**Public Speaking**

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| COMMRC 10151 | COMMRC 10152 | COMMRC 10838 |
| M/W/F  9:00–9:50 | M/W/F  10:00–10:50 | M/W/F  12:00–12:50 |
| 235 Cathedral of Learning | 119 Cathedral of Learning | 226 Cathedral of Learning |

**Instructor:** Dr. Bryan Blankfield

**Office:** 1117 J Cathedral of Learning

**Office Hours:** 11:00–11:50; 1:00–1:50 M/W/F; and by appointment

**Email:** bblank@pitt.edu

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Presented from a rhetorical perspective, this course offers its participants many opportunities to refine their speaking abilities. Our shared assumption throughout is that words can and do nudge the world a little. Accordingly, emphasis will be placed on learning how to engage the attention, attitudes, and actions of others in regard to issues of personal, communal, and civic importance.

The fundamental assumption underlying this course is that we learn best by doing. Thus, instead of relying heavily on written assignments, students will give speeches regularly. Students will deliver three major speeches this semester (an informative, persuasive, and ceremonial speech). In addition, students will deliver a 2-minute long extemporaneous speech each week. These shorter speeches will be worth fewer points than the three major speeches. Grading for all speeches will be based on your synthesis of course material and quality of extemporaneous delivery.

Students who complete Public Speaking should be able to:

1. Identify and describe the characteristics of informative, persuasive, and ceremonial speeches.
2. Construct speeches that pay special attention to purpose and organization.
3. Deliver speeches that demonstrate special attention to the verbal (vocal) and nonverbal (physical) aspects of delivery.
4. Construct speeches that pay special attention to topic selection and research.

**REQUIRED TEXT**

*A Concise Public Speaking Handbook* (4th Edition) by Steven A. and Susan J. Beebe

**MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS**

**Problem Speech**: For 4–6 minutes you will explain a significant social problem to the class and convince them of its importance, relevance to them, and urgency. The speech will both educate the class about the history, causes, and effects of the problem as well as arouse their concern about it. Thus, it will contain both informative and persuasive techniques. You must display appropriate selection and organization of material, employ language effectively, and deliver the message extemporaneously. This speech should include a minimum of 4 verbal citations. These citations will require the source (author’s name/organization), the source’s qualification/reputation, and date. Visual aids are optional.

**Policy Speech**: For 6–8 minutes, you will advocate for the adoption of a proposed policy that will reduce or eliminate the problem described in the first speech. The best speeches will briefly recap the problem before demonstrating how your policy is effective, better than the alternatives, and fair. In your speech you will need to employ a visual aid and 5 verbal citations. The best speeches will be logically organized, present sound evidence and reasoning in support of their proposals, draw upon the beliefs and values of the audience, manage visual aids smoothly and effectively, and will be presented in a polished, extemporaneous manner.

**Ceremonial Speech**: For 4–6 minutes, you will deliver a ceremonial speech via manuscript about someone or something in our class. More precisely you can speak about someone, the class as a whole, the classroom, the semester, an earlier assignment, a speaker we read about, and so on. We, your audience, simply need to be familiar with your subject. No citations or visual aids are necessary. The best speeches will employ narrative, identification, magnification, and stylistic devices. I will give you a handout later in the semester highlighting different forms of ceremonial speeches.

***Progymnasmata* Speeches**: In Ancient Greece and Rome, students of rhetoric would use the *progymnasmata* to hone their speaking abilities. The *progymnasmata* were a series of increasingly difficult exercises, ranging from the construction of fables to discussion of laws.

Each Friday (except those devoted to major speeches) will be devoted to a *progymnasmata* exercise. Precise instructions for these speeches will be revealed on each Wednesday. Students will need to come prepared to give a 2 minute long extemporaneous speech. At the beginning of class I will collect full-sentence outlines from everyone, which will be graded on a pass/fail basis. I will ask for volunteers, but also call on specific students. The purpose of these exercises is to: a) help you feel comfortable speaking in front of others; b) serve as the building blocks for your longer speeches; and c) provide you with opportunities to freely experiment and cultivate your own voice. I will set aside a few minutes at the end of each class for all of us to discuss, evaluate, and offer feedback on the speeches.

**Exams:** Students will be given a midterm and final exam. These exams will test students’ knowledge of course readings and lectures. More details of their exact format to come.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Assignments:** Homework shall be collected on the day it is due at the beginning of class. It must be typed, printed, and (preferably) stapled. **I will not collect homework that is late, handwritten, or via email.**

Students must deliver their speeches (both major and minor) on their assigned day. Students who are absent the day of their speech will receive a zero on the assignment. If a scheduling conflict arises, students must let me know in advance *and* receive my permission to reschedule. I will not listen to “make-up” speeches during office hours.

**Attendance**: Students are expected to attend each class. That said, I recognize that emergencies and appointments sometimes conflict with our schedules. Thus, students are allowed to miss three classes without any grade deductions. Each absence after the three permitted, however, will result in a 3% grade deduction. At seven absences (including the three permitted), your final grade will be a D. If you are absent nine times (including the three permitted), you will fail the course. I will only accept University-approved absences that are sent to me by the Dean of Student's office.

Students who are consistently late to class will also receive a grade deduction. If you are late on the day of a speech, wait until your classmate has finished before entering. It is inconsiderate to disrupt someone else.

**Learning Accommodations:** If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to inform me and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 as early as possible in the term. Disability Resources and Services reviews documentation related to a student's disability, provides verification of the disability, and recommends reasonable accommodations for specific courses.

**Academic Honesty:** Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity, from the February 1974 Senate Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom reported to the Senate Council, will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the assignment (quiz, speech, or exam) will be imposed.

**Oral Communication Lab:** The Department hosts an Oral Communication Lab directed by Professor Michael “Mickey” Bannon and located in 1109 CL. The Lab is an excellent free resource for undergraduates who need additional help with their speeches. They will help you at **any** stage of your speaking assignment. They are prepared to offer advice on topic selection, arrangement, and how to deal with speech anxiety—to name only a few possibilities. They can also listen as you practice your speech and provide you with feedback. Timely Lab appointment requests should be sent to speaklab@pitt.edu.

**Electronics (cell phones, laptops, and other devices):** I find that electronic devices often become distracting and encourage students to isolate themselves from their classmates. Thus I request that you do not use any electronics in class. Generally speaking, I do not allow laptops in class, unless it is an outline workshop day.

**Class Climate:**  In this class we will be engaging and entertaining a wide variety of perspectives, beliefs, and values. It is very likely (and frankly hoped) that you will disagree with or feel challenged by some of them. All I ask is that you remain civil and open-minded to foreign ideas and your classmates who may voice them.

**Office Hours:** If you need assistance, have questions, or need clarification on an assignment, please feel free to send me an email, come to my office during my office hours, or make an appointment to meet with me. I check my email fairly frequently, but expect that a response may take up to 24 hours. Please do not expect an email sent the morning before class to have been read prior to class.

**GRADING**

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| --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Points** |
| Problem Speech | 150 |
| Policy Speech | 200 |
| Ceremonial Speech | 150 |
| *Progymnasmata* Speeches | 140 |
| Homework | 100 |
| Participation | 100 |
| Midterm Exam | 80 |
| Final Exam | 80 |
| **Total** | **1000 points** |

Grades will be determined on the following scale:

93-100% = A

90-92% = A-

87-89% = B+

83-86% = B

80-82% = B-

77-79% = C+

73-76% = C

70-72% = C-

67-79% = D+

63-66% = D

60-62% = D-

0-59% = F

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Day** | **Lecture Content** | **Reading and Work Due** |
| 8-29 | M | Course overview/ *Progymnasmata* |  |
| 8-31 | W | What is rhetoric?  Rhetorical Situation |  |
| 9-2 | F | **Speeches of Introduction** | 16-26 |
| 9-5 | M | *Labor Day* |  |
| 9-7 | W | Defining problems and origins  *Assign Speech #1* | Come to class prepared to discuss three problems in your local community. What is causing them? |
| 9-9 | F | **Fable** |  |
| 9-12 | M | Audience Analysis and Adaptation | 48-65  Speech Topic Due |
| 9-14 | W | Invention – an exercise in judgment | 66-96 |
| 9-16 | F | **Narrative** |  |
| 9-19 | M | Arrangement – helping your audience follow along | 97-108 |
| 9-21 | W | Designing effective introductions and conclusions  *Establish speaking order for Speech #1* | 109-121 |
| 9-23 | F | **Maxim** | Rough Outline Due |
| 9-26 | M | Style – keeping their interest & shaping knowledge  Outline Workshop | 129-138 |
| 9-28 | W | Memory & Delivery | 139-163 |
| 9-30 | F | **Commonplaces** |  |
| 10-3 | M | Speech one – Problem | Self-evaluation due next class |
| 10-5 | W | Speech one – Problem |  |
| 10-7 | F | Speech one – Problem |  |
| 10-10 | M | Ethos  Talk about last night’s presidential debate  *Assign Speech #2* | 213-214 |
| 10-12 | W | Pathos | 221-224 |
| 10-14 | F | **Ethopoeia** |  |
| 10-17 | M | *Fall Break* |  |
| 10-19 | W | Midterm exam |  |
| 10-21 | F | **Confirmation/Refutation**(*Impromptu Friday*) |  |
| 10-24 | M | Crafting a strong policy | 224-227 |
| 10-26 | W | Intro to Persuasion | 201-212; 215-220 |
| 10-28 | F | **Confirmation/Refutation pt. 2** (*Impromptu Friday*) | Policy assignment due |
| 10-31 | M | Metaphors | Read “Metaphors We Live By” |
| 11-2 | W | Visualization/Visual Aids  *Establish speaking order for Speech #2* | 170-186 |
| 11-4 | F | **Description** | Outline due |
| 11-7 | M | Outline workshop |  |
| 11-9 | W | Exam |  |
| 11-11 | F | **TBD** |  |
| 11-14 | M | Speech two – Policy  *Assign Speech #3* | Self-evaluation due next class |
| 11-16 | W | Speech two – Policy |  |
| 11-18 | F | Speech two – Policy |  |
| 11-21 | M | Speech two – Policy |  |
| 11-23 | W | *Thanksgiving Break* |  |
| 11-25 | F | *Thanksgiving Break* |  |
| 11-28 | M | Ceremonial Speeches  *Establish speaking order for Speech #3* | 229-238  Ceremonial Assignment Due |
| 11-30 | W | The Ceremonial Style and Delivery |  |
| 12-2 | F | **Invective**  Outline workshop |  |
| 12-5 | M | Speech three – Ceremonial | Self-evaluation due next class |
| 12-7 | W | Speech three – Ceremonial |  |
| 12-9 | F | Speech three – Ceremonial |  |