COMM 204: PUBLIC SPEAKING
Spring 2015

Section: 20379, MWF 11:00a–11:50a, ANN 211
Instructor: Cynthia Wang
Email: wangcynt@usc.edu
Office: PhD Office (ASC G6, Basement of West Lobby)
Office hours: By appointment

Course Description

This course is designed to teach the principles and practice of effective oral communication, the analysis of the speaking-listening process, the selection and organization of materials for a variety of speaking situations, and the use of new communication and multimedia technologies in formal presentations. The class will also discuss the complexities of the public sphere, and the underlying sociocultural implications of speaking and listening.

Course Objectives

- To develop communicative competence through analysis and criticism of oral messages.
- To develop skills for presenting informative and persuasive discourse.
- To develop skills in creating and using a variety of visual and multimedia aids, including digital media and web-based applications.
- To learn about ethical challenges that speakers face.
- To engage with social, political, and cultural issues as a vehicle to understand public speaking’s role in society.

Required Materials


Additional materials to be distributed throughout the semester.

A blogger.com and a Twitter account.

Recommended Supplemental Materials

- APA Style Manual – All papers for this class must be submitted in proper APA style, including citations and bibliographies. Library handouts and/or websites may be sufficient (including: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/)
- Two-pocket folder for speech portfolios
- 4x6 index cards

Course Policies
Respect. The classroom should be a safe space for learning and expression. Contributions in class should be thoughtful and engaging, rather than monopolizing or silencing. The ability to share diverse experiences and opinions contributes to a productive and engaging learning environment. Please be attentive and courteous to your fellow classmates, respectful of opinions and ideas, and you should expect the same in return. Rude and disrespectful comments or behavior will simply not be tolerated. Finally, don't be afraid to ask questions, engage with each other, and help each other out.

Academic Integrity. Academic honesty is a core value of the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. Your work should reflect your own thoughts and ideas. Representing others’ efforts and conclusions as your own without acknowledgement (even when placed in your own words) is considered plagiarism. For guidance about what constitutes as forms of academic dishonesty, please see (http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/tig.pdf and http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/tio.pdf). We are committed to upholding the standards outlined by the Student Conduct code in SCampus (see http://web-app.usc.edu/scampus/). Incidents in violations of these standards and policies will result as a failing grade on the offending assignment (at minimum) and will be reported Office of Student Conduct. If you are having trouble discerning what is considered cheating or plagiarism, please confer with me. Ignorance will not be an acceptable excuse for dishonest behavior.

Technology. Is everywhere. It should facilitate, rather than hinder, your academic experience. Therefore, I will allow technology (silenced) in the classroom to the extent that it does not disrupt fellow classmates' learning experience, nor disrespect fellow classmates while they are participating in class discussion. On speech days, all technology must be turned off and put away.

Emailing. You are expected to check your USC email daily, as I will often send readings, updates, and other class information through it. If you email me, please allow 24-48 hours for a response. If you don't hear back from me by then, feel free send your email again.

Disability Services. Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please have the letter delivered to me as early in the semester as possible within the first week of the semester. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30am-5:00pm, Tuesday through Friday. DSP’s phone number is (213) 740-0776.

ESL Students. Please inform me as soon as possible if English is not your primary language and you believe you may require special accommodations.

Assignments
Assignments will receive a +/- grade deduction for every 24 hours it is late.

**Introduction Speech.** As a warm up, you will be asked to make one-minute speeches about yourself. This is a chance to get to know a little bit more about you and for you to begin feeling comfortable speaking to your classmates. Please tell us about what makes you unique – your background, interests/hobbies, and any other details you would like to share.

**Informative Speech.** You will present a 5-7 minute speech informing your peers about a topic or idea of your choice. We will model our speeches after TED Talks. You will also be required to conduct research on your topic and provide three to four sources during your speech. Two of these sources must be academic works. The purpose of this speech is to sharpen your research skills and relay your thoughts to your audience in an engaging way.

**Persuasive Speech.** You will present a 5-7 minute speech that will require you to craft effective arguments and provide credible evidence for your claims. Your speech can request your audience to perform an action or to shift thoughts and feelings.

**Visual Aid Speech.** You will be asked to present a 5-7 minute speech that utilizes visual, audio, or other non-verbal tools. The focus of the speech will be to buttress your claims with effective tools. You may revisit a topic or idea from your informative or persuasive speech.

**Speech Observations.** We will sharpen our analytical skills in this course. Part of this will include being critical of others’ speeches as well as your own. For the live speech observation, you will be asked to reflect on ideas you’ve learned in the class when viewing a speech in person. You will describe the context, whether the speaker was effective and why, and whether they aligned their comments to their target audience.

**Reflection Blog.** You will write a 2-3 paragraph reflection blog after each speech you give, to be posted within a week of giving your speech in class. Please talk about what you learned in the process of preparing and giving your speech, why your speech topic is important or meaningful to you, what you think you did well, and what you felt you could improve upon, some of the challenges you faced, and anything else you think might be of interest to share with me and your classmates. This class is on public speaking, and speaking to a public does not always mean oral communication. The purpose of this is so others can also learn from your experiences and maybe pick up tips that will help them with their speeches. The class blog is found here: [http://comm204publicspeaking.blogspot.com](http://comm204publicspeaking.blogspot.com)

**Reading summaries/Leading Discussion Sections.** You and a fellow classmate will be responsible for leading discussion for one class of the semester. You will provide a brief summary of each of the readings assigned for that class, and come up with a few points or questions to start a class discussion.

**Twitter.** Please tweet something relevant to our class at least once a week. It can be about the readings, about your topic of choice, about anything we talked about in class. But make sure you tweet the link with the hashtag **#comm204.**

**Midterm Exam.** This is a skills-based course, however, we will be learning theoretical
concepts to develop these skills. This exam will be designed to test your knowledge on the foundations of public speaking, and will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

Final Project. There will be no final exam for this course. In lieu of a final exam, you will do a final project in the form of a blog, a video, or other multimedia rendering of your choice. This is an opportunity to apply public speaking to a digital format and a potentially broader Internet audience.

Active Participation. There is a difference between just being physically present in class, and actively participating. You will be expected to engage with your classmates and contribute to class discussions in lively and productive ways (both verbally and non-verbally), and not zone out on your computer screen during class.

Attendance. Your attendance in this course, both as a speaker and listener, is important. You are expected to arrive on time and remain in class for the duration of the period. Punctuality is particularly important on speech days. Do not interrupt your peers by entering class late or leaving early unless you have an absolute emergency (and if you are late, wait until in between speeches to enter the room). Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Absences from class will affect your final grade.

- **Excused Absences:** In some circumstances, absences due to severe illness, religious observance, or university sanctioned activities (sports, band, academic competition, etc.) may be excused without penalty. Written documentation is required for an absence to be considered excused. When possible, please inform me of any known scheduling conflicts in advance of missing class.
- **Unexcused Absences:** You are permitted one unexcused absence during the semester. Each additional unexcused absence results in the reduction of the final grade by one (+/-) letter grade.
- **Makeups:**
  - The following assignments can be made up ONLY under extenuating circumstances and with acceptable documentation:
    - Speeches
    - Quizzes
  - The following assignments CANNOT be made up.
    - Activities (like the In-class Peer Review, and participation)
    - Final Project (this is a strict university policy over which I have no control)
Course Grading

Your grade in this course will be determined based upon percentage of points you earned of the total number of points possible in the class, using the following grading scheme:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.9%</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.9%</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.9%</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.9%</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>73-76.9%</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72.9%</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69.9%</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62.9%</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>59.9% or below</td>
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Speeches: (240 Points Total)
- Introduction Speech (Personal Narrative)
  - Content and Delivery – 10 points
- Informative Speech (News & Information)
  - Research Portfolio - 20 Points
  - Content & Delivery - 50 points
- Persuasive Speech (Contemporary Issue of Public Interest)
  - Research Portfolio - 20 Points
  - Content & Delivery - 50 points
- Visual Aid Speech (Historical or Contemporary Subject)
  - Research Portfolio - 20 Points
  - Content & Delivery - 50 Points
  - Visual Aid - 20 Points

Speech Observations: (50 Total)
- Live Speech Observation - 20 Points
- Self Observation - 25 Points

Exams: (100 Total)
- Midterm Exam - 40 points
- Final Exam - 60 points

Class Activities/Participation: (110 Total)
- In-Class Peer Edits – 30 Points (10 points each)
- Post-Speech Reflection Blogs - 35 Points
- Participation in Class Discussion and Activities - 30 Points
- Leading Class Discussion – 10 Points
- Twitter Posts – 10 Points

TOTAL: 500 Points

***You must complete ALL of these assignments (except for the extra credit assignment) in order to pass the class. Failure to complete ONE OR MORE of them will result in an F in the class.***
Additional Notes about Grading

- In-class exercises are not graded but count towards your participation points. Participation points are also based on your participation as an audience member, your work in small groups and your contributions to class discussions.
- Questions about grades must be addressed in a timely manner: Requests for a grade review must be in writing, accompanied by a copy of the graded assignment and submitted to me within one academic week of your receipt of the grade.

Course Schedule

*** Subject to change as the semester unfolds.

Week 1: Introductions

Mon, Jan 12th:
- Introduction to the Course - Syllabus
  Discussion Leaders assigned

Wed, Jan 14th:
- Read Chapter 1: “Introduction to Public Speaking”
  Introduction Speech Assigned

Fri, Jan 16th:
- Read Stuart Hall's “Encoding/Decoding” (BB)

Week 2: Preparation

Mon, Jan 19th:
  ***No Class – Martin Luther King Jr. Day***

Wed, Jan 21st:
- Read Chapter 4: “Listening Effectively”
- Read Kate Lacey: “Listening Overlooked”(BB)
  Introduction Speech Presentations
  Live Speech Observation Project Assigned

Fri, Jan 23rd:
- Read Chapter 11: “Speaking with Confidence”
- Read Chapter 12: “Delivering your Speech”
**Week 3: The Informative Speech**

Mon, Jan 26th:
Read Chapter 5: “Audience Analysis”

Wed, Jan 28th:
Read Chapter 15: “Informative Speaking”
*Informative Speech Assigned*

Fri, Jan 30th:
Read Walt Fisher, “Narration as Human Communication Paradigm” (BB) – (especially section on “The Narrative Paradigm”)

**Week 4: Researching, Constructing, and Organizing the Informative Speech**

Mon, Feb 2nd:
Read Chapter 7: “Supporting Your Ideas”
Read David Altheide, “Plugged in Research” from *Qualitative Media Analysis* (BB) - (especially pp. 9-13)

Wed, Feb 4th:
Read Chapter 8: “Organizing and Outlining”

Fri, Feb 6th:
*Share/discuss Informative Speech Topics in class*

**Week 5: Choosing Your Words Part 1**

Mon, Feb 9th:
Read Chapter 10: “Using Language Well”
*Live Speech Observation Decision Due*

Wed, Feb 11th:
Read Sandra Bartky's “Foucault, Feminism, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power.” (BB)

Friday, Feb 13th:
*Informative Speech Thesis Statement, Preliminary Outline, and Bibliography Due*
*In-class peer edits*
Week 6: Informative Speech Delivery

Mon, Feb 16th:
***No Class – Presidents’ Day***

Wed, Feb 18th:
*Group A: Informative Speeches, Portfolios Due*

Fri, Feb 20th:
*Group B: Informative Speeches, Portfolios Due*

Week 7: Informative Speech Delivery + MIDTERM

Mon, Feb 23rd:
*Group C: Informative Speeches, Portfolios Due*

Wed, Feb 25th:
Midterm Review - come prepared with questions

Fri, Feb 27th:
*MIDTERM EXAMINATION*

Week 8: Persuasive Speeches

Mon, Mar 2nd:
Read Chapter 16: “Persuasive Speaking”
*Live Speech Observation Written Report Due*
*Persuasive Speech assigned*

Wed, Mar 4th:
Read “The Book of Bad Arguments”: [https://bookofbadarguments.com/](https://bookofbadarguments.com/)

Fri, Mar 6th:
*Share/discuss Persuasive Speech Topics in class*

Week 9: Choosing your Words Part 2

Mon, Mar 9th:
Read Tal Fortgang's “Checking my Privilege”
Read Stuart Hall's “Minimal Selves” (BB)
*Self Observation Written Report Assigned*
Wed, Mar 11th:
Read CommGAP Public Sphere (BB)

Fri, Mar 13th:
**Persuasive Speech thesis statement, outline, and bibliography due**
**In-class peer edits**

**Spring Break! March 16-21st**

**Week 10: Persuasive Speech Delivery**

Mon, Mar 23rd:
**Group B: Persuasive Speeches, Portfolios Due**

Wed, Mar 25th:
**Group C: Persuasive Speeches, Portfolios Due**

Fri, Mar 27th:
**Group A: Persuasive Speeches, Portfolios Due**

**Week 11: Integrating Visual Aids**

Mon, Mar 30th:
Read Chapter 9: “Visual Resources and Presentation Technology”
**Visual Aid Speech Assigned**

Wed, Apr 1st:
Read TED’s “10 tips on how to make slides that communicate your idea”
(http://blog.ted.com/2014/07/15/10-tips-for-better-slide-decks/)
Read “How to Avoid Death by Powerpoint”

Fri, Apr 3rd:
**Visual Aid Speech Topic Due – Share/discuss in class**

**Week 12: Visual Culture**

Mon, Apr 6th:
Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, “Practices of Looking” (selections)

Wed, Apr 8th:
Readings TBD
**Work on Visual Aids in class**
Fri, Apr 10th:
   Visual Aid Speech thesis statement, outline, and bibliography due
   In-class peer edits, practice Visual Aid Speeches

Week 13: Visual Aid Speech Delivery

Mon, Apr 13th:
   Group C: Visual Aid Speeches, Portfolios due

Wed, Apr 15th:
   Group A: Visual Aid Speeches, Portfolios due

Fri, Apr 17th:
   Group B: Visual Aid Speeches, Portfolios due

Week 14: Public Discourse in the Digital Age

Mon, Apr 20th:
   Read Clay Shirky’s Here Comes Everybody excerpt (BB)
   Final Project Assigned

Wed, Apr 22nd:
   Jodi Dean “The Net is Not a Public Sphere” (BB)

Fri, Apr 24th:
   Matthew Hindman - “The Myth of the Digital Democracy” (BB)

Week 15: Blogs and Videos

Mon, Apr 27th:
   Read various blogs
   Self Observation Written Report Due

Wed, Apr 29th:
   Share Final Project Topics

Fri, May 1st
   Wrapping Up
   Prep for Final Exam

FINAL EXAM – Due Wednesday May 6th at 11am: Take home project: Write a blog or make a video to inform or persuade a digital audience of something.