

# COMM 204: Public Speaking

Spring 2020 Syllabus

Monday & Wednesday 10 – 11:50 AM | ANN 405

---

## Instructor Information

Instructor: Franny Corry | Email: [corry@usc.edu](mailto:corry@usc.edu)

Office: ASC G6 – PhD offices | Office hours: Wednesdays 12 – 1 pm

---

## Course Description

This course is intended to help students become effective and confident public speakers. Students will learn key speech concepts, as well as strategies for researching, planning, and delivering speeches. Combining theory-based learning with skills-based practice, this course takes into account the real situations in which students will encounter public speaking. This includes academic, business, and social environments, as well as exploring how effective speech is important in everyday contexts, whether in-class discussion or interpersonal peer conversation. Students will also understand the role of listening as a crucial component of public speech.

## Course Objectives

- Understand fundamental speech concepts and how they apply to speech in practice.
- Develop robust speech planning skills, including brainstorming, research, organization and outlining.
- Become an effective and compassionate listener, who can understand and engage with diverse viewpoints.
- Improve skills for the critical evaluation of speeches made by others.
- Reduce *glossophobia*, or the fear of public speaking, through strategies for addressing speech anxiety.

## Required Course Texts

- *The Public Speaking Project*. (n.d.). Public Speaking: The Virtual Text (PSVT). Available free from: <http://publicspeakingproject.org/psvirtualtext.html>
- Almosawi, A. (2014). *The Book of Bad Arguments*. The Experiment. Available free from: [bookofbadarguments.com](http://bookofbadarguments.com)
- Additional readings are uploaded to Blackboard as needed.

## Course Policies

### ***Respectful Learning Environment***

Public speaking is a difficult activity for many people. Our goal in this classroom is to foster a supportive environment as we embark on what is often a less-than-comfortable task. Please treat your classmates with respect when they present, during in-class discussion, and in your written peer reviews.

### ***Attendance & Participation***

Regular attendance and class participation ensure a dynamic learning environment. To this end, attendance and adequate class preparation are mandatory. Readings will be discussed in the class period and should be completed before the class period they are associated with on the syllabus. As a public speaking course, in-class verbal participation is the primary means by which participation will be assessed. Active listening will also be taken into account.

You may not have more than two unexcused absences during the semester. These unexcused absences may not take place on your assigned speech days. If you have an unexcused absence on your speech day, your speech grade will be reduced by one full letter (i.e. an A becomes a B). Each unexcused absence beyond two will reduce your final grade by one half (i.e. an A becomes an A-). If you must miss class because of illness, religious observance, sanctioned university activity, or an emergency, please contact me as soon as possible *before* class and provide proper documentation.

### ***Assignment Submission & Deadlines***

Written assignments should be submitted via Turnitin on Blackboard by 11:59pm on the day they are due. If you are experiencing a technical difficulty with the site, email me your assignment *before* the deadline. Late assignments grade will be reduced by a full letter grade for each day they are late (i.e. an A becomes a B).

### ***Instructor Communication***

I am available via email ([corry@usc.edu](mailto:corry@usc.edu)) Monday through Friday, between 9am and 6pm. I try to respond to emails within 24 hours during these periods; if I have not responded to you within 24 hours, please resend your email.

I am also available for questions during my office hours, which are held after class on Wednesdays from 12pm to 1pm. Please flag me as class concludes if you will be attending office hours.

### ***Technology***

Laptops and other technologies are to be used for purposes relevant to the class. Phones should be put away and headphones should not be worn in class. If technology becomes a distraction, I will request that devices be put away. All devices must be turned off and put away on speech days.

### ***Academic Accommodations***

For those seeking academic accommodation based on a disability, you must register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for accommodations can be

obtained from DSP, and should be brought to me (or sent via email) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is in 3601 Watt Way in Grace Ford Salvatori Hall, Rm. 120 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

### ***Academic Integrity***

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).

## **Overview of Assignments & Grading Breakdown**

### ***Speeches (50% total)***

#### **Personal Speech (5%)**

This two-minute speech is a brief introduction to who you are. The personal speech will be video recorded and reviewed with the instructor to discuss the student’s initial speaking strengths and strategies for improvement.

#### **Informative Speech (10%)**

This five to seven-minute speech informs your classmates about a topic of your choosing. We will model our speeches after TED Talks. The speech should help you hone your research skills as you provide sound evidence for your claims, and as such requires external research. Please provide *three to four sources* during your presentation. Along with your in-class presentation, you will need to submit your speech outline and references on Blackboard before the speech day class period begins.

#### **Shark Tank Exercise (5%)**

Modeled after the popular TV show, the Shark Tank exercise will require your team to convince a group of investors to buy into your company. You will have ten minutes to present an idea or innovation to this panel in an effort to persuade them to fund their project.

#### **Persuasive Speech (10%)**

This five to seven-minute speech requires you to build your own arguments and refute potential counterarguments in order to persuade your audience. This may involve asking them to consider new perspectives, take a certain action, or change their behavior. This speech requires external research, and you must draw on three to four sources during your presentation. Along with your in-class presentation, you will need to submit your speech outline and references on Blackboard before the speech day class period begins.

**Sensory Aid Speech (10%)**

This five to seven-minute speech incorporates visual, audio, or other non-verbal tools that bolster or enhance your claims. You may revisit a topic or idea from your informative or persuasive speech. This speech requires external research, and you must provide *three to four sources* during your presentation. Along with your in-class presentation, you will need to submit your speech outline and references on Blackboard before the speech day class period begins.

**Special Occasion Speech (10%)**

This is a two-minute speech modeled after a speech you may be asked to give in real life. This could be a wedding toast, an introduction of an individual, giving someone an award, delivering a eulogy, accepting your first Oscar, or otherwise. Your choice!

**Written Assignments (40% total)****Written Reflections (x4, 20% total)**

**Reflection 1 – Introduction Speech (4%)**

**Reflection 2 – Informative Speech (6%)**

**Reflection 3 – Persuasive Speech (6%)**

**Reflection 4 – Sensory Aid Speech (4%)**

After each speech, you will write a one-page, double-spaced reflection about your presentation, describing what you believe you did effectively and where you felt you could improve.

In addition, for Reflection 2 and 3, you will also critique one classmate's speech for each category, answering the following: 1) What did they do especially well? 2) How could they improve their speech? 3) What aspects of their speech style would you like to adapt to your own? This critique should also be one-page, double-spaced.

**TED Talk Review (10%)**

Analyze a TED Talk (at least ten minutes long) of your choice and write a two-page summary/critique of the speech employing speech concepts learned so far in class.

TED Talks are available at <https://www.ted.com/talks>

**Final Paper (10%)**

The final, 3-5 page (double-spaced, before references) self-reflection paper 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.

## Class Participation (10%)

Class participation is based on your preparation for class as well as class engagement, including verbal participation and active listening.

## Grading

Standard letter grades are used, and are as follows:

94% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 93%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

---

## Course Schedule

### Week 1: Introduction to Public Speaking

- M 1/13**      **Introductions and Course Overview**
- W 1/15**      **Introduction to Public Speaking and Public Speaking Competencies**  
Reading: PSVT Ch. 1 “Introduction to Public Speaking”  
PSVT Ch. 4 “Listening Effectively”

### Week 2: Introductory Speeches

- M 1/20**      **NO CLASS – Martin Luther King Jr. Day**  
DUE: Sign up for 15 minute video review meeting for week of 1/27
- W 1/22**      **Introduction Speeches (Groups A&B)**  
Reading: Acocella, J. (2015). I Can’t Go On! What’s Behind Stagefright? *The New Yorker*.

### Week 3: Informative Speaking: Introduction & Developing a Research Portfolio

- M 1/27**      **Video review meeting with instructor**
- W 1/29**      **What is Informative Speaking? & Developing a Research Portfolio**  
Reading: PSVT Ch. 15 “Informative Speaking”

### Week 4: Informative Speaking Continued

- M 2/3**      **Organizing and Outlining**  
Reading: PSVT Ch. 7 “Supporting Your Ideas”

PSVT Ch. 8 “Organizing and Outlining”  
DUE: Reflection 1  
Informative speech topic

**W 2/5**      **Effective Introductions and Conclusions**  
Reading: PSVT Ch. 9 “Introductions and Conclusions”

#### **Week 5: Informative Speeches**

**M 2/10**      **Group A**

**W 2/12**      **Group B**

**F 2/14**      DUE: TED Talk Review (no class)

#### **Week 6: Introduction to Persuasive Speaking**

**M 2/17**      **NO CLASS – President’s Day**

**W 2/19**      **What is Persuasive Speech?**  
Reading: Ch. 16 Persuasive Speaking  
DUE: Reflection 2

#### **Week 7: Audience Analysis & Persuasive Speaking**

**M 2/24**      **Audience Analysis & Defining Publics**  
Reading: PSVT Ch. 5 “Audience Analysis”  
Warner, M. (2002). Publics and counterpublics (abbreviated version). *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 88(4), 413–425.

**W 2/26**      **Logical Fallacies & Building an Argument**  
Reading: A Book of Bad Arguments <https://bookofbadarguments.com/>

#### **Week 8: Persuasive Speaking in Action**

**M 3/2**      **Shark Tank Exercise**  
DUE: Persuasive speech topic

**W 3/4**      **Peer Review Session – Persuasive Speech**

#### **Week 9: Persuasive Speeches**

**M 3/9**      **Group B**

**W 3/11**      **Group A**

#### **Week 10: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**

### **Week 11: Introduction to Speaking with Sensory Aids**

**M 3/23      Speaking with Sensory Aids**  
Read: PSVT Ch. 13 “Speaking with Visual Aids”

**T 3/24      The Moth Mainstage**  
Palace Theater – 7pm doors, 8pm show  
More info here: [Moth Mainstage](#)

If you cannot make this event, please contact me at least **two weeks in advance** to discuss an alternative event assignment.

**W 3/25      NO CLASS – Replaced by Moth event**  
DUE: Reflection 3

### **Week 12: Speaking with Sensory Aids & Technology**

**M 3/30      Speaking with Technology**  
Reading: TBA  
Explore: Gettysburg Powerpoint Presentation  
<https://norvig.com/Gettysburg/>

**W 4/1      Peer review day – Sensory Aid Speech**

### **Week 13: Sensory Aid Speech**

**M 4/6      Group A**

**W 4/8      Group B**

### **Week 14: Introduction to Special Occasion Speeches**

**M 4/13      Special Occasion Speaking**  
Reading: PSVT Ch. 17 “Special Occasion Speaking”

**W 4/15      Using Humor Effectively**  
Reading: Greathouse, J. (2019). Public Speaking Secrets From The World of Stand Up Comedy. *Forbes*.  
DUE: Reflection 4

### **Week 15: Special Occasion Speeches & Public Speaking Ethics**

**M 4/20      Group A & B**

**W 4/22      Public Speaking Ethics**  
Reading: PSVT Ch. 3 “Public Speaking Ethics”

## Week 16: Speaking Across Difference & Public Speaking Awards

**M 4/27**      **Speaking Across Difference**  
Read or listen: Smith, Z. (2008) "Speaking in Tongues"  
[Article link](#), [audio link](#)  
DUE: Email clip and award name to Franny

**W 4/30**      **The Public Speaking Awards: Speech Screening Day**

### Final

**M 5/6**      DUE: Final reflection paper (no class)

---

### Student Resources

***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/additional-funding-resources>

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***

<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.