

PUBLIC SPEAKING SYLLABUS 2026-27

Instructor Information:

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Digital Requirements/Tools:

Student Laptop. **Please make sure that your laptop is fully charged every day for class.**

Course Description:

This course is designed to provide both a practical introduction to the fundamental principles of public speaking and a forum for practicing public speaking skills. Through a variety of instructional strategies -- discussion, lectures, and presentations -- you will learn the processes by which effective speeches are conceived, prepared, and delivered.

Course Objectives:

1. To increase your confidence in your public speaking ability.
2. To learn principles of effective public speaking
3. To reinforce existing speaking skills and identify areas for improvement.
4. To demonstrate effective aspects of speech preparation.
5. To demonstrate effective aspects of speech delivery.
6. To appropriately apply public speaking skills to a variety of speech contexts

Attendance Policy:

Because this course emphasizes live performance as well as class discussion, attendance at all class sessions is imperative. (You can't do public speaking without a "public") If you are absent the day you are expected to present a speech, you will still be responsible for presenting your speech when you return to class - skipping class will not get you out of a speech. If you were absent on your scheduled day to present, and you do not present your speech during the first class period in which you return, you will receive a zero. If you do miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the information that was covered from either your classmates or Mr. Shafer

Equity Statement:

All persons, regardless of gender, age, class, race, religion, physical disability, sexual orientation, etc., shall have equal opportunity without harassment in this course. Any problems with or questions about harassment can be discussed confidentially with Mr. Shafer.

Expectations and Behaviors:

- ✓ ***THE NUMBER ONE RULE IN THIS CLASS IS RESPECT: FOR EACH OTHER AND FOR THE TEACHER.***
- ✓ The collaborative nature of our class demands energized participation from everyone. Although the thought of sharing your ideas can be daunting, doing so sharpens your articulation skills, exposes the class to a variety of perspectives, and ultimately makes our time together more fruitful. Thoroughly prepare your speeches and come to class prepared to share your insights and thoughts. You should think of this class as a safe space to express and grow your ideas; **I will not tolerate any manner of disrespect.** Listen to and consider others' points of view, don't talk when someone else has the floor, and refrain from name-calling or any other disrespectful language or gestures. When people are presenting speeches, the expectation is that you have your computers away and you are actively listening.
- ✓ ***Cell phones are never allowed in class per State law.***
- ✓ ***Be engaged during class.*** This includes watching videos, writing, editing, and generally paying attention to whatever is going on.
- ✓ ***Be to class on time.*** Parents will be contacted if tardies become a habitual problem.
- ✓ ***Utilize the entire class period for learning.*** You will be given an ample amount of class time to create, refine, and rehearse your speeches. USE IT!

Speeches:

You will be given an ample amount of class time to compose, refine, and rehearse your speeches. Speeches vary in length (3-6 minutes). While you are not expected to memorize your speech word for word, you should be very familiar with it. You should be able to get through one minute of your speech without looking down at your notecards. You are allowed to use THREE notecards (that I will provide - using only the front side) for each speech.

You are not to write your speech word for word on these cards. Instead, they should be used as an outline for your speech, with specific talking points, statistics, and transitions. Notecards will be checked by me three days prior to your speech. If you do not have anything written on your note cards at this time, or you have written your entire speech on the notecards, you will not be allowed to use note cards during your speech. Additionally, your notecards will be checked again on the day of your speech prior to your presentation. There should not be any significant additions to your notecards between the three days prior to your speech and the day of your speech. You will lose 50% of your points if there are significant additions to your note cards (i.e., you wrote your entire speech on the notecards).

If your speech is completely off-topic and/or uses inappropriate language in any way, you will not receive credit for your speech. In this scenario, you would still be allowed to rewrite your speech and present it to receive credit.

Academic Integrity:

Verified academic misconduct, including plagiarism, will result in failure of the assignment. The possibility of making up any points will be at the discretion of the instructor. All written work for credit must be the product of the student's individual effort, since accepting the help of others is a form of cheating.

Plagiarism is cheating that consists of using the work of others without adequate acknowledgement. Any idea, fact, or language borrowed from a source must be documented formally or informally. Some examples of plagiarism are

1. copying another student's work and submitting as one's own;
2. copying or paraphrasing passages sentences, phrases, words, data, statistics, and visual aids without giving credit to that person;
3. using someone else's ideas without giving credit to that person;
4. buying and submitting a professionally prepared research paper;
5. submitting assignments which are the result of collaboration (when such collaboration is prohibited).

Any student caught using (plagiarizing) someone else's speech topic, outline, or notes, or lifting information from sources without citing those sources (another form of plagiarism) will be given an automatic zero for their speech and may be asked to drop the course.

Grading:

Grades are determined by the student's percentage of the total points possible for each semester. This means grades are determined by one grade at the end of the semester, not the average of two quarters combined. Please visit the online grade book at the *StudentVUE/ParentVUE* site to review your grades.

Participation:

This class demands 100% participation. Therefore, participation weighs heavily on your grade. Each student can earn a possible 5 points daily for participation. Lack of participation will result in a zero for the day/project. Students will be pro-rated for excused absences. However, speeches cannot be missed.