

COMS 4 Introduction to Public Speaking

Course Code: COMS 4

Instructor: Joseph Bowling

Home Institution: University of Wisconsin

Office Hours: by appointment

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Credit: 4

Course Description

This course is designed to enhance oral communication skills for college and employment situations. We will engage in an array of communication activities that have been designed to improve oral presentation skills, including:

- Presenting different kinds of speeches

- Learning to assess and critique the content, organization, and delivery of speeches

- Assess the exigencies of settings in which you will be called upon to present your work

- Develop tools to assess the kind of presentation you should create, based upon the format, audience size, and time restrictions.

- Hone the ability to respond to audience reactions to your work.

Required Textbooks:

J. Dan Rothwell, *Practically Speaking*. Oxford UP, 2019

<https://www.redshelf.com/book/1508729/practically-speaking-1508729-9780197528235-j-dan-rothwell>

Course Objectives

This course will help you develop your ability to speak publicly in both academic and professional workspaces. We will work through fundamental communication skills, so as to ensure that you are able to present your best self, and avoid some of the pitfalls of self-representation. By the end of the course, you will be more confident, and better able to combat speech anxiety, draft and perform speeches appropriate to particular situations, and prepare for important interviews and presentations.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- develop appropriate speeches

- Assess the style and content of speeches

Determine what elements are essential for effective speech making
Deliver a variety of different speeches
Create appropriate visual aids to accompany your speeches
Learn about resources that can help you with public speaking
Develop skills to assess the audience, and pitch your work appropriately
Develop your own “voice”

Course Schedule:**Week 1: The Basics of Public Speaking**

For our first week, we will cover the fundamentals of public speaking and address how to overcome common anxieties and fears associated with it.

Read: chapters 1-5 of Practically Speaking

Watch: Lectures 1-5 (from “Introduction” through to “Gathering Materials”)

Week 2: Organizing Speeches and Consulting Supporting Materials

We will learn about how to structure a speech and effectively deliver a speech. We will continue to focus on performance and delivery this week, and with special attention to how to effectively incorporate technology into your presentation.

Read: chapters 6-9 of Practically Speaking

Watch: Lectures 6-10 (from “Engaging Audiences” through to “Delivery”)

Week 3: Informative speeches

We’ll build on our performance skills and begin to focus on the arts of argumentation.

Read: chapters 10-13 of Practically Speaking

Watch: Lectures 11-15 (from “Being Skeptical” through to “Informative Speaking Examples”)

Week 4: Persuasive speeches

Read: chapters 14-17 of Practically Speaking

Watch: Lectures 15-18 (from “Persuasive Speaking” through to “Varieties of Public Speaking part 2”)

Grading Policy:

Informal speech analysis 25%

You will submit two short informal analyses of speeches you find online to help you write and deliver your own speeches.

Speech 1: Introductory: 25%

Speech 2: Informative: 25%

Speech 3: Persuasive” 25%

Letter Grade Assignment

Final grades assigned for this course will be based on the percentage of total points earned and are assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Percentage	Performance
A	93-100%	Excellent Work
A-	90-92%	Nearly Excellent Work
B+	87-89%	Very Good Work
B	83-86%	Good Work
B-	80-82%	Mostly Good Work
C+	77-79%	Above Average Work
C	73-76%	Average Work
C-	70-72%	Mostly Average Work
D+	67-69%	Below Average Work
D	60-66%	Poor Work
F	0-59%	Failing Work

Course Policies:**Attend Class**

Students are expected to attend all class sessions as listed on the course calendar.

Build Rapport

If you find that you have any trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, make sure you let your instructor know as early as possible. As you will find, building rapport and effective relationships are key to becoming an effective professional. Make sure that you are proactive in informing your instructor when difficulties arise during the semester so that they can help you find a solution.

Understand When You May Drop This Course

It is the student's responsibility to understand when they need to consider disenrolling from a course. Refer to the Course Schedule for dates and deadlines for registration. After this period, a serious and compelling reason is required to drop from the course. Serious and compelling reasons includes: (1) documented and significant change in work hours, leaving student unable to attend class, or (2) documented and severe physical/mental illness/injury to the student or student's family.

Commit to Integrity

As a student in this course (and at this university) you are expected to maintain high degrees of professionalism, commitment to active learning and participation in this class and also integrity in your behavior in and out of the classroom.

Academic Honesty Policy & Procedures

“The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars and teachers. University expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles, and in so doing, will protect the integrity of academic work and student grades.”

Definitions

“**Cheating** is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means.”

“**Plagiarism** is a form of cheating.”

“Plagiarism is the use of distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person’s contribution.”