

Public Speaking

Course Syllabus

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Course Goals and Objectives

Course Description: This course is designed to enhance students' speech skills as effective performers and audience members of a diverse society. Therefore, a wide variety of readings, assignments, and class work will center on the development and application of skills necessary to speak and listen with a heightened awareness of audience adaptation. Theoretical concepts as they apply to actual speech performances will be the main emphasis in this course.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, students should be able:

1. To think critically about topics that relate to societal issues concerning ethnicity, race, identity, gender, and culture.
2. To select public speaking topics that reflect ideas and concepts important not only to themselves but to the listening audience.
3. To research critically speech materials through the active use of the library, Internet, personal interviews, newspapers, magazines, TV broadcasts/documentaries, etc.
4. To analyze the audience throughout the preparation and delivery process in an effort to appreciate and adapt to differences in listening, thinking, perceiving, or learning due to physical, psychological, cultural, racial, gender-related, and/or socio-economic needs.
5. To organize ideas and supporting materials in a manner considerate of the audience's individual listening needs.
6. To prepare a variety of public speeches which are distinguishable in form, content, and presentation technique.
7. To listen critically yet non-judgmentally during speech performances in an effort to understand the information, identify the purpose, and demand substantial data and arguments in support of all assertions.
8. To develop voice and body language skills for the effective delivery of a speech in order that all audience members might accurately hear and see the message as it was intended with full consideration of the diverse backgrounds and special needs of all who are present.
9. To defend ideas, beliefs, and values throughout the speech performance and listening process in an effort to demand considerate, open-minded, critically analyzed, legitimately supported, and logically argued materials throughout the entire preparation, delivery and observation of speeches.
10. To incorporate the principles of diversity throughout the entire speech process.

Course Materials

Required Text

The Art of Public Speaking, Author: Lucas, Publisher: McGraw Hill, Edition: 12
ISBN 978-0073523910

Overview of Course Requirements

Each student will perform a speech nearly every time we meet. There are a variety of small speeches (2 min / 20 point) speeches, including one group speech, and larger (5 min / 100 pts) speeches. These will include:

Introductory Speech: 20 pts

Introduction of a classmate: 20 pts
Impromptu Speeches: 20 pts each
Comedy Speech: 20 pts
Food day: 20 pts
Group Speech: 20 pts
Extemporaneous Speech: 20pts
Information Speech: 100 pts
Commemorative Speech: 100 pts
Demonstration Speech: 100 pts.
Persuasive Final Speech: 200 pts.

Note: Speeches and outlines for the 100/200 pt. speeches are due on the assigned day. Five points are taken off for each day a speech is late. One 5 minute speech (not the Final Speech) may be video-recorded for the student to review.

Assumed Prerequisite of Speaking Ability:

Each speech builds upon the next both in difficulty level as well as in instructor expectation. Basic concepts of organization, introduction/body/conclusion, transitions, development, support, delivery, etc. are assumed to be learned by all students prior to this college-level speaking experience. Those students who do not feel they have adequate preparation for this course for whatever reason or in whatever manner, should please bring this to the attention of the instructor as soon as possible. The instructor will help individually assess the student's perceived deficit and then make recommendations for supplemental readings, rehearsal speeches with the instructor, learning services facilitation, or other such individualized assistance. The responsibility for the student to share special needs with the instructor is necessary in order that the student may acquire maxim benefit from this course.

Speech Time Limitations:

Time limitations are strictly adhered to in this classroom because of the time restraints of the course and because of the practical application to real life speaking situations outside the classroom. Such speakers as radio broadcasters, TV journalists and talk show hosts, political candidates, graduation speakers, eulogists, after dinner speakers, and award winners alike must realize that one of the least tolerated cardinal sins of speaking is to do so for too long a time. Likewise when there are so many students presenting so frequently throughout the term, it is necessary for them all to speak on the day they planned and within the time limitations of the class period.

Speech Prerequisites for Grading:

In an effort to address the most basic elements of an acceptable speech in this course, the following list of fundamental requirements must be stated implicitly in an effort to maintain the integrity and rules of the classroom as well as the respect and consideration of all participants.

A speech WILL NOT be evaluated and will receive an automatic F if...

- 1.... offensive, abusive, foul language or disrespectful and/or discriminatory statements exist within the speech. In consideration of the various religious, racial, ethnic, cultural, and gender differences, this cannot and will not be accepted in this classroom. Audience analysis and basic respect for human difference in this multi-cultural world is a fundamental requirement for all speeches in any setting and therefore provides the basis for this standard.

- 2....an outline/manuscript or works cited sheet (as required by the individual speech form) is not handed in AT THE TIME OF THE PRESENTATION.

3....the time limitations of the particular speech are severely ignored. Certainly some students will speak faster or slower when they are in front of an audience. Rehearsals out loud in front of a real or pretend audience often may help prevent severe time violations. Reasonable grace periods are also given for each speech. (See "Speech Time Limitations" above.) However, students who present a speech that is less than half or more than double the required time, apparently have not rehearsed appropriately and will not be graded.

4....the form of the speech does not match the assignment. On rare occasions, students completely misinterpret the speech assignment due to frequent absences or some other misunderstanding. In this case, the speech may be done over again if in fact the student completely redoes it on another topic that is mutually agreed upon by the instructor and student.

In addition, all speeches must be well researched, organized, and prepared in accordance with the instructions and guidelines presented in the text, handouts, and lectures for each particular speech assignment.

PLEASE NOTE: Severe, repeated, and obviously intentional defiance of the above listed criteria will result in personal consultations with the instructor and/or division chair and could result in an "F" for this course. Appropriateness of a speech is a fundamental requirement in real life, not only in the classroom!

Grading Rubric for All Speeches:

In an effort to maintain consistency throughout the semester, a standardized speech evaluation form is used on all graded speeches with minor adaptations and emphases as deemed appropriate for the individual speech assignments. Since (1) this course assumes a basic knowledge of writing/organizational methods taught in previous speech classes and freshmen writing classes and (2) all speeches build upon the instruction and experience of the previous speeches, areas that have been covered in class discussion and readings will be graded at an increased level of expectation and improvement throughout the semester.

Writing Requirements

The typed, final outline and a works cited sheet (using APA format only) must be handed in prior to speaking on the day of the presentation.

A vital portion of the public speaking experience is assessment. Students not only learn from their instructor's comments but they also learn from their self and peer assessments as well. By learning key components or elements of effective speaking, students learn what to look for and how to improve various aspects of the speech process. Therefore there are specific assignments built into this course designed to facilitate this learning objective:

In-Class Written Peer Evaluations:

Students will evaluate several of the performances throughout the semester both through oral commentary as well as through written feedback. This assessment is done in class after the student performances. A special evaluation form will be given to each student on speech days in order that they may identify their peer's positive and negative speaking techniques involving such items as organization (main points), support/citations, and delivery. These will be reviewed by the instructor and forwarded to the appropriate student in an effort to provide additional feedback for peers as well as facilitate listening and assessment techniques for all students.

Examinations:

This course is designed as a performance-based, active learning experience. The true test of one's ability will be measured in the speech writing and presenting demonstrated throughout the semester. In addition, however, there may be two to three quizzes, a mid-term and a final exam. Any of these can be waived at the discretion of the instructor. Certainly, students need to read, study, understand, and apply the text materials throughout the semester and not just the night before an exam or speech.

General Perspective:

This class may be viewed as a cooperative learning experience in which we are all responsible for one another's learning. Speeches are not created to be delivered to empty rooms but rather to attentive audiences. For this reason attending class and sharing ideas, views, and feedback will be mandatory and therefore evaluated regularly, on a daily basis throughout this course. Certainly, exceptional needs or learning differences will be dealt with on an individual basis. Please be sure to bring such cases to the instructor early in the semester.

Speech Revisions:

Students may redo one or more speeches in an effort to improve their grade.

The requirements for this option are as follows:

- (1) Students must do a totally different speech on a different topic but must follow the same criteria of the particular speech assignment.
- (2) Students must complete this make-up work by no later than the last scheduled day of classes. (Exceptions may be made for finals week if prearrangements are made and the need arises. Remember this is solely at the discretion of the instructor.)
- (3) Students must perform the make ups in front of a live audience, preferably their own classmates.
- (4) Students can only receive the same or improved grades upon doing a new speech. That is, they cannot do worse than on the first speech. The better of the two grades will be given.
- (5) Students may not substitute a speech grade for one that they did not have prepared for on time. This is not to be used for late speech assignments.

One of our class periods will be used by library personnel and will take place at the library. The instructor will tell you when this is to occur. In addition to that in-class experience, there is a Data Base Library Tour.

Tutorial Services (includes both extra credit and required assignments):

The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides a full array of tutorial services including public speaking. Students are highly encouraged to discuss their outlines, ideas, and research with a trained tutor. For any of the 5-minute speeches in which the Tutorial Center is involved, the student receives a bonus 10 points. For the final 200-point speech, the student receives a 20-point bonus.

Types of Tutorial Services Available:

Private Tutoring Sessions: To request a tutor, go to www.upj.pitt.edu, click on "Current Students" link, click "Campuservices.upj.pitt.edu" link and log-in with your username and password. Finally click on "Academic Success Center—Tutor Services" and complete the application process.

Drop-In Tutorial Sessions: Public speaking tutors are regularly scheduled for drop-in sessions with students on select days and hours. Notices are posted throughout the campus with specific details and locations.

On-Line Outline Assistance: Students may submit their outlines to the tutorial service center on line and receive feedback on their outlines any time throughout the semester. All students are required to submit their Informative pre-outline, Persuasive pre-outline, and Manuscript Speech rough draft to this service for review at least one week in advance of their presentation.

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 as early as possible in the term.