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### COMX 111A.05C: Introduction to Public Speaking

Jennifer Lynn Geist

*The University of Montana*

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# DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED ARTS AND SCIENCES SPRING 2016, COURSE SYLLABUS



**COURSE:** COMX 111A Section 5C, Introduction to Public Speaking

**TIME / LOCATION:** Tuesday & Thursday, 5:10 – 6:30 PM, HB 07

**SEMESTER CREDITS:** 3

**PREREQUISITES:** None

**INSTRUCTOR NAME:** Jen Geist, M.A.

**E-MAIL ADDRESS / PHONE / OFFICE:** [jennifer.geist@mso.umt.edu](mailto:jennifer.geist@mso.umt.edu) / (406) 243-4341 / Skaggs 340

Unfortunately, I do not have an office location on site, and am unable to hold office hours. I will be available to meet with students by appointment only.

## COURSE PURPOSE & RATIONALE:

This course introduces students to the conceptual knowledge and practical skills needed for effective public speaking. There are often students who have waited until their junior or senior year of school to complete this basic requirement as they believe they will never need to learn the skills presented in a public speaking course. In fact, employers rank communication skills, including public speaking, among the highest personal qualities sought after in recruiting qualified employees. Furthermore, according to a 2010 Reader's Digest article by Sacha Zimmerman:

*"By taking a public speaking course, you can master the skills required in the current American landscape. Today, with a 24-hour news cycle, hundreds of television stations, and massive amounts of information on the Internet, the need to be able to speak clearly and effectively is greater than ever. Doctors are interviewed on the local news during flu season, lawyers are asked to discuss the big cases of the day, business leaders comment on the region's economy, and just about anyone can be asked to do a man-on-the-street interview. These days, if you have interesting ideas or a specific type of expertise, chances are you are going to have to speak about it in a very public way.*

*Even in the private world in which most of our careers take place, public speaking skills are vital to our success. Making a proposal to a superior, teaching a classroom full of bored children, pitching an idea to an organization, or acquitting yourself well at an important social function are all situations in which we daily experience the need to express clear, organized thoughts that will help create serious interest in our ideas and opinions. A public speaking course can help you identify how to be assertive without being aggressive, how to read your audience, how to control a conversation or interview while maintaining a pleasant demeanor, how to think on your feet, and how to deal with tricky or difficult responses and questions.*

Indeed, building your public speaking skills in this course will have personal, social, cultural and professional benefits that will extend beyond the classroom for years to come.

## REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIALS:

Schwarze, S. (2011). *Speaking in the public sphere*. Boston, MA: Penguin Academics.

We will utilize an online Moodle page to post all quizzes, in-class activities, assignments and additional readings for this course; internet access is required.

Please turn in all assignments typed and printed in black ink; access to a printer is required. All major speech materials other than speaking notes must be typed. Handwritten assignments will NOT be graded. All in-class activities must be submitted on the documents available for printing on the course Moodle page. Please print all in-class activities prior to the class session in which it will be used.

All speech materials related to the four major speeches must be submitted in a two-pocket folder. Failure to do so will result in a loss of points.

## STUDENT PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES:

1. You will learn the process for creating and presenting an effective public speech.
2. You will conduct college level research and use that research to support your ideas.
3. You will learn outlining strategies for organizing extemporaneous speeches.
4. You will learn how to construct a clear, organized and appropriate oral message.
5. You will have opportunities to practice your speaking/delivery skills in both formal and impromptu situations.
6. You will learn how to give constructive criticism as you critique other students' speeches.
7. You will learn how to use constructive criticism to improve your own speaking skills as others critique your speeches both for content and for delivery.

## ADDITIONAL COURSE “DO’S”:

1. DO set personal goals for yourself as a speaker. Every speaker has their own unique style. Start with who you are and where you are -- set appropriate goals for yourself.
2. If you encounter any difficulties with the material in this course, please DO take time to talk to me.
3. DO take time to talk to your fellow class members about speech topic ideas or each other’s speeches -- speech is a communication event between speakers and audiences. It is this communication that makes it fun.
4. DO be empowered by the fact that you are taking this course and improving your personal communication skills. There is nothing more empowering than seeing the influence your communication has on those around you.

## GRADING:

- Assignment instructions and rubrics will be distributed prior to their announced due date.
- Speeches (4): 65% of grade (SP 1: 100; SP 2: 200; SP 3: 200; SP 4: 150 points/650 total)
- Quizzes (15): 7.5% of grade (5 points each/75 total)
- In-class Activities/Short Assignments: 7.5% of grade (5 - 10points each/75 total)
- Peer Evaluations: 10% of grade (10 points each/100 total)
- Self Evaluations: 6% of grade (15 points each/60 total)
- Outside Speaker Evaluation: 4% of grade (40 points)

## GRADING SCALE:

You will receive a straight letter grade based on the number of points you earn throughout the semester. I will not be assigning + or – (s).

A: 1,000 - 900, B: 899 - 800, C: 799 – 700, D: 699 - 600, F: 599 and below

## ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:

While the classroom is not a formal business, it is my belief that the classroom should be treated like any other professional setting. Just as you are compensated for hard work at your job, hard work and attendance at class will determine a student’s level of success in the classroom. If you miss a class, you will miss a learning opportunity. Students with fewer than two absences during the semester often see their final grade increased by 5%. Furthermore, students with more than two absences may lose their privilege for a makeup should an emergency arise. Participation in class will also be assessed through in-class speaking exercises; as such, missing class also means a loss of points.

### Late assignments:

Deadlines in the business world tend to be hard and fast. Employers and coworkers tend to be forgiving of a person’s absence for an important meeting or engagement **if** that person has proven to be dependable in the past. As such, my policy follows this principle.

1. If you anticipate a need to turn in work late, you must request an extension and discuss this with me *at least 24 hours in advance* of the assignment’s due date.
2. Late work will only be accepted within one class period from its original due date. Work turned in more than one class period late will NOT be graded.
3. I will NOT accept multiple late assignments (i.e., I will only accept one late assignment at a time.)
4. Late work will only be accepted if submitted in a hard copy; electronic submissions/work submitted by email will NOT be graded.

### Absences on Speech Days:

Speeches in this class are the equivalent of examinations in other courses. Students are expected to treat speech days as formal public speaking engagements. When attending speaking events outside of class, the presumption is that the speaker is prepared to give their presentation with enthusiasm and dynamism. S/he does not get to ask for an extension to finish preparing his/her presentation as such behavior is disrespectful to the audience and the speaking engagement. As such, the policy for speech days is as follows: All students must present speeches on the day they are assigned. **ABSOLUTELY NO MAKE-UPS OR EXTENSIONS WILL BE**

**ALLOWED.** In the rare case that you have a documented emergency (significant illness requiring medical attention; i.e., you are on your death bed), I may allow you to make up your speech if the following conditions have been met:

1. You must be in good standing in the class. This means fewer than two absences, no late assignments and passing grades on all completed quizzes, activities, and assignments.
2. You must notify me prior to missing the speech that you will be unable to attend that class period, and provide an explanation for your absence (email is okay). You must provide documentation of verification of your excuse (i.e., doctor’s note for illness, etc.).
3. You must turn in your outline within 24 hours of missing the speech (emailing is acceptable, however you must turn in a hard copy with your speech materials).

## **DROP POLICY:**

From the forty-sixth instructional day of the semester through the last regular class day/Friday before finals week “**students may drop courses only by petition**. Note that not all petitions are approved, and that documented justification is required. Some examples of documented circumstances that may merit approval are: accident or illness, family emergency, or other circumstances beyond the student's control. Instructors and advisors have the right to indicate they do not recommend the drop. However, it is the decision of the Dean of the student's major to approve or deny the request to drop courses” (UM Catalogue). Failing is not an acceptable reason to drop the course.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT:**

Please conduct yourself in a way that promotes learning for all students in the classroom (i.e. do not use language that might offend others, avoid disclosing too much personal information, turn off cell phones, absolutely no text messaging, and avoid monopolizing class discussion).

## **ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:**

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at [http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student\\_conduct.php](http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php)

## **DISABILITY STUDENT SERVICES:**

Eligible students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course when requested in a **timely** way. Please speak with me after class or in my office. Please be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator.

## **SAFETY:**

This class takes place after most other faculty, staff and students have left the building. In the unlikely event of fire, explosion or armed intruder, please note the closest exits and leave the room quickly and quietly. When you are safely outside the building and away from the danger, call 911.

Additionally, all University employees are mandatory reporters of sex-based discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual misconduct involving students. Within 24 hours of learning about an instance of sexual misconduct, all employees must report that information to the Office of Equal Opportunity.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

*Readings, quizzes and assignments are due on the day listed,  
Please consult Moodle for handouts, in-class activities and homework assignments.  
Course schedule subject to change at the instructor's discretion.*

Week	Date	Tuesday	Date	Thursday
1	1/26	Course Introductions	1/28	The Public Sphere Read Chapter 1 Take Chapter 1 Quiz online
2	2/2	Delivering Your First Speech Read Chapter 2 Take Chapter 2 Quiz online	2/4	Listening and Feedback Read Chapter 3 Take Chapter 3 Quiz online
3	2/9	Speech 1	2/11	Speech 1
4	2/16	Developing Topics, Understanding Audiences Read Chapters 4 & 5 Take Chapters 4 & 5 Quizzes online	2/18	Researching Public Issues Read Chapter 6 Take Chapter 6 Quiz online
5	2/23	Inventing and Organizing Your Speech Read Chapter 8 Take Chapter 8 Quiz online	2/25	Organizing Your Speech Read Chapter 9 Take Chapter 9 Quiz online
6	3/1	Outlining Your Speech Read Chapter 10 Take Chapter 10 Quiz online	3/3	Supporting Your Central Idea; Citing Sources Read Chapter 11 Take Chapter 11 Quiz online
7	3/8	Speech 2	3/10	Speech 2
8	3/15	Speech 2	3/17	Speech 2
9	3/22	Persuasive Speaking Read Chapters 13 Take Chapter 13 Quiz online	3/24	Methods of Persuasion Read Chapter 14 Take Chapter 14 Quiz online
10	3/29	Delivering Your Speech; Using Visual Aids Read Chapter 12 Take Chapter 12 Quiz online	3/31	Persuasive Speech Workshop
11	4/5	NO CLASS – Spring Break	4/7	NO CLASS – Spring Break
12	4/12	Speech 3	4/14	Speech 3
13	4/19	Speech 3	4/21	Speech 3
14	4/26	Special Occasion Speeches & Language and Style Read Chapters 7 & 15 Take Chapters 7 & 15 Quiz online	4/28	Commemorative Speech Workshop Extra Credit Opportunity
15	5/3	Speech 4	5/5	Speech 4
16	Tuesday, May 10, 5:30 PM: Finish Speech 4			