

**SPEECH 140**  
**PUBLIC COMMUNICATION**

**BULLETIN INFORMATION**

SPCH 140: Public Communication (3 credit hours)

**Course Description:**

Introduction to theory and practice of oral communication in public, social, and institutional contexts. Includes foundational and cumulative training in the invention, performance, and critical analysis of oral communication, with emphasis on argumentation, persuasion, audience analysis, delivery, and ethical forms of engagement

**SAMPLE COURSE OVERVIEW**

Our public words are a source of vulnerability and power. For many, standing and speaking in public is an anxious event. And yet, the words that we offer to others bear directly on our sense of well-being. As we find and invent the potential to speak and listen together, we discover the potential to create relationships, express interest, undertake collective action, and foster productive dissent. Neither a simple tool nor an innate capacity, public speaking is an art that calls us to reflect on the possibilities of language and the ways in which our words compose, sustain, and complicate the human condition.

This course is an introduction to the theory and practice of public speaking. Through an inquiry into the nature and dynamics of speech, including the concerns of rhetoric and argumentation, the course offers the chance to carefully and methodically develop skills that enable the creation, performance, and assessment of public discourse.

**ITEMIZED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Speech 140 provides a critical and working understanding of oral communication in public settings. Each student in this course will have the opportunity to master fundamental principles of public communication and apply these principles through a cumulative series of practical exercises and oral performances.

**Upon successful completion of Speech 140, students will be able to:**

1. Identify different forms of public communication and explain their respective value in specific social, political, and institutional contexts;
2. Explain the fundamental concepts of public communication, including principles of oral argumentation, persuasion, theories of the rhetorical situation and audience interaction, modes of listening and style, and the demands of ethical public engagement;
3. Apply and demonstrate the basic concepts of public communication through the performance of speeches that are addressed to a variety of issues, audiences and situations;
4. Interpret and assess the form, dynamics, and power of public communication;

5. Define the art of rhetoric and explain its role in the development of public and social life.

### **SAMPLE REQUIRED TEXTS/SUGGESTED READINGS/MATERIALS**

1. David Zarefsky, *Public Speaking: Strategies for Success*, (Custom Edition), 2011.
2. Additional readings noted on the course schedule will be posted to Blackboard.

### **SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR EXAMS**

In Speech 140, we will engage in a variety of activities, including lecture, lecture-based discussion, group activities, student speeches, and criticism of contemporary spoken discourse. The course places special emphasis on the application of theoretical principles to the cumulative practice of public speaking. Over the semester, each student will have the opportunity to develop and present a series of speeches, as well as receive specific feedback about the form and content of their performances.

Each student in the course will be asked to undertake and complete the following assignments. Assignments will be detailed in handouts and discussed in class.

1. **Three (3) Impromptu Speeches.** These short speeches (1-2 minutes) are scattered over the semester. Each is designed to deepen your sense of audience, develop your style of presentation, and expand the kinds of issues about which you are comfortable speaking
2. **Group Narrative Exercise.** This exercise in story-telling will be undertaken with a partner. It will serve as a springboard for our extended consideration of the way in which speaking shapes the terms and value of public life.
3. **Speech of Introduction.** The speech of introduction will be your first “full” speech (4-5 minutes). With its preparation and delivery, we will begin to think critically about issues such as topic selection, the structure of public speech, and the various contexts of public communication.
4. **Public Issue Informative Speech.** With this speech (5-6 minutes), you will select and develop an extended argument about the terms and significance of a contemporary public policy issue, a problem over which people disagree with respect to its importance and solution. The speech is designed to expand your research abilities and develop your critical argumentation skills.
5. **Demonstrative Speech.** Building on the skills and principles that underpin informative speaking, this speech (6-7 minutes) asks you to develop and present an extended argument about a public controversy. How did it develop? Who is involved and invested? Over what do they disagree? In the name of a solution, how is it possible to gather and address the conflicting positions?
6. **Rhetorical Argument Speech.** This speech (7-9 minutes) will gather the concepts and skills on which we have worked over the course of the semester. In it, you will develop and present an extended rhetorical argument, a case developed through a careful analysis of an issue and its audience and which seeks to engage others in the name of creating a shared basis for deliberation and judgment.

7. **Three (3) Peer reviews.** For three of the four speeches, you will be asked to complete a peer evaluation, a critical and thoughtful analysis of how one particular speech addressed its topic and audience.
8. **Public Argument Criticism – Essay and Presentation.** This assignment asks you to undertake an argumentative analysis of a contemporary rhetorical act in order to assess its terms, form and audience. The analysis will include a written portion (3 pages) and a presentation.

### **SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE WITH TIMELINE OF TOPICS, READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS/PROJECTS**

Specific reading assignments and questions will be distributed at the beginning of each lecture. It is up to each member of the course to keep current with any changes in the schedule. Reading assignments are given by date and should be completed prior to that day's lecture.

**Week 1:**      A Theoretical and Practical Introduction  
 Class Introduction & Syllabus Discussion  
 Introductory Impromptu Speaking Exercise and Discussion

**Week 2:**      The Terrain of Public Speaking  
 Lecture: Speech and the Contours of Public Life  
 Reading: Zarefsky, Chapters 1&2; Donald Bryant  
 Impromptu Speeches #1  
 Discussion of Group Narrative Exercise

**Week 3:**      Discovering a Public Voice  
 Group Narrative Performances  
 Discussion: Speech of Introduction Assignment  
 Lecture: Discovery – The Grounds of Public Speaking  
 Reading: Zarefsky, Chapter 6; Nelson Mandela

**Week 4:**      Opening Words  
 Speeches of Introduction  
 Speeches of Introduction  
 Peer Reviews Due

**Week 5:**      The Controversial Subjects of Public Speaking  
 Lecture: The Scope of Public Discourse  
 Reading: G. Thomas Goodnight  
 Lecture: About What Does the Public Speak?  
 Reading: Judith Butler

**Week 6:**      The Discovery and Invention of Public Arguments  
 Lecture: From Issue to Research

Reading: Zarefsky, Chapter 7  
Handout and Discussion of Public Issue Informative Speech  
Lecture: Developing Arguments – Part I  
Reading: Zarefsky, Chapter 13, Brockreide

**Week 7:**      Giving Form to Public Arguments  
Lecture: Organization and Arrangement – The body of the speech  
Reading: Zarefsky, Chapter 9, Chapter 11  
Lecture: Introductions, Conclusions, and Transitions  
Reading: Zarefsky, Chapter 10, Chapter 3  
Impromptu Speeches #2

**Week 8:**      Speaking to Inform  
Public Issue Informative Speeches  
Demonstration Speech Handout  
Public Issue Informative Speeches  
Peer Reviews Due

**Week 9:**      From Information to Demonstration  
Lecture: Making a Demonstrative Argument  
Reading: Zarefsky, Chapter 8; Brockreide and Ehninger,  
Lecture: The Dynamics of Controversy, Clash, and Rebuttal  
Reading: Goodnight

**Week 10:**     Demonstrative Speaking  
Demonstrative Speech  
Peer Reviews Due

**Week 11:**     The Complexity of the Rhetorical Situation  
Lecture: The Elements of a Rhetorical Argument  
Reading: Zarefsky, Chapter 5  
Discuss Persuasive Speech Handout  
Lecture: Words with Vision – Rhetoric’s Appearances  
Reading: Zarefsky, Chapter 15

**Week 12:**     The Vexing Question of Audience  
Lecture: The Dynamics of Persuasion – Speaking and Listening Beyond  
Self-Interest  
Reading: Zarefsky, Chapter 14; Bitzer  
Lecture: Persuasion and Ethical Public Life  
Reading: Nancy, On Listening; Havel

**Week 13:**     Practicing the Art of Rhetoric  
Rhetorical Argument Speech

Rhetorical Argument Speech

**Week 14:**    Practicing the Art of Rhetoric  
Rhetorical Argument Speech  
Rhetorical Argument Speech  
Peer Reviews Due

**Week 15:**    Towards a Style of Public Discourse  
Lecture: Discerning the Power of an Art  
Reading, Zarefsky, Chapter 12  
Impromptu Speech #3  
Discuss Public Argument Criticism Handout

**Week 16:**    The Criticism of Public Communication  
Lecture: Rhetoric - Everywhere  
Reading: Blumenberg  
Lecture: Each Generation Finds its own Words

**Final Exam Period: Public Argument Criticism Presentations  
According to Exam Schedule**