

## TERM PAPER INSTRUCTIONS

**Essay prompt:** Write an extended essay on the relationship between media and democracy in American politics by looking at one issue in depth (racism, inequality, liberty, etc.), drawing briefly on at least one significant work written before 1900 (i.e., one of our earlier readings in A Documentary History of the United States); a case study of a speech from the 20th century (i.e., a revision of your third analytical paper); a brief discussion of the role of the media (i.e., of one of the media readings in Heffner); and a discussion of where we seem to be headed, citing statistics and other rigorous forms of evidence, perhaps even offering a recommendation based on your research. Your paper must have a clear, reasonably sophisticated thesis at the end of the introduction. You will need to develop a new thesis to forecast your new argument. Your essay must demonstrate this thesis through rigorous textual evidence, persuasive argumentation, and clear writing. As you revise and expand your third major essay into an original argument about modern American society, your guiding question will most likely be **“how much has the situation really changed since the time of the speech I have analyzed?”**

**Due:** In class on Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, and electronically by midnight that night for anonymous UNM Gen Ed assessment. I can offer extensions but we must agree ahead of time on when you will submit your project.

**Length:** AT LEAST 8-12 full pages of text, double spaced, following MLA format precisely, plus an **accurate** Works Cited page. A template is still available at <http://citizen.obenauf.net>. I will not grade any paper that fails to meet these basic expectations, nor will you be permitted to rewrite or resubmit your essay because this core writing class emphasizes form as much as content. See the syllabus for more information.

**Notes:** Revision means more than simply correcting typos; it means taking a new look at your work and making sure everything fits together tightly. You should consult my **Guide to Writing and Reasoning Like a Scholar**, my comments on your first three papers, and your **MLA Handbook** for advice on how to approach high-level writing; you should also allot time to use my **Revision Triage Checklist** to make sure every element of your paper is impeccable. Aim to produce a masterpiece of publishable quality as the culmination of your semester’s learning in this course.

You are no longer required to use the ten constructions from the Third Analytical Paper (additionally, furthermore, moreover, etc.) but you are encouraged to deploy such formulas to help guide your reader.

The use of AI algorithms including ChatGPT at any stage of the brainstorming, research, writing, and revision process constitutes a violation of the student code of conduct that can lead to a disciplinary procedure.

As always, you must cite your sources rigorously, following the guidelines in the MLA Handbook.

## Sample Outline

1a. General Introduction. You should frame your essay by looking back at an earlier text, predating your speech, such as by Washington or Lincoln, to establish the longer historical, political, and philosophical context for your new argument. You should pick a text that helps frame the main themes of the speech you will be discussing in the main part of your paper, even if there is not a direct allusion to it in that speech. You will need to build an argument very efficiently about this text, laying out the relevant quotes and analyzing them in such a way that establishes the line of reasoning you will then illustrate in the main part of your paper. (No more than 1 paragraph; possibly combine this with 1b)

1b. Targeted introduction. Either separately or as part of the same paragraph as 1a, you will need to offer your reader an introduction to your topic. What theme, value, or issue are you discussing in your paper? Which speech will you analyze? You may be able to repurpose some of your first paragraph from the Third Analytical Paper, but make sure that you also forecast the conclusion of your essay, in which you will assess the situation today. Your introduction should conclude with your thesis statement. (1 paragraph, ending with your thesis statement)

2. An in-depth analysis of a speech from the twentieth century and its contemporary media coverage. This is essentially a revision of your Third Analytical Paper (minus the conclusion), and it will be the meat of your new essay. (5-7 pages)

3. Transition. Before discussing the speech's subsequent legacy (and recycling and expanding upon the scholarly material you explored in your Third Analytical Paper), you need to comment briefly on the relationship between public figures and the press by drawing a connection to one or more of the media readings in Heffner (*i.e.*, LBJ, Lippmann, Murrow, Agnew, or Stewart; or TR from the coursepack). You should efficiently introduce the text and its background, incorporate quotations from it, and show how it helps illuminate the argument you are developing throughout your paper. (1-2 paragraphs)

4. Scholarly and other subsequent evaluation of the speech. This is an expansion of the conclusion to your Third Analytical Paper. You may need to find additional scholarly sources to show how the speech and its speaker have been assessed more recently. (2-3 paragraphs or so)

5. Your own assessment. This is the point of it all: the "so what" of all your research. Bring us to the present and make some observations of your own. You are expected to respond to recent voices on the topic by citing at least one op-ed on your topic (if not the speech itself, if you can find one) from the editorial page of a major newspaper (*e.g.*, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, or The Washington Post) from sometime in 2024. Using statistics and other rigorous forms of evidence, make a case for where you agree and disagree with recent thinkers on your topic. In this section, you may wish to critique or comment on recent journalism on the topic, and explain what bias you see and what it suggests about the current state of affairs. A strong conclusion will allude to the earliest text that you considered in your introduction and bring your essay full circle. (2-4 pages)