

# COMM 204: Public Speaking

## FALL 2016

Instructor: Raffi Sarkissian  
Office: ASC Room G6  
Office Hours: Tues 4:00-4:50 or by appt.  
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Section: 20376R  
Meeting: T/Th 5:00-6:20pm  
Classroom: ASC 240

### Course Description

Public speaking is an indispensable skill not only for delivering formal speeches but also for a variety of professional, informal, and social circumstances, including digital communication today. This course is designed to teach the principles and practices of effective oral communication with focus on the speaking-listening process, research skills, how to select and organize materials, and the best use of multimedia tools in presentations. The course will also cover theories and approaches to the public sphere to better understand how language, identity, place, and power influence the contexts for speaking. Given that our lives are inextricably enmeshed with the digital, this course also offers material and skills to better understand evolving communication technologies in order to equip ourselves with the tools to effectively analyze and practice digital “speech.” This course should be intellectually challenging and prove to be useful in the academic, business, and social worlds.

The course objectives are to:

- Define and explain communication concepts that serve as a basis for effective speaking
- Understand and interrogate the social, cultural, and political contexts for speech
- Demonstrate listening, analytical, (non-)verbal, research, and critical reasoning skills
- Research, prepare, and deliver informative, persuasive, and engaging presentations
- Analyze and critically evaluate speeches made by others
- Learn a variety of digital communication and production skills

### Required Text

- *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text* (<http://publicspeakingproject.org/psvirtualtext.html>)  
All the assigned chapters will *also* be available in PDF format on Blackboard.
- Additional required readings and multimedia texts will be made available on Blackboard.

### Additional Materials

- All students should have 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.

## Overview of Speeches and Assignments

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All speeches and assignments will have more detailed handouts when they are assigned.

**Introduction Speech** (Aug 30): This is a brief warm-up speech (2-3 minutes) to assist you in feeling more comfortable speaking in front of your classmates.

**Informative Speech\*** (Week 5): You will be asked to present a 5-6 minute speech informing your classmates about a topic of your choice. The purpose of this speech is to sharpen research skills and provide credible evidence for your claims.

**Persuasive Speech\*** (Week 9): You will be asked to present a 5-6 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.

**Multimedia Aided Speech\*** (Week 13): You will be asked to present a 5-6 minute speech that utilizes visual, audio, or other media and non-verbal tools. The focus of the speech will be to enhance your claims with effective tools.

**Special Occasion Speech** (Dec 1): You will be asked to present a 3-4 minute speech that adheres to a special occasion of your choice, i.e. a toast, commencement, award acceptance speech, etc.

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

**Written Assignments:** Throughout the semester, you will be turning in short-form written assignments (usually between 500 and 1000 words) that will analyze various speeches or readings. These assignments are meant to be critical applications of what we have learned in class; thus, simply summarizing or reporting will not be enough to earn full credit.

**Midterm Meetings** (Weeks 8-9): Everyone is required to meet with the instructor outside of class by the end of week 9 to review their progress in the class.

**Final Project** (Due 12/4): Students will have the choice of turning in a formal essay (7-8 pages) analyzing an approved speech using all the critical skills we have learned throughout the course OR making an audio podcast (8-10 minutes) on an approved topic.

**Class Participation and Exercises:** A key component of public speaking is contributing to the discourse at hand. The classroom is a space for open discussion to learn and workshop critical, oral, written, and organizational skills. Come prepared to every class to discuss the assigned readings and to participate in any informal discussions. Participating in class discussions and in-class exercises is worth up to 18% of your final grade.

**Extra Credit:** There will be one extra credit opportunity. It will entail attending a live speech and completing a write-up. More details will be given in class.

## Grade Distribution

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### Grade % Breakdown

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

A: 93 – 100	B+: 87 – 89.9	C+: 77 – 79.9	D+: 67 – 69.9
A-: 90 – 92.9	B: 83 – 86.9	C: 73 – 76.9	D: 63 – 66.9
	B-: 80 – 82.9	C-: 70 – 72.9	D-: 60 – 62.9
			F: Under 60

### Grade Breakdown by Assignment

#### In-Class Speeches (250 points)\*

		<u>Due Date</u>
Introduction Speech	15 points	Tuesday, August 30
Informative Speech	70 points	Week 5
Persuasive Speech	70 points	Week 9
Multimedia Speech	70 points	Week 13
Special Occasion Speech	25 points	Thursday, December 1

#### Written Assignments (80 points)

TED Talk Analysis	20 points	Monday, September 12 by 5pm
Public Spheres Analysis	20 points	Monday, October 3 by 5pm
Election Debate Analysis	20 points	Friday, October 28 by 5pm
Podcast Analysis	20 points	Monday, November 7 by 5pm

Midterm Meeting	10 points	Week 8 and 9
Final Project and Reflection	70 points	Sunday, December 4 by 5pm

Attendance and Participation	45 points	Daily
Impromptu/In Class Exercises	45 points	Daily

Total possible score for the class      500 points

\*In-class speech grades include both speech performance *and* portfolio materials, which may be due in advance of the speech day.

### Late Policy

Students who are absent on their assigned speech day and who do not have documented evidence for their absence may receive no higher than a C on their speech.

Assignments that are turned in up to 24 hours late from their respective due dates will be reduced by 15%. Assignments that are turned in later than 24 hours past due date will be reduced 50%.

## Course Schedule

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Please read the assigned chapters and articles *prior* to the class meeting it is scheduled under so that we can have a productive and engaging discussion.

Course schedule is subject to revisions to meet the evolving needs and interests of the class.

### **Week 1: Introduction to the Course and Public Speaking**

- T 8/23 Introductions and Course Overview  
**Read** PS Chapter 1: Introduction  
**Read** UofA, “The Five Canons of Rhetoric” (2 page handout)
- Th 8/25 Background and Basics  
**Read** PS Chapter 12: Delivering Your Speech  
**Read** iSpeak Chapter 2: Preparing Your First Presentation (p.28-39)

### **Week 2: Introductory Speeches and Informative Speech**

- T 8/30 *Deliver Introduction Speeches – GROUP A and B*  
**Read** Carmine Gallo, “Master the Art of Storytelling” (from *Talk Like TED*)
- Th 9/1 Types of Informative Speech and Picking a Topic  
**Read** PS Chapter 15: Informative Speaking  
**Read** Nathan Crick, “Five Canons of Rhetoric” (10-15)  
**Read** Carmine Gallo, “Teach Me Something New” (*Talk Like TED*), p.111-122  
**Assign** Informative Speech  
**Assign** TED Talk Analysis

### **Week 3: Constructing Your Speech I**

- T 9/6 Assembling Your Portfolio: Topics, Thesis, and Research  
**Read** PS Chapter 8: Organizing and Outlining  
**Read** PS Chapter 7: Supporting Your Ideas  
**Read** Nathan Crick, “Five Canons of Rhetoric” (15-19)  
  
*\*\*Informative Speech Topic due Wednesday (9/7) by 5pm via email*
- Th 9/8 Working on Delivery and Style  
**Read** Nathan Crick, “Five Canons of Rhetoric” (42-47)  
**Read** PS Chapter 11: Speaking with Confidence  
**Read** Carmine Gallo, “How to Say It So People Listen” p. 81-88;  
“The Gist on Gestures” p.97-105; “Lighten Up” p. 159-175 (from *Talk Like TED*)

## **Week 4: Constructing Your Speech II**

***\*\*TED Talk Analysis due Monday (9/12) by 5pm via Blackboard***

- T 9/13 Fine-tuning Your Words  
**Read** PS Chapter 9: Introductions and Conclusions  
**Read** PS Chapter 10: Using Language Well  
**Read** Nathan Crick, “Five Canons of Rhetoric” (19-26; 32-33, 37-39)

***\*\*Annotated Bibliography due Wednesday (9/14) by 5pm via email***

- Th 9/15 Audience and Listening  
**Read** PS Chapter 4: Listening Effectively  
**Read** PS Chapter 5: Audience Analysis  
**In-Class Workshop:** *Bring outline drafts to class*

## **Week 5: INFORMATIVE SPEECH WEEK**

- T 9/20 *Deliver Informative Speech, Turn in Portfolio – GROUP A*
- Th 9/22 *Deliver Informative Speech, Turn in Portfolio – GROUP B*

## **Week 6: Public Spheres and Political Speech**

***FYI First Presidential Debate: Monday (9/26) 6:00-7:30pm***

- T 9/27 Open Discussion: first presidential debate  
Start theories and critiques of the public sphere  
**Read** Douglas Kellner, “Habermas, the Public Sphere, and Democracy” (1-6)  
**Read** Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere” (56-77)  
**Read** Catherine Squires, “Rethinking the Black Public Sphere” (446-457)  
**Assign** Public Spheres Analysis
- Th 9/29 Continue theories and critiques of the public sphere; code-switching  
Speaking without words: bodies, politics, protest  
**Read** Larry Gross, “Coming Out and Coming Together” from *Up From Invisibility*  
**Assign** Persuasive Speech

***\*\*Public Spheres Analysis due Monday (10/3) by 5pm via Blackboard***

### **Week 7: Speaking of Persuasion I**

- T 10/4 Introduce Persuasion  
**Read** PS Chapter 16: Persuasive Speaking  
**Read** PS Chapter 6: Critical Thinking  
**Recommended** Jay Heinrichs, “Control the Tense” (in *Thank You for Arguing*)  
**Assign** Presidential Debate Analysis

***FYI Second Presidential Debate: Tuesday (10/4) 6:00-7:30pm***

- Th 10/6 Continue Persuasion: Ethos, Logos, Pathos  
Argument Fallacies Part I  
**Read** Jay Heinrichs, “Spot Fallacies” (in *Thank You for Arguing*)  
**Read** An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments  
**Recommended** Jay Heinrichs, “Make Them Listen” (in *Thank You for Arguing*)

***\*\*Persuasive Speech Topic due Friday (10/7) by 5pm via email***

***FYI Vice-Presidential Debate: Sunday (10/9) 6:00-7:30pm***

### **Week 8: Speaking of Persuasion II**

- T 10/11 Arguments and Fallacies Part II  
**In Class** Fallacy Exercises

***\*\*Annotated Bibliography due Wednesday (10/12) by 5pm via email***

- Th 10/13 ***In-Class Workshop: Bring persuasive speech outlines to class***

### **Week 9: PERSUASIVE SPEECH WEEK**

- T 10/18 *Deliver Persuasive Speech, Turn in Portfolio – GROUP B*

***FYI Third Presidential Debate: Wednesday (10/19) 6:00-7:30pm***

- Th 10/20 *Deliver Persuasive Speech, Turn in Portfolio – GROUP A*

### **Week 10: Speaking with Multimedia Aids**

- T 10/25 All About Slides: Powerpoint, Keynote, Prezi  
**Read** PS Chapter 13: Visual Aids  
**Watch** “How to Avoid Death by Powerpoint”

- Th 10/27 *Assign* Multimedia Aided Speech  
Alternative Speaking Aids and Media  
*Read* “How to Choose and Use Speech Props”
- \*\*Presidential Debate Analysis due Friday (10/28) by 5pm via Blackboard*

### **Week 11: Speaking in the Digital Age**

- T 11/1 On Podcasting; Rip, Remix, Record and Broadcast Podcast Workshop  
*Read* NPR Interviews, “From Upspeak to Vocal Fry”  
*Listen* Radiolab, “Debatable”  
*Assign* Final Project  
*Assign* Podcast Analysis
- \*\*Multimedia Speech Topics due Wednesday (11/2) by 5pm via email*
- Th 11/3 In-Class Debate on Election Propositions and Candidates
- \*\*Podcast Analysis due Monday (11/7) by 5pm via Blackboard*

### **Week 12: Politics and Digital Workshop**

- T 11/8 Open Discussion: Election
- Th 11/10 Alternative (to) Speech: Digital Activist Campaigns  
*Read* TBA

### **Week 13: MULTIMEDIA AIDED SPEECH WEEK**

- T 11/15 *Deliver Multimedia Aided Speech, Turn in Portfolio – GROUP A*
- Th 11/17 *Deliver Multimedia Aided Speech, Turn in Portfolio – GROUP B*

### **Week 14: Speaking for Special Occasion**

- T 11/22 Special Occasion Speeches  
*Read* PS Chapter 17: Special Occasion Speaking  
*Assign* Special Occasion Speech
- Th 11/25 Happy Thanksgiving: No Class

## **Week 15: Speaking for Special Occasion II**

- T 11/29 Award Shows and Acceptance Speeches  
Course Review and Evaluation  
*Read* TBA
- Th 12/1 *Deliver Special Occasion Speeches – GROUP A and B*

***Final Project: Due Sunday 12/4 by 5pm***

### **Course Policies**

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**Respect.** This classroom should be a safe space for everyone to learn and express their thoughts. 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.

**Attendance and Participation.** Attendance is mandatory. If you have a doctor's note or an emergency situation, please let me know ahead of time and provide proper documentation. More than three unexcused absences will result in one letter grade reduction of your final score. More than six unexcused absences can lead to failing the class. Participation is also an integral component of the class and your grade. Always come prepared to class to discuss the readings and course concepts.

**Using Tech in Class.** *\*Laptops, tablets, and cell/smartphones are not allowed in class.\** This is a hands-on, discussion-focused, and listening-intensive class. You are encouraged to take notes with old school paper and pencil. All lecture slides will be posted on Blackboard at the end of every week. I have provided links on Blackboard (in Lecture Notes) to reports and studies on why handwriting notes is better than taking notes on laptops. Feel free to read them. A small class works and learns better when everyone brings all their focus and attention to the group.

**Contacting the Instructor.** I will try my best to always be available via email or to meet in person. Students can stop by any time at my office hours or make an appointment to meet at a different time. You can email me at [raffisar@usc.edu](mailto:raffisar@usc.edu) with any questions or concerns about the class or academic performance. When emailing, please allow up to 24 hours for a response (48 hours on weekends). If you have not heard back after that time, feel free to follow-up.

**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. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing speeches or other assignments will receive a failing grade in the course and may be dismissed from the major. For guidance about what constitutes as forms of academic dishonesty, please refer to the SCampus guide, Part B, Section 11 ([https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/files/2015/11/SCampus-Final-112015\\_v8.pdf](https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/files/2015/11/SCampus-Final-112015_v8.pdf)).

**Disability.** Academic accommodations based on a disability are available to students who 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 as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

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

**Academic Support.** 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. Or check out the services at the USC Writing Center (<https://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/>).

**Safety.** 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* (<https://dps.usc.edu/contact/>). This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on the 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 resources center webpage ([sarc@usc.edu](mailto:sarc@usc.edu)) describes reporting options and other resources.