



**COMM 204: Public Speaking**  
**4 Units**

**Fall 2021 – T/TH – 12:30pm-1:50pm PST**

**Section: 20375R**

**Location: Online**

**Instructor: Professor Kiran Dhillon**

**Office: Online**

**Office Hours: M/W/F 8:00am-9:00am PST; Also by Appointment**

**Contact Info: kkdhillon@usc.edu**

### **I. Land Acknowledgement**

The University of Southern California's (USC) University Park campus is located on the traditional land of the Tongva People. You can visit <https://mila.ss.ucla.edu/> to learn about the history of Indigenous peoples in Los Angeles and read stories shared by the Tongva community. To learn about the Indigenous land on which your remote learning location resides, you can visit <https://native-land.ca>.

### **II. Course Description**

This course introduces students to a core set of theories and practices related to the art of public speaking. In this class, you will learn what goes into making good decisions about communicating effectively in public situations, how to approach audiences analytically, and how to be a more engaged member of society that values the free exchange of good ideas. The class has two basic components: theory and application. The theory component explores how and why public speaking is a vital part of social life, and the choices that will best prepare you for those moments when you are called upon to speak. The application component provides opportunities to perform public speaking by building your speeches and then delivering them to your audience. Success in this class requires that you give sufficient attention to both components. Those who apply themselves will learn to be more thoughtful speakers, and to speak more thoughtfully. The concepts we learn in this class will apply not only to situations where you get up and speak, but any situation where being an engaged member of a group is important. We cannot promise that you will become a great speaker, but you will receive the benefit of the knowledge and training that will provide you with the opportunity to improve your abilities and understanding.

### **III. Student Learning Outcomes**

Successfully completing the course assignments will help students learn the fundamental skills of public speaking such as critical thinking, political awareness, performance skills, and listening skills. By the end of this course, students will:

- Understand fundamental speech concepts and strategies and apply them in practice
- Develop their skills conducting research and presenting evidence to support their ideas
- Develop the ability to make reasoned decisions about communication choices, knowing what to do, as well as how and when to do it

- Understand the role, opportunities, norms, and limitations of individual speech in public discourse
- Learn how to effectively create, organize, and utilize speech materials
- Understand, analyze, evaluate, and create speeches surrounding social justice
- Learn how to supplement speeches with multimedia tools and visual aids
- Learn strategies for critically and creatively expressing themselves through public speaking
- Develop critical, constructive, and compassionate listening skills as audience members and practicing critical evaluation of classroom speakers
- Learn strategies for making their speeches accessible, inclusive, and ethical

#### **IV. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

Leslie J. Harris, Marnie Lawler-McDonough, Josh Miller, Emily Mueller, Megan Orcholski, Kristin Woodward, and Lisa Roth, *Stand up, Speak out – The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking* (2017). Available online at University of Wisconsin Milwaukee UWM Digital Commons and is posted on the course Blackboard site. Use prior editions at your own risk; they are not the same material. All class assignments, including exams, presume students are using the assigned textbook.

Announcements, Content, Discussion Postings, Links, Etc. on Blackboard.

#### Recommended Reading

Public Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition

#### **Course Notes**

Course information and materials will be posted on Blackboard. Please note that this syllabus may change based on student feedback, the progress of the class, and/or events. I will communicate any syllabus and content changes via email and Blackboard.

Remote learning resources and information about accessing and navigating Blackboard and Zoom can be found through USC Keep Teaching (<https://keep-teaching.usc.edu/students/student-toolkit/>) and the Annenberg Digital Lounge (<http://www.annenbergdl.org/>)

#### **Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 8/23/21 – 12/3/21)**

**Link:** <https://classes.usc.edu/term-20213/calendar/>

**Friday, September 10:** Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

**Friday, September 10:** Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit for Session 001

**Friday, September 10:** Last day to purchase or waive tuition refund insurance for fall

**Tuesday, September 14:** Last day to add or drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund or change to Pass/No Pass or Audit for Session 001

**Friday, October 8:** Last day to drop a course without a mark of “W” on the transcript for Session 001. Mark of “W” will still appear on student record and STARS report and tuition charges still

apply. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]

**Friday, October 8:** 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, November 12:** Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

**Saturday, November 13:** Last day to change between letter grade or Pass/No pass in a letter graded course for Session 001.

## **V. Description and Assessment of Assignments & Assignment Submission Policy**

### Class Participation

#### **Participation**

A portion of your grade for this class will be earned by productive participation in class sessions, as determined by your Instructor. The current modality of teaching includes synchronous and asynchronous lessons, assignments, exercises, and evaluation processes, and each affords different types of participation. In a synchronous zoom environment, when proper, participation is synchronous. This may include talking, when appropriate, during a zoom meeting, or using the chat function to generate or participate in discussions. Blackboard offers different types of participation, including participating in forums and completing asynchronous assignments. In addition, the distant nature of these learning environments may prompt us to forget that we are a community and that each of us and our ideas deserve respect. For this reason, it is imperative that you remember to **respect the opinion of others**, regardless of how much you disagree. Not participating productively will negatively impact your participation grade. Each class period your class participation will be evaluated. In each class, you have the potential to earn 1 point toward your overall class participation grade.

#### **A-Level Daily Participation (1-.09 point(s))**

Engages in class discussion by frequently doing the following:

- voluntarily and frequently offering creative or original responses/interpretations/observations beyond the obvious,
- involving others in class discussion by asking questions, seeking others' responses, etc.
- eagerly and intelligently attempting to answer questions,
- offering follow-up responses,
- actively engaging and taking part during classroom activities/small group discussion,
- using technology responsibly (For example, your cell phone never went off in class and you were never on your phone during class), and
- treating classmates and the professor respectfully (For example, listening while the person is talking, not having side conversations, etc.).

Eagerly treats class discussion as a conversation among students and professor.

#### **B-Level Daily Participation (.08-.07 points)**

Participates in class discussion by doing the following:

- offering consistently appropriate and occasionally creative or original responses/interpretations/observations
- answering questions frequently,

- actively, taking part in classroom activities/small group discussion
  - using technology responsibly (For example, your cell phone never went off in class, you were never on your phone during class, and if you brought in your laptop you were only using it to take notes), and
  - treating classmates and the professor respectfully (For example, listening while the person is talking, not having side conversations, etc.).
- Treats the class discussion as a conversation among students and professor.

### **C-Level Daily Participation (.06-.05 points)**

Only sometimes participates in class discussion by doing the following:

- occasionally offering responses/interpretations/observations but nothing that really challenges the class to think beyond the obvious,
- answering questions every now and then,
- demonstrating overall competence in comments or raising good questions in response to discussion, but rarely actively or voluntarily contributes to discussion,
- occasionally engaging in classroom activities and small group discussion, but sometimes not involved,
- using technology responsibly (For example, your cell phone seldom went off in class, you were rarely on your phone during class, and if you brought in your laptop you were only using it to take notes), and
- treating classmates and the professor respectfully.

Many comments are merely factual statements or merely entertaining comments, neither of which demonstrates careful and intelligent responses to class content.

### **D-Level Daily Participation (.04-.03 points)**

Rarely participates in class discussion, and then primarily by doing the following:

- offering a few instances of response/interpretation/observation,
- answering a couple of questions or offering one-word responses to discussion,
- rarely participating in group activities/small group discussions,
- occasionally disrupting class by coming to class late, failing to contribute to the learning environment by blankly staring off into space/out the window or working on something else during class, talking with someone while someone else is speaking, being off topic, or being merely entertaining with little purpose beyond clowning around,
- using technology somewhat irresponsibly (For example, your cell phone went off in class and you were on your phone during class) or
- treating classmates or the professor disrespectfully, disrupting the learning environment.

Primarily a non-participant in topics relevant to class discussion.

### **F-Level Daily Participation (.02-0 points)**

Does not participate in class discussion in a constructive manner, doing the following:

- never offering responses/interpretations/observations,
- constantly did not participate in class activities or small group discussion,
- actively disengaging from class so that others may not know what this person's voice sounds

like, much less what his or her opinions/interpretations/observations might be, or what his or her face looks like when looking directly at them, participating only at the level of snide comments,

- constantly used technology disrespectfully within the classroom, or
- treating classmates or the professor disrespectfully, disrupting the learning environment.

Never involved in class discussions, or serves as a disrupting voice in discussion.

### Speeches

There are four required speeches – a informative speech, a pre-assigned persuasive speech, a persuasive problem/solution speech, and a ceremonial speech -- for this class. Each provides an opportunity to demonstrate your creativity and mastery of class concepts. In order to qualify for a passing grade in this class, you must give, for a grade, a speech in at least three of four speeches. Students who do not participate in at least three of four speeches will receive a failing grade for the course, regardless of their performance on other class tasks. All assignments are due on the dates specified and assignments must be submitted via Blackboard as a .doc or .docx Word document. In addition, you must complete one peer review for each assigned speech.

### Outlines

An outline is required for each of the four assigned speeches. The outlines must be uploaded to the appropriate Blackboard assignment on the dates specified. In general outlines need to express the content of the speech and the thesis. The outline must also contain a bibliography for all cited materials used in the speech, formatted properly according to APA (American Psychological Association) guidelines. Outlines are part of your overall speech grade.

### Exam

There is one final exam in this class which tests your knowledge of concepts covered in the lecture and reading. The exam will be given during class and is open-book. The exam is 100 points and will be taken on Blackboard.

## VI. Grading

### a. Breakdown of Grade

Assignment	Points
Participation	30
Speech 1	100
Speech 2	150
Speech 3	200
Speech 4	200
Peer Evaluations	20

Final Exam	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>800</b>

### b. Grading Scale – Total Possible: 800 Points

800-744: A	663-640: B-	559-536: D+
743-720: A-	639-615: C+	535-504: D
719-696: B+	614-584: C	503-480: D-
695-664: B	583-560: C-	479-0: F

### c. Grading Standards

Each assignment has stated requirements. While this is a lower level course, the standards are high. Careful preparation and dedication on your part will be necessary to earn even a C grade. Merely “getting through” a speech is not the same thing as delivering a successful speech. Only that work which demonstrates success at achieving beyond the basic requirements will earn higher grades, and work which does not demonstrate successful completion of the assignment objectives will earn less. This class is not merely about giving speeches; it’s about providing you the opportunity to learn how to use the power of language to understand, shape, and impact the world you share with your audience. Speeches which focus on the critical elements of thoughtfulness and decision-making will help you make the most of this opportunity.

Letter Grade	Description
A	Excellent; demonstrates extraordinarily high achievement; comprehensive knowledge and understanding of subject matter; all expectations met and exceeded.
B	Good; moderately broad knowledge and understanding of subject matter; explicitly or implicitly demonstrates good, if not thorough understanding; only minor substantive shortcomings.
C	Satisfactory/Fair; reasonable knowledge and understanding of subject matter; most expectations are met; despite any shortcomings, demonstrates basic level of understanding.
D	Marginal; minimal knowledge and understanding of subject matter; more than one significant shortcoming; deficiencies indicate only the most rudimentary level of understanding.
F	Failing; unacceptably low level of knowledge and understanding of subject matter; deficiencies indicate lack of understanding.

### d. Grading

Grading Timeframe

For effective learning, students should receive timely feedback on assignments and exams. Therefore, every attempt will be made to grade assignments/exams and post grades within two weeks. Scores for all assignments and exams are regularly updated on Blackboard.

#### Grade Reconsideration

All students must wait 24 hours from the time they receive their grade before contacting their Instructor about the grade, whether face-to-face or through email. When contacting your Instructor with a request for a grade reconsideration, students are expected to be extremely professional and rational. Rude, aggressive and/or threatening behavior toward your Instructor absolutely will not be tolerated and will be reported to the appropriate University authority for further action. Requests for grade reconsideration must make a positive argument based on the facts of the assignment and feedback. Simply “wanting” or “feeling” a higher grade is due are not satisfactory arguments, and such requests will be rejected. Requests for grade reconsideration are not guaranteed to be granted. Additionally, all grade reconsiderations must be initiated within seven days of receipt of the grade. After that time, the grade is final. Ultimately, the grade you receive in this class is the grade you have earned. If you desire a higher grade, seek out ways of improving your academic progress by taking advantage of the numerous class and University resources available to you.

#### VII. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

**Important note to students:** Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, events, etc. Students should consult the Registration Calendar for dates regarding add/drop deadlines, fees, grading options, etc.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Class Agenda	Reading
Week 1 Dates: 8/23-8/27	Welcome, Course & Introduction; Public Speaking Today; Engaging Your Audience	Introduction Speeches (While introduction speeches are not graded, they are considered part of class participation)  Syllabus Review	Syllabus  Chapters 1 & 2
Week 2 Dates: 8/30-9/3	Understanding the Ethics of Public Speaking; Informative Speaking; Topic, Purpose, and Thesis		Chapters 3, 4, & 5
Week 3 Dates: 9/6-9/10	Researching Your Speech; Building and		Chapters 7 & 8

	Organizing Your Speech; Effective Introductions and Powerful Conclusions		
Week 4 Dates: 9/13-9/17		<b>Speech 1: Informative</b>	[ <b>Labor Day:</b> Monday, September 7]
Week 5 Dates: 9/20-9/24		<b>Speech 1: Informative</b>	
Week 6 Dates: 9/27-10/1	Persuasive Speaking; Developing Strong Arguments	<b>Speech 1 Peer Review Due</b>	Chapters 9 & 10
Week 7 Dates: 10/4-10/8	The Importance of Language and Style; Delivery: A Recipe for Great Speaking; Presentation Aids	<b>Speech 2 Workshop</b>	Chapters 11, 12, & 13
Week 8 Dates: 10/11-10/15		<b>Speech 2: Persuasive (Pre-assigned)</b>  <b>Speech 2: Persuasive (Pre-assigned)</b>	
Week 9 Dates: 10/18-10/22		<b>Speech 2: Persuasive (Pre-assigned)</b>  <b>Speech 2: Persuasive (Pre-assigned)</b>	
Week 10 Dates: 10/25-10/29		<b>Speech 2 Peer Review Due</b>  Speech 3 Workshop	
Week 11 Dates: 11/1-11/5		Speech 3 Workshop	
Week 12 Dates: 11/8-11/12		<b>Speech 3: Persuasive (Problem/Solution)</b>	



Week 13 Dates: 11/15- 11/19		<b>Speech 3: Persuasive (Problem/Solution) Speech 3 Peer Review Due</b>  Speech 4 Workshop	
Dates: 11/22- 11/26		Speech 4 Workshop  <b>Speech 4: Ceremonial</b>	
Dates: 11/29- 12/3  STUDY DAYS		<b>Speech 4: Ceremonial</b>	
Dates: 12/6- 12/15  STUDY DAYS  FINAL EXAM PERIOD		<b>Speech 4 Peer Review Due</b>  <b>Final Exam on Tuesday, December 14 from 11:00am-1:00pm</b>	

## VIII. Policies and Procedures

### Additional Policies

#### Synchronous session recording notice

Live class sessions will be recorded and made available to students through Blackboard. Please remember that USC policy prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment. As a student, you are responsible for the appropriate use and handling of these recordings under existing SCampus policies regarding class notes (<https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-c/>). These rules will be strictly enforced, and violations will be met with the appropriate disciplinary sanction.

#### Attendance policy

Students are strongly encouraged to attend live sessions via Zoom. This is the best way to engage with the course and keep up to date with class activities and assignments. However, there will be no penalty for failing to attend live sessions, and students who miss live sessions will be able to keep up with the class by reviewing class recordings and engaging through asynchronous class activities and assignments. Note that university guidelines dictate that faculty should only maintain normal attendance, participation, and assessment expectations for

students when the class time falls within reasonable learning hours in the student's time zone, defined as 7:00am to 10:00pm in the student's time zone.

### **Zoom etiquette**

Although you are not obligated to turn your camera on, we highly recommend it. Please wear **appropriate clothing**. Please keep your **microphone off** during zoom class, except when you're asked to unmute for discussion or questions. Please use **appropriate backgrounds**.

### **Communication**

If you cannot attend office hours and would like to chat, I encourage you to email me to arrange a meeting time. In your email correspondence please send all of your available dates and times. In addition, please allow for replies to emails to be within 48 working hours.

### **Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

#### **Academic Integrity Policy:**

The School of Communication maintains a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards and may be dismissed from the School of Communication. There are no exceptions to the school's policy.

#### **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](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).

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course, without approval of the instructor.

#### **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 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.symphlicity.com/care\\_report](http://usc-advocate.symphlicity.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 Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710*  
[campussupport.usc.edu](http://campussupport.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](https://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Annenberg Student Success Fund*

<https://annenbergsuccessfund.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenbergscholarshipsandawards>

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.