

# ISS 1340: Rhetoric and Leadership

## Quest 1: Identities

### I. General Information

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#### Class Meetings

- Fall 2025
- 100% In-Person, No GTAs, 35 Residential
- T | Periods 5-6 (11:45 AM - 1:40 PM)
- R | Period 6 (12:50 PM - 1:40 PM)

#### Instructor

- Robert Stone
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- Tel: 352-394-3994
- CSE E544
- *Office Hours:* T/R, 2:00-3:00 PM and by appointment

#### Course Description

How do leaders use rhetoric to persuade others? What role does the art of rhetoric have in the making of politics, art, and community? This course will draw from ancient and modern perspectives, looking at both philosophical explorations of rhetoric and practical examples of it. We will begin with the Greek and Roman world, looking to examples of speeches from Homer and Thucydides, as well as critiques and defenses of the art of rhetoric from Plato to Aristotle to Cicero. We will then read famous instances of rhetoric in modern literary and political contexts, from Shakespeare's historical plays to American presidential oratory, to try to discern what is timeless about the art of rhetoric. Throughout, we will ponder what role persuasion plays in our own lives, and what role it should play.

## Quest and General Education Credit

- Quest 1
- Humanities
- Writing Requirement (WR) 2000 words

*This course accomplishes the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) objectives of the subject areas listed above. A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S-U.*

*The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.*

*Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.*

## Required Readings and Works

1. All readings for the course are available on Canvas.
2. Writing Manual: *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 18<sup>th</sup> edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2024)
3. Materials and Supplies Fees: n/a.

## II. Graded Work

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### Description of Graded Work

**1. Active Participation and Attendance: 20%**

**a. Participation: 10%**

- i. An exemplary participant shows evidence of having done the assigned reading before each class, consistently offers thoughtful points and questions for discussion, and listens considerably to other discussants. See participation rubric below. (R)
- ii. As part of participation, students should be prepared to note a passage from each week's reading that they find interesting and would like to highlight for class discussion.

**b. Class Attendance: 10%**

- i. On-time class attendance is required for this component of the course grade. You may have two unexcused absences without any penalty, but starting with the third class missed your grade will be affected. Starting with the third unexcused absence, each unexcused absence reduces your attendance grade by 2/3: an A- becomes a B, and so on.
- ii. Except for absence because of religious holiday observance, documentation is required for excused absences, per university policy. Excessive unexcused absences (10 or more) will result in failure of the course. If you miss 10 or more classes (excused or not), you will miss material essential for successful completion of the course.

**2. Experiential Learning Component: 10%**

- a. During the semester, students will attend an on-campus public speaking event (details to be provided in class).
- b. In Week 13 (Nov. 14), students will submit a short report (500 words maximum) reflecting on the rhetorical effectiveness of the speaker(s).

**3. In-class Reading Quizzes: 20%**

- a. Reading quizzes will be administered at the start of class on Tuesday, five times throughout the semester. They will test the student's knowledge of the week's readings, and will contain short-answer, true/false, and/or multiple-choice questions. See grading rubric below. (R)
- b. Quizzes will be administered on random weeks throughout the term.

**4. Midterm Examination: 25%**

- a. In Week 7 (October 2), a midterm examination will be administered in class. The examination will be an in-class, 50-minute exam including essay, short-answer, true-false, and/or multiple-choice questions. Professor Stone will provide written feedback on your essay and/or short-answer questions. See grading rubric below. (R)

**5. Final Analytical Paper: 25%**

- a. In Week 15 (Dec. 7), students will submit a 2,000 word (minimum) analytical essay addressing a prompt provided to you. They will develop an analytic argument based on their

own thesis responding to the prompt. The paper must incorporate at least four course readings. See Canvas for more details.

- b. In Week 14 (Nov. 21), students will submit a draft of the analytical essay. This may be shorter than the final version and will not be graded. Professor Stone will provide comments on the draft to help improve the final product with respect to the overall argument, as well as grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.
- c. You may want to access the university's [Writing Studio](#).
- d. An additional writing guide website can be found at [OWL](#).
- e. For grading standards, see Writing Assessment Rubric on syllabus.

# III. Annotated Weekly Schedule

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## WEEK 1 (AUG. 21): INTRODUCTION

We will begin with general introductions, a discussion of the goals and themes of the course, and pose the question of what we take the word rhetoric to mean, and how it relates to leadership

Readings: none

## WEEK 2 (AUG. 26-28): RHETORIC FOR SPEAKERS, READERS, WRITERS

This week we will look at short works from Winston Churchill on the nature of the oratory, George Orwell on the state of the English language, and Jacques Barzun on the importance of individual style, to stimulate discussion of rhetoric and the importance rhetoric has for us as human beings and citizens.

Readings (19 pages):

1. Winston Churchill, "The Scaffolding of Rhetoric, November 1897" (5 pages) (pdf).
2. George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language" (14 pages) (pdf)
3. Jacques Barzun, "Rhetoric: What it is; Why Needed," in *A Jacques Barzun Reader*, ed. Michael Murray (HarperCollins, 2002), pp. 149-155.

### WEEK 3 (SEPT. 2-4): RHETORIC OF WAR AND DEMOCRACY

We will look to speeches from the historian Thucydides and consider ancient Athens' rhetoric of ethics, democracy, war, and empire. Thucydides will prompt us to consider how we should balance claims of morality and self-interest, what role a leader plays in a democracy, and to what extent rhetoric can influence the conduct of nations.

Readings (45 pages):

1. Jeremy Mynott, "Introduction," *The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. xx-xxv.
2. Thucydides, *The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians*, II.34-46, II.59-65, III.36-50, III.70-84, ed. Jeremy Mynott (Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 109-117, 124-131, 182-193, 206-215.

#### WEEK 4 (SEPT. 9-11): THE PHILOSOPHER AS RHETORICIAN

This week we look to Plato for a philosophical critique of rhetoric as it is commonly understood. In the *Gorgias*, Socrates argues that what we think of as rhetoric fails to achieve what is actually good. We will discuss the merits of this argument in light of the “ship of state” analogy in the *Republic* the epistemic critique of democratic politics.

Readings (21 pages):

1. Plato, *Gorgias* 447a-465e, in *Complete Works of Plato*, ed. John M. Cooper (Hackett, 1997), pp. 791-809.
2. Plato, *The Republic* 488a-489b in *Complete Works of Plato*, pp. 1111-1112.



## WEEK 5 (SEPT. 16-18): THE ART OF RHETORIC

What is the case for rhetoric as a positive influence in our lives and upon society as a whole? What does the Greek tradition have to say about what makes rhetoric powerful, and how this power can be beneficial to us? This week we will explore Aristotle's political and psychological defense of persuasion and Danielle Allen's application of Aristotle for modern American civil discourse.

Readings (67 pages):

1. Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, I.1-6, I.8-10, II.1-4, II.18-20 III.16-17, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 3-24, 31-41, 60-71, 92-98, 150-155.
2. Danielle Allen, "Rhetoric, a Good Thing," in *Talking to Strangers*, (University of Chicago press, 2004), pp. 140-155.

## WEEK 6 (SEPT. 23-25): ROMAN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Cicero, unlike Aristotle and Plato, approaches rhetoric from the perspective of a practitioner. We will begin with a selection from his dialogue *On Invention* on the origins of oratory and society, and continue to his later work *On the Orator* where he suggests that an ideal orator is a moral and philosophical teacher. We then look at a selection of Cicero's most famous speeches attacking enemies of the Roman Republic, and we consider to what degree Cicero—or any orator—can live up to his ideals.

Readings (38 pages):

1. Cicero, *De Inventione*, trans. H.M. Hubbell (Harvard University Press, 1949), 1.1-1.9, pp. 3-21
2. Cicero, Selections from *On the Orator*, in *Ancient Rhetoric from Aristotle to Philostratus*, ed. Thomas Habinek (Penguin, 2017), pp. 3-13.
3. Cicero, "Among Us You Can Dwell No Longer" (Against Catiline), in *Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*, pp. 15-23.
4. Cicero, "Second Philippic Against Marc Antony," 1-9 (pdf).

## WEEK 7 (SEPT. 30-OCT. 2): MYTHMAKING AND NOSTALGIA IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

After civil war and the end of the Roman Republic, historians reflected on the meaning of Rome and the connection between virtue and politics. This week we look to Tacitus' reflection on great oratory as a relic of a different—and more violent—age. We will then look to the historian Sallust's recreation of the speech that launched the career of the populist Marius, whose factionalism helped bring about civil war and the end of the Republic.

Readings (38 pages):

1. Tacitus, "Dialogue on Orators," in *Ancient Literary Criticism* (Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 111-142.
2. Sallust, Speech of Marius in *The Jugurthine War*, trans. William Batstone (Oxford University Press, 2010) chaps. 84-86, pp. 105-110.

**Assignment: In-class Midterm THURSDAY, October 2**

## WEEK 8 (OCT. 7-9): MACHIAVELLI: RHETORIC OF ADVICE AND LEADERSHIP

This week we move to modern political thought for a contrast to the ancient approaches to rhetoric. We will read selections from Machiavelli, who models a type of rhetoric of advice to rulers. We will contemplate how the intended audience and type of regime shapes the advice we might give to others, and how shocking statements have enduring power.

Readings (74 pages):

1. Quentin Skinner, "Introduction" to *The Prince* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), ix-xxiv.
2. Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Harvey Mansfield (University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 3-4, 21-42, 54-82, 87-91, 101-105.

## WEEK 9 (OCT. 14-16): RHETORIC IN ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

Our experience of English rhetoric originates from 16<sup>th</sup> century England. Shakespeare's plays feature some of the great monologues of the English language. We will read through these speeches to identify features of their eloquence and how they comment on the role of rhetoric in politics. We will then read the speeches of Queen Elizabeth to see an example of monarchical rhetoric in practice.

Readings (35 pages):

1. William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Plays, Sonnets and Poems* from The Folger Shakespeare, ed. Barbara A. Mowat, Paul Werstine, (<https://shakespeare.folger.edu/>),
  - a. *King Lear*, I.1, pp. 7-29
  - b. *Julius Caesar*, III.2, pp. 115-135
  - c. *Henry V*, IV.3, pp. 161-165
2. Elizabeth I, "I have the heart and stomach of a king" (Speech to the Troops at Tilbury), in *Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*, pp. 40-41.

## WEEK 10 (OCT. 21-23): MILTON ON ELOQUENCE

This week will be devoted to reading selections from Milton's formative English epic poem, *Paradise Lost*. We will consider how theological and abstract concepts are made tangible through eloquence, what parts of eloquence make a reader relate to characters in fiction, and whether eloquence is itself to be mistrusted.

Readings (58 pages):

1. Introduction, pp. xv-xxix.
2. John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (Blackwell, 2007)
  - Book I, (entire), pp. 11-35.
  - Book II, lines 1-527, pp. 37-51.
  - Book IV, lines 1-130, pp. 91-95.

## WEEK 11 (OCT. 28-30): THE AGE OF REVOLUTIONS

We continue our exploration of political rhetoric by looking at paradigmatic examples of conservative and radical thought in the eighteenth century. Edmund Burke models a political rhetoric in the service of conservative ideals, while Robespierre appeals to notions of justice and virtue as engines for change. We will consider how these models of rhetoric live on in our contemporary politics.

Readings (39 pages):

1. Robespierre, "Speeches in the French Revolution," in *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, ed. Keith Michael Baker (University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 368–384.
2. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, in *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, ed. Keith Michael Baker (Chicago, 1986, pp. 428–445.
3. Edmund Burke, "Speech to the Electors of Bristol," in *Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*, pp. 114–115.

## WEEK 12 (NOV 4-6): AMERICA: FOUNDING TO CRISIS

This week will turn to the American rhetorical tradition. We begin with pre-Revolutionary rhetoric of John Winthrop, then we will read Federalist 10 for a defense of the proposed Constitution. We will also consider James Fenimore Cooper's concern that democracy was increasingly susceptible to manipulation by unscrupulous individuals. We will then turn to the brewing crisis posed by slavery and read speeches by John C. Calhoun and Frederick Douglass. We will conclude with Elizabeth Cady Stanton's demand for women's right to vote. We will consider how these arguments invoke and reflect what it means to be American.

Readings (35 pages):

1. John Winthrop, "City on a Hill," in *Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*, pp. 95-97.
2. The Federalist, No. 10 (8 pages).
3. James Fenimore Cooper, "On Demagogues" from *The American Democrat* (New York, 1858) (4 pages)
4. John C. Calhoun "The Controversy is...between power and liberty," in *Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*, pp. 241-245.
5. Frederick Douglass, "What, to a Slave, is the Fourth of July?" in *Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*, pp. 260-263.
6. Elizabeth Cady Stanton "We Now Demand the Right to Vote," in *Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*, pp. 429-432.



### WEEK 13 (NOV 13): LINCOLN AND THE RHETORIC OF MEANING

This week will be devoted largely to a close consideration of perhaps the single most celebrated piece of American oratory: Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. We will consider it in light of Garry Wills' contention that it redefines the meaning of the Civil War and the American experiment. We will ask what makes this eloquent and what it means for modern American life.

Readings (24 pages):

1. Abraham Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address," in *Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*, ed. Brian MacArthur (Penguin, 2017), pp. 367-368.
2. Garry Wills, "The Words that Remade America," *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 1992, pp. 57-79.
3. Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address" (3 pages) (pdf).

**Assignment: Experiential Learning Report Due by 11:59 PM, FRIDAY, Nov 14**

## WEEK 14 (NOV. 18-20): SPEECHES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

What makes a great speech in modern times? How do some of the most famous speeches of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the modern American presidency make use of classical modes of persuasion, and how do they build on the English rhetorical tradition we have looked at thus far? We will look at speeches from World War II and the American civil rights era, and we will ask how such rhetoric both meets its moment and transcends it. We will also consider a speech by Adolph Hitler, and we will ask whether the success of such a speaker is a condemnation of the art of rhetoric.

Readings (42 pages):

1. Jeffrey K. Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency* (Princeton, 2016), pp. 3-23 (pdf).
2. Franklin Delano Roosevelt 'A Date Which Will Live in Infamy' (3 pages)(pdf)
3. Winston Churchill, 'Their Finest Hour', in *Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*, pp. 482-483.
4. Adolf Hitler, 'My patience is now at an end', in *Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*, pp. 477-480.
5. Martin Luther King, Jr., 'I Have a Dream', in *Penguin Book of Historic Speeches*, pp. 487-491.

**Assignment: Analytical Paper DRAFT Due 11:59 PM, FRIDAY, Nov. 21**

## WEEK 15 (DEC. 2): REVIEW AND REFLECTION

For our final session we will reflect on the state of public discourse today. Drawing on Sam Leith, we will consider whether the state of rhetoric is in crisis, and, if so, what this portends.

Reading (23 pages):

Sam Leith, "Afterword," *Words Like Loaded Pistols* (Basic Books, 2023), pp. 281-303.

**Assignment: Analytical Paper Due 11:59 PM SUNDAY, Dec 7**

## IV. Grading Scale and Rubrics

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### Grading Scale

For information on UF's grading policies for assigning grade points, see [here](#).

A	94 - 100%		C	74 - 76%
A-	90 - 93%		C-	70 - 73%
B+	87 - 89%		D+	67 - 69%
B	84 - 86%		D	64 - 66%
B-	80 - 83%		D-	60 - 63%
C+	77 - 79%		E	<60

## Grading Rubrics

### Participation Rubric

<b>A</b> (90-100%)	Typically comes to class with pre-prepared questions about the readings. Engages others about ideas, respects the opinions of others and consistently elevates the level of discussion.
<b>B</b> (80-89%)	Does not always come to class with pre-prepared questions about the reading. Waits passively for others to raise interesting issues. Some in this category, while courteous and articulate, do not adequately listen to other participants or relate their comments to the direction of the conversation.
<b>C</b> (70-79%)	Attends regularly but typically is an infrequent or unwilling participant in discussion. Is only adequately prepared for discussion.
<b>D</b> (60-69%)	Fails to attend class regularly and is inadequately prepared for discussion. Is an unwilling participant in discussion.
<b>E</b> (<60%)	Attends class infrequently and is wholly unprepared for discussion. Refuses to participate in discussion.

### Examination Rubric: Essays and Short Answers

	<b>Completeness</b>	<b>Analysis</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Writing</b>
<b>A</b> (90–100%)	Shows a thorough understanding of the question. Addresses all aspects of the question completely.	Analyses, evaluates, compares and/or contrasts issues and events with depth.	Incorporates pertinent and detailed information from both class discussions and assigned readings.	Presents all information clearly and concisely, in an organized manner.
<b>B</b> (80–89%)	Presents a general understanding of the question. Completely addresses most aspects of the question or address all aspects incompletely.	Analyses or evaluates issues and events, but not in any depth.	Includes relevant facts, examples and details but does not support all aspects of the task evenly.	Presents information fairly and evenly and may have minor organization problems.
<b>C</b> (70–79%)	Shows a limited understanding of the question. Does not address most aspects of the question.	Lacks analysis or evaluation of the issues and events beyond stating accurate, relevant facts.	Includes relevant facts, examples and details, but omits concrete examples, includes inaccurate information and/or does not support all aspects of the task.	Lacks focus, somewhat interfering with comprehension.
<b>D</b> (60–69%)	Fails fully to answer the specific central question.	Lacks analysis or evaluation of the issues and events beyond stating vague, irrelevant, and/or inaccurate facts.	Does not incorporate information from pertinent class discussion and/or assigned readings.	Organizational problems prevent comprehension.
<b>E</b> (<60%)	Does not answer the specific central question.	Lacks analysis or evaluation of the issues and events.	Does not adduce any evidence.	Incomprehensible organization and prose.

## Writing Rubric

	Thesis and Argumentation	Use of Sources	Organization	Grammar, mechanics and style
<b>A</b> (90–100%)	Thesis is clear, specific, and presents a thoughtful, critical, engaging, and creative interpretation. Argument fully supports the thesis both logically and thoroughly.	Primary (and secondary texts, if required) are well incorporated, utilized, and contextualized throughout.	Clear organization. Introduction provides adequate background information and ends with a thesis. Details are in logical order. Conclusion is strong and states the point of the paper.	No errors.
<b>B</b> (80–89%)	Thesis is clear and specific, but not as critical or original. Shows insight and attention to the text under consideration. May have gaps in argument's logic.	Primary (and secondary texts, if required) are incorporated but not contextualized significantly.	Clear organization. Introduction clearly states thesis, but does not provide as much background information. Details are in logical order, but may be more difficult to follow. Conclusion is recognizable and ties up almost all loose ends.	A few errors.
<b>C</b> (70–79%)	Thesis is present but not clear or specific, demonstrating a lack of critical engagement to the text. Argument is weak, missing important details or making logical leaps with little support.	Primary (and secondary texts, if required) are mostly incorporated but are not properly contextualized.	Significant lapses in organization. Introduction states thesis but does not adequately provide background information. Some details not in logical or expected order that results in a distracting read. Conclusion is recognizable but does not tie up all loose ends.	Some errors.
<b>D</b> (60–69%)	Thesis is vague and/or confused. Demonstrates a failure to understand the text. Argument lacks any logical flow and does not utilize any source material.	Primary and/or secondary texts are almost wholly absent.	Poor, hard-to-follow organization. There is no clear introduction of the main topic or thesis. There is no clear conclusion, and the paper just ends. Little or no employment of logical body paragraphs.	Many errors.
<b>E</b> (<60%)	There is neither a thesis nor any argument.	Primary and/or secondary texts are wholly absent.	The paper is wholly disorganized, lacking an introduction, conclusion or any logical coherence.	Scores of errors.

## V. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

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At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the [Quest](#) the [General Education student learning outcomes](#) for Humanities (H).

[Humanities \(H\)](#) Humanities courses must afford students the ability to think critically through the mastering of subjects concerned with human culture, especially literature, history, art, music, and philosophy, and must include selections from the Western canon.

Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

**Content:** *Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline(s).*

- Identify, describe, and explain the methodologies used across humanities disciplines to examine essential ideas about rhetoric and leadership (Quest 1, H). **Assessment:** midterm exam, analytical essay, in-class reading quizzes.
- Identify, describe, and explain key ideas and questions about rhetoric and leadership (Quest 1, H). **Assessment:** midterm exam, analytical essay, in-class reading quizzes.

**Critical Thinking:** *Students carefully and logically analyse information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the discipline(s).*

- Analyse how philosophical, political and literary works from antiquity through the present explore rhetoric and leadership (Quest 1, H). **Assessment:** analytical essay, midterm exam.
- Analyse and evaluate specific accounts of human reaction to concepts that challenge our own notions of rhetoric and leadership, using close reading, critical analysis, class discussion, and personal reflection. (Quest 1, H). **Assignments:** analytical essay, discussion questions, midterm exam.

**Communication:** *Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).*

- Develop and present clear and effective written and oral work that demonstrates critical engagement with course texts, and experiential learning activities (Quest 1, H). **Assessments:** experiential learning interview report and discussion, analytical essay, midterm exam.
- Communicate well-supported ideas and arguments effectively within class discussion and debates, with clear oral presentation and written work articulating students' personal experiences and reflections on rhetoric and leadership (Quest 1, H). **Assessments:** active class participation, experiential learning component, discussion questions.

**Connection:** *Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.*

- Connect course content with students' intellectual, personal, and professional lives at UF and beyond. (Quest 1). **Assessments:** experiential learning component, analytical paper, discussion questions.



- Reflect on students' own and others' experience with rhetoric and leadership, in class discussion and written work (Quest 1). **Assessments:** experiential learning component, analytical paper, discussion questions.

## VI. Quest Learning Experiences

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### 1. Details of Experiential Learning Component

During this semester, students will be asked to attend a public speaker event such as a lecture or roundtable debate on the UF campus. They will be asked to take note of what they find effective or ineffective in the speaker's presentation and arguments. They will then submit a short report of 500 words maximum, noting their observations and explaining their opinions with reference to themes and material discussed in the course thus far.

### 2. Details of Self-Reflection Component

Self-reflection is built into many of the assignments, primarily through the reading questions that students create, the analytic essay assignment, and rhetoric and leadership experiential learning assignment. In these opportunities for self-reflection offered by specific activities throughout the course, students will reflect on the broader implications of the themes of the course, considering the impact to themselves and/or to a wider community.

## VII. Required Policies

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Please follow [this link](#) for University policies on Attendance, Accommodation, and UF student evaluations.