COMM 204 Public Speaking

Spring 2018

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Kessler
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Section: 20375
Meeting: M/W 3:30pm-4:50pm
Classroom: ANN 309

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Public speaking—as in speaking both to and before an audience—is not only about what you say; it's about how you say it. As politicians and pop stars constantly remind us, voice is as much a part of spoken communication as speech itself. In this introductory public speaking course, students will both examine the established principles and cultivate the practices of effective verbal and non-verbal oral communication for a variety of professional and social contexts. This work will involve critically analyzing the dynamics between speaker and listener; performing research, as well as selecting and organizing materials, in preparation for public speaking; using various multimedia tools and sensory aids to bolster oral presentations; and most importantly, giving compelling, ethically grounded, speeches. Crucially, the course will also entail considering contemporary notions of voice in relation to questions of language, authority, power, and identity.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Comprehend and be able to clearly explain communication concepts that serve as bases for effective speaking
- Cultivate and demonstrate analytical, listening, research, and verbal and non-verbal communication skills
- Give captivating, responsibly crafted, speeches
- Critically examine and evaluate others' speeches (both within and without the classroom)
- Become a more confident, ethical speaker and a more active, responsive listener
- Critically register and interrogate how ideas of voice intersect with issues of identity, language, power, and authority

REQUIRED TEXT

Public Speaking: The Virtual Text (n.d.), available in PDF form and online at http://publicspeakingproject.org/psvirtualtext.html (abbreviated to PS in course materials)

Other course readings and viewing materials will be made available via Blackboard.

ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

More detailed descriptions will be provided when speeches and other exercises are assigned. Assignments may shift focus based on the needs and desires of the class.

Introductory Speech. 60-90 sec. A brief speech about you, you, you, that introduces you to the rest of the class. This speech should help you feel less jittery speaking in front of your classmates.

Informative Speech. 5-7 min. A research-based speech (modeled on a TED Talk) that informs your classmates about a topic of your choice. This speech requires you to sharpen your research skills and provide credible evidence for your claims. Along with your speech, you will be required to submit your research materials (including at least 5 outside sources).

Persuasive Speech. 5-7 min. A research-based speech that requires you to craft effective arguments and to define and refute potential counterarguments. This speech should request your audience to perform an action or to shift potential thoughts and feelings. Along with your speech, you will be required to submit your research materials (including at least 5 outside sources).

Multimedia Aided Speech. 5-7 min. A research-based speech that uses audio, visual, or other media and non-verbal tools to effectively enhance your claims. You may choose to revisit an idea or a topic from either your informative or your persuasive speech. Along with your speech, you will be required to submit your research materials (including at least 5 outside sources).

Special Occasion Speech. 1-3 min. A speech appropriate to a real-life special occasion at which you might be asked to speak in future. This speech can be anything from a wedding toast to an Oscar acceptance speech (!), and should help you practice speaking in a less formal environment.

Written Reflections and Analyses. In addition to writing a 1-page (double-spaced) critical reflection on your own performance after each of the first four speeches (total = 4 reflections), you will also be required to write a 2-page (double-spaced, before references) critical analysis of a TED Talk of your choice, as well as a 3-4-page (double-spaced, before references) critical analysis of the public speaking skills of two people on opposing sides of a debate. All reflections and analyses should critically apply the terms and concepts we are studying in the class—mere summaries will not suffice.

Final Reflection. 3-5 pp. (double-spaced, before references). Instead of a final exam, you will be required to submit a final reflection paper that applies the concepts and terms learned in class to your own work throughout the past semester. Rather than regurgitating your previous reflections, you should holistically and critically reflect on your speaking experience, improvement, and room for improvement through the lens of the course materials covered. You should also discuss your goals for future performances.

Participation and Attendance. This course is as much about developing your ability to productively engage others' ideas—i.e. sharpening your listening (not to mention reading and writing) skills, honing your contributions to collective discussion, and bolstering your confidence in asking questions—as it is about performing speeches before an audience. Our classroom will serve as a laboratory for learning and practicing crucial oral, written, and organizational skills. Every lecture or presentation will be followed by substantial discussion, and impromptu speaking and other activities will be assigned throughout the semester so that you may become more adept at responding without formal preparation. In short, show up, show up on time, come prepared to discuss the assigned readings, and come prepared to perform!

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

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

A	92.5-100	B+	86.5-89.4	C+	76.5-79.4	D+	66.5-69.4
A-	89.5-92.4	B	82.5-86.4	C	72.5-76.4	D	62.5-66.4
		B-	79.5-82.4	C-	69.5-72.4	D-	59.5-62.4
						F	59.4 or below

Grade Breakdown by Assignment.

Assignment	Total Points	Due Date
Speeches		
Introductory Speech	40 points	Jan. 17
Informative Speech	140 points	Feb. 12 & 14
Persuasive Speech	140 points	Mar. 19 & 21
Multimedia Aided Speech	180 points	Apr. 16 & 18
Special Occasion Speech	100 points	Apr. 25
Written Assignments		
Speech Reflections (4)	100 points (25 x 4)	Jan. 24, Feb. 21, Mar. 28, Apr. 23
TED Talk Analysis	40 points	Feb. 5
Debate Analysis	60 points	Apr. 11
Final Reflection	100 points	May 4
In-Class		
Participation and Attendance	100 points	Ongoing
Total	**1000 points**	

COURSE SCHEDULE

The assigned readings should be read *in advance of* the class under which they are listed. The course schedule will shift according to our needs, so please regularly consult Blackboard for any updates (i.e. I won't be handing out updated paper syllabi over the course of the semester).

Week 1: Course Introduction

M 1/8 Introductions and Course Overview
Assignment: Introductory Speech

W 1/10 Introduction to Public Speaking and Effective Listening
Reading: PS Chapter 1, "Introduction to Public Speaking" and PS Chapter 4, "Listening Effectively"

Week 2: Introductory Speech Week

M 1/15 *NO CLASS—Martin Luther King Jr. Day*

W 1/17 Introductory Speeches (Groups A and B)

Week 3: Introduction to Informative Speaking & Research Portfolios

M 1/22 Informative Speaking and Choosing Research Topics
Reading: PS Chapter 15, "Informative Speaking"
Viewing: Chris Anderson (Head of TED) Talk: https://www.ted.com/talks/chris_anderson_teds_secret_to_great_public_speaking?langu age=en and Nancy Duarte TED Talk: http://www.ted.com/talks/nancy_duarte_the_secret_structure_of_great_talks
Assignments: Informative Speech and TED Talk Analysis

W 1/24 Creating a Research Portfolio
Reading: PS Chapter 7, "Supporting Your Ideas" and PS Chapter 8, "Organizing and Outlining"
Deadline: Introductory Speech Reflection (Blackboard)

F 1/26 *Deadline:* Informative Speech Topic (via email by 5:00 PM)

Week 4: Informative Speech Preparation

M 1/29 Performing Your Speech
Reading: PS Chapter 11, "Speaking with Confidence"

W 1/31 The Uses of Language
Reading: PS Chapter 9, "Introductions and Conclusions" and PS Chapter 10, "Using Language Well"

Week 5: Informative Speech Preparation

M 2/5 Freeing Your Voice
Reading: Freeing the Natural Voice, Kristin Linklater, pp. 7-25 ("An Introduction: The Approach to Vocal Freedom"; "How the Voice Works"; "Why the Voice Does Not Work")
Deadline: TED Talk Analysis (Blackboard)

W 2/7 In-Class Informative Speech Peer Review (*bring outline drafts to class*)

Week 6: Informative Speech Week

M 2/12 Informative Speeches and Research Portfolios (Group A)

W 2/14 Informative Speeches and Research Portfolios (Group B)

Week 7: Voice & Political Speech

M 2/19 *NO CLASS—President's Day*

W 2/21 Voice and Political Speech
Reading: Public Speaking and Civic Engagement, pp. 14-20 ("Deliberation and Demagoguery in the Twenty-First Century"; "The Responsible Citizen-Speaker")
Assignment: Persuasive Speech
Deadline: Informative Speech Reflection (Blackboard)

Week 8: Introduction to Persuasive Speaking

M 2/26 Introduction to Persuasive Speaking
Reading: PS Chapter 16, "Persuasive Speaking"; PS Chapter 6, "Critical Thinking"; *The Book of Bad Arguments*, Ali Almossawi (https://bookofbadarguments.com)

T 2/27 *Deadline:* Persuasive Speech Topic (via email by 5:00 PM)

W 2/28 Audience Analysis & Gestural Activity
Reading: PS Chapter 5, "Audience Analysis"

Week 9: Persuasive Speech Preparation

M 3/5 Group Pitch/Shark Tank Activity
Viewing: Go on YouTube, search for *Shark Tank*'s best and worst pitches, and watch a few!

W 3/7 In-Class Persuasive Speech Peer Review (*bring outline drafts to class*)
Assignment: Debate Analysis

Week 10: Spring Break

M 3/12 *NO CLASS—Spring Break*

W 3/14 *NO CLASS—Spring Break*

Week 11: Persuasive Speech Week

M 3/19 Persuasive Speeches and Research Portfolios (Group B)

W 3/21 Persuasive Speeches and Research Portfolios (Group A)

Week 12: Introduction to Speaking with Multimedia Aids

M 3/26 Introduction to Speaking with Multimedia Aids
Reading: PS Chapter 13, "Visual Aids"
Assignment: Multimedia Aided Speech

W 3/28 Slideware and Speech Props
Viewing: "How to Avoid Death by Powerpoint":
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iwpi1Lm6dFo
Reading: "How to Choose and Use Speech Props":
http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/speech-props/
Deadline: Persuasive Speech Reflection (Blackboard)

F 3/29 *Deadline:* Multimedia Aided Speech Topic (via email by 5:00 PM)

Week 13: Multimedia Aided Speech Preparation

M 4/2 In-Class Exercises: Speaking Extemporaneously

W 4/4 In-Class Multimedia Aided Speech Preparation/Office Hours

Week 14: Multimedia Aided Speech Preparation & Introduction to Speaking on Special Occasions

M 4/9 In-Class Multimedia Aided Speech Peer Review (*bring outline drafts to class*)
Assignment: Final Reflection

W 4/11 Introduction to Speaking on Special Occasions
Reading: PS Chapter 17, "Special Occasion Speaking"
Assignment: Special Occasion Speech
Deadline: Debate Analysis

Week 15: Multimedia Aided Speech Week

M 4/16 Multimedia Aided Speeches and Research Portfolios (Group A)

W 4/18 Multimedia Aided Speeches and Research Portfolios (Group B)

Week 16: Special Occasion Speech Week

M 4/23 Multimedia Aided Speech Decompression
Special Occasion Speech Preparation
Course Evaluations
Deadline: Multimedia Aided Speech Reflection (Blackboard)

W 4/25 Special Occasion Speeches (Groups A and B)
Goodbyes ☹

Final Reflection Due F 5/4, 4:00 PM (Blackboard)

COURSE POLICIES

Respect. It is not uncommon for people to experience anxiety when speaking before an audience. One of the goals of this course is to help you develop the confidence to express your ideas publically. To this end, our classroom will foster a safe space within which you are able to do just that. I expect students to listen attentively and respectfully to one another during speeches as well as class discussions. When contributing to the conversation (as I hope everyone will), I expect students to speak thoughtfully, and to remain sensitive to others' desires to speak and be heard. Disrespectful conduct will not be tolerated. Please let me know right away if you have concerns about the atmosphere of our classroom.

Attendance. Your presence in the classroom is essential and mandatory. If you will be absent from class due to illness, a religious observance, or a university-sanctioned activity, I will require advance documentation to excuse your absence. Should an emergency situation arise that makes it impossible for you to attend class, I will require documentation after the fact to excuse your absence. More than two unexcused absences will lead to a 1/3 deduction from your final course grade (i.e. an A will become an A- and so on).

Participation and Technology. Please arrive to class on time, prepared (i.e. having done the day's course readings and other assignments), and ready to participate. Repeated lateness is disruptive to our work in the classroom and will negatively impact attendance and participation scores. Phones must be turned off and stowed away for the duration of each class meeting. Do not, I repeat, do not be that person whose phone rings during a speech. Laptops may be used only for note-taking and accessing course-related materials (i.e. course texts). They must be stowed away during all speeches. If at any other moment they become distracting, I will require that they be stowed away immediately. Please always bring additional note-taking materials to class (paper and pencil or pen).

Assignment Submission. All written assignments for the course will be submitted through Blackboard (http://blackboard.usc.edu) via Turnitin. If you are, for any reason, technically unable to submit a given course assignment to Blackboard, please send it to me as an email attachment in advance of the deadline. Due to the fast pace of the course, late assignments will not be accepted. If an emergency arises, please provide documentation and contact me before the deadline if possible. If you are absent on your assigned speech day without prior or emergency documentation (i.e. your absence is unexcused), your speech portfolio may still earn you credit if it is submitted by the appropriate deadline, but you will receive no higher than a C for the assignment.

Contacting Me. Please feel free to email me with any course-related questions or concerns you may have, provided these are not addressed or answered by the present course syllabus. Feel free, as well, to schedule an in-person meeting with me to discuss any issues related to the course. When you email me during the regular work week (M-F, 9:00 AM-5:00 PM), I may take up to 24 hours to respond. If you email me over the weekend, I will typically not respond until Monday. You may send me a follow-up email if more than the allotted amount of response time has elapsed.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

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 Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. 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.

Support Systems:
Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.
engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255
Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center
For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs
Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710
Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC
Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information
Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.
Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu