

Reading the World
Syllabus: “*My Fascination.*”
2023-2024
Dr. Maxine A Clarke

“... You do not have to be good at your passion, you just have to be passionate enough.” Andy Barrow – Motivational speaker, SHB Sept. 2016

Overview

Our studies for the second half of Term 1 will be centred on the topic of your fascinations – *My Fascination*. You will be required to choose a topic that fascinates you to research and write on. You can choose just about any topic as long as you are fascinated by it! In these classes you will be building on what you learnt in term 1A during your research and writing of the Colloquium topics: presenting yourself and your interests in a way that will engage and fascinate an audience; be more assertive in your classes, interviews and in the general presentation of your work and continue to practice speaking in a more confident and energetic way, and present your work in a compellingly manner. We will examine video clips of speeches by various young people, which demonstrates passion, self-awareness and professional excellence.

Outcome

You will be researching in a step-by-step manner on a topic that you are passionate about. At the end of this unit, you will present to your classmates a three-minute speech on *My Fascination*. You will also be able to convert your *My Fascination* projects into the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Last year eight out of ten students converted their *My Fascination* papers into EPQ dissertations. The EPQ is an independent research project which involves writing an essay of 5000 words or creating a product which might be anything from an art object to an iPhone app. It is for those of you who are interested in problem-solving, designing, managing and realizing projects, and is offered to students at A level standard. If you are interested please contact Mr. Langridge the EPQ Coordinator, on your return from half term break.

Assignment : Introduction. (Take your laptops to class).

- Please **think** carefully about the following assignment.
List the subjects you are doing at A levels and why you chose them.
What area do you intend to major in university? Why?
Make a list of other areas and academic subjects that you like, but won't be majoring in. Why?
List at least five (non-academic) things that you like to do.
What are some of the topics that interest you both local and internationally?
This can be in any area – social, economic, religious etc etc.
Come to class prepared to discuss these with your classmates.

Assignment 2: “Searching for that Fascination.”

- How would you define Fascination? Write down this definition.
- What fascinates you about what you are studying in your A levels or any topical news event? Write this down in your notebooks.
- Brainstorm and then write up a list of at least three possible topics to write on. Please give this some deep thought and write a sentence or two for each topic on why you would want to write about it. Please note that you need to do more than merely stating that you are fascinated by Maths, Physics or History. Be specific: “I am fascinated by the mechanics of Vedic mathematics,” or “I am interested in string theory” or “I am curious about how the French Revolution impacted the development of the nation state.” If for example, you are passionate about travelling, you might want to say “I am fascinated by travelling and its impact on the human psyche.”

Here is a list of some of the topics that previous Year 12s wrote on (this is to pick your brain and give you some ideas...you don't have to do the same.)

- Tea
- Harmful Effects of Online Abuse
- The Separation of Church and State: Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney-Barret
- Conflict Between Religion and Science
- Sugar Addiction
- The Practice of Foot Binding (Lotus Feet) in China
- The “F” Word [feminism!]
- European Extremism
- Why Gambling Should not be Banned/
- Where do Plastics Go?
- What Does it Feel Like to be an Atheist in a Religious Family
- Psychology of Anoxeria
- The Beauty of Down Syndrome
- Cultural Appropriation Towards Thai people
- Tom Yum Kung Crisis 1997
- Gender Representation in Disney Films
- The Harm in Gender Labelling and Gender Norms.
- Child Marriage in the USA
- Fear of Failure
- Being a Third Culture Child
- Absurdity Behind Whitening Products
- Thai honorifics and the Invisible Social Hierarchy in Thai Society
- Serial Killer
- My Journey of Overcoming Obesity
- Personal data as a Commodity
- The Thammasat University Protests and its Implications for Thai Politics and Society

- The Unspoken Truth: Son Preference in the Thai Chinese Community.
- Impact of COVID 19 on the Mental Health of People in Thailand.
- The Coming of the Chinese to Thailand – 1920-1970

Assignment 3: Fascination and Inspiration

- Define the word “inspire.”
- Write two paragraphs on someone or something that inspires you.
- Think about your own fascinations (from your list of three). Discuss these with the person sitting next to you. Which one inspires you the most (ie makes you want to find out more) and why?

Assignments 4 & 5: Viewing of video clips.

In our next class we will be watch video clips of several young people talking about their passions. These speeches should give you some good examples of public speaking. Please watch these videos **critically** and write down ANY questions or observations in relation to the speech and how it was **delivered**. You should have two questions/observations per video clip. Please work independently. Here are some questions that you can consider:

- What are the speakers trying to inspire in their audiences?
- What do they want the audiences to feel or think?
- How do they accomplish this? (Give some examples , including sentences from the speech).
- What are they fascinated by? How do you know?
- How did the speakers attempt to persuade their audiences?
- How did they structure their speeches?
- Create a list of delivery skills that you observed while viewing the video clips. Discuss this with the person sitting next to you.

List of Videos.

https://youtu.be/F_01Au8vZLA

(Severn Suzuki’s speech at the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992) **This link appears to be broken. You access the video by going straight to youtube with the information in the above line.**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?annotation_id=annotation_769105&v=IoRSGjUpn_k&feature=iv&src_vid=me8iw5U7Lso

(Duncan Harrison’s speech, from the UK television programme, *The Speaker*.)

<https://youtu.be/arIAFwtRD98> (Farah Iqbal – Bangladesh: One Young World 2012: Speech on Leadership and Governance.)

<https://youtu.be/H2QxFM9y0tY> Greta Thunberg (TEDx)

<https://youtu.be/TMrtLsQbaok> Greta Thunberg (UN Conference)

My Fascination – Writing the Three-Minute Speech.

You are required to research, plan, write, revise and deliver a **three-minute** speech in class about a single, focused topic - *My Fascination*. The speech must be carefully structured following the norms of essay writing: introduction, thesis, transition sentences and a conclusion. You should consult at least **two sources** for your speech. Remember, no matter what format you choose to write in, all writing must have structure, as outlined above. Since this is your personal Fascination, you can write (where necessary) in the first-person pronoun singular.

While your speech can explore a topic connected to one of your A-level courses, or a course that your current studies will lead you to undertake in university, it does not have to. If you are truly fascinated by a topic not connected to your present course of study, you should write about this. Whatever you write about, please remember that a fascination is about having a special interest. To be fascinated with something you should have an intense curiosity, be enthralled or captivated by your topic.

Do whatever research is necessary to strengthen and energize your speech. The inclusion of evidence to any topic that you are fascinated by gives it the “academic touch.” The following are some questions that you should try and focus on: where does this fascination come from; what will I explore and how will I conclude my speech; am I trying to say too much or too little and how will I catch the audience’s attention? Make sure you state clearly **why** your topic fascinates you. And remember to practice, practice, practice your speech!!

Please note that your homework for each class is to work on researching and writing your speech. All class sessions will be used to write the speech. I understand that the Christmas holidays will be used to prepare for your January Assessments. You should however, work on your papers little by little.

Assignment 1

- Find a general article in order to familiarize yourself on what your topic is about.
- In two columns write down a list of things that you think you must say and those that you might say about your topic.
- Begin searching online and in JSTOR for sources. To access JSTOR, go to the school's library's website via Firefly and follow the links to resources and databases. You should be able to automatically log on by clicking on the link. Make sure you access JSTOR through Firefly (and not via Google) or else you will have to pay to read the articles.

Preparation for presentation.

Send in draft copies to your teachers as soon as you are done, but give enough time for them to be corrected and returned to you. I encourage you to submit during the Christmas break, if by any chance you can do so. Your teachers will give you constructive and supportive critique of your speeches. You may use these questions as a guide and bear in mind the videos we watched in class:

- Did you achieve the objective of the speech?
- Is the audience considered?
- Are the sources used effectively?
- Is the speech well structured?
- Is the conclusion impactful?
- How was the speech delivered? Body language? Eye contact with audience? Posture? Speed of voice? (During your practice sessions!)
- What skills should you practice more?
- Are you *fascinated*?
- Are the fascinations explored fully?

Final review of your speeches.

Opening:

- How is the audience being drawn immediately into the speech? Is there a **hook**? What does the first sentence tell us?
- Does the speech open with a **story**? A **joke**? A startling **statistic**? A **controversial statement**?
- Is the purpose of the speech clearly established?
- Is the opening **memorable**?

Body:

- Is the speech **focused**? Do all the arguments flow from one point to the next?
- How is the speech organized?
- Do you provide evidence to support the arguments?

Conclusion:

- **How** does your speech conclude?
 - Is the conclusion **concise**?
 - If appropriate, is there a **call-to-action**?
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How Can You Improve Your Public Speaking? ***

Some of you might be nervous after watching the video clips with young people – some younger than you are – delivering themselves publicly and in such a confident manner. You are probably thinking that this is a “talent” that they were born with. Indeed, like many other things in life, some of the speakers were probably “born” with this talent, or were brought up in environments that allowed them to develop and be confident about their passions. This does not, however, mean that one cannot “acquire” the confidence to express yourself in public, as many effective speakers have done.

So how does one become an effective public speaker?

1. *Perception.* Don’t try to be a great “public” speaker, concentrating on the public at the expense of the “speaking.” Make this a conversation between you and the audience, as you would with a friend. Relax, be comfortable and interesting.
2. *Perfection.* If you make a mistake, keep going. Perhaps no one noticed, especially if your speech is interesting. Don’t apologize for a mistake or anything else – for eg. “English is not my first language.” You can use this “mistake” to connect with your audience.
3. *Discipline.* Practice becomes perfect. No, your aim is not to be perfect. But if you practice, you will become a more effective public speaker.

4. *Description.* Depending on your topic, give some personal examples in your presentation. For example, Wells, an alumna presented to the school's assembly on Gaming Addiction, explaining that her love of gaming affected her school work. People usually like to hear things that connect them to you; the bad, the good, jokes, anecdotes etc. (Don't invent!) This will also put you at ease since you know your story best!
5. *Inspiration.* What's the purpose of your speech? How can you make the audience agree to what you are saying? Are you seeking to encourage, inform or amuse?
6. *Anticipation.* At the end of your speech, your audience should want more. It's better if they say "I wish the speaker had said more *vs* I am glad the speech is over. Or "it was good, but too long...he/she began to loose me."

*** Adapted from Richard Zeoli's *Seven Principles of Effective Public Speaking*. Zeoli is the founder of an executive communications training firm and a Visiting Associate Professor at the Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University (NJ, USA).
