

COMM 15000

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF ORAL DISCOURSE

A Liberal Education Requirement Course

Lecture Instructor:

Office Location:

Phone:

Office Hours

COURSE GOALS

The purpose of the course is to develop an understanding of some major theories of oral communication as fundamental to an educated person in our society. The focus is on the "spoken word" in discourse with immediate audiences. The course studies some of our most distinctly human qualities: the principles, skills, and responsibilities of speaking to a purpose, of interpreting and adapting to reactions of an immediate audience, and of critically responding to our own and others' speaking.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, each student should have acquired knowledge, attitudes, and skills that enable:

- ◆ *Knowing the special values, assumptions, and methods of rhetoric and communication studies,*
- ◆ *Communicating intelligently and effectively in a civil, complex society,*
- ◆ *Thinking independently and collectively about issues of today and tomorrow, and*
- ◆ *Analyzing the process and effects of speech communication transactions.*

ABSTRACT

COMM 15000 examines the function and evolution of oral discourse in western civilization, the ends of oral discourse as limited by the elements of the rhetorical situation, and the means of persuasion and tactics of discourse which are described in both classical and contemporary theory and which may be available in a given situation. It also examines the possible conflicts among ends and means as well as ethical problems that arise from the society and from the technology of communication. Finally, it examines patterns of thinking and critical canons with which the analysis and appraisal of oral discourse should be approached.

REQUIRED TEXT

McCroskey, J. C. (1997). An introduction to rhetorical communication (7th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

EVALUATION

Approximately 60% of each student's final course grade will be based upon written work (exams, speech criticisms, outlines, evidence, papers) showing an understanding of *theory*. The remainder (approximately 40%) will be based on the speeches and other oral participation in class demonstrating skills in the *practice* of oral discourse.



A STUDENT MUST PASS BOTH THE THEORY AND THE PRACTICE PORTIONS OF THE COURSE IN ORDER SUCCESSFULLY TO PASS THE WHOLE COURSE.

Course Requirements

WRITTEN EXAMS

This course will have a midterm and a comprehensive final exam, both given during lecture sections. Material for the exams will come both from the text and from lecture and laboratory discussion. Students are responsible for all assigned materials, whether or not those materials have been covered in lecture or discussed in laboratories.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Overall, there will be three rounds of speeches in this class, all given in laboratory sections.

The first will be a short (2-3 minute), *ungraded*, introductory speech. The purpose of this speech is to provide an early opportunity for students to practice the skills required in this course and to provide an insight into the interests, beliefs, attitudes, and values of the members of the class who will be the audiences for speeches. In this speech, you should: (a) identify yourself and briefly describe your background as it relates to the topic of the speech, (b) identify a controversial topic currently of interest to you and (it is hoped) to the audience, (c) explain why this topic is of concern to you, (d) take a stand on this topic and (e) briefly justify that stand with ideas and evidence likely to be acceptable to the audience. While the speech is to be short and no extensive outside research is required for this round, the speech should reflect care and attention in preparation and extemporaneous delivery.

There will be two *graded* speech assignments in this course. The first is an informative speech (5-7 minutes); the second is a persuasive speech (5-7 minutes). Speeches will be graded on (a) the quality of the content of the presentation (*e.g.*, topic, data/evidence, explanations/reasoning), (b) the quality of the disposition/organization of the presentation, (c) the quality and appropriateness of language in the presentation, (d) the quality and appropriateness of the delivery of the presentation, and (e) the overall effectiveness of the presentation. Speech evaluations will also take into account the extent to which the presentation follows the parameters of the assignment (*e.g.*, nature of the speech [informative or persuasive], time limits, etc.). Additional activities/exercises may be inserted into the laboratory schedules if time permits.

OUTLINES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Formal, full sentence outlines are required for all graded speeches and are to be submitted **BEFORE** the beginning of the presentation. Proper outline form as described in the text and in classes must be followed. All outlines must be typed or computer printed, letter quality, or they will not be accepted by the instructor.

Bibliographies are required for both graded speeches and are to accompany the outline. Bibliographic format must conform to APA (4th ed.) style. No other format will be accepted. All bibliographies must be typed or computer printed, letter quality, or they will not be accepted by the instructor.

SELF-CRITIQUE

After the first graded oral presentation you will be required to turn in a short (1-2 page) self-critique paper. In this paper you will be asked to analyze your own speech in light of laboratory instructor feedback, and peer. Your analysis should cover all of the evaluation criteria mentioned above (*i.e.*, content, disposition/organization, language, and delivery). The paper should include (a) your evaluation of the strengths of your previous presentation, (b) your evaluation of the areas where you feel you need improvement, and (c) a description of the adaptations you intend to make in the next presentation. This paper must be typed or computer printed, letter quality, or it will not be accepted by the instructor.

PARTICIPATION

Substantive post speech **audience feedback/discussion** is one of the primary learning tools of this course. It enables speakers to know what they have been doing well and it points out areas where improvement would result in a better speech (and a better *grade*) in the future. Moreover, analysis of speeches, both others' and your own, provides invaluable experience in applying theory. Your full and honest participation in such feedback/discussion is, therefore, essential to the successful functioning of this class.

Post speech feedback will be both written and oral. Following selected speeches, on a schedule to be announced by your laboratory instructor, you will be asked to complete a feedback sheet; these sheets will be collected and distributed to the speakers. You will be asked to sign the feedback sheets (for evaluation purposes) but names will be removed before the sheets are distributed so feedback to individual speakers will be anonymous. In addition to written feedback, you will be asked to contribute to laboratory discussion/analysis of the speeches, also on a schedule to be to be announced by your laboratory instructor.

Grading Procedures

Grading in this course is on a straight 90%-80%-70%-60% basis; 90% and above is an "A", 89%-80% is a "B", 79%-70% is a "C", 69%-60% is a "D", and below 60% is an "F". Grades will not be curved.

The meaning of grades should be interpreted as follows:

- A = Excellent work; effort well beyond minimum requirements of assignment
- B = Good work; effort beyond minimum requirements of assignment
- C = Average work; effort meets minimum requirements of assignment
- D = Poor work; effort falls short of minimum requirements of assignment
- F = Very poor work; effort well below minimum requirements of assignment

Grade weights for the assignments in this class are as follows
(use the blanks to keep track of your grade):

Midterm Exam:	20%	_____
Final Exam:	20%	_____
Informative Speech:	20%	_____
Informative Speech Outline/Bibliography:	05%	_____
Informative Speech Self-Critique:	05%	_____
Persuasive Speech:	20%	_____
Persuasive Speech Outline/Bibliography:	05%	_____
Participation:	05%	_____
Final Grade:	100%	_____

Course Policies

ATTENDANCE

Kent State University's policy on classroom attendance is that "Classes are conducted on the premise that regular attendance is expected." In keeping with that philosophy, the attendance policy for the COMM 15000 course is as follows.

- ◆ **Unexcused Absences** - An absence is unexcused if it is one taken at the discretion of the student, for example, attending a social event, concert, sporting event, or fraternity/sorority function, discretionary travel, early departure for or late return from spring break, accepting overtime at work, doing work for another class, etc. Unexcused absences equal to one week of classes in a 15-week semester are allowed without penalty. For each additional one week equivalent of sessions missed, the course grade will be lowered by 10%. Students who, for whatever reason, miss a total number of class sessions equal to one-third of the term (five weeks in a 15 week semester) will fail the course. ***Presentations missed due to unexcused absences cannot be made up and a grade of zero for those assignments will be recorded.***
- ◆ **Excused Absences** - An absence can be excused if it is one over which the student has no effective control. According to the University Digest of Rules and Regulations such circumstances include "for example, illness, death in the immediate family, religious observance, academic field trips, and participation in an approved concert or athletic event,

and direct participation in university disciplinary hearings.” Absences will be excused only with *written* proof of such a circumstance that prevents attendance on the day in question. The written verification of absence must be provided by another person as witness or authority, and presented to the laboratory instructor within two weeks of the absence(s). ***Presentations missed due to excused absences shall be made up during the first class session following the absence.***

- ◆ **Late Registration Cases** - Students entering a section at late registration/drop and add are still allowed the one week equivalent of unexcused absences without penalty. However, the sessions missed before registration will be counted toward the “total number” of missed sessions limit.
- ◆ **Late Arrivals/Early Departures** - Students arriving late to class are responsible for having “absent” marks changed to “late.” ***This must be done ON THE DAY IN QUESTION!*** Three late arrivals will be counted as one absence. Early departures from class must be explained to and approved by the instructor. Unannounced and/or unapproved early departures will be counted as “lates.”

Depending on how late the arrival or how early the departure is, some late arrivals/early departures will be counted as absences. Arriving more than ten minutes late to class will be counted as an absence. The same policy applies to early departures. Leaving more than ten minutes early from class will be counted as an absence. University policy with regard to excusable absences (quoted above) also applies to late arrivals/early departures.

- ◆ **Late Exams/Assignments** - Policy with regard to missed speech days is described above. The same policy holds for exams and other assignments. Exams or assignments missed due to unexcused absences cannot be made up and a grade of zero for those exams or assignments will be recorded.
- ◆ **Documenting Attendance at Lecture Sections** – To document presence at lecture sections, it is the responsibility of the individual student to sign in with his or her signature and printed name on sheets provided according to section numbers and laboratory instructors. Look for one of the sign-in sheets with your section number and the name of your laboratory instructor and indicate your attendance accordingly. Students should accomplish this task in sufficient time to be ready for lectures to begin. If you sign in on an incorrect sheet your attendance may not be counted. It is the student’s responsibility to reconcile any such errors.

VISUAL AIDS

No alcohol, drugs, drug paraphernalia, firearms, weapons of any kind, or anything else illegal or dangerous may be used as a visual aid for speeches in this class.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

While research is expected and desirable, student speeches are expected to reflect the speaker’s own efforts, especially with regard to the strategic selection and adaptation of material to a specific audience. When facts or other material are obtained from an outside source, that source should be cited in the speech or, if that is not appropriate, in the outline/bibliography given to the instructor.

The University Digest of Rules and Regulations defines “cheat” as “intentionally to misrepresent the source, nature, or other conditions of academic work so as to accrue undeserved credit, or to cooperate with someone else in such misrepresentation.” The Digest defines “plagiarism” as “to take and present as one’s own . . . the ideas or words of another or to present as one’s own an idea or work derived from an existing source without full and proper credit to the source of the ideas, words, or works.” Example of actions that fall within these definitions can be found in the University Digest of Rules and Regulations. Reusing one’s own speeches or other such material from other courses at this university or elsewhere is considered cheating.

University policy with regard to cheating and plagiarism is applicable to this course. A student who cheats or plagiarizes could receive a zero for that assignment and/or a failing grade for the course. Probation, suspension and/or dismissal from the university are also possible. Instructors are required to report all such incidents.

SPEAKER FEEDBACK SHEETS

It is your responsibility to obtain the feedback sheets to be used in the various speech rounds (introductory, informative, and persuasive). Packets containing the required numbers of these forms are available for purchase at Wordsmiths. (address

- 402 E. Main St.; phone number - 677-9673). It is also your responsibility to bring the appropriate sheets with you to class on the days they will be required. Failure to have feedback sheets available for use on speech days will result in the loss of participation credit for that day.

RESEARCH PARTICIPATION CREDIT

Every student in COMM 15000 is required to earn four research participation credits. The policy governing this element of the course is described in detail in another section of this syllabus. Be certain you read thoroughly the policy statement.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please contact the appropriate instructors at the beginning of the semester or when given an assignment for which an accommodation is required. Students with disabilities must verify their eligibility through the Office of Student Disability Services (SDS) in the Michael Schwartz Student Services Center (330 / 672-2972).

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of every student to read, understand, and follow the course policies and procedures as explained in this syllabus and in any additional materials and/or handouts you receive during the semester. Not being aware of stated course policies is *not* an acceptable excuse for failing to follow stated course policies. *Don't let your grade suffer through oversight or carelessness.*

COURSE REGISTRATION

It is the policy of Kent State University that students are not permitted to attend classes for which they are not officially enrolled. It is the student's responsibility to ensure proper enrollment in classes. You are advised to review your official class schedule during the first two weeks of the semester to ensure proper enrollment. Should you find an error in your class schedule, you have until Friday of the second week of classes to correct it. If registration errors are not corrected by that date and you do continue to attend and participate in classes for which you are not officially enrolled, you are advised now that you will not receive a grade at the conclusion of the semester.

COMM 15000 RESEARCH POLICY

RATIONALE. Participation in communication research is designed to be an interesting educational experience to help introduce you to the communication field and its methods. Researchers will give you feedback on the research, usually after the study is completed. These summaries will be posted near the sign-up sheets on the COMM 15000 Research bulletin board (located on the second floor of Music/Speech across from the ladies room and stairwell) by the end of the semester. Feel free to ask the researchers questions if you are interested in learning more.

COURSE REQUIREMENT. COMM 15000 students are required to earn 4 **research credits** as part of the course requirements. Research credits can be earned through participation in communication research projects outside of class. Each one-half hour project will be worth 1 credit. **Failing to earn these research credits will result in a REDUCED COURSE GRADE. The grade you earn in the course will be lowered by one full grade, even if you earn 3 of the 4 credits.**

SIGN-UP PROCEDURES. During the semester, researchers will post sign-up sheets on the COMM 15000 Research bulletin board, giving dates, locations, times, and a brief overview of the research project. You may sign up for a project at any time. **You are only allowed to sign up once for each project.** When you sign up for a project, you are expected to keep track of the information on the sheet and to attend the correct project at the correct time and place. Each different color sheet represents a different date and time. Reminder forms are on the board for this purpose. Be sure you complete one after signing up. If you forget where and when your project is going on, consult the sign-up sheets. These sign-up sheets will be removed no later than 1 day prior to the study and Xerox copies will appear at that time; this means sign-up is closed. **You may not sign-up once the study is closed.** You may not attend a research session without signing up previously. In the event you need to cancel an appointment, you must speak to the researcher (only the names listed on the project have authority to excuse you without a penalty) or complete a cancellation form that is in your syllabus. You may have someone drop it off in D202 if you are ill, or you may fax it in to (330) 672-3510 if you are unable to get to the Music and Speech Building, or you may e-mail the researcher (be sure to write down an e-mail address).

KEEP ALL INFORMATION ABOUT ALL RESEARCH SESSIONS. Write down the title, code number, room number, researcher's email address, and date of the study. Keep the cover sheet or consent form, if given one. This is additional evidence (but not proof) that you participated in case problems arise. You are responsible for completing an optical scanner sheet at the study and signing-out (on the original sign-up sheet). This allows us to compute your points accurately.

TABULATION OF POINTS. You must complete a computer scan sheet containing your name (last name first), student number, and section number. **THIS IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.** This is how points will be credited to you. If you are unsure of your section number, ask the researcher. Printouts containing research credit points will be posted periodically near the sign-up sheets. If your credits are not posted within a reasonable period of time, fill out an inquiry and place it in the CRC mailbox in D202. Your points will be checked and you will be contacted.

NO-SHOW PENALTY. You must attend the sessions for which you sign up or call to cancel **24 hours in advance.** To cancel, call the researcher at 672-2659, or stop by D202 MSP and drop off a cancellation form. You should know the study's code number, the researcher's name, and e-mail address. If you fail to keep an appointment or to cancel 24 hours in advance, you will receive a **PENALTY** credit of -1 or -2. That is, 1 credit will be subtracted from your total for each point given for the project.

MASS TESTING. This is one way to begin earning points. Mass Testing is a procedure by which researchers can conduct brief surveys or screen large groups of people for participation later in other research. It usually is held during the third or fourth week of the semester. At this session you will complete a set of questionnaires and you are awarded either 1 or 2 credits for your participation, depending on how long the testing session is. Following Mass Testing, you may be contacted directly by researchers and asked

to participate in experiments (you will be asked for your local phone number) . You do not sign up for Mass Testing. If Mass Testing is to be offered, it will be announced in class along with the dates, times, and locations. You should bring two #2 pencils. Some research projects later in the semester may restrict entry to those who attended mass testing.

ALTERNATIVE ASSIGNMENTS. Two alternative methods of earning your research credits exist. Each is worth 2 credits:

1. Read a scholarly research article and summarize the article in two **typed** double-spaced pages. Your summary should cover 4 areas: the reason the research was conducted, the method used to discover the information, what the researchers found, and the researcher's discussion of the significance of the study. The articles will be placed on reserve in the library under the title "COMM 15000 Research Articles-Alternative Assignment" after about two-thirds of the semester is complete. **Only the articles selected by the Communication Studies staff and placed on reserve may be used to complete this alternative assignment. Beware, there are other COMM 15000 reserve files, and these will not be accepted. Only those in the COMM 15KAlternate Assignment reserve list will be accepted.**
2. Attend a public speech (at least 25 minutes in length) outside of class and write a 2-page typed critique of the speech. Church services are not acceptable for analysis. Your analysis must cover the four rhetorical canons of invention, disposition, style, and delivery. You must attach a newspaper clipping or announcement of the speech to receive credit.

Your name, student number, date, and section number must be clearly marked on the cover page for this assignment. Ask your instructor for a copy of the cover sheet if you do an alternate assignment. When complete, turn this assignment into your instructor by the due date.

DEADLINES. All credits must be earned by 5 p.m. on Wednesday of the last week of classes. No research projects will be conducted after that point. No alternative assignments and rewrites will be accepted after the deadline. Do not wait until the end of the semester to choose a convenient research session to attend. Sessions may not be available.

PROBLEMS? If you should ever have any problem connected with research credit participation, we would like to hear from you. Go to the main office (D202 MSP) and fill out an inquiry form. All inquiries are held in strict confidence. Your COMM 15000 instructor will not know you have inquired/complained. We will attempt to solve your problem quickly and conscientiously.

We hope you will enjoy learning about how we generate knowledge in the Communication field!

CONTACT YOUR INSTRUCTOR AT ONCE IF YOU ARE UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE!

This policy was approved by the Communication Studies Faculty Advisory Committee, April 1995.