

**University of Pittsburgh**  
**COMMRC 0520: Public Speaking**  
**Summer 2011**

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**Course Description:** When politicians like President George W. Bush, actors like Angelina Jolie or George Clooney, or successful businessmen like Bill Gates speak, millions of people are listening and making changes based on what they hear. When we speak, we may never address the masses, but our words can still influence our listeners' thinking and actions. This section of public speaking will use a variety of sources on presidential rhetoric to acquaint students with the purposes of speaking in a university community and the responsibilities of a public speaker. Through an exploration of the skills that go into creating effective speeches and engaging audiences, we will learn to critically evaluate arguments and develop our own arguments and information into coherent messages. Students will learn to apply their public speaking skills through at least three major speeches, several impromptu speeches, a midterm and a final.

**Course Goals:**

1. Develop effective speeches, characterized by a unique introduction and conclusion, strong purpose, thoughtful content, original ideas, clear organization, and audience-appropriate word choices.
2. Recognize the role of public speaking in a society, particularly within the academic community.
3. Acquire self confidence and poise in a variety of speaking situations.
4. Build the fundamental skills of argumentation, problem solving, listening, and critical thinking.
5. Learn to organize and defend arguments through the use of multiple forms of research, outlining, and visual aids.
6. Attain the ability to critically evaluate others' arguments in a way that impacts your own arguments.
7. Appreciate how to evaluate audiences and alter speeches to fit individual audience needs and changing speaking venues.

**Required Texts:**

Beebe, Steven A. and Susan J. Beebe. *A Concise Public Speaking Handbook*. 2nd Ed. New York: Pearson, 2009.

Other assigned readings will be posted on Blackboard or handed out in class.

## Assignments and Grading:

### Percentage Scale for Final Grades

98-100	A+
93-97	A
90-92	A-
88-89	B+
83-87	B
80-82	B-
78-79	C+
73-77	C
70-72	C-
68-69	D+
63-67	D
60-62	D-
59 and below	F

### Grading Structure and Assignments

Class Participation and peer reviews	20 percent
Quizzes	15 percent
Ceremonial Speech	20 percent (5 percent outline)
Informative Speech	20 percent (5 percent outline)
Persuasive Speech	25 percent (5 percent outline)
Total:	100 percent

*Class participation and peer reviews:* There will be daily reading quizzes, as I see fit. These quizzes will be given within the first 10 minutes of the class period, and they cannot be made up. This portion of the grade will also include your responses to other students' speeches, group work, participation in in-class discussion, and other daily class assignments. All students will be required to respond to three other student's speeches on a form that will be provided for each speech. Your daily class assignments will also include an introductory speech within the first two weeks of class, and it could include impromptu speeches and homework assignments that will help you to develop your understanding of ideas we've discussed class. Your daily class participation and group work will rely on your out-of-class reading assignments. I will give daily marks for discussion and involvement in class, so your active participation could help to bolster your grade.

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*Ceremonial, Informative, and Persuasive speeches (50 percent):*

**Ceremonial Speech: 3-5 minutes, 2-3 minutes of audience interaction**

**Informative Speech: 4-6 minutes, 2-3 minutes of audience interaction**

**Persuasive Speech: 5-7 minutes, 2-3 minutes of audience interaction**

You will receive more specific instructions for each of these speeches at least two to three weeks before you must deliver your speech. Each of these speeches covers a major speech genre that you will encounter both in and out of the classroom. This will give you time to submit either a topic proposal or a full outline (depending on the speech requirements), which I must approve

and respond to. You will then revise your outline in time for your speech. You will be graded based on a clear grading rubric, which will be handed out before the speeches are given in class.

**All major speeches, exams and major assignments are required to pass this class. You may not simply take a 0 on an exam, speech or assignment and still pass the course.**

## Course Policies

**Class participation:** I expect every student to help keep class interesting by adding his or her own perspective and research to class time. All students must do their homework and be prepared to contribute during class time. I enjoy hearing what you have to say, and I'm sure your fellow students will appreciate your participation also, since it means hearing less of your professor's voice.

**Ground Rules for Class Discussion and Participation:** Class discussion relies on students feeling comfortable expressing a variety of viewpoints, and sometimes those viewpoints may be controversial. Therefore, in order to build a supportive class environment that encourages student participation and camaraderie, please observe these ground rules:

1. Please show respect to both me and your fellow classmates by avoiding offensive language.
2. Please offer your input for class discussions when it is appropriate. This will help the class to see different viewpoints.
3. Be an active listener and respectfully listen to viewpoints that you both agree with and disagree with.
4. Remember that we do not need to agree at all points in time. Sometimes we can agree to disagree.
5. You may question your fellow students in a respectful manner if you want to understand their standpoint better.
6. You do not need to answer any question if it makes you uncomfortable.
7. If you feel uncomfortable speaking in class, it is your responsibility to speak with me outside of class time.

**Attendance and tardiness:** Because this class hinges on your involvement, attendance is mandatory. You are allowed one without penalty, with no questions asked. Remember this class is just six weeks, and we will be moving very quickly. If you miss a day, you miss a lot. After the first absence, your final grade will begin to go down by  $\frac{1}{2}$  letter grade for each additional absence (i.e. A- to B+, B-to C+, etc.). Absences that are excused per university policies require written notice from an activity/athletics advisor in advance of the absence. More than four absences (the equivalent of two weeks of class) could be grounds for automatically failing the course. Please also be considerate and show up for class on time. **If you miss a day of class, it is your responsibility to get notes from another member of the class. Please find a class partner whom you can contact in the event that you must miss a class period. Unless it's a special circumstance, I will not respond to e-mails asking me for what we went over in class (particularly if they are phrased as, "did I miss anything?" You missed class! Yes, you missed something.).**

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:** According to University policy, "Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity [<https://www.pitt.edu/~provost/ai1.html>]. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity."

More specifically: Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. Plagiarism is a form of academic theft. It is defined as using another person's unique words or ideas without giving that person credit. Academic dishonesty is a slightly broader category encompassing a range of issues, including double-dipping without instructor approval, cheating on an exam, fabricating information or sources, or helping another student to cheat (aiding and abetting).

**This class has a no-tolerance policy on plagiarism. The first time a student is caught in either plagiarism or academic dishonesty, he or she will receive an automatic F in the course. If you have questions about anything you think might be a grey area, please talk to me immediately. I'm happy to discuss anything you think is unclear before it becomes a problem for your grade.**

**My disclaimer:** Please be aware that I want you to follow simple rules. Deadlines and specifications are part of my grading system. When I say "5 minutes," I want to see students deliver a 5-minute speech—not a minute and a half or 10 minutes. Please refer to your assignment sheets for information on what I expect and feel free to contact me about anything that is unclear. Please refer to my grading rubric for more information on what I expect out of your speeches and writing.

**Late Work:** All work is due at the beginning of the class period on the day for which it is assigned, and presentations must be delivered on the day you are scheduled. Presentations may not be missed for any reason except documented illness or family emergency.

Standard grade deductions for missed assignments are as follows: Any assignment that is missed without a documented illness or family emergency will receive an automatic deduction of 10 points per 24 hour period until the student comes to my office hours with the assignment. The first deduction is taken immediately after the class during which the assignment was due. The next deduction is then taken at the time class might begin the next day. (For example, if you're in a Monday 9 a.m. section, your next grade deduction will be taken Tuesday at 9 a.m.) The deductions continue every 24 hours as outlined above. **An assignment will not be accepted if a student has not come to my office hours or arranged a makeup time within a week after the original due date.**

It is your responsibility to get homework assignments for any class you miss. An excused absence does not excuse a late homework assignment. Also, all homework must be in a format that I can accept. I cannot accept your laptop computer because your printer died an hour before class (Yes, this has actually been tried.), nor will I accept computer discs.

**Homework:** Handwritten homework is not acceptable. Please submit all homework in 12-point Times New Roman font, and remember that double spacing is important for written work. Homework will not be accepted via e-mail. It must be submitted in hard copy during class.

**Grade Grievances:** If you would like to dispute a grade, please allow at least 24 hours after receiving the grade sheet. All disputes must be addressed in person during my office hours or at another time that we arrange.

**Cell phones and laptops:** As you enter the class, please turn off your phone as a courtesy to your fellow classmates. A student whose phone rings during class will have to endure either myself or a fellow class member answering the phone and taking a message. If you don't know how to turn your cell phone off, please either leave it at home or read the owner's manual.

Please remember that having a laptop in class is a privilege. Laptops can be a useful educational tool, but they're often misused. On an average day, you should not need a laptop in this class. If you find that you need one on a particular day, you're welcome to use it. However, I will feel free to frequently check that you are not surfing the net, doing homework for other classes, e-mailing, or IMing friends. If I catch anyone doing any of these activities, I will revoke the privilege of laptops on average class days for everyone. (Laptops will still be allowed for presentations.)

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a disability for which you may need or want accommodations, you will need to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 216 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 (telephone), 412-383-7355 (TDD), or 412-624-3346 (Fax). DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. NOTE: Your instructor cannot make accommodations for your disability unless you contact DRS and receive instructions from that office. You must accomplish this within the first two weeks of class, or your instructor may not be able to accommodate your disability to your satisfaction.

**Office hours:** Please think of my office hours as your time to discuss your concerns with me. My office hours are free and no appointment is required. Please feel free to drop by. I'd love to speak with each of you. Remember, it's easier to discuss something before it becomes a crisis than it is to troubleshoot a problem after it has become a major issue.

**E-mail policy:** Please allow me 24-48 hours to respond to your e-mail. I will usually get back to you before that time. If I have not responded within that time, assume that I have *not* received your e-mail and resend it.

**Final notes:** Have fun! I want this class to be a place where you learn to write fantastic speeches, wow an audience, and enjoy yourself all at once. If you're having fun and contributing, I guarantee we'll have a great class.

## **Campus Resources**

**The Oral Communication Lab:** Offers assistance with speech anxiety, delivery, organization, choosing topics, and other speaking-related issues.

1109 Cathedral of Learning.

Call 412-624-6570 or e-mail [mbannon@pitt.edu](mailto:mbannon@pitt.edu)

**The Writing Center:** Offers writing consultation services for undergraduates, graduates and faculty. Papers in all stages, from brainstorming to “final” product, are welcome.  
[www.english.pitt.edu/writingcenter](http://www.english.pitt.edu/writingcenter) 412-624-6556

**Disability Resources and Services:** Offers assistance to students who need documentation of and accommodations for disabilities of any kind.  
[www.drs.pitt.edu](http://www.drs.pitt.edu) 412-648-7890

**The Office of International Studies:** Offers support for international students and students studying abroad. <http://www.ois.pitt.edu/>

## Writing and Citation Resources

**The University of Pittsburgh RefWorks training:** Pitt provides its students with a free, online citation tool that allows students to build and maintain their own reference dictionaries. To sign up for training, go to  
[http://www.library.pitt.edu/services/classes/infoliteracy/refworks\\_training.html](http://www.library.pitt.edu/services/classes/infoliteracy/refworks_training.html).

**The Purdue University OWL:** One of the most comprehensive citation and writing resources available on the web. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>.

**Duke University Library Citation site:** My favorite citation Web site because it puts five citation styles side by side. <http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/>.

## Class Schedule, Public Speaking, Summer 2011

\*Please note that this schedule is subject to change depending on class needs.

<b>Week 1</b>
<b>Tuesday:</b> Go over syllabus and class policies; introductory speeches. READ: Today's lectures will be drawn from Beebe and Beebe, ch.1, ch. 3, ch.4, ch. 5, ch. 11, ch.12, ch. 27, and ch. 8. INTRODUCE: Ceremonial speech.
<b>Thursday:</b> DUE: Topics and online library citation quiz. Audiences, Read Beebe ch. 3 and ch. 6
<b>Week 2</b>
<b>Tuesday:</b> DUE: Ceremonial rough draft. Delivery, Read Beebe 15, 16, 17, and 18.
<b>Thursday:</b> SPEECH DAY ONE. ALL FINAL CEREMONIAL SPEECHES DUE IN CLASS WITH ANCILLARY VISUAL AIDS.
<b>Week 3</b>
<b>Tuesday:</b> INTRODUCE: Informative speeches. Read Beebe 24. <b>QUIZ</b>
<b>Thursday:</b> DUE: Informative topics. Read Beebe ch. 9 and 10. *This may be a library day.
<b>Week 4:</b>
<b>Tuesday:</b> DUE: Informative Rough Drafts. Work on delivery and citations.
<b>Thursday:</b> SPEECH DAY TWO. ALL INFORMATIVE SPEECHES DUE IN CLASS WITH ANCILLARY VISUAL AIDS.
<b>Week 5:</b>
<b>Tuesday:</b> INTRODUCE: Persuasive speeches. Read Beebe ch. 26 and ch. 25. <b>QUIZ</b>
<b>Thursday:</b> DUE: Persuasive topics. Work on oppositional audience analysis and issue framing.
<b>Week 6:</b>
<b>Tuesday:</b> DUE: Persuasive speech rough drafts. Peer Reviews and impromptu debates
<b>Thursday:</b> FINAL SPEECH DAY THREE. ALL PERSUASIVE SPEECHES AND ANCILLARY VISUAL AIDS DUE.

**\*YOU SURVIVED! Good job!**