

Communication Arts 100: Introduction to Speech Composition

Syllabus

Communication Arts 100 is an introductory course in speech composition. Its purpose is to improve your skills of writing and presenting effective public speeches, with special emphasis on informative (expository) and persuasive (argumentative) discourse. It fulfills Level A of the University's communication/composition requirement as well as other requirements. The principles you learn in this class should benefit you not only in subsequent courses in the University, but also in your career and in your life as a citizen in a democratic society.

Course Objectives

1. To improve your ability to write effective public speeches. This will engage you in the full process of speech composition, including the following:
 - a. Selecting, narrowing, and focusing topics
 - b. Generating researching materials
 - c. Adapting the topic and research materials to the specific audience being addressed
 - d. Supporting ideas with evidence and reasoning
 - e. Organizing the message for effective communication
 - f. Preparing and revising drafts of the speech
 - g. Expressing yourself accurately, clearly, vividly, and appropriately
 - h. Using correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.
2. To improve your ability to deliver effective public speeches. This will engage you in activities such as the following:
 - a. Understanding the nature of speech anxiety and how to deal with it
 - b. Learning the vocal principles of effective speech delivery
 - c. Learning the nonverbal principles of effective speech delivery
 - d. Generating speaking notes from a full speech manuscript
 - e. Rehearsing the speech prior to final presentation
 - f. Using visual aids to reinforce and clarify the verbal message
3. To improve your ability to think critically and to apply the skills of critical thinking to the analysis of written and oral texts. This will engage you in activities such as the following:
 - a. Distinguishing main points from minor points in written and oral discourse

- b. Gauging the credibility of sources and the reliability of claims in supporting materials
 - c. Judging the soundness of evidence in public discourse
 - d. Assessing the validity of reasoning in public discourse
- 4. To improve your ability to listen effectively to public speeches. This will engage you in activities such as the following:
 - a. Distinguishing among the introduction, body, and conclusion of a public speech
 - b. Focusing on a speaker's ideas rather than being diverted by his or her delivery
 - c. Listening for the main points and supporting materials of a speaker's message
 - d. Developing note-taking skills
 - e. Preparing written analyses of classroom speeches
- 5. To improve your ability to utilize research skills and strategies. This will engage you in activities such as the following:
 - a. Developing skills of information acquisition, including interviewing, writing away for information, conducting library research, creating a research bibliography, and taking research notes efficiently
 - b. Thinking critically and creatively about materials acquired from print and electronic sources

Required Textbooks

Stephen E. Lucas, *The Art of Public Speaking*, 9th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007).

James Ferris and Stephen E. Lucas, *Speech Composition Resources: Communication Arts 100 Course Book*, 12th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007).

Richard Marius and Harvey S. Wiener, *The McGraw-Hill College Handbook*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994).

Students are also required to provide a half-inch VHS videotape.

Speech Assignments

Introductory Speech

A two- to three-minute speech introducing yourself or a classmate. Your instructor will give you the specific details for this assignment. But be sure to construct a speech that explains some aspect of your (or your classmate's) personality, background, beliefs, or aspirations.

This speech is to be written in manuscript form and is designed to fulfill two purposes. The first is to give you a brief, initial exposure to speaking before an audience. The second is to provide a piece of original prose that can be used to help diagnose your strengths and weaknesses as a writer. Do your best to express yourself clearly and concisely. Make sure your ideas are clearly organized and that you proofread the manuscript carefully to eliminate errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.

When you are writing your speech, it is important to keep focused on introducing yourself (or your classmate) to the rest of the class. If you are directed to begin with an article or an object, use it only as a starting point to explain something of consequence about you (or your classmate). The more creative your speech, the more successful it is likely to be.

A typed manuscript of the speech (two copies) is due on the assigned speech day. When you type your manuscript—and all assignments for this course—use 11- to 12-point type, with one-inch margins on all sides.

Informative Speech

A seven-minute speech informing the audience about an object, concept, process, or event. The speech should follow the guidelines for effective informative discourse presented in Chapter 14 of *The Art of Public Speaking*. Use of a visual aid is required. A typed full-sentence preparation outline of the speech, including bibliography, is due approximately one week before the speech is presented in class. A final, revised outline is due on the day the speech is delivered. The speech is to be delivered extemporaneously from a speaking outline.

Persuasive Speech

A nine-minute speech designed to persuade the audience for or against a question of policy. In the speech, you may seek either passive agreement or immediate action from the audience. In either case, you should be sure to deal with all three basic issues of policy speeches—need, plan and practicality—and to employ the methods of persuasion discussed in Chapter 16 of *The Art of Public Speaking*. This speech will require

considerable research and skillful use of supporting materials. Special emphasis should be given to evidence and reasoning in constructing persuasive arguments.

A typed full-sentence preparation outline of the speech, including bibliography, is due approximately one week before the speech is presented in class. A final, revised outline is due on the day the speech is delivered. The speech is to be delivered extemporaneously from a speaking outline.

In addition, as part of the persuasive speech assignment, you are required to construct an audience-analysis questionnaire in which you seek to gauge the knowledge, interest, and attitudes of your classmates with regard to your speech topic. As explained in Chapter 5 of *The Art of Public Speaking*, these questionnaires should use a blend of fixed-alternative, scale, and open-ended questions.

After you have tabulated the results of your questionnaire, you should use those results to help adapt your speech to the knowledge, interests, and attitudes of your audience. This does not mean you should compromise your beliefs to get a favorable response. Nor does it mean you should use devious, unethical tactics to persuade your listeners. You can remain true to yourself and to the principles of ethical speechmaking while simultaneously seeking to make your ideas as clear, appropriate, and convincing as possible.

Commemorative Speech

A four- to five-minute speech paying tribute to a person, a group of people, an institution, or an idea. The subject may be historical or contemporary, famous or obscure. In writing this speech, you should seek to use language creatively and imaginatively so as to invest the topic with dignity, meaning, and honest emotion. A manuscript of the speech (two copies) is due on the day the speech is delivered.

This speech will be delivered from manuscript rather than from a speaking outline.

Note: Students must complete all four major speech assignments in order to pass the course.

Other Written Assignments

Homework

Throughout the semester, there will be periodic written homework assignments in which you work with the principles of speech composition presented in the textbooks. These

assignments are due in class on the assigned day and will constitute a portion of your semester grade. Late homework assignments will not be accepted.

Peer Speech Assessments

As the semester progresses, you will be assigned to write a two-page typed assessment of a speech by one of your classmates during the informative, persuasive, and commemorative units. These assessments are due in class on the assigned day and will constitute a portion of your semester grade. As with other assignments, speech assessments are expected to be carefully written and to be free of errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc.

Self-Assessments

One of the most effective ways to become a better public speaker is to view your speeches on videotape and to engage in serious, objective self-assessment of those speeches. Each student in Communication Arts 100 needs to provide a blank VHS tape that can be used for recording his or her speeches when they are presented in class (videotapes cannot be shared among students). After the speech, you will view your videotape and prepare a two-page typed self-assessment evaluating your performance on that speech and explaining the major items you want to work especially hard on in your next speech. As with other written assignments, self-assessments should be thoughtfully composed, clearly expressed, and carefully proofread. Self-assessments are due in class as assigned by your instructor and will constitute a portion of your semester grade.

Examinations

Communication Arts 100 will have two midterms and a final examination. The midterms will be primarily objective (multiple-choice and short-answer) and will test your command of the principles, concepts, and skills presented in the textbooks and discussed in class. The final exam will require you to analyze a speech and to answer a series of essay questions about it.

Please note: Your instructor will notify you of the scheduled time for the final exam. The exam will be given at this time *only*. In keeping with University policy, there will be *no* early or late exams. If you have travel (or other) plans that conflict with the scheduled examination date, you need to change your plans or to take the course a different semester.

Portfolios

At the end of the course, each student in Communication Arts 100 will submit a portfolio of her or his work across the entire semester. The following items are to be included in the portfolio:

- Introductory Speech (initial version and revised manuscript)
- Informative Speech (preparation outline and final outline)
- Persuasive Speech (preparation outline and final outline)
- Commemorative Speech (initial version and final manuscript)
- Peer Speech Assessments and Self-Assessments

Failure to turn in a complete portfolio will result in a penalty on your final grade.

Attendance

Because participation is a central aspect of Communication Arts 100, regular and punctual attendance is vital. Therefore, for each absence beyond three (two for classes that meet twice a week) you will incur a penalty on your final grade. You are expected to attend class without exception on those days when assignments are due. If you fail to show up on a day when you are assigned to speak, you will receive an “F” on that assignment.

You are responsible for all assignments given or due on a day you are absent. If you miss class, contact your instructor or a classmate as soon as possible to find out what you have missed. Any absences that are excused by the University (for example, religious holidays or varsity sports events) must be reported to your instructor in writing during the first two weeks of class in order to be recognized as excused.

Your instructor may provide additional information about attendance requirements.

Grading

Final grades will be calculated according to the following scale:

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Proportion of Final Grade</i>
Introductory Speech	50 points	5 percent
Informative Speech	150 points	15 percent

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Persuasive Speech	200 points	20 percent
Commemorative Speech	150 points	15 percent
Peer Assessments and Self-Assessments	100 points	10 percent
Homework	30 points	3 percent
First Midterm Examination	100 points	10 percent
Second Midterm Examination	100 points	10 percent
Final Examination	120 points	12 percent

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a grave offence with serious consequences. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* defines “plagiarize” as to steal and pass off as one's own the ideas or words of another or to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

The following are some of the scenarios in which a student might be charged with academic misconduct in Communication Arts 100:

- Delivering all or a portion of another student's speech as if it were your own.
- Failing to cite sources of ideas, paraphrases, or quotations on your speech outline or during your oral presentation.
- Working with someone else in the course to produce one speech that is delivered by both you and that other person in different sections.
- Providing another student with a copy of a speech to deliver.

Students found guilty of academic misconduct will receive an “F” on the assignment and a letter concerning the affair will be forwarded to the Dean of Students for placement in the student's University file. More than one episode of academic misconduct during a student’s career can result in expulsion from the University.

If academic misconduct in Communication Arts 100 is discovered after a student has completed the course, the penalties may be levied retroactively, in which case the reason for the penalty will become part of the student's permanent transcript.