This course will trace the development of the rhetorical presidency from Wilson to Obama as it was reflected in and influenced by cultural, political, and technological changes. We will study how political arguments interact with cultural and political norms and practices, political ideologies, practical exigencies, the media through which they are communicated, and the personal predilections and preferences of leaders. Since this is a presidential election year, we will give some special attention to campaign rhetoric—especially primary rhetoric.

Four short essays and one major paper are required.