

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO
BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL SPEAKING, COMM 103-207
SPRING SEMESTER 2016
SOC 014; THURSDAY 4:15—6:45 PM

Instructor: Sue Castorino, scastorinominkoff@luc.edu

Form of communication: E-mail is preferred and checked regularly.

Course overview: “Professional speaking”: Does the very thought of those two words make you anxious, excited, or a little of both? What does it *really* mean in the 21st century as we interact in many different and distinct ways, often non-verbally? Why is it still relevant and important in this changing world? Most importantly, what can you do to gain poise and sound confident?

Professional communication takes dozens of forms, some you might not have even realized. Some have been with us since ancient times and others are contemporary and still evolving. One thing is certain: there will always be basic need for you to speak and speak well. You will have millions of communication encounters in your lifetime--from formal presentations to social media to impromptu conversations requiring you to persuade someone to listen to you and to take action. This can be extremely unnerving for most and comes naturally for a very few. This interactive class is designed to thoroughly prepare you for all types of public communication with practical applications that will be useful in the real world of business endeavors. You will also actively participate as observers from the audience point of view. You will gain valuable insight to help sharpen and polish your own skills as well as broaden your overall awareness.

You will learn how to:

- Confront the dreaded speech anxiety and raise your comfort level
- Improve your vocal delivery, articulation, poise and physical animation
- Logically reorganize your thoughts to motivate and persuade
- Edit yourself to adapt to the ‘clock’, using fewer words/better words
- Creatively impart information to engage your audience
- Use visuals sparingly, correctly, and effectively
- Persuasively support your point of view through weekly dialogue
- Convey your passion on a subject to avoid the ‘wooden syndrome’
- Answer audience questions and address relevant issues in a variety of situations
- Speak up in random impromptu situations on issues of the day
- Understand and critique presentations as an audience member
- Be aware that everything you say and do may be ‘on the record’
- Stop rambling and start connecting every time you speak and communicate

Course specifics: You will be called upon to deliver several different types of realistic presentations during the semester. You will be required to provide a hard copy of every assignment to be turned in, even if you don't present on a particular day. At times you will also be asked to critique others' presentations and are asked to be fair-minded in your assessments. Each week you will also participate in a segment entitled "Newsworthy/Cringeworthy"—discussing visible public speakers who have made a positive or negative impression on you in any type of communication. You should come prepared with examples every week and actively engage in discussion. There will also be the random "Lightning Round" of impromptu mini-speeches on topics of the day. There is no right or wrong here, just your observations and opinions. These portions of class will be factored into your final grade; everyone is highly encouraged to actively participate.

Special note: *There is no required textbook for this class. Therefore, it is imperative that you take complete notes in class every week in handwritten form in a notebook.* I strongly discourage the use of laptops for note taking, as it can be distracting. (You are encouraged to use them when you prepare for actual presentations.) Many topics will be covered at a fairly rapid pace. Your weekly attendance is mandatory. If you absolutely cannot attend, you must let me know immediately as it may impact your overall grade. It is your responsibility to seek out a classmate regarding material covered that day. You must still turn in *all* assignments by the designated deadline, even if you are unable to attend class for a specific reason.

Grades: For most assignments you will receive a letter grade: A(excellent), B(very good), C(average), D(poor), F (automatic for any incomplete assignments). Your grades are based upon many factors: mandatory attendance, active participation, periodic written quizzes and understanding of material, personal development & oral delivery, originality and creativity, and overall improvement. The last factor is very important: you are encouraged to make every effort to *try* during the various projects. Personal progress is important and will be noted. In some isolated cases you will receive a 'complete' for an assignment; I will be very clear up front about grade expectations during each project. You will receive each grade in a timely fashion during the next class. Mid-term and final exam presentations will be more heavily weighed.

A few last words: Some straight-forward rules that will make it easier for everyone:

- Be on time and complete all assignments on time; lateness will not be tolerated.
- Be original. Be ethical. Be honest—*always*.
- Be fair and open-minded.
- Encourage and respect your fellow classmates as they present.
- Don't ever hesitate to ask for clarification or direction.
- Be aware of current events and be prepared to participate in all discussions.
- You will have fun even as you take this seriously and I promise you'll learn techniques that will help you in life every single day during and after Loyola.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (Subject to change)

January 21: Introduction & overview: Conquer your fears & recognize your talents

- Understanding yourself, understanding the audience; putting it in perspective
- Even celebrities struggle; how to avoid brain freeze and mouth lock
- Yes, correct grammar is still important; avoiding errors, sounding professional
- In-class exercises with valuable techniques

January 28: What we can learn from the ancients and the contemporaries

- From Aristotle to today: A brief (and somewhat revisionist) history of the art of rhetoric
- Presidential presentations resonate: Lincoln at Gettysburg, the Roosevelts at opposite ends of the speaking spectrum, the Nixon/Kennedy debates--a watershed event here in Chicago, and more
- Dr. King's famous remarks revisited and why they still matter
- The economy of words: why fewer words/better words work
- Those in the limelight who speak--techniques to admire and to avoid
- Issue Management: What to do when crises occur, because they will

February 4: Putting it all together: The formal business presentation

- How to organize your thoughts, from a great opening to a memorable close
- Getting the words out of your brain and onto paper
- Persuasion: How to say what you mean and mean what you say
- Listening with an open mind and heightened awareness
- Visuals: why 'more' is not always better; what works, what doesn't
- The format: An important template and how to use it effectively
- How the dynamics shift during the question and answer period
- How to deal with emotion and the 'know-it-all'
- Maintaining control, keeping the audience interested and involved

February 11: "I'd like to thank the Academy..."

- Celebrities are really human; the art of the acceptance speech
- Going before a live audience: Grace (or not) under pressure

February 18: Prepare for mid-term presentations

February 25 & March 3: Mid-term dual presentations

- Formal business presentations delivered in teams with audience critique
- Also a recap discussion of the Academy Awards & the Tom Hanks theorem

March 10: Spring break/no class

March 17: “Freedom of Speech in the Internet Age” (tentative TV studio visit)

- Discussion of the impact of television & teleprompter
- The public airwaves: The FCC vs. The Supreme Court
- Public speaking as public persona/Facebook, Twitter & social media
- “Speaking your mind” vs. “Think before you speak”; debating pros and cons
- An in-depth in-studio panel discussion before a ‘live’ studio audience

March 24: Special assignment

March 31: Lyric Karaoke

- How spoken song lyrics can improve your overall delivery (yes, really!)
- Effective storytelling through personalization, repetition, & questions

April 7: The Gettysburg address revisited: Your personal presentation

- Reinforcing the importance of fewer words/better words and personalization
- Making it “short, sincere, & special”
- Planning ahead: Preparation for oral final exam/planned spontaneity

April 14: You’re hired: ‘Speed speaking’ is like ‘speed dating’

- Why your elevator speech is more important than ever
- Techniques for effective and persuasive job interviews
- Positively presenting yourself under pressure, answering difficult questions
- Talking from your resume, personalization is critical

April 21: Final individual oral presentations (Auditorium TBD)

- Individual formal presentations without notes and with audience critique

April 28: Individual interviews & final personal assessments (MANDATORY)
