

**HNRS 2112-008 MW 1pm-2:15**  
UNM Honors College Room 1004

Dr. Obenauf  
Spring Term 2026

## THE ARTICULATE CITIZEN

### SYLLABUS

Instructor: Richard Obenauf, PhD  
[obenauf@unm.edu](mailto:obenauf@unm.edu)  
<http://citizen.obenauf.net>

Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays  
12:30-1:00 and 4:00-4:30  
and by appointment

Our founders believed a republic could survive only if its citizens could read critically, think independently, and argue persuasively. This Honors writing seminar revives that ideal through a crash course in American history told in its own words. Students will examine key documents—from Common Sense and the Declaration of Independence, the Federalist Papers, and the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions to major speeches and essays by Lincoln, Carnegie, Roosevelt, Eisenhower, Kennedy, King, and others—and use them as models for their own writing. Alongside these classics, we'll analyze modern news coverage to see how bias, framing, and ideology shape the stories we read and tell. You'll learn to recognize persuasive strategies in history, journalism, and daily conversation—and to use them responsibly in your own work.

Assignments include a reading journal, short analytical essays, and an original research project based on primary sources. Small, discussion-driven, and rigorous by design, “The Articulate Citizen” challenges you to write clearly, think historically, and participate meaningfully in the ongoing American conversation.

### HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS COURSE

What you get out of this class depends on what you put into it.

“The Articulate Citizen” is different from other classes you have likely taken in that it is centered on primary sources. In most cases, I will be interested in how you respond to the ideas and themes in our readings without regard for what anyone else has said about them. I am looking for your most honest responses and interpretations based on the evidence you gather from our sources. Without fear of saying the “wrong” thing, or pressure to say the “right” thing, you will gain confidence in summarizing texts in your own words and generating your own ideas about them based on evidence you cite.

To help you slow down and practice reading, thinking, and writing carefully, most weeks you will need to spend between five and ten hours outside of class preparing for our seminar sessions. This course assumes that much of that time will be spent reading and writing without digital distraction—ideally with print texts, paper notes, and handwritten revision. We won’t use Canvas in this class—you’ll use Microsoft Word to produce MLA-style documents, which you’ll print out and turn in as hard copies. I’ll

read your papers with a pencil in my hand and return them with notes you will then review and use as you work on your next paper. When we're in class together, we will rarely use the projector for videos or PowerPoint; rather, we'll give each other our full attention by putting away our electronics and listening to what each person is really trying to convey through their words.

Rather than relying on summaries and other people's interpretations—which may be inaccurate or may cloud your analysis of the course readings—you should read slowly and with a dictionary, taking notes and coming to class with questions you were unable to answer on your own. If you don't already own a decent dictionary, you should consider buying one. A print dictionary will allow you to look up unfamiliar words without getting sucked into your phone. It is normal to be a little confused at times. That is part of the process. There are no shortcuts.

You are expected to be the sole creator of all work you submit and of every idea you raise during class discussion. This includes resisting the temptation to use AI tools like ChatGPT, Grammarly, or similar software. They can imitate certain skills, but they cannot give you the experience of doing the work yourself—and they can lead you astray. This course is designed to give you the rare opportunity to build your own voice, with your own reasoning, from the ground up. If you are ever in doubt about whether it is acceptable to use a particular resource for this class, you should ask your instructor. **Before you submit each assignment, ask yourself this question: Did I do this work myself, yes or no?**

I look forward to seeing what you'll discover for yourself this semester.

## YOUR GRADE

There are many ways to assess student learning. In this class, the main form of assessment will be the feedback you get on your writing. The comments on your papers are for your benefit. You should read my notes and ask questions so that you can follow up on each piece of advice as you work on each subsequent essay. In addition to the handwritten and typed notes, I will assign letter grades to your formal writing (i.e., the four major papers) and grade the response papers and exercises on a pass/fail basis. **These grades are a necessary evil: the grade you earn on each assignment is far less important than the feedback you receive and the progress you make over the course of the semester.** You should not fixate on the grades. Just keep doing your best and strive to push yourself with each assignment.

25% Participation

75% Written work

15% Response papers and exercises

15% First short analytical paper

15% Second short analytical paper

15% Third short analytical paper

15% Term paper (an expansion of the third analytical paper)

Your semester grade will follow the Honors College's unique grading system according to these criteria:

A semester grade of A+, A, or A– will be recorded on your university transcript as an A. An “A” signifies exemplary work that meets Honors expectations and will compute into your academic GPA.

A semester grade of B+ through C+ will be recorded on your university transcript as “CR.” A grade of Credit in this course signals that you participated meaningfully in class discussion and that you made an earnest attempt to meet the basic norms of scholarly writing even if your work did not consistently meet Honors-level expectations for writing and rigor. You will receive credit towards graduation for your satisfactory work in this class, but your grade will not factor into your academic GPA.

A semester grade of C or below will be recorded on your university transcript as “NC.” A grade of No Credit signals a failure to meet basic conventions of scholarly work, such as respect for deadlines, formatting, grammar, accuracy in citations and bibliographies, and/or significant problems in attendance and participation. **Even if your points add up to a passing grade, it is not possible to pass this course if your final project is incoherent or lacks appropriate citations or an accurate bibliography.** Thus, a grade of NC indicates unacceptable work and is not computed into your GPA or counted towards graduation.

I believe that every student enrolled in this seminar is capable of earning an A for the semester in “The Articulate Citizen.” Because I do not grade on a curve, nothing would delight me more than to turn in all As in May.

## CLASS PARTICIPATION

Attendance: We all benefit from hearing your perspectives in class discussion. **I will lower your participation grade for each unexcused absence. After four unexcused absences, therefore, you will no longer be able to earn a passing grade in the class.** Your consistent attendance and contribution to class discussion are crucial to the success of this small seminar. And although I expect you to be ready to begin on time, it's better to be late than not to come at all. Consistent tardiness will affect your participation grade in proportion to the consistency of your disruption. Please keep in touch with me if you must miss class. If you are experiencing physical or academic barriers, or concerns related to mental health, physical health and/or COVID-19, please consult with me after class, via email, or during office hours. I want to help you succeed in this class, and I will do everything within my power to shepherd you through to May. We will work together on a case-by-case basis as issues arise.

Book policy: Bring the book we're reading to every class session. We will need to cite evidence for every claim we make. To practice quoting the text extensively during class discussion in preparation for your papers, we will all (literally) need to be on the same page. I have prepared a photocopied coursepack of shorter readings and

ordered the most inexpensive editions I could find of longer books to make sure that you can afford the materials for this class, and you are expected to use these physical printed materials, in the exact editions I have requested. Our classroom is both a NO-B.S. ZONE and a safe space to try out new ideas; the best ideas are anchored in concrete evidence; without your book, you cannot cite evidence for your claims, and therefore you cannot participate meaningfully in discussion. **Since you may be dismissed from class and marked “absent” for the day if you do not have your book with you, if you realize you’ve forgotten your book, you should tell your instructor immediately and ask permission to share with a classmate or to use an electronic version for that day only.**

Electronics use: The emphasis in a seminar is on conversation. Even before class begins, Honors wishes to cultivate a sense of community through chitchat amongst your peers. In order to be fully engaged in our discussions, you should put away your electronic devices when you are in class so that you can devote your total attention to what your classmates are saying and to what you can contribute. I again ask that you use PRINT editions of the texts we will be discussing so that you can leave your phones, computers, tablets, e-readers, and other distractions in your bags. If you must use electronics during class, you will need to resist the temptation to check social media or work on other projects.

Participation and preparation: Honors seminars are neither lectures nor bull sessions; active attendance is a part of participation, and so your presence alone does not guarantee participation points. You are encouraged to contribute when you have something thoughtful to say...which means coming to class thoroughly prepared to discuss the day’s readings with an open mind. The best way to prepare is to read the course materials attentively, looking up unfamiliar words and concepts, and generally considering the major issues of the works before we begin our discussions.

Reading journal: In addition to your normal class notes, you will need a separate notebook—a **reading journal**—to use for reflection throughout the semester. For each reading, I will announce some reflection questions for you to consider in your private reading journal. I recommend tackling the questions before attacking the reading so that you can see how your ideas compare with those of the text. This will take approximately **one to two hours per text** and it is a significant part of this course. You will draw on your personal responses in your short response papers, and your observations about the readings will help you prepare for class discussion. **This reading journal is strictly confidential—you will never, ever be required to share its contents with me or with any of your classmates. You are expected to keep up with it.**

Following up by email: Although Honors expects all students to contribute to our daily seminar discussion, you may not be able to express every idea that you would like to explore in our limited time. I encourage you to email me with your observations, questions, or even links to relevant articles. Past students have found it helpful to articulate an idea by explaining it in an email to me, and this is one way for introverted students to show that they are truly engaged in the course.

Keeping up with the news: You should make a strong effort to keep up with current events while you are in this class (and hopefully for the rest of your life). I suggest following such sources as The Albuquerque Journal, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, and USA Today. The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal offer special discounts for students; Amazon Prime subscribers qualify for other discounts for The Washington Post. On social media, you should consider following sources like Dan Rather, ProPublica, and the Columbia Journalism Review. You don't have to read every newspaper every day, but you should at least keep up with the headlines in major legacy media outlets.

Extra credit: I would like to offer extra credit to any student who **independently** discovers a typo in a major newspaper (e.g., The Albuquerque Journal, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, or USA Today). I will add  $\frac{1}{4}$  point to your final grade for each mistake you detect in an online article, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  point for each mistake you detect in the print version. Typos include misspellings, punctuation errors, formatting problems, and other editing mistakes. In order to claim your bonus points, you must email me within 24 hours of publication with a screenshot of the relevant passage in the digital article (plus a link to it) or a scan or photograph of a printed page. **In order to claim the points, you must also write a brief paragraph describing the typo, hypothesizing what may have caused it, and explaining what the error signals about the way the article was written or the how newspaper is produced.**

## WRITTEN WORK

Consistent and thoughtful class participation is crucial to your education (and hence your grade), and yet the slow, careful work of a scholar is largely a solitary activity. And, in contrast to in-class participation, written work is much more objectively assessed and improved over time. Besides, this is a writing class! For these reasons, your written work accounts for the bulk of your grade in "The Articulate Citizen." I will provide ample feedback on your papers, including marginal annotations and typed comments, so that you can continue to improve your writing, no matter how well you write at the start of the term. You should review my notes carefully.

**I can only help you identify your strengths and weaknesses if the work you submit reflects your actual abilities. You will not be permitted to rewrite any of your papers in this class. It is important that you do your best the first time so that I can respond with advice that will help you take your writing and thinking to the next level.**

I will spend significant time responding to your work, and so I have some specific requests about how you format your documents so that I can streamline my grading. I would much rather spend my time commenting on your ideas and argumentation than on your formatting and grammar. You don't need me to tell you things you already know—if you rush through your drafts and skip the revision process, my feedback will be less helpful to you than if I am able to respond to your strongest effort. Since you will not be permitted to rewrite any of your papers in this class, I urge you to do a good job the first time and request guidance and extensions if necessary.

I take it as a given that you will use the MLA template I have provided on the course website so that you can focus your energy on your writing and argumentation and I can focus my energy on responding to your writing and argumentation. I have also provided a Guide to Writing and Reasoning Like a Scholar in the coursepack for this class to help you produce the sort of writing we are looking for in Honors, regardless of what writing classes you may (or may not) have had in high school or college.

For this class you will need to install **Microsoft Word** to your computer (and **NOT** just use the online version, or Google Docs, or Pages, etc.). You can get it for free as a UNM student through your webmail page. Look for the matrix of nine dots in the upper left corner (technically known as the “waffle iron”), and click it to reveal a list of various webapps. You don’t want those webapps, but above that list is a link with an arrow that says “Office.” Click that and you’ll go to office.com but logged in with your UNM credentials. At the top right of that page there’s a big button that says “Install Office.” Click the button and follow the instructions. Once you have Word on your computer, you’ll be ready to download my MLA template from the course website that will enable you to produce properly formatted MLA documents.

**Since you will not be permitted to rewrite any of your papers in this class, I urge you to do a good job the first time and request guidance and extensions if necessary.** That said, you have the tools to get full credit for all of your work. I would much rather spend my time commenting on your ideas and argumentation than on your formatting and grammar. You don’t need me to tell you things you already know—if you rush through your drafts and skip the revision process, my feedback will be less helpful to you than if I am able to respond to your strongest effort. To help nudge you towards using the course materials sooner rather than later, this semester **there will be a penalty of one letter grade for each significant formatting or proofreading issue.** I look forward to seeing what you come up with!

To reiterate, I have provided you with a thorough guide to writing and reasoning like a scholar in your coursepack, which will help you teach yourself how to meet the expectations of the formal analytical writing in this class, including the analytical portions of your term paper. You must proofread your work carefully before you turn it in. There will be numerous other handouts and tools provided to you this semester to help you succeed in this class. You should use these tools to hold yourself accountable and to help yourself develop writing and critical thinking skills that will serve you for the rest of your life. Please ask for help if you are struggling to meet these expectations.

**You are expected to follow the latest MLA style guide and to document your sources meticulously. This is Honors!** For example, all work should be exactly double-spaced in a 12-pt. Times New Roman typeface, rendered with 1” margins, and therefore 24 lines of text per page; the page number and your name must appear in the upper right corner of each and every page. **Please print all documents single sided.** You must neatly staple or paperclip your pages together: loose or crimped pages will not be accepted. **I will not grade any paper that fails to meet the minimum expectations for length, formatting, proofreading, or rigor of citations and bibliographies.** A template is

available on my website, <http://www.richardobenauf.com>. For additional examples, consult your MLA Handbook and see <http://style.mla.org>.

As you write, you should consult references like The Elements of Style, a good dictionary, your MLA Handbook, and Dr. Obenauf's Guide to Writing and Reasoning Like a Scholar. I expect your very best. As a rule of thumb,

**A papers** open with an introduction that gives sufficient context without overwhelming the reader with irrelevant information and offer a concrete thesis statement at the end of the introduction. The body of an A paper is meticulously organized and well polished, taking a serious tone as it persuasively guides the reader through rigorously cited evidence and careful original analysis. Its conclusion takes the analysis a step further and considers the broader implications of the project's analysis, avoiding recapping or simply summarizing what has already been said. The bibliography is accurate. In short, an A paper follows the conventions of style and formatting described in the MLA Handbook and in Dr. Obenauf's Guide to Writing and Reasoning Like a Scholar.

**B papers** make an earnest attempt at all of the traits of an A paper, but do not fully meet these expectations.

**C papers** struggle to meet these basic expectations but show a sincere attempt at intellectual honesty and rigor.

**D papers** make reasonable use of evidence but are too incoherent to build a persuasive argument.

**F papers** are intellectually dishonest or otherwise fail to meet the most basic expectations of college writing as described in Dr. Obenauf's Guide to Writing and Reasoning Like a Scholar. Coherent papers may be returned with an F if they do not conform to the norms of formatting, if they do not present sufficient evidence to build a persuasive argument, or if they do not respond to the paper prompt as assigned. Papers below the minimum length requirement cannot answer the assignment as described and so they will be returned with an F.

All work must be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class on the day it is due. I am reasonable about extensions, but you must talk to me—or e-mail me—ahead of time if you think you will need an exception. Otherwise, late work will be penalized one letter grade for each day it is late.

There are three main kinds of papers you will submit in “The Articulate Citizen”:

- There are **five short exercises** due throughout the semester. I will announce the assignments ahead of time, and you should follow the instructions carefully. Since they will be graded on a pass/fail basis, as a general rule they will not be accepted late. I will comment on these lightly. A pattern of especially good or especially sloppy work will affect your grade.

- Your **six short response papers** should be no less than one full page but no more than two full pages of text, double spaced, plus an accurate Work (or Works) Cited page. You may submit them at any time, but you must submit at least three of them before Spring Break. These short reflection essays are likely to expand on topics you first explored in your private reading journal, but there is no assigned topic: they merely need to relate to the class themes or readings.

While these essays are likely to be personal and reflective in nature, you must argue them with concrete evidence. Part of the challenge is to strike a balance of personal and analytical commentary, writing neither an entirely personal essay nor an entirely analytical paper. A personal anecdote drawn from your life would make a suitable opening; you might then comment on how one or more of our recent readings deals with a similar issue, **using rigorously-cited quotations from course readings or other materials you encounter**; to conclude, return to your opening comments. In discussing course materials, you should **not consult any outside sources, summaries, or commentaries, or using AI tools like ChatGPT**.

In order to avoid the pitfalls of arguing too broadly (such as by attempting to make sweeping suggestions about “society” or “human nature”), you should argue with concrete examples, which can include personal anecdotes and quotes from your journal. Anecdotes from your own experience can make a useful point of comparison for understanding how other people in other times and places dealt with similar situations.

You are encouraged to write on political themes, and you should not worry about my political sensibilities. I am interested in hearing your stance and giving you the opportunity to articulate your understanding of philosophy in light of current events. In order to avoid the pitfalls of arguing too broadly (such as by attempting to make sweeping suggestions about “society” or “human nature”), you might focus your commentary by briefly citing a relevant article from a newspaper of record (such as The Albuquerque Journal, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, or The Washington Post).

I will comment on these lightly. Since they will be graded on a pass/fail basis, as a general rule they will not be accepted late. A pattern of especially good or especially sloppy work will affect your grade.

- The **four analytical papers** will be due throughout the semester and represent 60% of your grade in this course. I will announce the assignments ahead of time, and you should follow the instructions carefully, following the conventions of MLA style and good, clear writing. I expect to see your writing improve from each paper to the next, and the feedback you receive on each essay will help you write more cleanly and organize your ideas more usefully for your reader.

## A NOTE ON CITING SOURCES ACCURATELY

Through these assignments, you will get lots of practice citing your sources. Your Works Cited page is perhaps the most important element of college writing because it shows your reader how to check the citations in your paper. You should plan ahead to create the bibliographic entries based on the sources you cite, and then painstakingly double- and triple-check them for accuracy. For reasons I explain in greater detail in my Guide to Writing and Reasoning Like a Scholar in your coursepack, it is very important that your Works Cited pages be accurate.

Bibliographies allow your reader to confirm that what you have said is true; inaccurate entries cast doubt on the entirety of your argument, and so they are anything but busy-work. You must devote as much attention to detail at the end of your project as at the beginning. A meticulous bibliography is part of a gestalt of rigor and intellectual honesty expected in Honors that signals your devotion to truthfulness and openness in your work.

**I have a zero-tolerance policy for inaccurate citations.** You are expected to quote your sources faithfully and to cite them rigorously. Anything less is a form of academic dishonesty and could lead to dismissal from the class. Working directly with primary sources is at the core of what this class is all about. You are expected to choose appropriate evidence to drive each point you make, and you are equally expected to produce your own in-text citations and your own works cited entries based on the materials you have used. Your sources should, as a rule, be the versions I have assigned for this course.

Inaccurate quotations or citations will be assumed to be produced by a citation generator or by AI and, as evidence of academic dishonesty, will force me to report your paper to the Dean of Students and to recommend that you be dropped from the class. Your learning in this class depends on you producing the work with your name on it and not relying on anyone else to do it for you. This is your only warning: if you submit work with citations that do not match the actual sources you used in your paper, I will be forced to initiate an academic dishonesty case against you. I implore you—do not outsource this most fundamental part of college writing!

Any student who lists an edition other than the exact version cited in the paper at hand will not receive credit for the assignment, whether it is a short response paper, a shorter analytical paper, or a final project. You will not be permitted to revise or resubmit your essay, and so a brazenly misleading bibliography can prevent you from earning an A for the semester, and it may well prevent you from passing the course. Fortunately, accurate bibliographies are not difficult to produce. You should resist the temptation to use an online citation generator, ChatGPT, or any other shortcut. It is not worth the risk! Instead, you should refer to your MLA Handbook and other reputable guides and produce the entries yourself. If you have any doubts, you should ask your professor for guidance.

That said, honest mistakes are part of the learning process. The zero-tolerance policy applies to citations that clearly do not correspond with the relevant information they

purport to document. I know it can feel safer to rely on a generator when you're worried about getting every comma in the right place. But part of the value in doing it yourself is that your first attempts will have their own quirks—and that's an inevitable part of the learning process. The MLA Handbook is a required text for this class because it shows you how to make your own citations based on the materials in front of you. (Tip: what MLA calls "location" means the location within the sources, such as a range of page numbers within an anthology; "place of publication" refers to the city or country where the work was published and is not generally needed for editions produced in the last hundred years.)

**Before you submit each assignment, ask yourself this question: Did I do this work myself, yes or no?**

### WHAT SORT OF HELP IS OK?

You may seek help with all stages of the writing process, but you must be the sole author of all work you submit in this course. Submitting material as your own work that has been generated on a website, in a publication, by an artificial intelligence algorithm, by another person, or by breaking the rules of an assignment constitutes academic dishonesty. It is a student code of conduct violation that can lead to a disciplinary procedure. It should go without saying that learning the course material depends on completing and submitting your own work.

Off-campus paper writing services, problem-checkers and services, websites, and AIs can produce incorrect or misleading results. Indeed, consulting outside sources is likely to derail your thought process, as is the use of AI tools such as ChatGPT.

Instead, I urge you to enlist your friends and family to help you proofread your papers—and to read your own prose out loud.

You may wish to reach out to our Honors librarian over at Zimmerman Library, Adrienne Warner by email at [adriennew@unm.edu](mailto:adriennew@unm.edu) or by scheduling an appointment through her faculty page, <https://ulls.unm.edu/people/directory/w/warner-adrienne.php>

Also, the Center for Teaching & Learning (formerly CAPS), offers resources at <https://ctl.unm.edu/> that you may find helpful at all stages of the writing process.

Above all, if you are ever in doubt about whether it is acceptable to use a particular resource for this class, you should ask your instructor.

### HOW WE WILL HANDLE PROVOCATIVE AND OFFENSIVE MATERIAL

This semester we will be examining cultural and historical legacies that span hundreds of years—some of them quite wonderful and others utterly horrifying—to better understand our own society and our place within it. The syllabus for this course is packed with works chosen for their literary, philosophical, political, historical, and

aesthetic significance. No historical artifact or document can capture the entire essence of the lived experience of a particular time or place; we will read these works for what they reveal about the broad expectations of their first audiences. For example, we will be encountering material that exposes the long shadow of racism, sexism, xenophobia, and other forms of coercion. But rather than judging the past by our standards, our time is best spent uncovering what old books suggest by thinking as historians, literary scholars, and anthropologists. For example, we will trace the roots of various kinds of bigotry—as well as pushback against injustice. I sincerely hope you use this information to build a more just world.

While I hope you find something of personal interest in our reading list, when you disagree with a perspective I encourage you to grapple with the seeming contradictions and internal inconsistencies within works and among various texts as a way to discover the forces that motivated people who held views different from your own. Indeed, we will be reading, discussing, and writing about ideas that will make you uncomfortable.

Considering concepts in their historical contexts should not be construed as endorsement of those memes. Our aim is not to litigate the truth or morality of the texts on our syllabus; our goal is to understand these works on their own terms for what they suggest about how other people lived and what they thought. To that end, as a general rule we will not be censoring our works. We acknowledge that when we analyze primary literary works within their historical contexts, the words and concepts belong to the author rather than to the scholar who is quoting part of a text that is germane to the topic at hand. In your papers, you should reproduce quotations precisely, though you may paraphrase words and passages in your subsequent discussion to avoid using epithets in your own prose. In our seminar sessions, at times your instructor may take the reins and read certain passages out loud so that no student is forced to read them in class, though, again, we recognize that the words and ideas belong to the author and not to the person reciting them.

Per Section 2220 of UNM's Student Handbook, The Pathfinder,

As an institution that exists for the express purposes of education, research, and public service, the University is dependent upon the unfettered flow of ideas, not only in the classroom and the laboratory, but also in all University activities. As such, protecting freedom of expression is of central importance to the University. The exchange of diverse viewpoints may expose people to ideas some find offensive, even abhorrent. The way that ideas are expressed may cause discomfort to those who disagree with them. The appropriate response to such speech is speech expressing opposing ideas and continued dialogue, not curtailment of speech.

The University also recognizes that the exercise of free expression must be balanced with the rights of others to learn, work, and conduct business. Speech activity that unduly interferes with the rights of others or the ability of the University to carry out its mission is not protected by the First Amendment and violates this policy.

While I would never pressure any student to say something simply because it's what you think I would want to hear, I encourage you to speak up when you have something relevant to say. Respectful debate and free inquiry are cornerstones of Honors seminars, so long as our discourse is germane to the seminar and the topic at hand. You do not have the right to derail class discussion.

Finally, at times this semester we may be discussing passages that could be disturbing, even traumatizing, to some students. If you ever feel the need to step out during one of these discussions, either for a short time or for the rest of the class session, you may always do so without penalty. You will, however, be responsible for any material you miss and should make arrangements to review notes with one or your classmates or to see me during office hours.

### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

This “Rhetoric and Discourse” course fulfills UNM Core Curriculum Area 1 (Writing and Speaking). Once students successfully complete “The Articulate Citizen,” they will be able to:

1. Critically evaluate a variety of written and spoken messages drawn from American history as well as contemporary coverage of current events in order to make informed decisions, such as by analyzing shifting portrayals of historical events and by comparing the bias in different media portrayals of current events;
2. Organize their thinking to express their viewpoints clearly, concisely, and effectively, primarily through the five short exercises and four analytical papers, which I will respond to thoroughly and expect to see improvement with each subsequent essay;
3. Select and use the best means to deliver a particular message to a particular audience (rhetorical strategies include but are not limited to modes, genres, media and technology, and graphics), for example by deducing the intended audiences of historical texts such as the Declaration of Independence and Federalist No. 10 by analyzing their rhetorical strategies, and by crafting a variety of documents intended for different audiences (e.g., an email to four different audiences conveying the same information; a document formatted according to different style guides);
4. Gather legitimate information to support their ideas without plagiarizing, misinforming, or distorting, such as by analyzing the bias of various sources (both popular and scholarly), by learning practical research techniques during a week of instruction at Zimmerman Library, and by learning to identify and avoid common rhetorical fallacies; and

5. Engage in reasoned civic discourse to accomplish their goals and to function as responsible citizens, for example by writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper which ties the student's historical research to current events.

## INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The University and the Honors College assess student work in several ways to demonstrate that students are learning the things we say that you are learning. Independently of my grade and comments to you on the final project, I may rate a random sampling of essays according to standardized rubrics or submit anonymous, random, or aggregate data on your class's performance. I may ask you to provide an additional copy of your project which may be reviewed and/or archived anonymously. This assessment is not related to your grade except that I may penalize you for not submitting an electronic copy of your essay in a timely manner. Thank you for your cooperation.

## RESPONSIBLE LEARNING AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Each student is expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in academic and professional matters. UNM reserves the right to take disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, against any student who is found guilty of academic dishonesty or otherwise fails to meet the standards. Per UNM policy, any student judged to have engaged in academic dishonesty in course work may receive a reduced or failing grade for the work in question and/or for the course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, dishonesty in quizzes, tests, or assignments; claiming credit for work not done or done by others, including the use of AI such as ChatGPT; hindering the academic work of other students; misrepresenting academic or professional qualifications within or without UNM; and nondisclosure or misrepresentation in filling out applications or other records.

These rules exist to protect your learning. If you do the work yourself, you'll discover things you never would have noticed otherwise—connections, questions, and even disagreements with the text that no summary or algorithm could hand you. That's where the real satisfaction comes from, and it's why the work in this class is worth doing honestly. **Therefore, you are responsible for personally creating each step of every assignment you submit in this class.** Taking shortcuts, including consulting summaries of the readings, ChatGPT or other AI models at any stage of the writing or revision process, citation generators, etc. is a form of academic dishonesty which will not be tolerated.

**Plagiarism is a grave offense that will result in a grade of "F" for the assignment and that could lead to dismissal from the Honors College or expulsion from the university. Any student who submits a paper with any component written by someone else—including by ChatGPT or other generative AI models—will receive a grade of "F" on the assignment and a grade of "NC" for the semester.**

The emphasis in our class on primary sources means that, with a few clearly defined exceptions, you should consult no resources outside of the books we are discussing in the editions I've specified in this syllabus. Inaccurate quotations or citations will be assumed to be produced by a citation generator or by AI and, as evidence of academic dishonesty, will result in my recommendation to the Dean of Students that you be dropped from the class. There will be no second chances. You may lose your scholarship. So, before you submit each assignment, ask yourself this question: Did I do this work myself, in its entirety, yes or no?

The point of these policies is not just to stop cheating—it's to make sure you get the full value of the work you put in. This class is designed to give you the kind of deep engagement with ideas, texts, and writing that can't be outsourced or shortcut. By doing your own work, you contribute to a community where grades mean something, ideas are genuinely exchanged, and your degree reflects real achievement.

For additional information on plagiarism and other university policies, please consult UNM's Student Handbook, [The Pathfinder](http://pathfinder.unm.edu/), at <http://pathfinder.unm.edu/>.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

UNM is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for students with documented disabilities. As your instructor, it is my objective to facilitate an inclusive classroom setting, in which students have full access and opportunity to participate. To engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations for this class and/or program, please contact Accessibility Resource Center at [arcsrvs@unm.edu](mailto:arcsrvs@unm.edu) or 505-277-3506.

## UAP 2720 AND 2740 STATEMENT

Our classroom and university should foster mutual respect, kindness, and support. If you have concerns about discrimination, harassment, or violence, please seek support and report incidents. Find confidential services at LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center, the Women's Resource Center, and the Arcoiris Center. UNM prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex (including gender, sex stereotyping, gender expression, and gender identity). All instructors are “responsible employees” who must communicate reports of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and sexual violence to Compliance, Ethics and Equal Opportunity. For more information, please see UAP 2720 and UAP 2740.

## CREDIT HOUR STATEMENT

This is a three credit-hour course. Class meets for two 75-minute sessions of direct instruction for fifteen weeks during the Spring 2026 semester. According to federal guidelines, students are expected to complete a minimum of six hours of out-of-class work (including homework, study, assignment completion, and class preparation) each week. Honors courses generally demand more than six hours per week outside of

class. You should budget at least ten hours a week for your reading and writing in this course.

## ELECTRONIC BACKUPS

You are required to keep electronic backups of all work you produce for this class that you can immediately provide upon my request. Additionally, I may retain scanned copies of the work you submit in this class to help me tailor my feedback to you and for other educational purposes.

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Founded in 1889, the University of New Mexico sits on the traditional homelands of the Pueblo of Sandia. The original peoples of New Mexico Pueblo, Navajo, and Apache since time immemorial, have deep connections to the land and have made significant contributions to the broader community statewide. We honor the land itself and those who remain stewards of this land throughout the generations and also acknowledge our committed relationship to Indigenous peoples. We gratefully recognize our history.

## CITIZENSHIP AND/OR IMMIGRATION STATUS

All students are welcome in this class regardless of citizenship, residency, or immigration status. I will respect your privacy if you choose to disclose your status. I support your right to an education free from fear of deportation. I pledge that I will not disclose the immigration status of any student who shares this information with me unless required by a judicial warrant, and I will work with students who require immigration-related accommodations. As for all students in the class, family emergency-related absences are normally excused with reasonable notice to the professor, as noted in the attendance guidelines above. UNM as an institution has made a core commitment to the success of all our students, including members of our undocumented community. The Administration's welcome is found on the website: <http://undocumented.unm.edu/>.

## CONNECTING TO CAMPUS AND FINDING SUPPORT

Students who ask for help are successful students. UNM has many resources and centers to help you thrive, including [opportunities to get involved](#), [mental health resources](#), [academic support including tutoring](#), [resource centers](#) for people like you, free food at [Lobo Food Pantry](#), and [jobs on campus](#). Your advisor, staff at the [resource centers](#) and [Dean of Students](#), and I can help you find the right opportunities for you.

## RESPECTFUL CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

I am committed to building with you a positive classroom environment in which everyone can learn. I reserve the right to intervene and enforce standards of respectful behavior when classroom conduct is inconsistent with University expectations. Interventions and enforcement may include but are not limited to required meetings to discuss classroom expectations, written notification of expectations, and/or removal from a class meeting. Removal from a class meeting will result in an unexcused absence. Five or more unexcused absences may result in permanent removal and a drop from the course (see attendance policy). The University of New Mexico ensures freedom of academic inquiry, free expression and open debate, and a respectful campus through adherence to the following policies: D75: Classroom Conduct, Student Code of Conduct, University Policy 2240 – Respectful Campus, University Policy 2210 – Campus Violence.

## UNM EMAIL CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

Students often use email to inquire about protected and sensitive matters, including grades and class progress, and faculty often use email to individually report such protected and sensitive matters. Unless students opt out, in writing, to the Honors College, the Honors College and Honors Faculty will assume that all email sent individually to students via their official UNM email addresses (generally their @unm.edu address) is private and confidential and that the student assumes all risk of inappropriate interception of email transmissions. If students opt out of this policy, they are agreeing to receive such information only in person (and they may be required to show identification before information is shared with them) or through regular mail to the student's official address on file with UNM.

## COVID-19 HEALTH AND AWARENESS

I will be wearing an N95 mask in class and encourage you to do the same. UNM is a mask-friendly, but not mask-required, community. Masking is a simple and effective way to reduce the spread of respiratory illness and protect our shared learning environment. If you are experiencing respiratory symptoms or believe you may be contagious, I ask that you not attend class in person. Please email me so we can discuss reasonable alternatives for that day. I trust you to use this policy responsibly and to maintain regular attendance when you are well, so that if illness does occur, you can take the time you need to recover without falling behind.

## READING LIST

This course does not participate in UNM's Course Materials Access ("Complete") program; all required materials are listed below and obtained independently. I have prepared a **coursepack** of readings, available for a nominal fee at the UNM Copy

Center in Dane Smith Hall (projected to be \$21 for Spring 2026). You will also need to purchase the books **in the specific editions on file at the UNM Bookstore**:

- A Documentary History of the United States, edited by Richard D. Heffner and Alexander Heffner, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> Edition
- The Elements of Style by William Strunk and E.B. White, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (1999)
- The MLA Handbook, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition (2021)

Other course materials may be distributed throughout the semester, either in class or on the class website, <http://citizen.obenauf.net>. Students are responsible for obtaining these texts and bringing them to class: again, you should come to class prepared to discuss the readings **in their entirety** on the day they appear on the syllabus, even if we have fallen slightly behind schedule.

This ambitious syllabus is subject to change. I will announce changes in readings and due dates ahead of time, in class, by email, or on the course website, which will always have the most up-to-date timeline.

### PROPOSED TIMELINE

Monday, January 19	NO CLASS (Martin Luther King Day)
Wednesday, January 21	Introduction + install MS-Word on your computer and download my MLA template from my website or email me for a copy
Monday, January 26	Strunk and White's <u>The Elements of Style</u> and <u>Dr. Obenauf's Guide to Writing and Reasoning Like a Scholar</u> (in your coursepack)
Wednesday, January 28	Continued discussion of <u>The Elements of Style</u> and <u>Dr. Obenauf's Guide to Writing</u> ; <b>short exercise #1 is due today</b>
Monday, February 2	Selections from Aristotle's <u>On Rhetoric</u> (in coursepack)
Wednesday, February 4	Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" (selection in Heffner); Thomas Jefferson's "The Declaration of Independence" (in coursepack)
Monday, February 9	George Washington's "Farewell Address"; other course materials to be distributed in class; <b>short exercise #2 is due today</b>
Wednesday, February 11	Seneca Falls "Declarations of Sentiments" and "Resolutions" (in Heffner); H.L. Mencken's "The Declaration of Independence in American" (in coursepack)

Monday, February 16	Abraham Lincoln's "First Inaugural Address," "The Emancipation Proclamation," "The Gettysburg Address," and "Second Inaugural Address" (all in Heffner); <b>FIRST ANALYTICAL PAPER IS DUE TODAY</b>
Wednesday, February 18	E.B. White's "Bedfellows" (in coursepack)
Monday, February 23	George Lakoff, "Metaphor, Morality, and Politics"; Robert Leonard, "Why Rural America Voted for Trump" (both in coursepack)
Wednesday, February 25	Andrew Carnegie's "On Wealth"; Teddy Roosevelt's "The New Nationalism"; Woodrow Wilson's "The Old Order Changeth"; and Herbert Hoover's "Rugged Individualism" (all in Heffner)
Monday, March 2	Continued discussion of bias in Carnegie, Roosevelt, Wilson, and Hoover; <b>short exercise #3 is due today</b>
Wednesday, March 4	FDR's "First Inaugural Address," "A Rendezvous with Destiny," "Quarantine," and "Four Freedoms" speeches (all in Heffner)
Monday, March 9	Continued discussion of FDR; <b>SECOND ANALYTICAL PAPER IS DUE TODAY</b>
Wednesday, March 11	Eisenhower's "Farewell" address (in Heffner) and Oliver Jensen's parody of "The Gettysburg Address in Eisenhowese" (in coursepack); <b>AT LEAST THREE SHORT RESPONSE PAPERS ARE DUE SOMETIME BEFORE SPRING BREAK (i.e., TODAY)</b>
Monday, March 16	<b>NO CLASS (Spring Break)</b>
Wednesday, March 18	<b>NO CLASS (Spring Break)</b>
Monday, March 23	JFK's "Inaugural Address," "Strategy of Peace," and "Civil Rights" speeches; LBJ's "Great Society" speech (all in Heffner); and <b>Orientation to Research Spaces and Tools:</b> Library Audio Tour, done in-person in Zimmerman with your smartphone and headphones when convenient for you; plus the "Library Website Walkthrough" and "What Is a Library?" and "Background Information" tutorials on the library website sometime this week
Wednesday, March 25	<b>Research Initiation: Entering the Archive</b> (class held in Zimmerman Library)

Monday, March 30	MLK's "Unwise and Untimely" letter (from the Birmingham Jail) (in Heffner) and "I Have a Dream" speech (in coursepack) and <b>Research in Practice</b> : "Searching Library Databases," "Types of Sources," "Choosing a Database," "Finding Books," "How to Get Help," and "Browsing the Stacks, Parts I and II" tutorials on the library website
Wednesday, April 1	No new reading: continued discussion of research strategies and tutorials, respect for the reader, and JFK, LBJ, and MLK speeches.
Monday, April 6	No new reading: continued discussion of research strategies and tutorials, respect for the reader, and JFK, LBJ, and MLK speeches.
Wednesday, April 8	No new reading: continued discussion of research strategies and tutorials, respect for the reader, and JFK, LBJ, and MLK speeches; <b>ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR THIRD ANALYTICAL PAPER IS DUE TODAY</b>
Monday, April 13	Teddy Roosevelt's essay "Lincoln and Free Speech" (in coursepack); LBJ's "Power of the Media" speech; Edward R. Murrow's "Guildhall Speech on Television and Politics"; Spiro Agnew's "The Importance of Television News" speech; and Potter Stewart's speech on "Freedom of the Press, Yale Law School, 1974" (all in Heffner)
Wednesday, April 15	Continued discussion of the media readings by TR, LBJ, Murrow, Agnew, and Stewart; <b>THIRD ANALYTICAL PAPER IS DUE TODAY</b>
Monday, April 20	Continued discussion of the media readings by TR, LBJ, Lippmann, Murrow, Agnew, and Stewart
Wednesday, April 22	Discussion of different style manuals and conventions, materials to be distributed in class or available online
Monday, April 27	Carl Sagan, "The Fine Art of Baloney Detection" (in coursepack); <b>short exercise #4 is due today</b>
Wednesday, April 29	Discussion of spin vs. bias. vs. propaganda vs. disinformation vs. misinformation vs. fake news vs. bothsidesism vs. lies. vs. rhetorical fallacies, readings TBA and likely distributed electronically
Monday, May 4	"Tatler" No. 230 (28 Sept. 1710) by Jonathan Swift on "False Refinements in Style"; George Orwell's "Politics and the English Language" (both in coursepack)
Wednesday, May 6	Final remarks; <b>FINAL SHORT EXERCISE (#5), THE REST OF YOUR SIX SHORT RESPONSE PAPERS, AND YOUR TERM PAPER ARE DUE TODAY</b>