

COM 107 Rhetoric, Film & National Identity
Second Graded Oral Presentation: **April 10, 12, 17, 19**
8-10 minutes; + 2 minutes for questions

Spring 2017
Prof. Owen
25% Grade Value

Argument Contexts for Popular Films
About the Vietnam and Gulf Wars

The goal of this oral presentation is to educate your audience about the parameters and complexities of a complicated social conflict – the Vietnam War. We will look at the history of the conflict, cinematic representations of the conflict, relevant historical contexts, film genre, healthcare for soldiers and veterans, roles for women in the Vietnam War and women in the contemporary military. Before we can understand popular films about the war or make arguments about them, we must understand the broader historical and cultural contexts within which these films were released.

Your particular contribution to this contextualization should be balanced, fair and equitable to all parties involved in the public disputes. Only after we have developed an argumentative context can we evaluate these cinematic “memories” of the war. We would *not* expect to hear you take a partisan stand on an issue, nor to defend one position over another. We *would* expect to hear you describe what the competing groups say, taking care to distance yourself from their advocacy and giving equal time to competing groups or points of view. Your audience trusts you to present a well-supported, well-organized presentation that is based on reliable sources.

Requirements:

1. Attendance: All members of the class are required to attend all four class days of presentations: **April 10, 12, 17, 19**. Members of the audience will be assigned to prepare questions for specific speakers.

2. Length of the speech: 8-10 minutes; 2 additional minutes for answering questions

3. Speech script + Works Cited must be turned in the day of the speech. See “Preparing Speaker Notes” below.

4. Research: Your sources must be **reliable**; some examples of reliable resources include: government sources, academic (peer reviewed) essays and book chapters, popular press for reviews of films or accounts of the war (and related subjects). Andrea Kueter, our library liaison, may suggest other sources, as well. VISIT WEB SITE set up by Andrea.

5. Support for the speech: You must use a minimum of **four** reliable sources for this speech. You must locate a minimum of **two** sources **on your own** (Andrea has set up a course website for this assignment). You may use any of the course readings as sources – but only in addition to the **two** you find on your own.

6. You must provide some sort of visual support for your speech. Some examples for visual support are: maps, charts or tables, points of information, still images, short clips (no more than 30-45 sec.), reinforcement (points raised), etc.

7. Development of the speech script: See EACH set of recommendations below.

Focusing the Oral Presentation:

It is not possible to include all or nearly all facts, figures, contexts, details or points of view on the topics listed in this assignment. Therefore, your task is to explain to us in **8-10 minutes** what you believe are the most important and relevant aspects of this topic. You may wish to explain why you chose to focus on some aspects of the topic more than others. (In other words, why do you believe this information or context is important to our ability to understand cinematic “memories” of the Vietnam War?) If you offer relevant scenes from a film, your time constraints limit you to very short clips.

It is VERY important that some of you consult with other speakers who are presenting topics similar to yours. Make sure that you and s/he are not repeating each other. [Vietnam War History, Film Genre/Sub-Genre, Military Draft]

Connecting with Your Audience:

One of the challenges of this assignment is to make the information you prepare and present as interesting and relevant as possible to this particular audience. Thus, consider the following questions as you prepare your speaker notes:

- Why should we be interested in this topic?
- Why should we keep an open mind on this issue in order to review the facts and competing interests as equitably as possible?
- How might this topic relate to our work with cinematic nation stories?
- How could we learn more about your topic? (What should we read? Where should we look for information and other points of view?)
- How is this topic relevant to your generation of American citizens?
- Your audience will have seen “Coming Home,” “Born on the 4th of July,” and “Platoon” – your audience will be thinking about writing an essay on one of these films. ***Think about how you can make your presentation as relevant as possible to the films.***

Tips on structure:

- Review “Tips for Speaking Situations” in the course syllabus.
- **Structure your presentation with a clear introduction, body and conclusion.**
- **When phrasing main points, remember: clarity, simplicity, and creativity**
- **Main points should be well structured and carefully worded**
- Remember the functions of an **introduction** (prepare the audience); of a **conclusion** (remind the audience of the significance of your presentation)
- Remember **transitions**: (1) from the intro into the body; from one main point to another within the body; from the body to the conclusion. Internal summaries and transitions are ***especially*** important when presenting material orally.

Tips on style (language use):

- Be sure that you define all technical or unfamiliar terms for the audience (this may require visual support of some sort).
- Be certain that you can pronounce all difficult words and know the proper definition and usage of challenging terms.

Tips on Support:

- Offer clear explanation of complex ideas, terms, political positions and contexts
- Provide sufficient detail to develop your key points
- Clearly and creatively structure the information you plan to offer your audience – do not “dump” or “lump” information. Remember, your audience is listening – they cannot “re-read” your oral presentation. You have to make it clear and easy to follow.
- **Cite your authoritative sources orally.** This enhances your credibility with the audience.
- Cite your authoritative sources in the text of your speaking notes (some sort of abbreviated citation). This cues you to cite the source orally. Every time you cite a fact, cite the source from which you located that fact.
- **DO NOT** use published material without citing the source. Plagiarism (using other people’s words without attribution) is a serious offense to academic integrity. These rules apply to oral as well as written communication.

Tips for using visual support:

- It may be useful to provide a handout or visual display of historical data and dates, factual information, contrasting points of view.
- Visual display should be planned carefully and worked carefully into a presentation. (REMEMBER: less is more with power point or other computer mediated display -- including film clips).
- Practice, practice, practice with your visual support.

Preparing Speaker Notes:

You will be handing in your speaker notes (the notes you actually use to deliver your presentation) along with a Works Cited list of sources used to prepare the presentation. Since your delivery style needs to be as **extemporaneous (conversational) as possible**, I ask you to follow the following format for speaking notes:

1. Use standard size (letter) paper. Do NOT staple them – leave them loose for greater ease of manipulation. NUMBER your pages so that you CANNOT get them out of order, as this can be very embarrassing. **USE ONE SIDE ONLY.**
2. Use an outline format that “imitates” the characteristics of an oral presentation
 - **Introduction:** attention getter; statement of purpose; connection to audience; **preview** of main points (name each one)
 - **Body:** Main ideas, supported by subpoints, details, explanation; transitions between and among each Main idea. Transition to conclusion
 - **Conclusion:** summary of material presented; significance of presentation; invitation to ask questions
 - Use short declarative sentences and key phrases where possible. Obviously, quotations and complex explanations will need to be word-for-word. Compensate for reading from your notes with vocal and facial variation. Practice this.
3. **Minimally, double space** – perhaps triple space your notes for ease of sight reference
4. Use larger than normal font -- **Perhaps like this** -- for ease of sight.
5. **Write in source citation** wherever you present a fact, figure, quotation or published point of view. (This can be abbreviated). You may not cite all the sources written into

your notes, but you want to have a source handy in case someone asks you a question about your sources. **Write signal phrasing in your notes so that you do not forget.**

6. Practice how you plan to cite sources orally, e.g., “The 1978 *New York Times* review of the film was especially negative. Writing for the *Times*, Vincent Camby said “blah, blah, blah.” This is similar to “signal phrasing” in writing.

7. After you have composed (**typed**) your speaking notes, use colored pens or highlighters to mark relevant or significant sections for yourself. Because these are speaking notes, it is permissible and desirable to “mark them up” to suit your individual needs. You may write in last minute notes, word changes, etc. as you see fit.

8. The Works Cited list to be turned in with your speaking notes should be absolutely correct in format and detail.

Delivery Tips:

- Rehearse this presentation several times.
- Rehearse this presentation with Vicky, **preferably along with the other people assigned to make oral presentations on your speaking date.**
- Rehearse the presentation with a completed set of speaking notes. You may wish to make revisions, but the notes you practice with should be VERY similar to the notes you use on the day you make your presentation. (This is called “sight memory” – a familiar text is easier to work with than an unfamiliar one).
- You must present your work within the **8-10 min.** time frame. Your focus should fit comfortably within this time frame. Practice so that you can hit the limit within 30 seconds. If you use visual support, practice that too.

Immediately after each speaker, there will be a **2 minute period** where audience members can ask questions. At the end of the speeches, if time permits, the speakers will “face the audience” for additional discussion and conversation.

Each audience member will be taking careful notes (for her or his own benefit) and writing questions for the speakers. **NO LAPTOPS** – take notes by hand. **Audience members are asked to pay careful attention to the speakers. Please be respectful of all speakers by giving them your full and courteous attention.**

Tips for answering questions: **Full Engagement with the Audience**

1. Listen to the question carefully. If you do not understand the question, ask for clarification. Do not try to answer a question you do not understand.
2. Answer the question as fully and as efficiently as you can.
3. Always have with you a bibliography you used for your speech so that you can answer questions about the sources of your information. In your speaker notes, always cite a source (abbreviated) for any factual material or important interpretive perspectives. That way you can scan your notes quickly and provide an answer.
4. The value of researching more material than needed for any presentation is that it prepares you to answer questions.

5. If no one asks a question, turn the tables on the audience. For example, “I thought that [a particular point] was very relevant to our upcoming writing assignment. I wonder if you’d like me to elaborate further?”
6. If you do not know the answer to a question, there are better and worse ways to respond. Speakers generally feel that they lose credibility if they can’t answer a question. This may or may not be the case. Do not confuse a tough question with a question for which you have no answer. When you encounter a tough question, you can acknowledge the challenge to the audience, (“that’s a really difficult question!”). This strategy gives you precious seconds to think and also frames the situation from your perspective. If you are asked a question you cannot answer, (a) do not try to fake an answer; (b) explain that you did not encounter that point in your research; (c) make the observation that the question is a good one and you will look into it – because you are not certain about the answer at this point; (d) concede that the question is a good one – and you wish you had thought of it while you were doing research. I will make judgments about whether the question is relevant enough that you reasonably should have been able to answer it.
7. You may get a question that bears little or no relevance to your topic. There are tactful ways to handle such a question: (a) explain that the question falls outside the focus area you researched; (b) tactfully ask the questioner to explain the connection of the question to your research; (c) Simply say, “I’m afraid I don’t know – I didn’t research that topic.”