

COMS 560-930—Syllabus  
The Rhetoric of First Ladies  
Dr. Diana Carlin

Textbooks: First Ladies, 1789-1960, Carl Sferazza Anthony  
Inventing a Voice, Molly Meijer Wertheimer

Other Readings are on the Blackboard site under Assignments or are available through e-journals on the KU Library Website

Websites: National First Ladies Library: <http://www.firstladies.org/>

Smithsonian: [The First Ladies | National Museum of American History](http://americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/exhibition.cfm?key=38&exkey=1239)  
([si.edu](http://si.edu))

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/exhibition.cfm?key=38&exkey=1239>

White House Museum: <http://www.whitehousemuseum.org/east-wing/first-ladys-office.htm>

White House Historical Association: [The First Ladies - White House Historical Association \(whitehousehistory.org\)](http://www.whitehousehistory.org)

All of the Presidential Libraries also have information on First Ladies. You can find the list of libraries and links at [nara.gov](http://nara.gov)

- Course Objectives:
1. To gain a better understanding of the role that U.S. First Ladies have played in their husbands' administrations and in U.S. history
  2. To explore the many forms of rhetoric available to First Ladies prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century
  3. To explore the many forms of rhetoric available to modern First Ladies.
  4. To understand the relationship between First Ladies' rhetorical choices and the larger context of women in U.S. society.
  5. To explore the many ways that First Ladies have enacted their roles over time and the role that personality and background played in their choices.
  6. To analyze First Ladies' rhetoric using a variety of critical methods.
  7. (Graduate students) To prepare a publishable essay on some aspect of First Ladies' rhetoric
  8. (Undergraduate students) To prepare a historical/rhetorical multi-media analysis of a First Lady's rhetoric (group project)
  9. To explore the role of First Ladies outside the U.S. and their sphere of influence.

Assignments:

1. Biographical/rhetorical introduction to an early First Lady (1789-1900). This is a 5-6 page paper that follows the format of the Wertheimer book. A summary will be presented orally. Details to follow in Assignments section of Blackboard. (25%)
2. Lead the discussion on a chapter in Wertheimer or an article. This will include providing an outline of the chapter/article to everyone prior to class via Blackboard (sent to me to post) and a set of questions to stimulate discussion. Details to follow in Assignments section of Blackboard. (10%)
3. Rhetorical criticism of a speech, collection of speeches, or other rhetorical artifacts of a modern First Lady. This is a 7-8 page paper. Details to follow in Assignments section of Blackboard. (25%)
4. Graduate students—Publishable essay on some aspect of First Ladies’ rhetoric. This can be on a single woman or comparison of two or more. Approximately 20-25 pages. Details to follow on Assignments section of Blackboard. (30%)  
Undergraduate students—Will work in groups to present a multi-media documentary-type study of a First Lady’s rhetoric. Details to follow in Assignments section of Blackboard. (30%)
5. Class participation. This includes attendance and contributions to discussion. (10%)

Tentative Schedule

		Readings
Class 1	Introduction to course	None
Class 2	The U.S. Presidency: A Two-Person Career	Campbell-Two person(BB) Inventing, pp. 1-30 Anthony-preface
Class 3	Analyzing rhetoric in its many forms	Campbell-Critiques (BB)
Class 4	The early years: Martha Washington	Anthony, pp. 31-60
Class 5	The early years: Abigail Adams	Anthony, pp. 60-72
Class 6	The early years: Dolley Madison	Anthony, pp. 75-98
Class 7	19 <sup>th</sup> Century-1915: Class choices <b>This is assignment 1 on the syllabus</b>	Anthony/Wertheimer, your choice
Class 8	19 <sup>th</sup> Century-1915: Class choices	Anthony/Wertheimer, your choice

Class 9	19 <sup>th</sup> Century-1915: Class choices	Anthony/Wertheimer, your choice
Class 10	19 <sup>th</sup> Century-1915: Class choices	Anthony/Wertheimer, your choice
Class 11	Edith Wilson	Anthony, 350-84/Wertheimer 103-124
Class 12	Lou Henry Hoover	Anthony, 435-454 /Wertheimer 161-180
Class 13	Eleanor Roosevelt <b>Rhetorical Criticism Due</b>	Anthony, 454- 513/Wertheimer 181-204
Class 14	Eleanor Roosevelt	Anthony 454- 513/Wertheimer, 181-204
Class 15	Bess Truman & Mamie Eisenhower	Anthony 517- 588/Wertheimer, 205-242
Class 16	Jacqueline Kennedy	Anthony, 588- 603/Wertheimer, 243-272
Class 17	Jacqueline Kennedy	
Class 18	Lady Bird Johnson	Wertheimer, 273-296
Class 19	Pat Nixon	Wertheimer, 297-324
Class 20	Betty Ford	Wertheimer, 325-340
Class 21	Rosalyn Carter	Wertheimer, 341-364
Class 22	Nancy Reagan	Wertheimer, 365-386
Class 23	Barbara Bush	Wertheimer, 387-416
Class 24	Hillary Clinton	Wertheimer, 417-434
Class 25	Hillary Clinton	
Class 26	Laura Bush	Wertheimer, 435-466
April 27	Michelle Obama	

Class 28      Melania Trump and Jill Biden      Blackboard

Class 29      Presentations

Class 30      Presentations