

THA 15B – Public Speaking: The Art of Oral Communication – Summer 2018

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Summer Office Hours: By Appointment Only, MTTH

I. COURSE OVERVIEW

Public speaking isn't only about presenting a speech from behind a podium. This form of speaking is something this course will address and practice, but it is just a small part of what speaking in public is all about. In the course, we will define what "public" means, realizing that in all of our speaking engagements, whether personal or professional, we will always have an audience, whether it is an audience of one or one hundred.

Public Speaking is a form of human communication, consisting of both talking and listening to an audience: it is a CONVERSATION. To become a strong speaker, in ANY context, you must begin at the foundation of where speaking and listening live in our daily lives: with our families, friends, classmates, colleagues, and in our professions. Naturally, we choose different communicative skills depending on our environment and audience. Much of the speaking we will do in life will NOT be from behind a podium.

In this course, we will work on speaking for LIFE. We will talk about who we are, our fears, our strengths, and our challenges when we think about speaking in front of others, and we will use these personal profiles as our foundation for our study. Each student will be able to use the flexibility of the assignments to work at his or her own pace and develop skills from whatever place you are coming from. This course is appropriate for a variety of skill levels, from the novice and more fearful speaker, to a more comfortable speaker looking for a place to focus and develop stronger skills. All will find a solid place here.

The overall course goal is to allow each student to feel comfortable, confident, and prepared to succeed in a variety of speaking situations, and to overcome any fears of public speaking through practice, discussion, and collegial support/feedback. I also have two greater goals for our time together: for you to ENJOY speaking and for us to BUILD a learning community. Connecting with other human beings in this manner is essential for our personal and professional communication skills.

This course is much like a lab in speaking and listening, and your classmates are as much a part of your learning as your own work and motivation are. Listening and learning from each other, as each person develops in his/her own way, is a huge part of this course.

Finally, our focus is on speaking and presenting effectively, and working through your strengths and challenges as a speaker. If you want a course that will help you become an expert in PowerPoint presentations or political speechwriting, this is not the course for you.

Also, please be aware now that technology in the form of laptops, phones, tablets, will not be permitted for use during the class. This policy will be discussed on the first day of class.

II. COURSE STRUCTURE

We will conduct our course in an experiential seminar format. This is a course about doing, so we will all be up and speaking and giving feedback from day one. Practice is the only way to become a better speaker.

Please bring a notebook and pen to take notes in class, but you should also bring your laptop to every class for assignment work. I prefer that students not use technology for notes in class because this is a course in oral communication, which includes active listening. Please be aware that we will use LATTE for ALL assignment postings and handouts on a regular basis, so be sure you are familiar with it.

When you enter our classroom space, please put all of your technology away. The goal in this course is for you to be communicating with each other *verbally*, rather than individually isolated into separate communication experiences via technology. This may be difficult for some of you to do, so I encourage you to see this class/space as a place for you to work on your ability to let go of technology and commit to face-to-face communication with your class colleagues and with me, from the first moment you walk into our classroom. I should walk into the space and hear conversation, not silence.

III. ASSIGNMENTS

Speeches

You will be required to complete 4 speeches in 5 weeks. This is an intensive course that moves quickly.

Written Reflections

You will be required to complete written self-reflections after each speech, as well as a longer final reflection paper at the end of the course. Due dates are listed on the specific schedule.

Partner Work

Students are required to work with a speaking partner throughout the course. You will reflect on your work together in class discussions and will have to report about progress. I will make these assignments in the first week of class.

Colleague Feedback

We will give feedback in class as a group. You are required to take notes during speeches and provide quality, constructive feedback to your classmates. We will discuss constructive feedback and what to look for in class. You will be evaluated on the depth of your feedback in your participation grade (see percentages below).

Instructor Feedback

Working with each of you individually is part of my core teaching pedagogy for the course. You are required to meet with me individually for feedback. You must take notes on the feedback in these meetings – I do not send the notes in writing. This is an important exercise in active listening and taking feedback verbally. In the summer, I try to have all meetings take place during class time, but there may be a need to schedule outside of class from time to time.

Active Listening

I will evaluate you as a listener during class/speeches over the course of the semester. Active listening, i.e., showing through non-verbal communication that you are listening to your speaker, is crucial for your own understanding as well as contributing to the success of the speaker. You will be helping each other be better, all semester. If you are not being a good listener, you are hindering your classmates' progress. This is a crucial responsibility for you to remember.

If you are a student who needs academic accommodations because of a documented disability, please contact me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as possible. Visiting students who have questions about documenting a disability or requesting academic accommodations should contact Gwenn Smaxwill, Summer School Director (781-736-3424) or smaxwill@brandeis.edu. Current Brandeis undergraduates should contact Academic Services (781-736-3470) for assistance. Letters of accommodation should be presented at the start of the semester to ensure provision of accommodations. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.

IV. ATTENDANCE AND EXPECTATIONS

My policy is very simple – there are NO excused absences during Summer Session.

For every unexcused absence, you will lose 5% towards your class participation grade, which is worth 35% of your final grade.

I cannot build the community required for the work we will do together without full attendance, all of the time. We are a learning community and each person is a vital member of this community. For this reason, there are no excused absences in this course unless documentation can be provided. If you feel you cannot fully commit to this policy, you should reconsider taking this course.

If you miss a day of speeches without a documented reason, you will receive a failing grade for that speech as well as lose 5% towards your participation grade, due to being unable to participate in any class feedback for the week. Our work is done IN class and seldom can be made up.

This class does not require extensive readings, long term papers, or traditional exams. Rather, this course requires your physical and mental presence in class and research/writing/speaking/practice outside of class. Your attendance, speech work (both in presentation and written reflection), and participation in the classroom community and feedback are the core tenets of the class.

Speeches are graded on effort, risk-taking, growth (when applicable), and clearly following the instructions of each assignment. More information will be given in class.

Written reflections must be typed, proofed, and written with care and effort. You will be graded on depth of content but also on form and efforts in writing. Spelling errors and lack of proofing will result in a lowered grade. I grade everyone equally on reflection assignments and expect high-level writing from all Brandeis students. While you may write in “conversation” with me (I will explain in class), please write in a professional manner without abbreviations and text-speak.

Class participation grading is based on (on-time) attendance AND participation in class through feedback, class exercises, and discussions. Please know that participation is not about raising your hand and talking all the time; it can also be about being a great listener. See the list below for all that is included for your class participation grade. If you ever have any questions about the grading policies/allocations, please let me know.

Speech Assignments (4 graded), 10% each:	40%
Written Reflections (3), 5% each:	15%
Final Reflection (1):	10%
Class Participation:	35%

- Punctuality
- Attendance
- Partner work
- Active Listening
- Colleague Feedback in class
- Completing profile and goals for the class (first assignment)

You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University's policies on academic integrity (See: <http://www.brandeis.edu/studentaffairs/srcs/rr/RR14-15version11.4.pdf>).

V. COMMUNICATION WITH ME

I will be as available as possible to each of you. Please know the following parameters to my availability: I am not always checking my work email and cannot respond to last-minute/late-night emails about assignments – this is especially true on Sunday evenings. I will generally answer emails once per day, usually in the morning.

You are expected to take notes on skill-building work/assignments given in class, and if you miss class, to secure notes from a classmate. I do not re-teach material but will answer any questions after you have secured a classmate's notes.

Remember that your classmates are your colleagues in this course, and you will also have an assigned partner for your speech work – you have more than just me as a resource. We are a learning community of many.

I am excited to work with all of you this summer!

Summer 2018 Schedule - Subject to Change. More Specific Details TBA.

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| Week 1 | <i>Introductions. Skill-Building.</i> Speech #1 Assigned – Informative
Assignment: Personal Profile, Goal-setting, and Listening Reflection |
| Week 2 | <i>Informative Speech #1 Week.</i> Speech #2 Assigned – Critical Creative Opinion
Assignment: Informative Reflection |
| Week 3 | <i>Critical Creative Opinion Speech #2 Week.</i> Speech #3 Assigned – Persuasive
Assignment: Critical Creative Opinion Reflection |
| Week 4 | <i>Persuasive Speech #3 Week.</i> Speech #4 Assigned – Personal Narrative
Assignment: Persuasive Reflection |
| Week 5 | <i>Personal Narrative Speech #4 Week.</i>
Assignment: Final Reflection (includes Personal Narrative) |