

COMMUNICATION 204: PUBLIC SPEAKING
Course Description and Syllabus

Instructor: Katherine (Katie) Elder
Office: ASCJ G6 – PhD Offices
Office Hours: By appointment

E-mail: kelder@usc.edu
GChat: Katherine.elder@gmail.com

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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

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

REQUIRED TEXT

The Public Speaking Project (n.d.). *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text*. Retrieved from <http://publicspeakingproject.org/psvirtualtext.html>

Other readings or recordings may be assigned during the semester and will be made available via Blackboard.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Students will purchase a two-pocket folder to be used for speech portfolios. Speech-related assignments will be turned in the day of the speech in these folders, and graded documents will be returned in these folders.

GRADING

Percentages will be calculated by taking the total points earned in the course and dividing by total possible points (500).

A: 92.6 – 100	C+: 77.6 – 79.5	D-: 59.6 – 62.5
A-: 89.6 – 92.5	C: 72.6 – 77.5	F: Under 59.5
B+: 87.6 – 89.5	C-: 69.6 – 72.5	
B: 82.6 – 87.5	D+: 67.6 – 69.5	
B-: 79.6 – 82.5	D: 62.6 – 67.5	

COURSE POLICIES

Respect. This 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 learning environment. Please be attentive and courteous to your fellow classmates, and you should expect the same in return. Rude and disrespectful comments and behavior will simply not be tolerated.

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the Department of Public Safety <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs http://sait.usc.edu/academic-support/center-programs/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology. s 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.

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

E-mail and GChat. Announcements and reminders will be sent no later than 24 hours prior to class. I will respond to e-mails within 24-48 hours. If that time has elapsed and you are concerned I did not receive your e-mail, feel free to send me another. Before speech dates I will be available on GChat for additional help with last minute questions or concerns.

Computers and Cell Phones. Out of respect for your professor and your fellow students, and recognizing that using them is distracting to both, cell phones and laptops must be put away during class. All lecture notes are available to students on Blackboard in advance of class, and if you want to take notes, you are free to print out these slides and take notes in class.

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS

Speeches.

Introduction Speech: As a warm-up, I ask that you make a one-minute speech about a classmate in an effort for us all to get to know each other. This will assist you in feeling more comfortable speaking in front of your classmates. We will be practicing audience adaptation, so think about what your peers might want to know about your classmate, including background, interests, and hobbies.

Informative Speech:* You will be asked to present a 5-7 minute speech informing your classmates about a topic 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.

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. The purpose of your speech should be to request your audience to perform an action or to shift thoughts and feelings.

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 be to enhance your claims with effective tools. You may revisit a topic or idea from your informative or persuasive speech.

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 an opportunity to further practice language selection and audience adaptation in a less formal environment.

*Note: The informative, persuasive, and sensory aid speeches are research-based. You will be required to conduct external research on your topics and provide three to four sources for use during your speech.

Midterm Meeting. Because this is a skills-based course, in lieu of a midterm exam, students will meet with me individually for 20 minutes the week of October 24 to discuss individual progress, lingering concerns, and/or techniques for improving comfort and/or performance.

Term Paper. Public Speaking courses often include a requirement that students critique the speaking styles of themselves and others. However, because we are in the midst of the presidential election season, we have a unique opportunity to critique the persuasive public speaking skills of the individuals running for President of the United States. This 5-7 page term paper (double-spaced, before references) will provide students with the opportunity to watch one of the presidential debates (dates TBD) and focus on and analyze a candidate of the student's choice.

Assignments.

Introduction Online Survey: This SurveyMonkey survey will be distributed the first week of class. There are only ten questions that will allow me to get to know you better and tailor the course to your needs and interests.

TED Talk Analysis: As part of our discussion of informative speeches, you will provide a two-page summary, critique of, and reflection on a TED Talk of your choice, as long as it exceeds 10 minutes (selection is available at <https://www.ted.com/talks>).

Final Reflection: In lieu of a final exam, students will be asked to turn in a 3-4 page self-reflection that discusses concepts learned and adopted, progress made, and room that remains for improvement.

Class Participation.

Shark Tank Exercise. As an in-class activity designed to put persuasive speaking skills into practice, students will team up and present an idea or innovation to a panel of “sharks” in an effort to persuade the sharks to fund their project. The winning team will receive 5 extra credit points.

Active Participation and Attendance. 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 also demonstrates your respect for your colleagues. Points in this category will be awarded at my discretion at the end of the semester.

In-Class Activities and Impromptu Speaking. This class provides students with ample opportunity to carefully craft and practice the delivery of a speech. It is important, however, that students feel comfortable speaking off-the-cuff in circumstances that find them less prepared. Throughout the semester, I will periodically ask students to speak in front of the class on random topics. Students will not be graded on the content of these short speeches, but rather, on their presence and participation.

Your attendance as both a speaker and listener is imperative for this course. You are expected to attend the full session and to arrive on time. Punctuality demonstrates respect to your classmates, especially on speech days. In some circumstances, absences due to illness, religious observance, or university-sanctioned activities (sports, band, academic competition, etc.) may be excused without penalty, on the condition that students provide me with written documentation. Students are permitted **one unexcused absence** during the semester. Each additional unexcused absence will result in the reduction of 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., A to A-, C+ to C, etc.).

GRADING BREAKDOWN

500 Points Total

Speeches	310 Points	Various Deadlines
Introduction Speech	40 Points	Due August 30
Informative Speech	70 Points	Due September 20, 22
- Research Portfolio	(20 Points)	
- Content & Delivery	(50 Points)	
Persuasive Speech	70 Points	Due October 18, 20
- Research Portfolio	(20 Points)	
- Content & Delivery	(50 Points)	
Sensory Aid Speech	90 Points	Due November 15, 17
- Research Portfolio	(20 Points)	
- Content & Delivery	(50 Points)	
- Sensory Aid	(20 Points)	
Special Occasion Speech	40 Points	Due December 1
Term Paper	60 Points	Due November 22
Assignments	50 Points	Various Deadlines
Introduction Online Survey	10 Points	Due August 25
TED Talk Analysis	20 Points	Due September 15
Final Reflection	20 Points	Due December 1
Class Participation	80 Points	
Shark Tank Exercise	20 Points	Due October 4
Active Participation and Attendance	20 Points	
Midterm Meeting	20 Points	Week of October 24
In-class Activities and Impromptu Speaking	20 Points	

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.

Please note that the syllabus is subject to minor revisions to meet the evolving needs of the class.

Week 1: Introduction to Course

- T 8/23 Introductions and Course Overview
Introduction Speech Partners Assigned
- Th 8/25 Introduction to Public Speaking and Public Speaking Competencies
Due online: Introduction Survey
Reading: Chapter 1 from *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text*

Week 2: Introduction Speeches and Overview of Informative Speaking

- T 8/30 **Introduction Speeches**
- Th 9/1 Developing a Research Portfolio for Speeches
Reading: Chapter 7 from *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text*

Week 3: Informative Speaking

- T 9/6 Introduction to Informative Speaking
Reading: Chapters 8 and 15 from *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text*
TED Talk Analysis Assigned
Informative Speech Assigned
- Th 9/8 Informative Speaking, continued

Week 4: Informative Speaking

- T 9/13 Informative Speaking in-class activity
- Th 9/15 Class Discussion of TED Talk Experiences and Analysis
Due in class: TED Talk Analysis

Week 5: Informative Speech Week

- T 9/20 **Informative Speeches and Research Portfolio**
- Th 9/22 **Informative Speeches and Research Portfolio**

Week 6: Introduction to Persuasive Speaking

- T 9/27 Introduction to Persuasive Speaking
Reading: Chapter 16 from *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text*
Persuasive Speech Assigned
Shark Tank Assigned

Th 9/29 Understanding your Audience
Reading: Chapter 5 from *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text*

Week 7: Persuasive Speaking

T 10/4 Arguments and Counterarguments

Th 10/7 In-Class Exercise: Shark Tank
Term Paper Assigned

Week 8: Special Topics in Persuasive Speaking

T 10/11 Propaganda and Ethics in Persuasion

Th 10/13 Persuasion and Philanthropy
Persuasion and Science

Week 9: Persuasive Speech Week

T 10/18 **Persuasive Speeches and Research Portfolio**

Th 10/20 **Persuasive Speeches and Research Portfolio**

Week 10: Midterm Meetings

T 10/25 Impromptu Speaking Exercise

Th 10/27 Term Paper Research Workshop

Week 11: Introduction to Sensory Aids in Public Speaking

T 11/1 Introduction to Sensory Aid in Public Speaking
Reading: Chapter 13 from *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text*
Sensory Aid Speech Assigned

Th 11/3 Reviewing Visual Arguments: Dos and Don'ts

Week 12: Sensory Aids in Public Speaking

T 11/8 Visualizing Data

Th 11/10 In-Class Exercise: Critiquing Sensory Aids

Week 13: Sensory Aid Speeches

T 11/15 **Sensory Aid Speeches and Research Portfolio**

Th 11/17 **Sensory Aid Speeches and Research Portfolio**

Week 14: Introduction to Special Occasion Speeches

T 11/22 Introduction to Special Occasion Speeches
Reading: Chapter 17 from *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text*
Special Occasion Speech Assigned

Final Reflection Assigned
Due in class: Term Paper

Th 11/24 *No Class. Happy Thanksgiving!*

Week 15: Special Occasion Speeches

T 11/29 Humor in Speeches

Th 12/1 **Special Occasion Speeches**
Due in class: Final Reflection

STUDENT RESOURCES

Sexual Assault Policy and Resources. The University of Southern California is committed to fostering a safe campus environment for all members of the university community, free from sexual coercion, violence, and sexual intimidation. The university's sexual misconduct and sexual assault policies have been developed to reaffirm these principles and to provide recourse for individuals whose rights have been violated (the policy is available in SCampus, Part E: https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/files/2015/11/SCampus-Final-112015_v8.pdf). To learn more about your reporting options and your rights, or to speak with a counselor confidentially, contact the USC Sexual Assault Resource Center/Center for Women and Men at 213-740-4900, or contact Student Counseling Services at 213-740-7711. For more information and resources, including off-campus resources like the Rape Treatment Center, visit the USC Sexual Assault Resource Center website at <https://sarc.usc.edu/resources/>. Finally, remember that you can contact a campus cruiser at 213-740-4911 for a safety escort.

Stress Management. Students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge. Moreover, they offer drop-in workshops throughout the semester on managing stress and maintaining mindfulness.

Additional Academic Support. A number of campus resources exist to support you academically. Contact the Center for Academic Support (<http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/>) at 213-740-0776 or study@usc.edu.