

**COMM 204 Public Speaking
Spring 2017 Syllabus
MW 10-11:50am, Location: ANN 211**

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Office: ASCJ G6 – PhD Offices
Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This skills-based course is meant to help you become a better public speaker through theory and, most importantly, practice. We will learn concepts and models of communication, how to adapt a speech for different occasions and audiences, how to effectively support your ideas, how to select and organize materials in preparation for a speech, and how to utilize multimedia tools in presentations, among other skills. This course should be relevant in academic, business, and social settings. You should become a better public speaker and listener, while thinking about and maintaining ethical standards.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Understand communication **concepts** that serve as a basis for **effective speaking**, and **apply this conceptual knowledge** in practice to give effective speeches
- Be a more **analytical listener**, and develop the ability to **analyze and evaluate presentations made by others**
- Develop and demonstrate **verbal, nonverbal, and research competencies** through researching, preparing, and delivering presentations relevant to your audiences
- Learn how to **ask good questions** and provide **meaningful answers** to questions
- **Gain confidence** to speak publicly in a variety of situations

REQUIRED TEXT

The Public Speaking Project (n.d.). Public Speaking: The Virtual Text. Retrieved from <http://publicspeakingproject.org/psvirtualtext.html> (referred to as PSVT for the rest of this syllabus)

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

GRADING

Percentages will be calculated by taking the total points earned in the course and dividing by total possible points (1000).

B+: 87.6 – 89.5 C+: 77.6 – 79.5 D+: 67.6 – 69.5

A: 92.6 – 100 B: 82.6 – 87.5 C: 72.6 – 77.5 D: 62.6 – 67.5 F: Under 59.5

A-: 89.6 – 92.5 B-: 79.6 – 82.5 C-: 69.6 – 72.5 D-: 59.6 – 62.5

COURSE POLICIES

- I. **Respect:** Public speaking is fear for many people, and one of the goals of this course is for everyone to feel more confident when they get up in front of others to speak. To achieve this, we are going to build and maintain a safe space for expression. We will have many class discussions and get to know each other over the course of the semester. We don't want anyone to monopolize conversations or, on the other hand, feel unable to contribute. We will learn from each other if we both listen to others and speak up when we want to share or ask questions. Disrespectful comments or behavior will not be tolerated. Please contact me immediately if you ever feel like the class atmosphere is not respectful toward you or your peers.
- II. **Academic Integrity:** As with all classes at USC, your work in this class must be yours. Any attempt to represent others' work as your own will receive a failing grade on the assignment in question (at a minimum) and will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. To learn more about about academic integrity and what constitutes academic dishonesty, please see these links:
<https://libraries.usc.edu/research/reference-tutorials> ;
[http://annenberg.usc.edu/CurrentStudents/GStudentsvcs/PhD/~media/Academic%20Integrity%20Overview.ashx](http://annenberg.usc.edu/CurrentStudents/GStudentsvcs/PhD/~/media/Academic%20Integrity%20Overview.ashx). We will uphold the standards outlined by the Student Conduct code in SCampus (see <http://web-app.usc.edu/scampus>). Please err on the side of caution and talk with me if you are confused or unsure if something could or would be considered cheating or plagiarism.
- III. **Assignment Submission:** There are ***no hard-copy paper submissions*** in this course. All assignments will be submitted through Blackboard (<http://blackboard.usc.edu>) via Turnitin. If you are unable for any reason to submit your assignment on time to Blackboard for a technical reason, email me (bighash@usc.edu) your assignment *before* the deadline.
- IV. **Deadlines:** The due dates for your assignments are strict. Late assignments are not accepted. If you have an emergency, please contact me before the deadline and documentation is required.
- V. **Email:** During normal business hours (M-F, 9am-6pm) I will respond to emails within 24-48 hours (probably sooner). If you email me outside of those times or if I give you some notice about limited email, it may take me longer to respond. On weekends, I may not respond until Monday. If it has been more than 24 hours and you think I may have missed your email, please send another.
- VI. **Technology:** Phones must be put away during class. Computers may be used if you like, but only for class-related material and note-taking. I may ask you to close all computers at any time, and if computers become distracting, I may change this policy. Computers must be put away during speeches and guest lectures.
- VII. **Special Accommodations:** Academic accommodations are 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 deliver this documentation to me within the first week of the semester, or as soon as possible. DSP (<https://dsp.usc.edu/>) can be reached at ability@usc.edu and (213) 740-0776.
- VIII. **English as a Second Language or Other Accommodations:** Please let me know if you need special accommodations if English is not your primary language or if you are concerned about accommodations for any other reason.

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS

Speech 1, Introduction Speech: This is a warm-up **1 minute speech** about yourself in an effort for us all to get to know each other. This should help you feel more comfortable speaking in front of your classmates.

Speech 2, Informative Speech*: This is 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. Along with your in-class presentation, you will be required to turn in (on Blackboard) your speech outlines and references.

Speech 3, Persuasive Speech*: This is 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. Along with your in-class presentation, you will be required to turn in (on Blackboard) your speech outlines and references.

Speech 4, Sensory Aid Speech*: This is 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. Along with your in-class presentation, you will be required to turn in (on Blackboard) your speech outlines and references.

Speech 5, Special Occasion Speech: This is a **2 minute speech** modeled after something that you may be asked to give in real life. This can be a wedding toast, a graduation speech, a keynote, an introduction, etc. You choose. This will be an opportunity to further practice language selection and audience adaptation in a less formal environment.

*Note: These speeches require you to conduct external research. You must provide three to four sources for use during your speech.

Speech Reflections: After the first four speeches, you will write a 1-page (double-spaced) self-reflection about your performance for a total of four reflections. You should include concepts learned in class while reflecting on your strengths and places for improvement for next time.

Online Intro Survey: This survey will be distributed the first week of class. These questions will allow me to get to know you better.

TED Talk Analysis: As part of our discussion of informative speeches, you will provide a 2 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>).

Speech Performance Critique: There are many opportunities live on campus or online to watch debates on topics that you find interesting and important. The options include critiquing the persuasive public speaking skills of the candidates for President of the United States last year, the inaugural address of the POTUS and the opposition response, and

many options on campus. The main requirement is that there must be at least two people who offer opposing views. This 3-4 page summary, critique, and reflection (double-spaced, before references) will provide students with the opportunity to watch a debate or two opposing speeches and compare and contrast the styles and performances.

Final Self-Reflection: This is a 3-5 page (double-spaced, before references) self-reflection paper that discusses concepts learned and adopted, progress made, and room that remains for improvement. You should expand on what you've written in previous reflections, not just reiterate what you already said. Evaluate your improvement throughout the entire course, and how you wish to utilize all of the concepts learned in class. Think about future occasions where you will be asked to speak in front of others, and how you will utilize what you've learned here for those situations. This is in place of a final exam.

Shark Tank Exercise: This is 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 10 extra credit points.

Participation and Attendance: One goal of this course is for you to feel more confident speaking up, asking questions, and participating more generally. Even lectures will have discussion components. We will learn more if we engage with each other and contribute to class discussions. Additionally, there will be several sessions where we will be doing impromptu speaking activities. These are very important for you to feel more comfortable speaking in a variety of settings and without formal preparation. Because of this, I expect students to attend all classes, other than pre-approved excused absences (illness, religious observance, university-sanctioned activities) or emergencies. An absence will be considered excused if it falls under one of those categories (pre-approved or emergency) *and* is accompanied by documentation. Any more than **two unexcused absences** will result in a $\frac{1}{3}$ deduction to your final grade (e.g., A to an A-, A- to a B+, B+ to a B, etc...). Also please **be on time**. If I notice persistent lateness, particularly if it is disruptive or during speeches, I will deduct points in this category.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

Assignment	Total Points	Deadline
Speeches		
Introduction Speech #1	40 points	Jan. 16
Informative Speech #2	140 points	Feb. 13 & 15
Persuasive Speech #3	140 points	Mar. 6 & 8
Sensory Aid Speech #4	180 points	Apr. 10 & 12
Special Occasion Speech #5	100 points	Apr. 24 & 26
Written		
Speech Reflections (4)	100 points (25 X 4)	Jan. 23, Feb. 20, Mar. 13, Apr. 17

Online Intro Survey	10 points	Jan. 11
TED Talk Critique	30 points	Feb. 6
Speech Critique	60 points	Apr. 5
Final Reflection	100 points	May 8
In-Class		
Shark Tank Exercise	40 points	March 1
Participation/Attendance	60 points	Ongoing
TOTAL		1000 POINTS

COURSE SCHEDULE

The assigned readings are meant to be read **before the class** under which they are listed. This syllabus and schedule may change slightly if the needs of you and the course change throughout the semester. If things change, I will provide you with a new copy.

Week 1: Introduction to Course

- M 1/9 Introductions and Course Overview
 Introduction to Public Speaking and Public Speaking Competencies
Assignment: Introduction Speech
- W 1/11 Introduction to Public Speaking and Public Speaking Competencies continued
Reading: PSVT Ch. 1 "Introduction to Public Speaking" & PSVT Ch. 4 "Listening Effectively"
Deadline: Online Intro Survey
 Truth or Lie? Impromptu Speaking In-Class activity

Week 2: Introduction Speeches and Research Portfolios

- M 1/16 Introduction Speeches (Groups A, B, C, & D)
- W 1/18 Finish Intro Speeches, if any
 Developing a Research Portfolio for Speeches
Reading: PSVT Ch. 7 "Supporting Your Ideas"
Assignments: Informative Speech

Week 3: Informative Speaking

- M 1/23 Introduction to Informative Speaking
Reading: PVST Ch. 8 "Organizing and Outlining" and Ch. 15 "Informative Speaking"
Assignments: TED Talk Analysis
Deadline: 1-page Introduction Speech Reflection (on Blackboard)
- W 1/25 Informative Speaking continued
 Reducing "Ums" activity

Week 4: Informative Speaking

- M 1/30 Informative Speaking, continued
Deadline: Informative Speech Topic Approval
- W 2/1 Peer Review Session for Informative Speeches

Week 5: First Speech Preparation

- M 2/6 Guest Speaker or Work Day
Deadline: TED Talk Analysis
- W 2/8 Class Discussion of TED Talk Experiences and Analysis

Week 6: Informative Speech Week

- M 2/13 Informative Speeches and Outlines (Group A and Group B)
- W 2/15 Informative Speeches and Outlines (Group C and Group D)

Week 7: Introduction to Persuasive Speaking

- M 2/20 Introduction to Persuasive Speaking
Reading: PVST Ch. 16 "Persuasive Speaking"
Assignment: Persuasive Speech
Deadline: 1-page Informative Speech Reflection
- W 2/22 Understanding your Audience
Reading: PVST Ch. 5 "Audience Analysis" and Ch. 18 "Group Presentations"
Assignment: Shark Tank

Week 8: Persuasive Speaking & Shark Tank

- M 2/27 Results of Audience Analysis, Arguments and Counterarguments
Peer Review for Persuasive Speeches
Assignment: Speech Critique
Deadline: Persuasive Speech Topic Approval
- W 3/1 In-Class Exercise: Shark Tank

Week 9: Persuasive Speech Week

- M 3/6 Persuasive Speeches and Outlines (Group C & D)
- W 3/8 Persuasive Speeches and Outlines (Group A & B)

Week 10: NO CLASS -- SPRING BREAK

- 3/13 NO CLASS
Deadline: Persuasive Speech Reflection

Week 11: Special Topics - Crisis Communication

M 3/20 Crisis Communication
Asking & Answering Questions
Assignment: Sensory Aid Speech

W 3/22 In-Class Activity: Q&A

Week 12: Introduction to Sensory Aids in Public Speaking

M 3/27 Introduction to Sensory Aid in Public Speaking
Reading: PVST Ch. 13 "Visual Aids"

W 3/29 Reviewing Visual Arguments: Dos and Don'ts
In-Class Activity: Articulation
Deadline: Sensory Aid Speech Topic Approval

Week 13: Sensory Aids in Public Speaking

M 4/3 Visualizing Data
In-Class Exercise: Critiquing Sensory Aids

W 4/5 Peer-Review Day for Sensory Aid Speeches
Assignment: Final Reflection
Deadline: Speech Critique

Week 14: Sensory Aid Speeches

M 4/10 Sensory Aid Speeches and Research Portfolio (Group A & B)

W 4/12 Sensory Aid Speeches and Research Portfolio (Group C & D)

Week 15: Introduction to Special Occasion Speeches

M 4/17 Introduction to Special Occasion Speeches
Reading: PVST Ch. 17 "Special Occasion Speaking"
Assignment: Special Occasion Speech
Deadline: 1-page Sensory Aid Speech Self-Reflection

W 4/19 Humor in Speeches

Week 15: Special Occasion Speeches

M 4/24 Special Occasion Speeches (Group C & D)

W 4/26 Special Occasion Speeches & Goodbyes! (Group A & B)

M 5/8 Final Exam Day -- **Deadline: Final Reflection**

Possible Guest Lectures:

Guest Lecture/Activity - Kristen Steves Alexander (Body Language)
Guest Lecture - Christina Hagen (Retired Navy Public Affairs Officer)
Guest Lecture - Katie Elder (Propaganda and Persuasion)

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.