

COM 111: PUBLIC SPEAKING WEC SPRING '09

Instructor: George Gaetano

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Required text: Beebe, Steven A., and Beebe, Susan, J. *Public Speaking: An Audience Centered Approach*. 7th edition. 2008. Allyn and Bacon, pub.

Course Description:

The majority of our time will be spent listening to and evaluating student speeches. There will be times when I will lecture, but this is primarily a learning- by-doing course. We will have a number of informal, ungraded exercises that will allow you to learn and understand the principles of public discourse and to discuss, as a class, the importance of public discourse in today's U.S. American society.

Course Objectives:

1. To increase your confidence in your public speaking ability
2. To learn principles of effective public speaking
3. To demonstrate effective aspects of speech preparation
4. To demonstrate effective aspects of speech delivery
5. To appropriately apply public speaking skills to a variety of speech contexts
6. To become skilled at critically evaluating public discourse

Attendance and Participation:

Regular attendance and active participation are critical in this course. Although you will only be giving four graded speeches, you will be listening to approximately 70 student speeches during the term. Your presence as an audience member and the critical feedback you can provide after each speech is an essential part of your learning experience. For this reason, I have made participation worth 10% of your total grade.

Having perfect attendance but rarely participating in class discussions or rarely giving feedback after a student speech will earn you a grade of no higher than a 2.00 on the participation portion of your grade. In addition, the quality of your feedback will also be taken into consideration.

Assignments:

There will be two exams in this course, one on Friday, May 8th and the other on Friday, June 19th. These exams are based upon material from the textbook and are not cumulative. Each test will take the form of multiple choice and true false questions. Each test will be worth 20% of your grade.

There will be four graded speeches. Thorough descriptions of each of these speeches

appear later on in this syllabus, but they will include two informative speeches, a demonstration speech, and two persuasive speeches. They will be approximately 5-8 minutes in length. The first speech will be worth 5% of your grade, the second speech 10%, the third speech 15%, and the last speech will be worth 15%. You must also write and hand in on the day you are scheduled to speak a full sentence outline for the second, third, and fourth speeches. Outlines are not required for the first speech. The first outline will be worth 1% of your grade (10 points) and the second and third outlines will each be worth 2% (20 points.)

Grading:

All grading will be in accordance with college policy, in general, work that meets the assignment requirements will receive a 2.0, work that substantially exceeds the requirements will receive a 3.0, and only outstanding work will receive a 4.0.

There are 1000 points to be earned in this course: 200 pts. for the first test, 200 points for the second test, 100 points for participation and attendance, 450 points for the four speeches, and 50 points for the two outlines. Below is how your point total for this course will equate to a final grade:

930 points and above= 4.0
880 points to 929 points= 3.5
830 points to 879 points= 3.0
780 points to 829 points= 2.5
730 points to 779 points= 2.0
680 points to 729 points= 1.5
630 points to 679 points= 1.0
580 points to 629 points= 0.5
579 points and below= 0.0

Late Assignments:

You will know well in advance when you are scheduled to speak this term. If you are absent the day you are scheduled to speak or you are not prepared to give your speech, you will be penalized one full letter grade. The same is true for the speech outlines. All assignments, no matter how late, must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in this course. With respect to the two exams, make-up tests will only be given if your absence was excused (i.e. doctor's note provided).

Speech Anxiety:

I am well aware that for many people, public speaking is a cause for some anxiety. If this anxiety is a concern for you, please come and talk with me and we can work on minimizing its impact in this course.

Speech Assignments

Speech #1: Anything About You (An Informative Speech)

Date: Friday: April 3rd for all the students in the class

Description: For your first speech you are to give an informative speech about aspect of yourself—your hobbies, your interests, your aspirations, your childhood, your family, where you grew up, places you visited, interesting experiences you've had, your greatest fear, or your pet peeve(s). Keep your focus narrow. Divide your main topic into three subdivisions. Make sure you have an attention-getting introduction, a clear thesis statement, a forecast of the three main points, internal transitions, and a conclusion that summarizes the three main points. You will be given feedback on content, organization, and delivery. You are not to read your speech. You may have with you one 8 ½" X 11" sheet of paper or a maximum of three index cards, but do not write out the text of your speech on that sheet or cards. These are extemporaneous speeches—not memorized and not read. This speech should conform to a 4-6 minute limit. You do not hand in an outline for this speech. This speech is worth 50 points.

Speech #2: Informative Speech

Date: Friday, April 17th for Group A and Friday April 24th for Group B

Description: For this speech you are required to do some research. You must provide me with at least two outside sources. (Include them at the end of the outline you turn in for this speech.) This is a "pure" informative speech. Your task is to teach the class something. What have you learned that you would like to share with us? As with all informative speeches, your goal is to provide the audience with understanding and to do it in a way that will result in their remembering the key information. This is a 5-7 minute speech, so do not try to do too much. Better to do less and have the audience understand more. Make sure you make the topic relevant to the audience. Why is this useful information? The speech is worth 100 points. A full sentence outline is also required and must be handed in on the day you speak.

Speech #3: Persuasive speech

Date: Friday, May 8th for Group B and Friday, May 15th for Group A.

Description: The primary goal of this speech is to sell your audience a product or a service. Your speech must target the particular needs, interests, values, and/or beliefs of your audience---your classmates in this course. It must be a "real" product or service that you are trying to sell them. You are to make use of the strategies discussed in chapters 16 and 17 of the text. This speech should conform to a 5-8 minute time limit. On the day of the speech you are to hand in an outline. The speech is worth 150 points and the outline is worth 20 points.

Speech #4: Persuasive Speech: Friday June 5th for Group B, Friday June 19th for Group A

Description: Your fourth graded speech for this course is also a persuasive speech. Many persuasive speeches do provide information to their audiences, but the main focus of this speech should be the use of persuasive appeals—the use of logical reasoning, appeals to emotions, use of credibility (yours or outside sources), appeals to needs and values, etc. Speakers often incorrectly assume that merely by providing the "facts", that will be sufficient to change people's attitudes or behaviors. In most cases, the real key to persuasion is proving the relevance of the issue to the audience, convincing them this issue is important to their lives and changing their thinking or behavior will benefit them in some way. On many issues a typical audience is "neutral"—often due to a combination of apathy and lack of information-but mainly because they don't see how it affects them or could benefit them. This is your greatest challenge in a persuasive speech.

Creating your persuasive speech begins with analyzing your audience. For most of you,

that will mean analyzing the members of our class—demographics, needs, values, interests. Let me know if you would like to survey the class on any issue. We can do it with a show of hands, or it can be an anonymous survey. This is not required, though. You can base your assumptions on the average age of the people in our class and that they are all currently living in Minnesota, and all currently attending a small liberal arts college. What are the likely views and behaviors of this type of audience? You may also choose to create a "pretend" audience for your speech. You may wish to persuade a group of senior citizens, or high school seniors, or student athletes, or a group of anti-gun control advocates, etc. You must then make assumptions about the needs and values and behaviors of the group to create and devise your speech accordingly. It is critical that you read the chapters on persuasive speaking before creating your persuasive speech.

This speech must involve trying to change the audience's opinion on some issue. The goal should not be behavioral change—but attitude change. Make sure that the central idea of your speech is not something that most people already believe, such as donating your organs or giving blood or exercising regularly or eating healthy foods.

The time limit for this speech is 5-8 minutes. You must provide two outside sources of research for this speech (include these at the end of your outline this assignment).

First day of class assignment: read chapters 1 and 2 and be prepared to give your first speech. No one will receive less than a 3.00 on the first speech.

Speech #4: Persuasive Speech

Date: Friday, June 5th for Group B and Friday, June 19th for Group A.

Your fourth graded speech for this course must be a persuasive speech. Many persuasive speeches do provide information to their audiences, but the main focus of this speech should be the use of persuasive appeals, the use of logical reasoning, appeals to emotions, use of credibility (yours or outside sources), appeals to needs and values, etc. Speakers often incorrectly assume that merely by providing the “facts” will be sufficient to change people’s attitudes or behaviors. In most cases, the real key to persuasion is proving the relevance of the issue to the audience, convincing them this issue is important to their lives and changing their thinking or behavior will benefit them in some way. On many issues a typical audience is neutral due to a combination of apathy and lack of information, but mainly because they don’t see how it affects them or could benefit them. This is your greatest challenge in a persuasive speech.

Creating your persuasive speech begins with analyzing your audience. For most of you, that will mean analyzing the members of our class's demographics, needs, values, interests. Let me know if you would like to survey the class on any issue. We can do it with a show of hands, or it can be an anonymous survey. This is not required, though. You can base your assumptions on the average age of the people in our class and that they are all currently living in Minnesota, and all currently attending a small liberal arts college. What are the likely views and behaviors of this type of audience? You may also choose to create a “pretend” audience for your speech. You may wish to persuade a group of senior citizens, or high school seniors, or student athletes, or a group of anti-gun control advocates, etc. You must then make assumptions about the needs and values and behaviors of the group to create and devise your speech accordingly. It is critical that you read the chapters on persuasive speaking before creating your persuasive speech.

Your speeches do not have to deal with major issues like abortion or gun control or the death penalty. You can try to persuade the class to see a particular movie, read a certain book, buy a specific CD, or attend a concert by a particular group. You can try and get your audience to buy some product, take a vacation somewhere, go to grad school, get a job in a specific field, be an organ donor, argue in favor or against the lowering of the drinking age, the legalization of marijuana for medicinal purposes, etc. As I have said several times, a large part of what makes a speech successful is talking about something you really care about, something that truly interests you, something that has benefited you and that you think could benefit others. What are those things that you believe in most strongly? What have you done or are currently doing that you truly enjoy and that enrich your life? What are you passionate about?

The time limit for this speech is 5-8 minutes. You must provide two outside sources of research for this speech (include these at the end of your outline). If you have any questions on this assignment, please come and talk to me as soon as possible. This speech is worth 150 points and the outline 20 points.