Sheet each class. If your signature is not there, you will be considered absent.*

Etiquette: No gum chewing while giving a critique. Courtesy and respect are anticipated. The best possible grammar will be used in presentations and in class. Hats, caps, etc. may not be worn while giving a presentation. Students may not enter or exit the room while others are giving presentations.

Honesty Policy: You are expected to do your own research, outlines, and critiques. Submitting or delivering critiques prepared by someone else or plagiarizing written material will be grounds for failing. All critiques must be original.

Courtesy: You are expected to be attentive during lectures. Small group or dyadic conversations are disruptive and discourteous to other students and the instructor. Students who need to talk with others will be asked to conduct conversations in the hall.

Assignments: Each student will purchase a textbook and are responsible for reading the assigned material as well as handouts given in class. Assignments consist of a variety of activities, such as exercises, discussion questions, peer critiques, and preparation for discussion. All outlines and analysis must be typed. Any work that is two or more pages in length are to be stapled together. Not being aware of stated course policies is not an acceptable excuse for failing to follow stated course policies. Don't let your grade suffer through oversight or carelessness.

Students with Disabilities: In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please contact the appropriate instructor at the beginning of the semester or when given an assignment for which an accommodation is required. Students with disabilities must verify their eligibility through the Office of Student Disability Services (SDS) in the Michael Schwartz Student Services Center (330) 672-2972.

Course Registration: It is the policy of Kent State University that students are not permitted to attend classes for which they are not officially enrolled. It is the student's responsibility to ensure proper enrollment in classes. You are advised to review your official class schedule during the first two weeks of the semester to ensure proper enrollment. Should you find an error in your class schedule, you have until Friday of the second week of classes to correct it. If registration errors are not corrected by that date and you do continue to attend and participate in classes for which you are not officially enrolled, you are advised now that you will not receive a grade at the conclusion of the semester.

Grading/Evaluation: Overall grading standards will be in accordance with the policy statement in the Undergraduate Catalog. "'A' indicates excellent scholarship, 'B' is good, 'C' fair or average, 'D' is poor (unsatisfactory but passing), and 'F' is failure." Refer to the attached sheets on criteria for evaluations.

### Core Speeches

The Irrepressible Conflict - The Civil War

Abraham Lincoln, "First Inaugural Address" - March 4, 1861

Long Night of Tyranny - World War II

Winston Churchill, "Be Ye Men of Valour" - May 19, 1940

Franklin D. Roosevelt, "For a Declaration of War Against Japan" - Dec. 8, 1941

Jesse G. Delia, "Rhetoric in the Nazi Mind: Hitler's Theory of Persuasion." Southern Speech Communication Journal, 37 (1971), 136 -149.

Civil Rights for All Americans

Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream" - Aug. 28, 1963

The Rhetorical Presidency

Bill Clinton, "Acceptance Address: Democratic Nominee for President" - Aug. 29, 1996

Robert Dole, "Acceptance Address: Republican Nominee for President" - Aug. 15, 1996

Additional Readings: Assigned readings are on reserve at the library by using KentLINK. Look for PROFESSOR/TA (Dr. Nancy Mitchell) or by COURSE (COMM 26000--Part 1). There is a list of Speeches for Student Critiques attached.

### Course Schedule

Criticism of Public Discourse

Dr. Rozell Duncan

Tues. and Thurs

Jan	16	Syllabus/Introduction to Course
	18	The Rhetorical Act Chps 1 & 2
	23	Rhetorical Organization/Examining the Audience/Chps 9 & 3
	25	Examining the Audience/Subject and Audience Obstacles/Chps 3 & 4
	30	Subject and Audience Obstacles/Chp 4/Civil War Era
Feb	1	Nonverbal Rhetorical Elements/Your Rhetorical Act/Chps 11 & 12
	6	Civil War Era/Lincoln Speech
	8	More Obstacles and Rhetorical Problems/Chps 5 & 6
	13	Obstacles/Problems/Chap 6/WW II Era
	15	Roosevelt, Churchill Speeches, Delia Article
	20	No Class: Work on Civil War/WW II Critiques – Instructor available for Critique Reviews as necessary.
	22	Critique I: Civil War/WW II Speeches
	27	Critique I: Civil War/WW II Speeches
March	1	Critique I: Civil War/WW II Speeches
	6	Test I
	8	Resources of Evidence/Chp 7
	13	Civil Rights/King Speech
	15	Resources of Argument and Language/Chps 8 & 10
	20	Politics and Rhetoric/Clinton and Dole Speeches
	22	No Class: Work on Civil Rights/Politics and Rhetoric Critiques – Instructor available for Critique Reviews as necessary.
	27	No Class: Spring Break
	29	No Class: Spring Break
April	3	Politics and Rhetoric/Special Topics
	5	Critique 2: Civil Rights/Politics and Rhetoric Speeches
	10	Critique 2: Civil Rights/Politics and Rhetoric Speeches
	12	Critique 2: Civil Rights/Politics and Rhetoric Speeches
	17	Critique 2: Civil Rights/Politics and Rhetoric Speeches
	19	Critique Review for Critique 3 at 10-min. intervals. <b>APPOINTMENTS NECESSARY.</b> Sign-up sheet available 4/10/01.
	24	Critique Review. (See April 19 above)
	26	No Class. Students will work on Critique 3. Instructor will be available in her office during class time for consultations.
May	1	No Class. (See April 26 above)
	3	<b>Critique 3 Due.</b> Review for Final Exam.
	9	Final Exam 7:45 – 10:00 am

The Instructor reserves the right to change this syllabus if deemed necessary.

Criteria Used for Evaluating Critiques

*The average critique (C) should meet the following criteria:*

1. Conform to the kind of critique assigned.
2. Be ready for presentation of the assigned date.
3. Conform to the time limit.
4. Fulfill any special requirements of the assignment--such as preparing an outline, using visual, etc.
5. Have a clear specific purpose and central idea.
6. Have an identifiable introduction, body, and conclusion.
7. Show reasonable directness and competence in delivery.
8. Be free of serious errors in grammar, pronunciation, and word usage.

*The above average critique (B) should meet the preceding criteria and also:*

1. Deal with a challenging topic.
2. Fulfill all major functions of a speech introduction and conclusion.
3. Display clear organization of main points and supporting materials.
4. Support main points with evidence that meets the tests of accuracy, relevance, objectivity, and sufficiency.
5. Exhibit proficient use of connectives--transitions, internal previews, internal summaries, and signposts.
6. Be delivered skillfully enough so as not to distract attention from the speaker's message.

*The superior critique (A) should meet all the preceding criteria and also:*

1. Constitute a genuine contribution by the speaker to the knowledge or beliefs of the audience.
2. Sustain positive interest, feeling, and/or commitment among the audience.
3. Contain elements of vividness and special interest in the use of language.
4. Be delivered in a fluent, polished manner that strengthens the impact of the speaker's message.

*The below average critique (D or F) is seriously deficient in the criteria required for the C critique.*

Course grade will be based on the following categories:

Exams - 35%: Exams will cover textbook, lectures, required articles, assigned speech texts, and student critiques. There will be 2 tests; the first test will be weighted at 15%, while the second test (final) will be weighted at 20%. There will be no "make-up" tests in the absence of compelling official documentation.

Critiques - 50%: There will be two oral presentations by each student and a written critique. The first two will be weighted at 15%; the final critique will be weighted at 20%. An outline including a complete bibliography is required for each presentation. The bibliography must follow either MLA or APA standards. See the Rhetorical Outline Standards in Chapter 9. While the first two critiques will be oral, the final critique will be a typewritten or computer printed rhetorical analysis. Critiques must be presented on the date assigned.

Assignments/Participation - 15%: Your participation in class discussions is expected - especially feedback on student critiques. In addition, there will be quizzes (announced or unannounced with no "make-up" available in the absence of compelling official documentation) and various daily assignments. If you would like feedback during the term about my evaluation of your performance in this category, please make an appointment to see me.

Grades will be assigned according to the following numerical scale per activity:

150	Critique I
150	Critique II
200	Critique III
150	Test I
200	Test II
150	Assignments/Participation

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1000	Total Points
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Final grades for this course will be assigned as follows:

875 - 1000	A
750 - 874	B
625 - 749	C
500 - 624	D
499 - 000	F

Individual point tally sheet:	Possible Points	Points Earned
Critique #1	150	_____
Critique #2	150	_____
Critique #3	200	_____
Test #1	150	_____
Test #2	200	_____
Assignments/Participation	150	_____
Quiz #1 10 pts.	_____	
Quiz #2 15 pts.	_____	
Quiz #3 25 pts.	_____	
Peer Critique # 1 25 pts.	_____	
Peer Critique # 2 25 pts.	_____	
(Each peer critique will be worth 1 point, up to a maximum of 25 pts. per assignment)		
Participation 30 pts.	_____	
Daily Assignments 20 pts.	_____	

### Critique Review Sign-up Sheet



List the elements of rhetorical analysis. Provide a brief example of each.

Criticism of Public Discourse

Quiz #2

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

Value: 15 pts.

Quote from Lincoln's Inaugural Address of 1861:

“That there are persons in one section or another who seek to destroy the Union at all events, and are glad of any pretext to do it, I will neither affirm or deny; but if there be such, I need address no word to them. To those, however, who really love the Union, may I not speak?”

(Later:)

“In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict, without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to ‘preserve, protect and defend’ it.”

1. Describe the audience(s) you believe Lincoln is addressing in these paragraphs.
2. Describe an obstacle as identified by Campbell you believe Lincoln was addressing in these passages.

Criticism of Rhetorical Discourse

Quiz #3

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

Value: 25 pts.

Using Senator Dole and President Clinton’s 1996 Presidential nomination speeches, develop a comparison on the page below. Choose a representative example for each of the criticism criteria listed in

the left-hand column. Describe and evaluate these examples as indicated. You may refer to the text of these speeches for your criticism. Use of examples from the speeches will enhance your answers.

Criteria	Dole	Clinton
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Exigency		
----------	--	--

Goal		
------	--	--

Strategy		
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Accomplished?		
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Quality of Strategy Accomplishment		
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Criticism of Public Discourse

Critique #1 (Oral 6 - 8 mins.)

Rhetorical Problems/Resources:

Your primary purpose in this assignment is to identify the “rhetorical problems” faced by the rhetor in presenting the speech you have chosen. You will also analyze rhetorical strategies used by the speaker in attempting to overcome the rhetorical problems and achieve the rhetorical goal. You may choose a speech from either Section II or IV of “Speeches for Student Critiques.”

In order to accomplish these purposes, you will first need to do background research on extrinsic factors surrounding the speech: the rhetorical exigency(s), the audience(s), the speaker, his/her goal. Second, you will need to identify strategies used by the speaker in attempting to overcome the rhetorical problems. Consider such factors as arguments, supporting materials, structure, speaker's persona, tone, language style, or any other strategy you feel is relevant in the speech.

Your speech should include:

1. Background materials:

A brief background of the speaker (include only what is relevant to the speech).

A brief background on the general context and the specific events, issues surrounding the speech.

Specific information on the speaking event (when/where speech was given, description of the audience, audience attitudes/beliefs/values, and the speaker's purpose).

2. Identify the rhetorical problem(s).

3. Briefly outline/summarize the major ideas presented by the speaker.

4. Describe and illustrate at least two strategies you believe were used in an attempt to overcome the rhetorical problems.

5. A brief overview of the results achieved by the speaker/speech.

The day of your speech, you are responsible for turning in:

A. A full sentence outline of your speech. (Campbell, Chp 9 has details for outlining format and principles.)

B. A bibliography of research sources (3 sources, minimum).

Criticism of Public Discourse

Peer Review - Critique #1

Value: 1 pt.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Presenter provided the following: (Points awarded are based on the quality/completeness of responses)

Background Materials:

A background of the speaker that was relevant to the speech?

Background on the general context, events, and issues of the speech?

Specific information on the speaking event?

Rhetorical problem(s) identified:

Outlined the major ideas presented by the speaker:

Described/illustrated at least two strategies used to overcome the rhetorical problem(s):

Overview of results achieved by the speaker/speech:

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Peer Reviewer

Criticism of Public Discourse

Instructor Evaluation - Critique #1

Value: 150 pts.

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Name

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Date

Presenter provided the following:

Background Materials: (30 pts.)

A background of the speaker that was relevant to the speech?

Background on the general context, events, and issues of the speech?

Specific information on the speaking event?

Rhetorical problem(s) identified: (20 pts.)

Outlined the major ideas presented by the speaker: (20 pts.)

Described/illustrated at least two strategies used to overcome the rhetorical problem(s): (20 pts.)

Overview of results achieved by the speaker/speech: (30 pts.)

A full sentence outline of critique submitted: (10 pts.)

A bibliography of research sources (3 sources minimum): (10 pts.)

Delivery was extemporaneous: (10 pts.)

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Points Awarded \_\_\_\_\_

Criticism of Public Discourse

Critique # 2 (Oral 8 - 10 mins.)

Rhetorical Strategies:

Your primary purpose in this assignment is to describe the “rhetorical strategies” used by the rhetor in the speech you have chosen in order to achieve the rhetorical goal. In order to do this fully, you will also need to identify the rhetorical exigency(s) and the rhetorical problem(s) faced by the speaker. You may choose a speech from either Sections I or III of “Speeches for Student Critiques”.

To accomplish these purposes, you will first need to do background research on extrinsic factors surrounding the speech: the rhetorical exigency(s), the audience(s), the speaker, his/her rhetorical purpose(s) in the speech, and the results/effects of the speech. This information will help you to identify

the rhetorical problems (obstacles) faced by the speaker in attempting to achieve his/her goal. Since your time is limited, be selective in choosing the extrinsic factors to be included in the actual speech presentation; include only those elements directly relevant to the speech you are analyzing and/or those elements necessary for the identification of the rhetorical exigency(s) and the rhetorical problem(s). Be certain to state explicitly the exact rhetorical exigency(s) and problem(s) faced by the speaker.

Second, identify the rhetorical strategies used by the speaker in attempting to remove the rhetorical exigency(s) and/or to overcome the rhetorical problem(s). Consider such facts as arguments, supporting materials, structure, speaker's persona, tone, language style, or any other strategy you feel is relevant in this speech. In preparing your critique, you may wish to refer to the Elements of Rhetorical Action (Chapter 2) and to the discussions of rhetorical resources in Chapters 7 - 11 of the text and/or to the material discussed in class.

Since your time is limited, you will need to be selective in choosing the strategies to be discussed in your presentation. Focus on the most significant of the speaker's strategies and on the strategies that will most affect the audience in understanding the rhetorical characteristics of the speaker and the speech.

Third, state explicitly how the rhetorical strategies you describe were intended to aid the rhetor in achieving his/her rhetorical goal.

Your presentation should include the following:

1. Background materials:

- A brief background of the speaker, include only what is relevant for this speech.
- A brief background of the context of the speech, include only what is relevant.
- Identify rhetorical exigency(s) and the rhetorical problem(s) faced by the speaker.
- A brief summary of the speech, include only what is relevant to your analysis.

2. Describe and illustrate the strategies that were used in an attempt to overcome the rhetorical problems.

3. Describe how the rhetorical strategies relate to the accomplishment (or the failure to accomplish) the rhetorical goal.

The day you present your speech, you are responsible for submitting:

- A. A full sentence outline of your speech. This means that phrases, words, or other forms of expression that are less than a complete sentence will receive a lower evaluation. (See Chp 9).
- B. A bibliography of research sources (4 sources, minimum).

Criticism of Public Discourse

Critique # 2 - Peer Review

Value - 1 pt.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Presenter provided the following: (Points awarded based on quality/completeness of responses)

Background materials:

A brief background of the speaker that was relevant to the speech

Background on the general context, events, and issues of the speech

Specific information on the speaking event

Rhetorical strategy(ies) identified/illustrated:

Presenter related the strategies to accomplishment of rhetorical goal(s):

Overview of the results achieved by the speaker/speech:

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Peer Reviewer

Criticism of Public Discourse

Critique # 2 - Instructor Evaluation

Value - 150 pts.

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Name

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Date

Presenter provided the following:

Background materials: (30 pts)

A brief background of the speaker that was relevant to the speech

Background on the general context, events, and issues of the speech

Specific information on the speaking event

Rhetorical strategy(ies) identified/illustrated: (30 pts)

Presenter related the strategies to accomplishment of rhetorical goal(s): (30 pts)

Overview of the results achieved by the speaker/speech: (30 pts)

Full sentence outline of critique submitted: (10 pts)

Bibliography of research sources (4 sources minimum): (10 pts)

Delivery was extemporaneous: (10 pts)

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Points Awarded \_\_\_\_\_

Criticism of Public Discourse

Critique # 3 (Written Critique 6 – 8 typed pages.)

Rhetorical Evaluation:

Your primary purpose in this assignment is to evaluate the choices of “rhetorical strategies” made by the rhetor in constructing the speech you have chosen. In order to do this fully, you will also need to identify the rhetorical exigency(s) and the rhetorical problem(s) faced by the speaker. You may choose any speech from the section labeled Speeches for Critique 3 of “Speeches for Student Critiques”.

In order to accomplish these purposes, you will first need to do background research on extrinsic factors surrounding the speech: the situation, the rhetorical exigency(s), the audience(s), relevant audience attitudes, the speaker, his/her rhetorical purpose(s) in the speech, and the results/effects of the speech. This information will help you to identify the rhetorical problems (obstacles) faced by the speaker in attempting to achieve his/her goal. Since your page count is limited, be selective in choosing the extrinsic factors to be included in the actual speech presentation. Include only those elements directly relevant to the speech

you are analyzing and/or those elements necessary for the identification of the rhetorical exigency(s) and the rhetorical problem(s). Be certain to state explicitly the exact rhetorical exigency(s) and problem(s) faced by the speaker, and the speaker's goal(s).

Second, identify the rhetorical strategies used by the speaker in attempting to remove the rhetorical exigency(s), to overcome the rhetorical problem(s), and to reach the goal(s). Consider such factors as arguments, supporting materials, structure, speaker's persona, tone, language style, or any other strategy you feel is relevant in this speech. In preparing your critique, you may wish to refer to the Elements of Rhetorical Action (Chp 2) and to the discussions of rhetorical resources in Chapters 7 - 11 and/or to the material discussed in class.

Considering your limited page count, you will need to be selective in choosing the strategies to be discussed in your presentation. Focus on the most significant of the speaker's strategies and/or on the strategies that will most assist your audience in understanding the rhetorical characteristics of the speaker and the speech.

Third, after identifying and explaining the rhetorical strategies in the speech, state explicitly how the rhetorical strategies you describe would/should aid the rhetor in achieving his/her rhetorical goal. Your discussion must include a specific evaluation of the strategic choices made by the speaker. You will thus be judging the speaker's use of the "available means of persuasion."

Your critique should include:

Background materials:

A brief background of the speaker, include only what is relevant to the speech.

A brief description of the context of the speech, include only what is relevant to the speech.

A brief summary of the speech, include only what is relevant to your analysis.

Identify the rhetorical exigency(ies), problem(s), and goal(s) relevant to the speaker.

Describe and illustrate the rhetorical strategies used by the speaker.

Describe how the strategies are intended to accomplish the rhetorical goal.

Evaluate the quality of the strategic choices using appropriate criteria.

The day you submit your paper, you are responsible for turning in:

A well written, well-developed paper using either APA or MLA style.

A bibliography of research sources (5 sources minimum).

A copy of the text of the speech you are analyzing.

Criticism of Public Discourse

Critique # 3 - Peer Review

Value: 20 pts.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Presenter provided the following: (Points awarded on quality/completeness of responses)

Background Materials:

Brief background of the speaker relevant to the speech

Brief description of the context of the speech

Brief summary of the speech

Identified the rhetorical exigence(s), problem(s), and goal(s) relevant to the speaker:

Described and illustrated the rhetorical strategies used by the speaker:

Described how the strategies were intended to accomplish the rhetorical goal:

Evaluated the quality of the strategic choices using appropriate criteria:

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Peer Reviewer

Criticism of Public Discourse

Critique # 3 - Instructor Evaluation

Value: 200 pts.

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Name

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Date

Presenter provided the following:

Background Materials: (50 pts)

Brief background of the speaker relevant to the speech

Brief description of the context of the speech

Brief summary of the speech

Identified the rhetorical exigence(s), problem(s), and goal(s) relevant to the speaker: (25 pts)

Described and illustrated the rhetorical strategies used by the speaker: (20 pts)

Described how the strategies were intended to accomplish the rhetorical goal: (20 pts)

Evaluated the quality of the strategic choices using appropriate criteria: (25 pts)

APA or MLA style used appropriately: (10 pts)

Content logical, well developed, with meaningful transitions: (30 pts)

A bibliography of research sources (5 sources minimum): (10 pts)

A copy of the text of the speech: (10 pts)

Points Awarded \_\_\_\_\_