

PARRHESIA PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC THINKING AND DISCOURSE

Department Website: <https://college.uchicago.edu/parrhesia-program-public-discourse> (<https://college.uchicago.edu/parrhesia-program-public-discourse/>)

WHERE PRINCIPLES MEET PRACTICE

Parrhesia (par-uh-ZEE-uh), to speak freely and openly, signifies the Program's commitment to fostering vigorous, inclusive, and productive discourse on campus and in communities. Rooted in the University of Chicago Principles of Free Expression, The Parrhesia Public Thinking and Discourse program offers innovative undergraduate curriculum, programming, and outreach in freedom of expression and the theory and practice of discourse.

The Program follows a holistic approach to free expression and public discourse, recognizing that the classroom is only one space among many in which students exchange their ideas and views and that free expression must be practiced non scholae, sed vitae. In concentric circles, the Program is structured to radiate outward beyond the immediate space of the University. With an education in discourse, students and graduates of the Parrhesia program learn to engage with and make a difference in their communities.

PARRHESIA PROGRAM COURSES

PARR 13700. Science Communication and Public Engagement. 100 Units.

Public understanding of science and deliberative civic engagement with science are critical for democratic governance. Yet, in the U.S. (and around the world), we are seeing high levels of distrust in institutions of science and political polarization around science-informed issues such as climate change, vaccinations, nuclear waste disposal and biology of sex and gender, to name just a few. Through our readings, we will examine different perspectives on the relationship between scientific expertise, public understanding of science and civic life. Our guiding questions will focus on how inclusive and adaptive science communication can transform disagreement and misunderstanding into public dialogue focused on problem solving. Working in teams, you will convene and facilitate a community-based discussion on a controversial science-informed issue. You will create a variety of written, oral and digital communications for this deliberative engagement process.

Instructor(s): Ekaterina Lukianova Terms Offered: Spring

PARR 20337. Finding and Reporting the Real Story: Urban Redevelopment. 100 Units.

Taught by a veteran Chicago journalist, the goal of this class is to help students learn, understand and produce narratives about the social, political, cultural, and economic motivations and ramifications of neighborhood redevelopment (often known as "gentrification" or "re-gentrification"), while gaining practical experience researching in and reporting on diverse, multiethnic neighborhoods. Focusing gentrifying Chicago communities with very different racial histories, students will be taught how to research their target neighborhoods and to make contact with and cultivate sources for "on the ground" information about these communities. This course will focus on essential journalism skills: generating story ideas, interviewing, gathering data, writing, revising and using appropriate organizational structure, grammar and news judgment. Much of the work produced in this class will be print, but students are encouraged to consider other story platforms as well, making this class applicable to students in a wide range of disciplines (including history, film/media studies, creative writing, urban studies, and more) in which primary source research, narrative development, and considerations of journalistic integrity may add value.

Instructor(s): TBD Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CHST 20337

PARR 21400. Trump, Turnout and Thanksgiving Dinner: Election Discourses in a Polarized Society. 100 Units.

At the time of increasing polarization and fears of democratic backsliding, electoral rhetoric is employed to exploit divisions, as well as to overcome them. In this course we will study the conditions of political and cultural polarization in the U.S. and analyze electoral rhetoric to identify key motifs employed by alternative campaigns. We will also discuss approaches to dealing with polarized electoral discourses advanced by civil society organizations focused on promoting democratic practices and public deliberation.

Terms Offered: Autumn

Note(s): Ekaterina Lukianova

PARR 21500. What's Up With These Words? (Ideology and Word Meaning) 100 Units.

Public intellectuals, journalists and citizens at large are having heated debates on whether to use and how to use such words and phrases as "privilege," "woke" or "illegal immigration." Partisan opinion leaders develop strategies of linking key terms, such as "critical race theory" or "global warming," to negative narratives in order to thwart constructive public dialogue on substantive issues. You may be wary of using words that would get you in trouble in the classroom, in a professional interview or in a public-facing presentation. How do you make intelligent vocabulary choices in a polarized political environment? How do you negotiate disagreement over terms? How do you manage adverse emotional reactions precipitated by a trigger word?

Terms Offered: Winter

Note(s): Ekaterina Lukianova

Equivalent Course(s): LING 21550

PARR 22100. No Justice, No Speech! Free Speech and the Place that Shall Not Be Named. 100 Units.

Are there-or should there be-limits to free speech? What is the relationship between free speech and hate speech? Does speech deserve special kinds of protections (or limits) in the context of the university campus? In this course, we will critically engage with these questions as they relate to political organizing and political expression on (and in) P_____. Our course will examine these foundational questions before turning to some of the sticking points in the debate over free speech and P_____ today: What is freedom of expression in I____-P_____, and what does it have to do with the politics of US campuses? What is the call for Boycott Divest and Sanctions, and is it intended to foster or limit academic freedom? Is anti-Z_____ anti-S_____? To consider these questions, we will do critical readings of primary texts such as the guidelines issued by PACBI (P_____ Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of I_____) and the definition of anti-S_____ issued by the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance), as well as ethnographic and other accounts of the problem of political expression in P_____ today.

Instructor(s): Callie Maidhof Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): LLSO 25850, DEMS 25850, NELC 25850, PBPL 25850, GLST 25850

PARR 22115. Iconoclasm. 100 Units.

The recent removal of Confederate statues in the US and ISIL's destruction of ancient sites in Iraq and Syria, while motivated by different aims, find a common solution in dealing with images deemed inappropriate. Context is crucial to understanding what is at stake in these different iconoclastic acts: What is being destroyed? Who is destroying it and why? Although the term "iconoclasm" initially was used to describe the violent clashes between rival Christian ideologies over the status of images in a religious context in the 8th century, scholars now use it more capaciously and it refers to any movement dedicated to the destruction of images, be it in ancient Mesopotamia, Reformist Europe, or Talibanist Afghanistan. While the term offers syntactical clarity, it simultaneously obscures the various processes that go into practicing iconoclasm; for example, what motivated Byzantine destruction of icons is distinct from why European colonizers destroyed Native American heritage. This seminar proposes a broad and historically contingent study of iconoclasm. By looking at a range of examples from different periods and geographical contexts, we will examine the ways in which images have been perceived as threats, aberrations, seductions, or inconveniences best removed. We will also explore the various ways in which removed images continue to resonate with new meanings. The seminar spends a week defining the key terms before delving into particular case studies of iconoclasm.

Instructor(s): M. Manohar Terms Offered: Spring

Prerequisite(s): This course fulfills the following requirements in the ARTH major and minor: Asian pre-1800, Asian post-1800

Equivalent Course(s): SALC 32115, RLST 28312, SALC 22115, ARTH 32115, NEHC 22115, ARTH 22115

PARR 23500. Freedom of Speech on Campus: From Milton to the Middle East. 100 Units.

Free expression always involves strong emotions and tensions with others, who come from a different perspective. To live a full academic life, you want to be authentic. You also want to be civil and professional. What can and can't you say on campus and in the classroom? What should or shouldn't you say? How could you make a conflict more constructive, if it will exist? This course connects the philosophical foundations of free speech and free expression practices at US Universities, and explores the ongoing tensions around this issue. You will develop a thorough understanding of the issue through readings, writing and dialogue involving your peers at and outside of the University of Chicago. You will also practice the skill of moderating discussions on difficult issues that involve matters of free expression and inquiry in the academic setting. Readings will include influential philosophical texts of the Anglo-Saxon tradition (Milton, Locke, Mill, Meiklejohn, Berlin, Fish), legal cases, university declarations, as well as mass media coverage of recent events and proposed legislation. The course will begin with a classroom-based deliberation about free speech and the inclusive campus. You will then proceed to reading seminars and teamwork researching recent controversies concerning free expression at universities. You will write an essay proposing a collaborative solution to the case that you researched.

Instructor(s): Ekaterina Lukianova Terms Offered: Winter

PARR 24223. Parrhesia: Fearless Speech from Socrates to Greta von Thunberg. 100 Units.

The course will examine the long history of parrhesia, the Greek term for free and fearless speech, from ancient Athens to its current renaissance through the rediscovery by Michel Foucault. Focusing on the relation of truth and discourse, the course will consider not only the extraction of truth as a form of subjection to disciplinary power but also acts of telling truth to power as a practice of self-formation and exercise of freedom. Parrhesia implies a relation between the human self and the act of truth-telling that is suffused with interesting political, philosophical, and ethical possibilities, which students will be encouraged to explore. The course will begin by reviewing Foucault's final lectures on parrhesia and "the courage of truth." It will then examine some of the ancient Greek and Christian texts that Foucault analyzed. It will go on to consider early modern instances of parrhesia (e.g. Galileo and Descartes) and will conclude by surveying relatively recent versions (e.g. Greta von Thunberg and James Comey, JD'85), including contemporary feminist and queer practices of parrhesia. Lectures and discussions in English. No prerequisites.

Instructor(s): Christopher Wild Terms Offered: Spring

Equivalent Course(s): GRMN 24223, DEMS 24223, CMLT 34223, GRMN 34223, CMLT 24223, RLVC 34223, RLST 24223

PARR 25600. Narratives of Power. 100 Units.

For the past four years we've been transfixed by the news-but also by the way the news has been reported. Longstanding practices have been questioned or abandoned as our media have grappled with how to cover a changing political landscape. A similar situation unfolded in late and post-Soviet Russia, where it seemed that newspapers and TVs were not only reporting, but also carrying out, a regime change. This course will examine media regimes in both the U.S. and Russia (and the U.S.S.R.), with careful attention to historical and theoretical frameworks that will help us better understand current media events. On the Russian side we will explore how political and cultural regimes have systematically exploited the gap between experience and representation to create their own mediated worlds-from the tight censorship of the imperial and Soviet periods to the propaganda of the Soviet period and the recent use of media simulacra for strategic geopolitical advantage. We will compare this tradition with that of the United States, where freedom of expression has been privileged, but has also been shaped and distorted by the economic and cultural markets that constitute our media.

Instructor(s): William Nickell Terms Offered: TBD

Note(s): A companion to Media and Power in the Age of Putin and Trump, this course covers different material and does not require the former as a prerequisite. Together the courses consider how form and content shape the spread of information.

Equivalent Course(s): SIGN 26029, REES 35603, REES 25603, CMLT 25603, CMLT 35603, MAPH 35603

