

St. Mary's College Department of Humanities
COM 201/202, Public Speaking: Course Policy Statement and Syllabus—Dr Andrew Childs

Course Description and Purpose Statement:

COM 201/202, Public Speaking, offered within the Department of Humanities at St. Mary's College, is a year-long course designed to introduce students to elements and strategies for developing public speaking techniques based on understanding of classical rhetoric, and contemporary models. Beyond considering the mechanical mastery of communication, however, students now more than ever must be aware of the perilous moral and rhetorical climate in which we live. Throughout the year, discussions will take place considering serious societal issues involving issues of morality and natural law. Students will practice the effective communication of thought and emotion in public speaking through the development of skills in listening, analysis, organization, and delivery. Verbal communication underpins human interactions in an immediate and powerful way. Modern apologetics requires a proper sense of communicative mastery: in an age of ever-decreasing attention spans, one must command the attention to access the ear. An unheard truth makes no impact. The course will consider Classical Rhetoric, and the mechanics of modern oratory, what, *how*, and *why* of communication; students will learn how to overcome natural fears of public speaking, as well as choosing topics, preparation, organization, and delivery of effective presentations.

In the fall semester, all students will develop outlining and interviewing skills, deliver ceremonial speeches of introduction, and researched informational speeches. In the spring semester, students will deliver persuasive speeches, and will present a 15-20-minute public oration as a final project subject to faculty panel review.

Administrative Policies

Students are bound by all policies, guidelines, and expectations found in the St. Mary's College Student Handbook. As such, it is assumed that the student has thorough familiarity with the Handbook.

- **Cell phones are forbidden in class**
- **GRADING:** Students will earn grades based on written assignments, and in-class discussion and activities, determined by the following formula: Written Assignments 20%; Class Participation and Speeches 50%; Final Speeches 30%. **NB: *Communications is a single 2-credit course taught over the course of 2 semesters. Students will receive grades in the spring based on their work throughout the year.***
- **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:** Students will complete written assignments based on any assigned reading and class activities, as well as provide detailed speech proposals and drafts.
- **DEADLINES:** Punctuality and met deadlines relate strictly to justice, represent the results of student efforts to establish disciplined work habits, and exhibit charitable respect to instructors and peers alike. Though extenuating circumstances exist, late work will be accepted subject to penalty.
- **CLASS PARTICIPATION & PRESENTATIONS:** Students must participate meaningfully in discussions that occur within the lecture, to include providing appropriate peer evaluations.
- **SPEECHES:** All students will deliver **FOUR** major oral presentations over the course of the two semesters, including a final speech project at the end of the spring semester. In the fall semester, all students will deliver a **3-5-minute INTRODUCTORY speech of a classmate** based on information gathered in a structured interview, and a **10 to 15-minute researched INFORMATIONAL speech on an approved topic**. In the spring semester students will deliver a **10 to 15-minute PERSUASIVE speech on an approved topic**. These persuasive speeches may be subject to review and examination by a faculty panel. Students will submit written statements of purpose and detailed structural and/or speaking outlines, to include exploration of major points and transitional materials.
- **FINAL SPEECHES:** Students will deliver **15-20-minute FINAL speeches on an approved topic**. Time and logistical considerations permitting, these speeches may be delivered in a public forum. Exceptional speeches may warrant consideration for publication.

Contact Information and Office Hours

- achilds@smac.edu; (785) 437-2471 x426 (office); (203) 606-3250 (cell). Office hours by appointment.

SYLLABUS: FALL SEMESTER 2023

Week 1, September 5 & 7

- Introduction; objectives and expectations (and activities!); grouping ('early birds' and 'procrastinators')
- Classical Rhetoric (Plato and Aristotle, "The Great Debate"); modern application
- **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT**—Temperament test: what's your code?

Week 2, September 12 & 14: Self-knowledge; understanding the 'other'

- **ACTIVITY**—Who do you think you are? (Temperament Twister!)
- **ASSIGNMENT**—Choose (and practice!) short poems for recitation (**week 4**)

Week 3, September 19 & 21: Organization and outline; Interviewing

- **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT**—Develop questionnaires; conduct interviews

Week 4, September 26 & 28: The sound of your voice...

- **ACTIVITY**—Reading aloud (a bit of poetry...)
- **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT**—Introductory speech drafts due **October 6**

Week 5, October 3 & 5: Designs of speeches; speaking to inform; choosing topics

- **TOPICAL CONSIDERTION**—TBA
- **ASSIGNED SPEECH**—Introductory
- **WRITTEN**—Informational speech topics due **October 13**

Week 6, October 10 & 12: Introductory Speeches

Week 7, October 17 & 19: Introductory Speeches

- **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT**—Informational drafts due **November 3**

Week 8, October 24 & 26: Finish Introductory Speeches

Week 9, November 2: The rhetoric of teaching—tell me something I don't know (and that you love)

- **TOPICAL CONSIDERTION**—TBA

Week 10, November 7 & 9: Audiences and techniques; developing rhetorical strategies...

- **TOPICAL CONSIDERTION**—TBA

Week 11, November 14 & 16: Argument and Persuasion preview—Debate

- **Early Bird Informational Speeches**
- **ACTIVITY**—Debate club

Week 12, November 21: Informational Speeches/Turkey clinic (*Thanksgiving break begins after classes*)

Week 13, November 28 & 30: Informational Speeches

Week 14, December 5 & 7: Informational Speeches

Weeks 15, December 12: Informational Speeches

Final Exam Period, Wednesday, December 20: Finish Informational Speeches