

ARC Abstract Revision

Rhetoric and Human Liberty: A Historical Look at the Connections between Freedom of Speech, Democracy, Human Rights and the Negatives of Political Correctness.

The purpose of this presentation is to reintroduce the importance of the First Amendment and its tenants. This persuasive essay will explore the central principles of the freedom of speech and its connections to human liberty throughout history. The rationale for this piece is to reestablish the importance of freedom of expression as an inalienable right in a society that appears to be struggling to remember why this right exists. At this stage in our history, and certainly in the political arena, Americans have even questioned whether or not the First Amendment should be honored; some suggest that offensive speech should not be tolerated and that political correctness should govern or even ban the words of Americans.

In a return to the writings of The Enlightenment Thinkers, who brought forth Western Culture, this essay will discuss individual sovereignty as a birthright of all men. It will look at the writings of men like John Locke, Montesquieu, Edmund Burke, and Thomas Paine. These men lived closest to the usurpation of liberties by kings and tyrants and, therefore, understood more intimately the importance of free speech and its connection to individual freedoms. By drawing on these thinkers, and their modern progeny—Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, and Mark Levin—students can reexamine the high-value placed on free speech and its link to human liberty in general.