

COM 160: Public Speaking

3 credits; No prerequisite

Gen Ed: Meets Oral Communication Requirement

Course Description: This course is an introduction to the concepts, theories, and skills of effective public communication. It includes the consideration of successful public speaking techniques and strategies for selecting speech topics, argument construction, and delivery.

Oral Communication Competency: Oral communication is a prepared presentation that demonstrates knowledge of a selected topic and attempts to move an audience. This process involves the thoughtful evaluation of a topic, the clear, concise expression of an argument, the use of appropriate evidence in support of the argument, the effective engagement of the intended audience, and the polished delivery of a well-crafted presentation. Oral communication competency grows alongside the development of strong critical thinking skills.

Upon completion of the Oral Communication Competency, students will be able to:

- Determine scope: Students will define the boundaries of the argument in a manner that reflects knowledge of the topic;
Addressed in Part II: Communication Process and Skills, points 1, 2 & 5.
- Use evidence: Students will identify and cite relevant and appropriate evidence;
Addressed in Part II: Communication Process and Skills, points 5-7.
- Construct arguments: Students will synthesize evidence in support of the central argument;
Addressed in Part II: Communication Process and Skill, point 5 & 6; Part III: Delivery, point 1; and Part IV: Public Communication in Context, points 2 & 4.
- Respond to context: Students will demonstrate understanding of the audience and the situation; and,
Addressed in Part II: Communication Process and Skill, point 4 and Part IV Public Communication in Context, points 1-7.
- Control delivery: Students will deliver well-crafted, polished presentations.
Addressed in Part III: Delivery, points 1-4 and Part IV Public Communication in Context, points 1-7.

Course Outline

Part I: Introduction to Public Communication

1. The power of public speech to shape communication environments
2. The historical development of public communication (e.g., the rhetorical tradition, the elocution era, the development of science, social constructionism, the critical/cultural turn).
3. Communication and perception
4. Verbal/Linguistic communication
5. Embodied/nonverbal communication
6. Communication, culture, and identity
7. Communication and power

Sample OC Course Outline

Part II: Communication Processes and Skills

1. Selecting and refining topics
2. Observation and inference
3. Effective listening
4. Analyzing audiences/publics
5. Argument construction
6. Evaluation and use of supporting evidence
7. Ethics

Part III: Delivery

1. Organizing the speech/outlining
2. Effective use of Visual Aids
3. Beginning and ending the speech
4. Voice, body, and rehearsal

Part IV: Public Communication in Context

1. Informative speaking
2. Persuasive speaking
3. Leadership
4. Public advocacy
5. Speaking for special occasions
6. Speaking in small groups
7. Mass mediated communication