

NOTE: If you are reading this, I encourage you to take a look at Prof. Susan Owen's "Historical-Cultural Context 2017" document, also in the Sample Assignments folder. That document contains a much more fulsome explanation for students of good preparation and speaking techniques. If you are interested in an historical parallels-type assignment, consider incorporating the relevant guidance that Susan's assignment outlines. My purpose in providing this shorter example is to illustrate how you might craft a speech assignment related to your course content that also builds students' research capacity, particularly for SSI 1 or 2. This example also includes, at the bottom, potential text to encourage students to use the resources of the Center for Speech. KB

Purpose: Understanding contemporary events – even seemingly simple ones – is often a difficult business. This assignment is designed to advance your public speaking skills while allowing all of us to bring greater historical perspective to our understanding of contemporary events. In particular, this assignment will allow you to strengthen your skills in the areas of historical library and internet research, synthesis and integration of supporting material in a message, organization of somewhat complex information, and adaptation to audience. These are skills that will be useful in future coursework, as well as in civic and career communication situations.

Task: Prepare a six-to-seven minute speech which argues that understanding better an historical event will help us to gain insight on a (more) contemporary event.

Sample central idea (or thesis) statements:

- Learning about India's political history of family dynasties can help us to better understand strengths and challenges of contemporary United States politics.
- Learning about above-ground nuclear testing in the U.S., 1951-1962, can help us to better understand the concern about Russia's recent missile accident.
- Learning about the turning point in popular support for legalization of gay marriage can help us to better understand current efforts to strengthen weapons control in the U.S.

Your speech should include a minimum of three sources, in addition to personal knowledge, which are acknowledged both through oral footnotes and a formal bibliography. You should deliver the speech conversationally (extemporaneously) from notes. After you speak, turn in a typed, two-paged, full-sentence outline with your bibliography.

You should plan to rehearse your speech at the Center for Speech in Jones 204. [Insert instructions for making an appointment.] Plan to (1) **bring a thumb drive** on which to store the recording of your rehearsal, (2) spend a few minutes with the student Communication Assistant reviewing and receiving feedback on your speech, and (3) forward the file to me [insert instructions] by [insert date].