

Oral Communication Proposal Form

To: Faculty
From: Susan Birren, Chair, Oral Communication Committee
Date: Spring 2008

The Oral Communication Committee invites faculty to propose courses for inclusion in the program for the 2008-09 academic year. Please submit your syllabus and use the attached syllabus cover sheet to help the Committee assess whether the assignments and instruction contained in your course fulfill OC requirements.

The Oral Communication requirement aims at enhancing students' ability to communicate and listen effectively in a range of contexts, to critically evaluate orally presented information and arguments, and to consider specific techniques for using language as a communication tool.

Background. In addition to the USEM and UWS requirements, all students will now be required to complete one additional Writing-Intensive (WI) course, and one other course from either the WI or Oral Communication components. OC courses may be offered in any discipline; courses numbered 90-99 are excluded. A course may be certified as both writing intensive and as an oral communication course, although students may use it to fulfill only one of the requirements.

Requirements - More specifically, OC courses must:

1. Require students to make two distinct oral presentations of at least 5 minutes each, prepared in advance in the student's own words, and dealing with scholarly, intellectual, or critical material. Such presentations could occur inside or outside the classroom, and be either an individual or collective enterprise. Examples of assignments include an oral presentation on a subject pertaining to course content, managing a classroom discussion, participating in a debate or classroom panel, or summarizing the findings of a small group exercise. Appropriate content might include describing one's own research and the data sought and found; framing different perspectives or approaches found in the relevant scholarly literature; summarizing a scientist's research and analyzing its standing in the field; or discussing the achievements and import of an artist or scholar. Examples of faculty approaches to instruction and assessment can be found on our website: <http://www.brandeis.edu/ustudies/Bulletin%20OC.html>
2. Require faculty to offer specific instruction in OC skills (before the presentation), and to provide feedback (after the presentation), with clear standards of assessment. A grade for, or the formal evaluation of, oral communication skills is optional. The instruction might take the form of ten minutes of lecture on techniques of effective presentation, and/or on methods and standards of providing peer feedback. The focus of instruction and feedback may be on aural as well as oral skills, and may address topics such as appropriate style and effective delivery; small group interaction; and the organization and presentation of complex arguments.

OC committee members: Professors Susan Birren (Biology), Jane Hale (Romance & Comparative Literature), Jennifer Cleary (Theater), Dawn Skorczewski (English), Carmen Sirianni (Sociology), Jim Morris (Biology), Nancy Nies (Director, ESL Programs) and Dan Kryder (Politics).

Oral Communication Course Proposal

Return to Lisa Mills in University Studies (MS 080, lmills@brandeis.edu).

Name: _____ Dept: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____ Mail stop: _____

Please provide summary information **and a syllabus** for each course you are proposing.

Course ID: _____ Title: _____

The guidelines for designating a course as fulfilling the OC requirement (see reverse) call for two brief oral presentations and at least one exercise of instruction and one exercise of feedback.

While the standards and style of such work depend on the intellectual or artistic traditions of your field, we seek proposals aiming at the communication of scholarly, intellectual, or critical content (for example: using historical or fictional narrative, scientific analysis, logical argument, or empirical summaries). Exercises in a foreign language course may satisfy this requirement if communicating such intellectual content is their primary goal.

Briefly describe in your syllabus how oral communication skills factor into your learning goals for the course and provide summary information below:

- a. instruction on how to develop OC skills, addressing techniques of delivery (e.g. eye contact, gestures, and vocal variety) and strategies of organization;
- b. two oral communication assignments listed in your syllabus (their length and nature);
- c. one exercise of feedback (e.g. an evaluation of the oral presentation by faculty or students).

a. Please describe how you will develop or teach oral communication skills in your course:

b. Please describe two oral communication assignments in your course:

c. Please describe the feedback you will provide to your students:
