
UW-Stevens Point Division of Communication
Communication 101: Fundamentals of Oral Communication

Fall 2017

General Course Syllabus

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(Directs Course Policy, Structure, Curriculum Decisions, Teaching Staff, and Disciplinary Action)

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Course Description

Effective oral communication skills are essential for success in college-level coursework and post-graduation careers. This is an entry level skills-based course covering the fundamentals of oral communication. The COMM 101 course has been designed to help you learn more about oral communication principles but also to develop practical skills in presentation (speech) development and delivery. This course prepares students for more advanced oral communication training offered in departmental and/or major-specific upper division courses (Communication in the Major) at UW-Stevens Point. Those who complete assigned reading/hybrid materials, seek help from their Comm 101 discussion session instructor, and practice presentations in advance will gain increased confidence and skills in oral communication by the end of this course.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Research, write, and deliver** effective informative and persuasive presentations.
2. **Critically evaluate** the credibility and overall merit of informative messages and persuasive appeals.
3. **Identify, describe, and explain** the central concepts and principles of oral communication.

Required Materials

- **Textbook:** *Gunn, J. (2018). Speech Craft (1st edition). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's*
- **D2L Access** (*Contact UWSP IT Help Desk if you need help logging on, etc.*)
- **Two-pocket paper folder** (*NO 3-RING BINDERS*), *print your name, section#, and semester on folder*

Course Assignments & Grading

Activity		Pts	Approx. Course %
Discussion Session (In-class)	Presentation Assignments	350	64%
	Informative – “Teach Something Novel & New”	100	
	Persuasive – “Take a Stand”	150	
	Commemorative – “Pay Tribute”	100	14%
	Supplemental Assignments	75	
	Community Involvement Paper	25	
	Section Specific Participation & In-class Activities (See “ <i>Supplementary Section Detail</i> ”)	50	
Online Hybrid (D2L)	Quizzes & Tests	125	22%
	Quizzes	50	
	Final Test (Cumulative)	75	
		550	100%

Grade Percentage Distributions (Grades will be assigned using this percentage scale)

A	=	100 - 93	C	=	76.9 - 73
A-	=	<u>92.9 - 90</u>	C-	=	<u>72.9 - 70</u>
B+	=	89.9 - 87	D+	=	69.9 - 67
B	=	86.9 - 83	D	=	66.9 - 63
B-	=	<u>82.9 - 80</u>	D-	=	<u>62.9 - 60</u>
C+	=	79.9 - 77	F	=	Below 60

All assignment descriptions available via D2L.

Grading Rubric Used for Presentation Evaluations

* criteria adapted from *National Communication Association Standards for Public Speaking*

C = “average presentation” (C+, C, or C- based on quality) should accomplish the following:

1. Conform to the kind of presentation assignment given – informative, persuasive, etc.
2. Be ready for presentation on the assigned date.
3. Conform to the time limit
4. Fulfill any special requirements of the assignment – preparing an outline, using visual aids, conducting an interview, etc.
5. Have a clear specific purpose and central idea.
6. Have an identifiable introduction, body, and conclusion.
7. Show reasonable directness and competence in delivery.
8. Be free of serious errors in grammar, pronunciation, and word usage.

B = “above average presentation” (B+, B, or B- based on quality) should meet all of the highest “C” criteria, and also:

1. Deal with a challenging topic.
2. Fulfill all major functions of an introduction and conclusion.
3. Display clear organization of main points and supporting materials.
4. Support main points with evidence that meets the test of accuracy, relevance, objectivity, and sufficiency.
5. Exhibit proficient use of connectives – transitions, internal previews, internal summaries, and signposts.
6. Be delivered skillfully enough so as not to distract attention from the presenter’s message

A = “superior presentation” (A or A- based on quality) should meet all the highest “B” and “C” criteria and also:

1. Constitute a genuine contribution by the presenter to the knowledge or beliefs of the audience.
2. Sustain positive interest, feeling, and/or commitment among the audience.
3. Contain elements of vividness and special interest in the use of language.
4. Be delivered in a fluent, polished manner that strengthens the impact of the speaker’s message.

D or F = “below average or failing presentation” that is seriously deficient in the criteria required for the C speech due to one or more of the following:

1. Fails to accomplish most obvious requirements of the assignment
2. Performance demonstrates obvious lack of preparation
3. Missing the required bibliography/works cited (receives a “0” on assignment) which constitutes incremental plagiarism.
4. Does not deliver presentation on assigned day or delivers on a topic other than what has been assigned

General Course Policies

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory – no exceptions. In Comm 101 being “present” means being in your seat within the first 15 minutes of the designated class start time. In a skills-based course like this students must be in class to learn, practice, receive feedback, and give feedback to others. In addition, COMM 101 requires an audience for students to practice and learn correct presentation skills. Attendance records are kept for discussion sessions. As a courtesy we will update attendance records on D2L at the midterm and prior to finals week, however, students are accountable for knowing when they have missed class. If you find a difference between posted attendance and your own records, please schedule a time to discuss this issue with your assigned instructional assistant so they can help resolve it.

Missing class in most cases = “0” on missed in-class activities, collected assignments, and presentations.

We have a firm 3-absence grace period policy in Comm 101. Any time you miss a discussion session class you are marked “**absent**” from class (you are not “in your seat”). Avoid being **absent** for non-critical reasons since any absence beyond the 3-absence grace period will result in a final grade penalty. For example:

If sick 1 day = marked as 1 absence.

If course added a day late = marked as 1 absence.

If missing class for an unexpected emergency = marked as 1 absence.

If missing class for athletics = marked as 1 absence.

If car trouble on the way to give a speech = marked as 1 absence.

PLEASE NOTE: If a serious emergency occurs (car accident, hospitalization, etc.) contact your assigned instructional assistant as soon as possible via email to explain the situation. Obviously if you are physically injured you should contact your IA as soon as it is reasonably possible to explain the reason for your absence. You will still be marked absent (since you are not “in your seat”), but exemptions from a grade penalty for missing an assignment deadline, missing a scheduled presentation day, etc. will be handled on a case by case basis. Exemptions due to extreme individual circumstances are at the discretion of each IA in consultation with the Assistant Course Director &/or Course Director based on the student’s previous class participation, previous attendance, overall standing in the course, etc. Accommodations like this are extremely rare, seldom repeated, and may require confirmation from multiple third-party individuals/organizations via official documentation and/or phone calls to ensure validity.

If an IA deems a student is contagiously sick that student will be required to go home and get well before returning to class (counted as an absence for each day they miss class). If it is a presentation day, a sick student will still be asked to go home and get well (still counted as 1 absence for each day they miss class) but can reschedule their presentation without penalty by demonstrating they were prepared to go before being asked to leave class (all required materials for presentation are completed and submitted to their assigned Instructional Assistant).

Students have a grace period of 3 absences before receiving a penalty on their final course grade (other than the natural consequence of missing in-class assignments, etc.)

When students reach four (4) absences for any reason (other than required military activities) they will receive a **full letter-grade drop** on their final grade in the course. Each additional absence beyond four (4) will receive an additional letter-grade drop on their final grade in the course. Seven or more absences means a student has missed 3 ½ weeks of total class-time and must repeat the course to receive credit.

To clarify how this works, a student who finishes coursework with a 90% and has:

- (0-3) absences = no penalty, final grade of "90%" (A-) in the course
- (4) absences = final grade of "80%" (B-) in the course
- (5) absences = final grade of "70%" (C-) in the course
- (6) absences = final grade of "60%" (D-) in the course
- **7 or more absences = Failing Grade = must repeat the course**

Student Absences for Documented Military Service

Many of our students sacrifice time while in college serving in our armed forces. Students with required (and documented) military activities during the semester will receive the following accommodations as long as documentation of that service (including contact information for the commanding officer) is provided to their assigned Instructional Assistant prior to their absence(s):

1. Absences due to required military service will be recorded on D2L but will NOT penalize a student's course grade.
2. Assignments due on class days missed due to required military absences will be accepted after the student returns to class. If the missed assignment was an in-class activity that cannot be duplicated the student will be given an assignment of equal value related to the in-class activity topic. Due dates on such assignments will be set by each IA in consultation with each student.
3. Presentation assignments will be re-scheduled for days of required military absences and will NOT be penalized.

Tardy:

Students more than 15 minutes late to class will be counted as absent. Please arrange your schedule to arrive to class on time.

Late Work:

Late work is not accepted. Turn assignments in on time and deliver presentations on the day you are assigned. Each student is required to know when posted assignments are due, to ask about deadline changes when absent, and to turn assigned materials in on time. Students must have access to reliable and up to date computer equipment as part of this course. Avoid missing deadlines and being late on a presentation day by planning ahead.

Make up Work:

Missing class means missing course credit offered for in-class activities, exams, and presentations. Students who miss class must contact a fellow class member to get discussion notes. IA's can answer questions about assigned materials but cannot be expected to "re-teach" material from an entire class session.

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Services, Student Services Center Room 103, call 715-346-3365, or email disserv@uwsp.edu.

Academic Integrity

Be honest in what you do in this class. Do your own work in this course and uphold the UWSP tradition of integrity and hard work. Plagiarism is a big deal here and is not tolerated in any instructor's classroom. Those caught plagiarizing will face charges of academic misconduct which can result severe consequences ranging from a failing grade on the assignment, failing the course, and/or university expulsion. Talk with your instructor and/or refer to Chapter 14 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code: "Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures" (<http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs/rights/rightsChap14.pdf>) if you have any questions.

Community Rights and Responsibilities

As a UWSP student you have specific rights and responsibilities. You have the right to receive fair and equitable evaluations based on course objectives outlined in the syllabus and without reference to personal or political views. You have the right to expect timely and accurate information and feedback about your progress and achievements in this course. You also have the responsibility to participate fully in the learning experience and to complete all course requirements. Please refer to the following link for more specific rights and responsibilities afforded to you as a UWSP student: <http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs/rights/rightsCommBillRights.pdf>.