Communication 104: Public Speaking

Instructor:  Dr. Tom Heeney  
Office:  9 College Way, Room 207  
Phone:  (843) 953.3859  E-mail:  heeneyt @ cofc.edu  
Spring 2011 Hours:  1-3:00 T/Tr & by appointment.

Course:

This course reviews the basic and classic elements of successful public speaking. In addition, you will learn and practice the rules for organizing and delivering an effective presentation, and also begin to appreciate both critical listening and ethical public discussion. Through lectures, demonstrations, and individualized practice, you will discover and learn how to improve your personally most effective style of public speaking. The classroom will be our ‘workshop’ where you will learn from a supportive and critical audience, and be guided and evaluated by an experienced professor-mentor. You will learn by doing—through exercises, practice, peer feedback, and an excellent text. You will improve your ability to communicate in a thoughtful, organized, and dynamic manner. These are crucial skills for leadership and personal success. The primary pedagogical emphasis will be placed on the inventive composition and effective delivery of several kinds of public communication.

Text:  Dan O’Hair, Rob Stewart & Hannah Rubenstein, Speaker’s Guidebook 4th Ed. (Bedford)

Goals of the Course:

Effective public speaking is a learned art and essential for professional success. The ability to understand and address the many occasions that call forth eloquent response has been prized from antiquity to today. There are several time-honored aspects—the quality of any national or local political discourse (leadership), the acuteness of accusation and defense in law and civil discourse, and the emotional, commemorative, and instructive character of speech on special occasions (virtue)—were all recognized as important learned skills by the foundational thinkers of western culture. By improving your own public speaking talent, you will enhance your sense of civic responsibility, increase your appreciation of why speeches are important and effective (or not), and enjoy the respect of peers, community, and co-workers alike. In sum, this may be one of the most important courses you can take in your college career!

The objectives you should strive to achieve or improve are:

- Learn how to choose and adapt a topic for a specific audience & occasion
- Be able to research, organize, and outline ideas and arguments effectively
- Use appropriate reasoning and evidence in a presentation
- Make effective use of visual aids and ‘body language’ adapted for an occasion
- Improve the quality of your individual presentational style
- Demonstrate critical listening and thinking ability
- Understand how to assess the content, delivery, and ethical implications of all public media
- Explain the role of public speaking and critical debate in a democratic society

Speeches:

You will compose and deliver several kinds of original speeches addressing the following specific criteria as learning goals:

- **The Flaneur**: focuses on audience analysis, narrative & personal storytelling, organization & compositional style, and finally developing effective and focused introductions and conclusions.

- **Oral Interpretation**: focuses on a communicative reading of dramatic or creative materials, presented to highlight the vocal dynamics of delivery, together with an informed introduction.
• **Informative Speaking** stresses the proper way to gather and present factual material in a visually effective manner. In a world flooded with ‘data’, you will learn how to keep afloat by using factual and narrative points to ‘inform’ an audience.

• **Persuasion (1)** will ask you to make a convincing speech on a question of fact, on a disputed or controversial value claim, or speak to our need to motivate action.

• **Persuasion (2)** will focus on making public policy recommendations on timely topics.

**Grades:**

Each speech will receive immediate oral feedback in class (from both instructor and students), and later you will receive a written evaluation and percentage grade reflecting 1) the originality and appropriateness of your topic, 2) the quality of your organization and language, 3) the style and delivery of your presentation, and 4) the visual and nonverbal aspects of your speech presentation. About half of the total speech grade will emphasize originality and organization (1 & 2), while the remainder will reflect delivery (3 & 4). Each speech can receive up to a possible 100 points. Time outliers will be penalized. Written guidelines and class discussions before all graded assignments should provide the direction, and your original topic and text, rehearsal, plus effective delivery should result in a just reward.

The percentage (point) ranges are:


The final course grade will be a sum of six graded assignments, each equal in value. The six graded assignments are: five public speeches (up to 100 points each), and finally a grade reflecting attendance and class contributions (up to 100 points, but the ‘default’ or starting grade is 75 points). There is no extra credit, and late assignments will be penalized (see below).

**Attendance and Participation:**

You must attend regularly, and participate actively, to receive the full benefit of the course and earn a good grade. Students report they learn primarily from personal experience, watching other students and their individual performances. More than one (unexcused) absence will impact the final course grade negatively, and hinder your learning. Habitual late arrival, and/or leaving early will also be penalized at the discretion of the instructor. Late speeches (on other than the assigned day) will always be penalized, and can be made up only if time permits (and usually the last day of class). Excused absences will not be penalized. You retain no right to make up any late assignment (other than excused absence), and I retain the right to drop you from the course with no credit (XL) for poor attendance or missed assignments.

You should participate in class discussions of student speeches in a thoughtful and positive way. This means offering an honest critique or peer suggestions than can include positive appreciation of the strengths and quality of the speech, comments on where the speech could be improved, and why, and possibly general questions that arise on account of the student presentation. You should demonstrate you have read and understand the text by asking informed questions at any time. Your active contributions will be noted and rewarded.

**Communicating with the Instructor:**

The best way to contact me is email. When you do, please put “COMM 104” in the subject line, and always use your Edisto email account. Failure to follow both instructions could result in misdirected or unanswered email. I try to answer email within 24 hours during the normal business week and hours, and I will try to answer any afterhours or weekend emails, but no guarantees.

If you use the phone at the above number, always be clear and simple, and always repeat the contact information, as fast talkers and mumbled messages cannot be easily comprehended.
Honor Code & Academic Integrity:

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are all violations of the college honor code. When suspected or identified, these incidents will be processed following the procedures outlined in the *College of Charleston Student Handbook*. Consult this guide for all questions about what constitutes the honor code, and the policies and procedures when suspected. Grade penalties, including no credit for an assignment, and/or no course credit and withdrawal for dishonesty (XL), are possible outcomes when the honor court determines an infraction of the code.

(Tentative) Syllabus:

*Always bring your text to class. Be prepared for the discussion topics on assigned dates.*

1/11   Introduction to the course.
1/13   *Audience Analysis:* Discussion  
       Read Chapter 6-7
1/18   *Composing the Personal Narratives:* Read Chapter 2.  
       *Special Occasions: Commencement & Commemoration:* Read Chapter 27.
1/20   **The Flaneur** (1)
1/25   **The Flaneur** (2)
1/27   **The Flaneur** (3)
2/1    **The Flaneur** (4)
2/3    *Oral Interpretation:* Read Chapters 14, 16, 18
2/8    **Oral Interpretation** (2)
2/10   **Oral Interpretation** (3)
2/15   **Oral Interpretation** (4)
2/17   **Oral Interpretation** (1)
2/22   *Informative Speaking:* Read Chapters 11, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23.
2/24
3/1    **Informative** (3)
3/3    **Informative** (4)
3/15   **Informative** (1)
3/17   **Informative** (2)
3/22   *Persuasion as Argument:* Read Chapters 24 & 25  
       *Organizing a Persuasive Speech:* Read Chapter 26
3/24   **Persuasion** (4)
3/29   **Persuasion** (1)
3/31   **Persuasion** 1 (2)
4/5    **Persuasion** 1 (3)
4/7    *Policy Speeches & Researching the topic*
Persuasion: Policy (1)
Persuasion: Policy (2)
Persuasion: Policy (3)
Persuasion: Policy (4)