

**Comm 204: Public Speaking**  
4.0 units  
Spring 2020, T/Th, 2:00-3:20 PM  
Section 20376  
ANN 309

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Kessler  
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Office: ASC 333  
Hours: T/Th, 9:30-10:30 AM

**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.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- 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

**DESCRIPTION AND ASSESSMENT OF ASSIGNMENTS**

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!

## GRADING

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

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Total Points</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
<b>Speeches</b>		
Introductory Speech (4%)	40 points	Jan 21
Informative Speech (14%)	140 points	Feb 11 & 13
Persuasive Speech (14%)	140 points	Mar 10 & 12
Multimedia Aided Speech (18%)	180 points	Apr 14 & 16
Special Occasion Speech (10%)	100 points	Apr 28 & 30
<b>Written Assignments</b>		
Speech Reflections (4) (10%)	100 points (25 x 4)	Jan 28, Feb 20, Mar 24, Apr 23
TED Talk Analysis (4%)	40 points	Feb 4
Debate Analysis (6%)	60 points	Apr 7
Final Reflection (10%)	100 points	May 7
<b>In-Class</b>		
Participation and Attendance (10%)	100 points	Ongoing
<b>Total (100%)</b>	<b>1000 points</b>	

### Grading Scale.

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

**Grading Standards.** Grades will be assigned as follows:

A	Outstanding, thoughtful, enthusiastic work
B+/B	Above average work, demonstrating good insight into assignment
B-/C+	Needs improvement on ideas and execution
C and below	Fulfills the bare minimum and shows little understanding of the material

**Grading Timeline.** Grades and written feedback on each course assignment will be provided within two weeks of assignment submission.

## ASSIGNMENT RUBRICS

Detailed rubrics accompany each course assignment and will be distributed along with assignment prompts.

## ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICY

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.

## REQUIRED READINGS AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

*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.

## LAPTOP POLICY

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the [Annenberg Digital Lounge](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

## ADD/DROP DATES FOR SESSION 001 (15 WEEKS: 1/13/20 – 5/1/20)

**Friday, January 31:** Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

**Friday, January 31:** Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

**Tuesday, February 4:** Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund for Session 001

**Friday, February 28:** Last day to drop a course without a mark of “W” on the transcript for Session 001. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]

**Friday, February 28:** Last day to change pass/no pass to letter grade for Session 001. [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

**Friday, April 3:** Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

## COURSE SCHEDULE: A WEEKLY BREAKDOWN

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 Intro

- T 1/14            Introductions and Course Overview  
*Assignment:* Introductory Speech
- Th 1/16            Introduction to Public Speaking and Effective Listening  
*Reading:* PS Chapter 1, "Introduction to Public Speaking"; PS Chapter 4, "Listening Effectively"

### Week 2: Intro Speeches & Intro to Informative Speaking

- T 1/21            Introductory Speeches (Groups A and B)
- Th 1/23            Remaining Introductory Speeches (if necessary)  
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?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/chris_anderson_teds_secret_to_great_public_speaking?language=en) and Nancy Duarte TED Talk:  
[http://www.ted.com/talks/nancy\\_duarte\\_the\\_secret\\_structure\\_of\\_great\\_talks](http://www.ted.com/talks/nancy_duarte_the_secret_structure_of_great_talks)  
*Assignments:* Informative Speech and TED Talk Analysis

### Week 3: Informative Speech Prep

- T 1/28            Creating a Research Portfolio  
*Reading:* PS Chapter 7, "Supporting Your Ideas"; PS Chapter 8, "Organizing and Outlining"  
*Deadline:* Introductory Speech Reflection (Blackboard)
- W 1/29            *Deadline:* Informative Speech Topic (via email by 5:00 PM)
- Th 1/30            Performing Your Speech  
*Reading:* PS Chapter 11, "Speaking with Confidence"

### Week 4: Informative Speech Prep

- T 2/4            Using Language  
*Reading:* PS Chapter 9, "Introductions and Conclusions"; PS Chapter 10, "Using Language Well"  
*Deadline:* TED Talk Analysis (Blackboard)

Th 2/6 In-Class Informative Speech Peer Review (*bring outline drafts to class*)

### **Week 5: Informative Speech Week**

T 2/11 Informative Speeches and Research Portfolios (Group A)

Th 2/13 Informative Speeches and Research Portfolios (Group B)

### **Week 6: Voice, Political Speech, & Intro to Persuasive Speaking**

T 2/18 Voice and Political Speech

*Reading:* Kristin Linklater, *Freeing the Natural Voice*, pp. 7-25 (“An Introduction: The Approach to Vocal Freedom”; “How the Voice Works”; “Why the Voice Does Not Work”); *Public Speaking and Civic Engagement*, pp. 14-20 (“Deliberation and Demagoguery in the Twenty-First Century”; “The Responsible Citizen-Speaker”)

Th 2/20 Introduction to Persuasive Speaking

*Reading:* PS Chapter 16, “Persuasive Speaking”; PS Chapter 6, “Critical Thinking”; *The Book of Bad Arguments*, Ali Almosawi (<https://bookofbadarguments.com>)

*Assignment:* Persuasive Speech

*Deadline:* Informative Speech Reflection (Blackboard)

### **Week 7: Persuasive Speech Prep**

T 2/25 Audience Analysis & Gestural Activity

*Reading:* PS Chapter 5, “Audience Analysis”

W 2/26 *Deadline:* Persuasive Speech Topic (via email by 5:00 PM)

Th 2/27 NO CLASS—Work on Persuasive Speech Outlines and References

### **Week 8: Persuasive Speech Prep**

T 3/3 Group Pitch/Shark Tank Activity

*Viewing:* Go on YouTube, search for *Shark Tank*’s best and worst pitches, and watch a few!

Th 3/5 In-Class Persuasive Speech Peer Review (*bring outline drafts to class*)

*Assignment:* Debate Analysis

### **Week 9: Persuasive Speech Week**

T 3/10 Persuasive Speeches and Research Portfolios (Group B)

Th 3/12 Persuasive Speeches and Research Portfolios (Group A)

### **Week 10: Spring Break**

T 3/17 NO CLASS—Enjoy the break!

Th 3/19 NO CLASS—Enjoy the break!

### **Week 11: Intro to Speaking with Multimedia Aids**

T 3/24 Introduction to Speaking with Multimedia Aids  
*Reading:* PS Chapter 13, “Visual Aids”  
*Assignment:* Multimedia Aided Speech  
*Deadline:* Persuasive Speech Reflection (Blackboard)

Th 3/26 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/>

### **Week 12: Multimedia Aided Speech Prep**

M 3/30 *Deadline:* Multimedia Aided Speech Topic (via email by 5:00 PM)

T 3/31 In-Class Exercises: Speaking Extemporaneously with Slideware

Th 4/2 In-Class Exercises: Speaking Extemporaneously with Speech Props

### **Week 13: Multimedia Aided Speech Prep**

T 4/7 In-Class Multimedia Aided Speech Preparation/Office Hours  
*Deadline:* Debate Analysis

Th 4/9 In-Class Multimedia Aided Speech Peer Review (*bring outline drafts to class*)

### **Week 14: Multimedia Aided Speech Week**

T 4/14 Multimedia Aided Speeches and Research Portfolios (Group A)

Th 4/16 Multimedia Aided Speeches and Research Portfolios (Group B)

### **Week 15: Intro to Speaking on Special Occasions & Special Occasion Speech Prep**

T 4/21 Introduction to Speaking on Special Occasions  
*Reading:* PS Chapter 17, “Special Occasion Speaking”  
*Assignments:* Special Occasion Speech and Final Reflection

Th 4/23 In-Class Special Occasion Speech Preparation/Office Hours  
*Deadline:* Multimedia Aided Speech Reflection (Blackboard)

## Week 16: Special Occasion Speech Week

T 4/28 Special Occasion Speeches (Group B)  
Course Evaluations

Th 4/30 Special Occasion Speeches (Group A)  
Goodbyes ☺

**Final Reflection Due Thursday, May 7, 2:00 PM (Blackboard)**

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### Additional 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. Silence your phone and leave it in your bag for the duration of class. Unless you have an accommodation, you may only use your laptop for the purpose of referencing the course materials on Blackboard. If you are able, you must take notes with pen and paper. If I see you on your laptop and disengaged from class discussion, I will ask you to close it and stow it away. All laptops must be stowed away during all speeches.

#### Communication

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*

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](http://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, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

### Support Systems

#### *Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

#### *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

#### *Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

#### *Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298*

[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

#### *Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*

[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](http://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*

[dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710*

[uscsa.usc.edu](http://uscsa.usc.edu)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Annenberg Student Success Fund*

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

*Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]*

<https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/>

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally “breaking bread” over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.