Overview

The purpose of this course is to overview skills and theories to improve your public speaking. We will review the speaking-listening process, how to select and organize materials, and how to best utilize multimedia tools in presentations. The course should be intellectually challenging, relevant in academic and business worlds, and useful to you in a broader social context. Our objectives will be:

- To define and explain communication concepts that serve as a basis for effective speaking
- To demonstrate listening, analytical reasoning, verbal, non-verbal, and research skills
- To research, prepare, and deliver informative presentations relevant to your audiences
- To analyze and evaluate speeches made by others

This class adopts the perspective that everyone has room to improve their public speaking. You will learn by doing and we will have many in-class impromptu speaking or active exercises. It is my hope you will have an enjoyable and productive semester.

Required Texts


Other readings or recordings may be assigned during the semester and made available via Blackboard (which you can access by logging into https://blackboard.usc.edu/).

Additional Materials

- Twitter micro-blogging account (sign up at www.twitter.com), using hashtag #COMM204
- Two-pocket folder for speech portfolios
- APA Style Manual (recommended) – All papers and assignments *must* be submitted in proper APA format. Regardless of your future field or occupation, you will be required to adhere to certain formatting standards. It is good practice to be vigilant about this now.
Course Policies

**Respect.** The classroom should be a safe space for 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, and you should expect the same in return. Rude and disrespectful comments or behavior will simply not be tolerated.

**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 these links: 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.

**Special Accommodations.** I am committed to providing assistance that will help students succeed in the course. Academic accommodations will be made when students register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me within the first week of the semester or as soon as possible. DSP is located at STU 301, 8:30 am - 5:00 pm, Monday – Friday, and can be reached at (213) 740-0776.

**English as a Second Language.** Please inform me if you need special accommodations if English is not your primary language.

**E-mail and Skype.** Announcements and reminders will be sent no later than 24 hours prior to class. You can expect me to respond to e-mail within 24-48 hours. If that time has elapsed, and you are concerned I might not have received your e-mail, please feel free to send another. Before exams and speech dates I will also log on to Skype for additional help with last minute questions or concerns.

**Computers and Cell Phones.** We live in a time where technology is ubiquitous. Nonetheless, it should facilitate, rather than hinder, your academic experience. Cell phones must be put away in class. Laptops and tablets are permitted, but only for note taking and other in-class activities. If you use a laptop, I ask that you sit on the far left side of the classroom (we can refer to it as “laptop alley”) as not to distract others’ behind you. In respect for your classmates, technology is banned on speech days.

**Grading Concerns.** This class will institute a 24-hour policy on all returned assignments. If you have any comments or concerns about your grades, I am happy to speak with you 24 hours after the assignment grades have been distributed. This time period allows some time to reflect and have a productive conversation. All formal grade change requests should be in writing, submitted within a week after a grade is posted, and provide sound reasoning and support for the grade change.
Overview of Assignments

Speech #1: Introduction Speech. As a warm up, you will be asked to make one-minute speeches about yourself. It is our hope that we get to know a little bit more about you and that you begin to be comfortable speaking to your classmates. We will be practicing audience adaptation. Think about what your peers might want to know – what makes you unique, your background, interests/hobbies, and any other details you would like to share.

Speech #2: TED Talk (Informative Speech).* You will be asked 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. The purpose of this speech is to sharpen research skills and provide credible evidence for your claims.

Speech #3: Persuasive Speech.* You will be asked to present a 5-7 minute speech that will require you to craft effective arguments and to define and refute potential counterarguments. Your speech should request your audience to perform an action or to shift thoughts and feelings. This speech will also be recorded for your analysis in your self-observation speech critique.

Speech #4: Sensory 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 to enhance your claims with effective tools. You may revisit a topic or idea from your informative or persuasive speech.

Speech #5: Special Occasion Speech. You will be asked to present a two-minute speech that you may be asked to give in real life. This can be a wedding toast, a graduation speech, a keynote, an introduction, etc. This will be a fun opportunity to further practice language selection and audience adaptation.

*Note: Speeches #2, #3, & #4 are research-based speeches. You will be required to conduct external research on your topics and provide three to four sources during your speech. Two of these sources must be academic works.

Exams. This is a skills-based course, however, we will be learning theoretical concepts to develop these skills. These take home exams will be designed to test your knowledge on the concepts overviewed. The exams are non-cumulative and will consist of short answer and essay questions.

Speech Critiques. We will sharpen our analytical skills in this course. For the first critique, you will be asked to evaluate the content and delivery of a TED Talk in preparation for Speech #2. You will explain whether the speaker was effective utilizing concepts discussed in class or the text. For the self-observation critique, you will reflect on your speaking strengths and weaknesses across the speeches you have presented and indicate the steps you will pursue to improve after the course.

Meet-and-Greet. I am committed to getting to know each of you as we spend time in class. The additional benefit of a small class is that we can get better acquainted. For our first assignment, I will ask you to sign up for a 10-minute time slot where we can discuss your interests in communication, career goals, hobbies, your favorite TV shows, debate about the Chicago Cubs vs. White Sox, and any questions about the class you have. These meet-and-greets will provide me an opportunity to get to know you a bit more and get a sense of what activities might be beneficial to you and the class.
Overview of Assignments (Continued)

**In-Class Activities.** I am an advocate for experiential learning and we will have many in-class activities that involve practicing the skills we discuss in class.

**Twitter Participation.** In our digital society, many of the speeches we view are via a medium, rather than in person. Technology has also allowed individuals to share and publicly comment on these speeches. As public speaking scholars, we should engage in this conversation. You will be expected to contribute a minimum of one original Tweet and one response Tweet to your classmates each week before Monday’s class using the hashtag #COMM204. This tweet should discuss a thought about the reading or course topics of the upcoming week. You encouraged to share examples and critiques of speech content, organization, and delivery skills. On speech weeks, you will have until Wednesday of that week to post an original Tweet and response Tweet regarding the speeches given in class. The purpose of this practice is to generate thoughtful discussion amongst your peers, and thus Twitter participation will be examined holistically. You must have a minimum of 12 original Tweets and 12 original responses, spread across distinct weeks to receive a Twitter participation grade. If a week or two is missed, but the remaining Tweets reflect substantial thought and critique, it will not be detrimental to the grade.

**Active Participation.** We learn a great deal from each other. You will be expected to engage with your classmates and contribute to class discussions in lively and productive ways. Additionally, being an attentive listener and other non-verbal behavior also demonstrates your presence to your colleagues. Active participation will be judged holistically, rather than on a class-by-class basis.

**Attendance.** Your attendance as both a speaker and listener is imperative for this course. You are expected to attend the full class session and to arrive on time. Punctuality demonstrates respect to your classmates, especially on speech days.

- **Excused absences:** In some circumstances, absences due to illness, religious observance, or university-sanctioned activities (sports, band, academic competition, etc.) may be excused without penalty. Written documentation is required.
- **Unexcused absences:** Students are permitted one unexcused absence during the semester. Each additional unexcused absence results in the reduction of 1/3 a letter grade (e.g., A to A-, C+ to C, etc.)

**Extra Credit.** You may have the opportunity to participate in research conducted at the university or other small assignments. After completing a short response, you may receive a 1% increase to your final grade for each extra credit opportunity. You can complete up to two extra credit opportunities.
Grading Criteria
[500 Points Total]

Speeches 250 Points
- Speech #1: Introduction 20 Points
  o Content & Delivery 10 Points Due January 21
  o 1-Page Reflection 10 Points Due January 26
- Speech #2: TED Talk 60 Points Due February 9 & February 11
  o Research Portfolio 10 Points
  o Content & Delivery 50 Points
- Speech #3: Persuasive 60 Points Due March 9 & March 11
  o Research Portfolio 10 Points
  o Content & Delivery 50 Points
- Speech #4: Sensory Aid 80 Points Due April 6 & April 8
  o Research Portfolio 10 Points
  o Content & Delivery 50 Points
  o Sensory Aid 20 Points
- Speech #5: Special Occasion 30 Points Due April 27

Speech Critiques 50 Points
- TED Talk Critique 25 Points Due February 18
- Self-Observation Critique 25 Points Due April 20

Take Home Examinations 100 Points
- Midterm Exam 50 Points Due March 25
- Final Exam 50 Points Due May 6

Class Participation 100 Points
- Meet-and-Greet 10 Points Complete within first two weeks of the semester
- Twitter Participation 40 Points Instructor discretion at the end of the semester
- Active Participation 50 Points Instructor discretion at the end of the semester

Late Work. Late work will be reduced one full letter grade each day the work is tardy. If any assignment is past the point of a failing grade, it still must be completed. All requirements must be fulfilled to receive a passing grade in the course.

Grading Scale

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>63 – 66.5</td>
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<td>59.5 or below</td>
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COMM 204 – Spring 2015 – Section 20383R
Course Schedule

** Please review the assigned readings prior to the class session it is listed under so that we can have a productive and engaging discussion. **

** Week 1: Introduction to Course **

M 1/12 Introductions & Course Overview
   Introduction Speech assigned
   Schedule Meet-and-Greets (for Week 1 and Week 2)

W 1/14 TED Talk Critique assigned
   PSVT Ch. 1: “Introduction to Public Speaking”
   PSVT Ch. 4: “Listening Effectively”

** Week 2: Presenting Introduction Speeches **

M 1/19 ** Martin Luther King Jr. Day – No Class **

W 1/21 ** Introduction Speeches **

** Week 3: Introducing TED Talks (Informative Speeches) **

M 1/26 ** Introduction Speech Reflection Due **
   TED Talk (Informative Speech) assigned
   PSVT Ch. 15: “Informative Speaking”

W 1/28 Reducing Communication Apprehension
   PSVT Ch. 11: “Speaking with Confidence”
   PSVT Ch. 12: “Delivering Your Speech”

** Week 4: Researching and Constructing Informative Speeches **

M 2/2 TED Talk (Informative Speech) Portfolio Peer Review Day
   PSVT Ch. 8: “Organizing and Outlining”
   PSVT Ch. 5: “Audience Analysis”

W 2/4 Finding Credible Sources & APA/MLA Style
   PSVT Ch. 7: “Supporting Your Ideas”
Week 5: Presenting TED Talks (Informative Speeches)
M  2/9  ** TED Talks (Informative Speeches) – Portfolios Due **
W  2/11 ** TED Talks (Informative Speeches) – Portfolios Due **

Week 6: Introducing Persuasive Speeches
M  2/16 ** President’s Day – No Class **
W  2/18 ** TED Talk Critique Due **
   Persuasive Speeches assigned
   PSVT Ch. 16: “Persuasive Speaking”

Week 7: Organizing and Practicing Persuasive Speeches
M  2/23 Midterm Take Home Exam Posted
W  2/25 Crafting Arguments and Counterarguments

Week 8: Organizing and Practicing Persuasive Speeches
M  3/2 Persuasive Portfolio Peer Review Day
   Midterm Review Jeopardy
W  3/4 COMM 204 Shark Tank

Week 9: Presenting Persuasive Speeches
M  3/9 ** Persuasive Speeches – Portfolios Due **
W  3/11 ** Persuasive Speeches – Portfolios Due **

Week 10: Spring Break
M  3/16 ** Spring Break – No Class **
W  3/18 ** Spring Break – No Class **

Week 11: Using Multimedia for Presentations
M  3/23 Sensory Aid Speeches assigned
   PSVT Ch. 13: “Visual Aids”
W  3/25 ** Midterm Exam Due **
Week 12: Organizing and Practicing Sensory Aid Speeches

M  3/30  Sensory Aid Portfolio Peer Review Day
     Self Observation Report assigned

W  4/1  Reviewing Visual Arguments

Week 13: Presenting Sensory Aid Speeches

M  4/6  ** Sensory Aid Presentations – Portfolios Due **

W  4/8  ** Sensory Aid Presentations – Portfolios Due **

Week 14: Introducing Special Occasion Speeches

M  4/13  Special Occasion Speeches assigned
        PSVT Ch. 17: “Special Occasion Speaking”

W  4/15  Fielding Questions & Answers

Week 15: Organizing and Practicing Special Occasion Speeches

M  4/20  ** Self Observation Critique Due**
        Job Interviews & Cover Letters

W  4/23  Practicing Special Occasion Speeches
        PSVT Ch. 10: “Using Language Well”

Week 16: Presenting Special Occasion Speeches

M  4/27  ** Special Occasion Speeches **

Final Examination

M  5/6  ** Final Exam – Scheduled 4:30 – 6:30 PM (Exams due by 6:30 PM via Blackboard) **