

**Speech Composition and Presentation, COM203**  
**Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:10 – 11:05 a.m.**

Christina M. Knopf  
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Office Hours: M, W 11:05a.m.-12:35p.m., F 11:15a.m.-12:45p.m. (and by appointment)

**Preliminary Syllabus**

**Text:** German, K., Gronbeck, B.E., Ehninger, D., and Monroe, A.H., (2003). Principles of public speaking, 15<sup>th</sup> ed.

*Other handouts may also be assigned for reading.*

**Overview:** The main focus of this course is **persuasion**; the goal is to improve your ability to adapt a message in detail so it matters to your audience and is as effective in producing the desired results as possible. You will learn and apply persuasive techniques and rhetorical theory. In addition, this course will help you to develop and hone presentation skills such as speaking clarity and use of nonverbal techniques. These objectives will be achieved by a combination of reading and lecture/discussion and graded assignments (as described below).

Additionally, you will learn about how to present speeches in two forms – from manuscript and extemporaneously (from notes). Also, though the course will focus on persuasion, you may have the opportunity to present speeches in other genres, with the ultimate goal being to create a stronger persuasive speech.

**Grading:** 70% of the course grade will be based on grades for your speeches. Each following speech will be weighted to count for an increasingly larger proportion of the course grade, to coincide with your increasing level of knowledge on speech construction:

- Speech 1 = 10%
- Speech 2 = 25%
- Speech 3 = 35%

Speeches will be graded out of 100 points, using a rubric designed and tested for fairness and accuracy across disciplines by Stephanie Thomson of Xavier University of Louisiana and Mary L. Rucker of Wright State University.<sup>1</sup> The original rubric has been detailed to apply to this persuasive speaking class and to provide you with a clear set of guidelines while composing your speeches. A sample of the grading sheet that will be used is attached.

20% of the course grade will be based on two exams, worth 10% each. The exams will be in multiple-choice format and will concentrate heavily on the assigned readings.

The final 10% of your grade will be based on the series of homework assignments you will be given to help you prepare for your speeches.

The final grade will be the weighted average of the grades on your assignments. I am guided by the following grading scheme:

|           |           |           |           |           |         |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| 100-96: A | 95-92: A- | 91-88: B+ | 87-84: B  | 83-80: B- |         |
| 79-76: C+ | 75-72: C  | 71-69: C- | 68-66: D+ | 65-63: D- | 62-0: E |

**Homework:** Homework is due the day specified, no exceptions. All homework must be typed in 12 point Times New Roman or Courier font, printed in black. Assignments must be written in complete sentences.

**All homework must be double-spaced and have 1-inch margins.** If homework turned in does not meet these standards *it will not be accepted*. There will be approximately 10 homework assignments throughout the semester. *Homework is not accepted via email except under extenuating circumstances and a hard-copy must be turned in at some time.*

<sup>1</sup> "The Development of a Specialized Public Speaking Competency Scale: Test of Reliability," Communication Research Reports 19, 1. (Winter 2002).

**Speeches:** Speeches will be approximately five minutes in length. *When you give a speech, you will need to hand-in a clean copy of the manuscript to me before beginning. Like your homework, these manuscripts should be in black, 12 point Times New Roman or Courier, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins.*

As you will learn when we discuss the topics of speech delivery and presentation, the image you project is important. Therefore, when giving a speech you are asked to dress and act appropriately – no hats, no gum.

**Plagiarism:** *Plagiarism occurs when you create the impression that something you present for a grade was produced by you when it wasn't. This happens when you create the impression that you read something you didn't, had an idea that wasn't yours, produced text that someone else wrote. Even if you somehow cite the source, but still create that false impression, it's plagiarism. Penalties will range from a failing grade on the assignment if any of it is plagiarized, to a failing grade in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the University if an entire assignment is a plagiarism. If you are unsure if something is plagiarism, play it safe and cite your source and/or ask questions of me. If you are using someone else's words or ideas because you think they are effective for your purposes, you need to cite the source clearly and every time you use that person's, or others', quotes or ideas; if you fail to do so, it will be considered plagiarism.*

I have a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism. We will thoroughly discuss proper citation for written and spoken work in class, and there are numerous resources throughout the college, including at the library, that are designed to help you with citations. So, there can be, and is, no excuse for plagiarism in this class.

**Grade Changes:** If you ever are unsatisfied with the grade you get back on an assignment and feel that I perhaps erred or missed something when grading it, you may submit the assignment for reconsideration. To do this, you must type up to a 1-page explanation and description of why you believe the grade you received is not the grade you earned. Be aware, however, that in reconsidering the grade I may find that I was too hasty or too lenient and gave you a grade that was too high and ultimately decide to lower the original mark, so be sure you are confident in the validity of your assessment.

Final grades cannot, by University policy, be reconsidered after they are submitted to the registrar, unless you believe an *error* was made in the calculation. At the end of the semester, I will schedule a time when interested persons can come in to see me, find out the grades on the last assignment(s), and review grades from the semester. This time will coincide with the University's final exam schedule for our class (though there is no final) to ensure that you have no course conflicts with the hours I have designated. **NO GRADES WILL BE EMAILED; DO NOT ASK ME FOR THEM;** privacy laws make this practice illegal. If you want to see your final mark before the college releases them, or if you want to know how your mark was calculated, *you must come in at the designated time – NO EXCEPTIONS.* (I am as eager to start vacation at the end of the semester as you, and am not typically available to review grades with you if you chose to not come in when I was available.) After that time, no reconsideration of grades will, or can be, made – unless, again, a mistake was made in calculation.

**Attendance:** **Attendance in class is mandatory.** Much of the learning takes place in class and so you need to be there. Late arrivals are also counter-productive; they disrupt the flow of the class, cause you to miss valuable information, and distract your classmates. You are allowed three (3) absences without penalty. Also, three (3) late arrivals will count as an absence. For each absence beyond three, your course grade will drop by a half step (B+ to B, C- to D+, etc.). Considerations and exceptions may be made in the event that I receive documentation from the Office of Undergraduate Studies notifying me that your absence was unavoidable. *If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting the assignments and notes you may have missed.*

Attendance and punctuality are mandatory on speech presentation days. **IF YOU MISS A CLASS IN WHICH YOU'RE SCHEDULED TO SPEAK, YOU WILL ONLY BE GIVEN A CHANCE TO PRESENT THAT SPEECH AND RECEIVE A GRADE IF I AM NOTIFIED BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES THAT I SHOULD MAKE EVERY CONSIDERATION FOR YOUR ABSENCE.**

**Class Etiquette:** There will be no gum-chewing in class to help you get used to speaking and interacting publicly without gum in your mouth.

Cell phones, beepers, and alarm watches **MUST** be turned off before coming into class (unless you can provide proof of a medical reason that warrants their use). These are distracting to me, to your fellow classmates, and they will be distracting to you when you are in front of the room speaking. If I hear one of these devices go off during a regular class day, you may be asked to leave for disruptive behavior. If I hear one of these devices go off during a day when speeches are being presented, your own speech mark may be affected.

Finally, I ask you to be civil and polite to me and to your fellow classmates. Rudeness and other displays of a bad attitude will not be productive for the class or for me and may ultimately be counterproductive for you.

**Contacting Me:** I will hold regular office hours during which you can come in and discuss any concerns with the class you may have. If you *absolutely cannot* make my scheduled office hours, I will make an appointment with you at a time that is convenient for both of us. Coming in to see me is the BEST way of discussing whatever class concerns or questions you may have.

I can be reached by phone at the time of my office hours, and voice mail can be left when I am not there, however be aware that I do not check the voice-mail frequently.

I can also be reached by email, but I ask you to follow a few simple steps if you contact me this way.

- 1) Identify yourself by first and last name. I have no way of knowing who *hotnsexy@yahoo.com*, *nakedcoed@aol.com*.
- 2) Put COM203 in the subject line so that I do not mistake an email from *hotjox@hotmail.com* as SPAM and delete it. (If I do not see COM203 in the subject line, your email will not be read.)
- 3) Use good grammar and punctuation, and write in complete sentences. Not only is this a good habit to get into before entering the "real world," it is necessary to make sure I can understand your query. I do not speak instant message and email shorthand. If your email is not written in your best English, I will not respond.
- 4) Do not send questions or drafts on assignments to me the night before they are due. There is a very good chance that I will not receive your email in time to help, and it is never a good idea to admit to your instructor that you waited until the last minute to do your work.

-During the workweek, specific questions will be answered promptly. On weekends, specific questions will be answered within about 24 hours. On breaks or long weekends, specific questions will be answered in 36-48 hours. After the semester ends, I can make no guarantees about how long it will be until you get a response.

-Complaints will not be dealt with over email because there is too much room for misunderstandings that, for your sake and mine, I would like to avoid.

-If sending an email with something other than a question, please indicate if you need a response. (For example, "Just letting you know, I won't be in class.")

All of my contact information is at the top of this syllabus.

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Homework #1: Please email me the following statement by the beginning of our second class. This provides me with your email address, should I need to contact you, and signals to both you and I that we have a clear understanding and a contract of what is expected throughout the semester.

*I have read and reviewed the syllabus thoroughly and I understand and agree to the policies outlined and articulated in it.*

Spring COM203, Knopf: Preliminary Schedule: You are responsible to keep up!  
Assignments due on days designated. ★ indicates homework due; details given in class.

January:

- 22, W Review Syllabus. Read chapters 1-3, at your own pace.
- 24, F Delivery/presentation – voice. Read chapter 11.
- 27, M Delivery/presentation – body. Read chapter 12.
- 29, W Delivery/presentation – practice presentations using Dr. Seuss's Oh Say Can You Say.
- 31, F Delivery/presentations – practice presentations using Dr. Seuss's Oh Say Can You Say.

February:

- 3, M Persuasion – how it compares to other speech forms. Read chapter 14-15. ★
- 5, W Persuasion – understanding audience. Read chapters 4-5.
- 7, F Audience continued – workshop ★.
- 10, M Informative speaking. Read chapter 13.
- 12, W Research – doing and applying. Read chapter 6-7
- 14, F Research – applying, continued. (review ch. 15). ★
- 19, W Research – plagiarism and citing (with emphasis on in-speech citations) EXAM 1
- 21, F Organizing arguments. Read chapter 8.
- 24, M Introductions and conclusions. Read chapter 9. ★
- 26, W Language. Read chapter 10. ★
- 28, F Writing tips and workshop.

March:

- 10, M Informative Speech.
- 12, W Informative Speech.
- 14, F Informative Speech.
- 17, M Informative Speech.
- 19, W EXAM 2
- 21, F Extemporaneous speaking. ★
- 24, M Extemporaneous speaking – practice. Speech of introduction for assigned Simpsons character.
- 26, W TBA ★
- 28, F TBA
- 31, M Motivational Speech

April:

- 2, W Motivational Speech ★
- 4, F Motivational Speech
- 7, M Motivational Speech
- 9, W TBA ★
- 11, F TBA
- 14, M TBA ★
- 16, W TBA
- 21-25 CANCELLED
- 28, M Persuasive Speech
- 30, W Persuasive Speech

May:

- 2, F Persuasive Speech
- 5, M Persuasive Speech