

Presentation/Public Speaking Workshop, Spring 2011
Gord Sellar, Instructor

Course Overview:

Delivering a good presentation is a useful and important skill for anyone, especially a student of a foreign language. This course will familiarize students with the style and expectations of public speaking in Anglophone cultures, and deal with areas such as nonverbal cues and communication, visual aids, structure, argumentation, discussion and disagreement, and other related topics. Students will be required to prepare and make various presentations, and in-class group discussion will be required regularly. ***Participation will be an absolute requirement, regardless of any given student's level of spoken English.***

Teaching Method:

Our regular course meetings will consist of lectures and exercises; solo and group presentations to the class; critical group discussions of presentation topics and ideas. The specifics will of course vary with relation to the level and needs of the students, but rest assured that this course is focused on techniques of public speaking and presentation-making, more than on fluent speech itself. There is no reason why a student whose spoken English level is not fluent cannot fulfill my expectations.

Course Objectives:

The point of this course is not to make you a better English speaker, but to equip you with the skills and confidence to be a more effective PUBLIC speaker. You will unlearn everything you thought about public speaking, and relearn how to speak to an audience, one skill at a time. By the end of the course, you will

1. be able to prepare a well-structured and clear presentation on an interesting topic,
2. be able to present to an audience -- especially an audience of non-native speakers of English -- using visual aids, nonverbal cues and communication, and other skills practiced in class, ***and to do so without having prepared a script***
3. know how to handle disagreement and verbal debate as well as contribute critically to others presentations,
4. develop a much higher level of confidence in your ability to present to an audience, and
5. have strategies for giving memorable and exciting presentations alone or in a group.

Homework

Homework for this class falls under several different categories.

- You absolutely must prepare all speeches and presentations for the assigned presentation date. Failure to do so will be acceptable only once during a given semester, and only with a good reason. Therefore, I will try to give students 7-10 days' warning before any speech-presentation date whenever possible, unless spontaneity is an important feature of the exercise.
- Occasional written homework assignments -- for example, the outline of a speech, or a homework worksheet -- may be assigned. Students will normally have 7-10 days to complete one-page assignment, or more time for bigger assignments.

All written assignments submitted to me must be typed (double-spaced) and include your name, student number, my name, and the course name and number. Submissions consisting of multiple pages should be stapled or paperclipped, but I prefer that students not use plastic folders or binders to submit their work. Any work failing to meet these criteria will be returned to the student immediately for resubmission within 3 days. Late work will be penalized one half-grade level per day late: A+ becomes A0 at one day late, B+ at two days late, B0 at three days late, etc.

Textbook

We may use excerpts from the textbook *I'd Rather Die Than Give a Speech: The Comprehensive Guide for Public Speaking* by Michael Klepper. This book is out of print, so unless I can find an eBook edition for you to buy, I will provide you with copies of whatever relevant excerpts I choose for the class.

Should you wish to explore texts or materials not encompassed in this course, please feel free to ask me for recommendations. I will be more than happy to help you find materials which are suited to your needs and worth exploring.

One recommendation I strongly make to all students is to spend some time each week (or, depending on how badly you want to develop your public speaking skills, each day) watching speeches at TED.com and comparing the techniques used by those speakers to the ones we are studying.

Assessment

As you can see below, course assessment is not heavily focused on examinations. The vast majority of your grade (70%) will be based on what happens during regular classtime -- regular attendance, in-class participation, and the regular presentations that you will prepare weekly and make to the class or to groups within the class.

- 30% - In-class participation (includes Attendance)
- 40% - Homework, Presentations, & Speech Diary (Blog)
- 10% - Midterm Presentation & Summary Self-Evaluation
- 15% - Final Presentation & Summary Self-Evaluation
- 5% - Department Events Attendance (especially the Speech Contest!)

However, a 0% in any of the above marks will result in an incomplete grade. Students must at least attempt all homework/speech assignments, and especially the midterm and final presentation, in order to pass the course.

Since students seem to feel that asking for higher grades for personal reasons is especially permissible with foreign teachers, please be advised that your final grade will remain final unless by some chance I have made a mistake in calculating it. Requests for the "gift" of a higher grade will be considered an invitation to coldly, carefully reconsider the grade, and to lower one's final grade if it seems appropriate to do so.

Contact Information

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COURSE OUTLINE:

This might change! I will have to see what you want & need from this class.

Week 1: INTRODUCTION AND BEARINGS
Week 2: PRESENTATION FUNDAMENTALS
Week 3: BODY TALK AND GESTURES
Week 4: STRUCTURING A PRESENTATION
Week 5: VOICE INFLECTION & EMPHASIS

Week 6: THE WALKTHROUGH/PACKAGING YOUR EXPERTISE

Week 7: PACKAGING YOUR EXPERTISE

Week 8: MIDTERM PRESENTATION EXAM

Week 9: CREATING & USING VISUALS

Week 10: PERSUASION

Week 11: PERSUASION & HANDLING THE Q&A

Week 12: THE GROUP/PARTNER PRESENTATION

Week 13: THE GROUP/PARTNER PRESENTATION

Week 14: FINAL PRESENTATION (EXAMS)

Week 15: CONFERENCES & WRAP UP

Week 16: CONFERENCES & EVALUATIONS