

# Persuasive Speaking and Criticism

## COMM 350

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### Course Description and Objectives

As distinct from COMM 111, this course emphasizes the “public” dimension of public speaking over the dimension of “speaking.” Our focus will be less on delivery and more on the rhetorical practices necessary for citizenship in a democracy; namely, the analysis and production of effective public discourse.

You will see that the course front-loads the “content” and gives you time to think about and revise your main speeches prior to performance. Consequently, I have high expectations regarding the quality of the speech apart from your performance – a point addressed below in “Evaluation.” You should focus on learning and applying the ideas from the first half of the course if you want to achieve an optimal grade.

Ultimately, the course has one objective: by its end, you should be able to produce oral discourse that addresses issues of public significance and is attentive to audience beliefs, attitudes, values and identities.

### Texts

The readings for this class will be available in PDF or MSWord format via Blackboard.

### Expectations

Judging from recent student evaluations, here’s what you can expect:

- Expect me to raise challenging questions and encourage critical thinking
- Expect interactive lectures with plenty of room for discussion
- Expect a high-energy classroom environment
- Expect fair but difficult grading standards
- Expect email as a primary medium of communication outside the classroom

### Attendance

I expect you to attend every day. Many days will be part lecture, part workshop, so attending class will directly affect the preparation of your speeches. If you miss a day, you should *talk with your colleagues* about the issues we discussed in class. This will be far more fruitful than merely copying notes or asking me to teach the session again. Since speakers require audiences, it is bad form to miss speech days regardless of whether you are speaking.

### Requirements

You will produce three speeches during the semester. Each is worth approximately 28% of your grade. The remaining 16% is determined by the quality of your ongoing engagement with the course. I must emphasize that this is a rhetorical grading schematic, intended to signify the relative importance of certain components of the course rather than a mathematically precise

formula for your grade. Plus and minus grade discriminations will be used at the discretion of the instructor.

Speeches: In the first speech, you will develop an informative speech about some public problem. In the second speech, you will completely revamp your first speech to effectively engage a different rhetorical situation. In the third speech, you will attempt to persuade your audience regarding that problem. Each speech will be 7-8 minutes in length.

Engagement: The quality of your engagement with the course is another component of evaluation in the course. Engagement can be demonstrated through consistent and thoughtful participation in class that shows you've done the readings; useful feedback on your colleagues' work; and consistently solid performance on quizzes and homework assignments offered throughout the semester.

### **Evaluation**

I assume everyone to be capable of earning a C with moderate effort, and that you need to work from there to move your grade up or down. Both 'A's and 'F's are earned by outstanding performance on work; that is, your work must 'stand out' from average, typical work in order to earn these grades. *In this course, I place a premium on the canons of invention, arrangement and style, and less importance on memory and delivery. This means that flawless delivery of weak content will not earn a good grade.*

Students who do the readings before class and discuss their work with me and their colleagues outside of class tend to earn higher grades than those who do not do such things. Students who fail to take the class seriously and then try to argue their grades later lack credibility.

### **Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, and deliberate interference with the work of others. It is the intellectual equivalent of fraud, and the aesthetic equivalent of plastic surgery. Like the former, it ruins the trust necessary for a well-functioning community; like the latter, it mistakenly sacrifices your unique characteristics and replaces them with a disfigured, false ideal.

I have busted people for academic misconduct in the past and am willing to do so again. Penalties range from an 'F' on the assignment to denial of a degree. Bottom line: don't do it. There are plenty of other rule-breaking activities you can engage while at college which have less serious consequences and are a lot more fun.

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you have a disability that may require modification of some element of the course, please obtain the appropriate documentation and then see me so we can make arrangements.

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
31-Aug	Course Introduction	Chapter 1 Public Spkg/Pub. Sphere	Chapter 2 (1st half), Chapter 4 (all) Topic Development
7-Sep	Labor Day-no class	Chapter 5 Audience Adaptation	Audience Adaptation Exercise
14-Sep	Chapter 8 Inventing Informative Speech	Chapter 9 Organizing Informative Speech	Chapter 11 Outlining
21-Sep	Chapter 10 Intros/Conclusions	Chapter 2 (2nd half) Delivery,	Chapter 3 Listening/Feedback
28-Sep	<b>SPEECH 1</b>	<b>SPEECH 1</b>	<b>SPEECH 1</b>
5-Oct	<b>SPEECH 1</b>	<b>SPEECH 1</b>	<b>SPEECH 1</b>
12-Oct	Chapter 6 Research	Chapter 8/9 Re-inventing Informative Speech	Chapter 12 Presenting
19-Oct	Workshop Week--	group and individual meetings	scheduled during class time
26-Oct	<b>SPEECH 2</b> <i>This week: Read Chs 13 &amp; 14</i>	<b>SPEECH 2</b>	<b>SPEECH 2</b>
2-Nov	<b>SPEECH 2</b>	<b>SPEECH 2</b>	<b>SPEECH 2</b>
9-Nov	Chapter 13 Inventing Persuasive Speech	Veterans' Day-no class	Chapter 14 Supporting Persuasive Speech
16-Nov	Chapter 15 Organizing Persuasive Speech	Catch-up Day	Workshop
23-Nov	TBA	Thanksgiving Holiday-no class	
30-Nov	<b>SPEECH 3</b>	<b>SPEECH 3</b>	<b>SPEECH 3</b>
7-Dec	<b>SPEECH 3</b>	<b>SPEECH 3</b>	<b>SPEECH 3</b>
Finals	Finals Week--Meet Monday	Dec. 14, 8:00-10:00 am	