

# Free speech

The erosion of free speech in the US

## During war

- During WWI, people forced of disloyalty were forced to hiss the flag in public.
  - In 1841, Roosevelt addressed the four "essential human freedoms" : freedom for want, freedom for fear, freedom of worship, freedom of speech.

## Freedom of speech and culture

- 1920s, artistic works with sexual themes were censored
  - 1930s, Hays code in the film industry (no nudity, long kisses or adultery)
  - 1940s 1950s anticommunist crusade hit the movie industry, they forced public libraries to remove Robin Hood

## Free speech in campuses

- In 1964, free speech movement from the Berkeley campus
  - Over the last couple of years, "trigger warnings" and "safe spaces" in US colleges

## The rise of the cancel culture

- JK Rowling : some of her books were removed from libraries because she was considered transphobic after some tweets she posted
  - A letter published in Harper's Magazine on 2020 with 150 intellectuals denounced this worrying trend

# About latest US elections

## Facts and figures

- Largest voter turnout in the past 100 years - 66 percent of eligible
  - Early votings : 102 M voted before the day of the election
  - J.-B had 6 votes than any other president (74M 69M)
  - J.-B is the oldest president ever (78 y.o)
  - Kamala Harris : the 1st female vice-president
  - DT had more votes in 2020 than in 2016 (63M 69M) so it isn't a "democratic accident"
  - The blue wave : Pollsters were wrong (like 4y ago), they underestimated trumps' supports
  - Many mail-in votes (covid) and supported by J.-B

## About the campaign

- The rise of QAnon (conspiracy theory with satan-worshipping pedophiles)
  - Supreme court now : 1 liberal and 6 conservative judges - In favor of Trump who got the supreme court demand recounting of votes
  - The "October surprise" : DT was tested positive for covid, there was a cluster in the white house
  - For primaries, Biden was unexpected but black voters helped

## The open war between DT and media

- MSNBC, ABC, CBS, CNBS, NBC chose to cut away from his speech
  - Twitter, Facebook, TikTok flagged some of his posts or blocked hashtags

## Fear of an escalation in violence

- DT's tweets : "to go to total war", "it's time to clean up this mess and stop looking like a banana republic"
  - Assault of the Capitol

## America and media

### History of America, stand for liberty

- James Madison called America "The workshop of liberty"
  - John L.O' Sullivan : "manifest destiny" referring to the USA's divine mission : "to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent"
  - Those who stood in the way were called obstacle to freedom

### Pro US bias in the media during the 20st century

- After WWII, USA was acknowledged as the "savior of the world"
  - During the cold war, USA was a bearer of freedom against the tyranny of the soviet union
  - Uniformity of opinion : Rupert Murdoch newspaper's support for the USA's invasion of Iraq in 2003
  - Business interest, promoting capitalism, free entreprise, free trade, etc...
  - America's soft power via a domination in the tech industry

## America and racism

- 1916 project : (1916 is the date of the arrival of the first africans on America) for the 400th anniversary, they want to study history taking into account black people's perspective (criticized because accused of distorting history)
  - A bit of history : the Civil War from 1861 to 1865 was won by the North with Lincoln as president : when they won, they abolished slavery

### Jim Crow laws : segregation laws. In the supreme court ...

- 1896, Plessy vs Ferguson : "Separate but equal" = it made segregation legal
  - 1954, Brown vs Board of Education of Topeka : end of segregation in schools

## References : movies

- Gone with the wind : A movie from 1939 that puts slavery in a better light. There's put a warning in the beginning to prevent misunderstanding.
  - Statues of historical American heroes, that were pro slavery, wanted to be dismantled
  - BlacKkKlansman : A movie that depicts the horror in the movement of the KKK.

## Social media and privacy

- Cambridge Analytica scandal in 2018 : A whistleblower (Christopher Wylie) found evidence that Facebook used the data of 87 million users to do research on how to influence votes.
  - Google dismantled its ethic team in 2021 because of a paper they published to warn about the bad usage of data to feed their algorithm.

## Social media and fake news

- The Facebook Files scandal in 2021 : A whistleblower (Frances Haugen) found evidence that Facebook encouraged the spread of violent contents and fake news. [link here](#)

## In the workplace

### Surveillance of workers (worst because of the pandemic)

### Exploitation, humiliation and precariousness

- "I, Daniel Blake" : a movie by Ken Loach dealing with the issues caused by British bureaucracy when it comes to social assistance
- "Sorry we missed you" : a movie by Ken Loach dealing with the issues for workers in the gig economy

## On the environment

## Guns in the USA

- "Skin" : short movie (awarded in Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival :) about neo-nazism, racism, firearms...
- National Rifle Association's headlines : "Guns don't kill, people do" ; "The one thing that can stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun"

## Progress in science and technology

### Transhumanism

- Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" : see [this link](#) about this dystopia