

## COM 230: Techniques of Speaking

Instructor: Anyun Chatterjee, [ac4473@drexel.edu](mailto:ac4473@drexel.edu)

Office Hours: by appointment using the Booking link on Blackboard

### Course description

Public speaking is a critical skill which permeates every facet of our personal and professional lives. This course will provide students with some foundational considerations when crafting and delivering speeches, and reduce the apprehension some students may feel about speaking publicly. Students will practice the art of crafting and delivering speeches of various genres.

### Upon completion of this course, students will have

- Delivered six public speeches to the instructor and their classmates
- Practiced organizing evidence and thoughts into logical and coherent arguments
- Developed the ability to give and receive constructive feedback

### Course materials

All course materials will be provided on Blackboard or are available for free online. There is no required textbook.

### Grade scale

You will notice that there are a total of 115 points available in this class. However, your final grade will be taken out of 100. This means that every student has the opportunity to earn 115% in this course. No other extra credit opportunities will be considered.

| Letter Grade | Points | Percent          |
|--------------|--------|------------------|
| A            | 4.00   | 92.5% and higher |
| A-           | 3.67   | 90.0 – 92.49%    |
| B+           | 3.33   | 87.5% - 89.99%   |
| B            | 3.00   | 82.5% - 87.49%   |
| B-           | 2.67   | 80% - 82.49%     |
| C+           | 2.33   | 77.5% - 79.99%   |
| C            | 2.00   | 72.5% - 77.49%   |
| C-           | 1.67   | 70% - 72.49%     |
| D+           | 1.33   | 67.5% - 69.99%   |
| D            | 1.00   | 62.5% - 67.49%   |
| D-           | .67    | 60% - 62.49%     |
| F            | .00    | 59.99% and lower |

**What you will be graded on**

| <b>Item</b>                       | <b>Description</b>  | <b>Points</b> |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------------|
| <b>Speech 1 - Icebreaker</b>      | In 3-4 minutes, deliver a speech introducing yourself to the class. Think of this speech as a pitch for why your classmates should be excited to work with you this quarter.  | 10            |
| <b>Speech 2 - Informative</b>     | In 4-5 minutes, deliver a speech explaining the important aspects of a topic you find interesting. You do not need to run your topic by me ahead of time, but please use your professional judgment in determining what is appropriate in a classroom setting.  | 15            |
| <b>Speech 3 - Persuasive</b>      | In 4-5 minutes, deliver a speech attempting to convince the audience of a specific position you hold. Again, no prior approval needed on topic, use your professional judgement.  | 15            |
| <b>Impromptu Speaking</b>         | In 1-2 minutes, respond to the randomly assigned prompt you will receive in class (1 minute to prepare). The goal here is to develop the muscle to quickly outline a speech and deliver it.   | 10            |
| <b>Speech 4 - Question/Answer</b> | Revisit your informative or persuasive speech and consider any feedback you received. In no more than 10 minutes, deliver an updated version of this speech and respond to 2-3 questions from the class.  | 20            |
| <b>Spoken Evaluation</b>          | Sign up ahead of time to evaluate a classmate's informative or persuasive speech. At the end of the class where they delivered that speech, deliver a 2-3 minute spoken evaluation covering positive and critical feedback the evaluated speaker can take with them.  | 10            |
| <b>Rubric Evaluation</b>          | Sign up ahead of time to complete the appropriate rubric on Blackboard for another classmate's informative or persuasive speech (whichever type you haven't evaluated orally). The rubric must be filled out in class on paper (notebook paper is fine, printed version of the rubric is preferable). Submit your completed rubric to the professor at the end of class to receive credit. Late submissions are not accepted. | 10            |
| <b>Attendance</b>                 | Attendance will be taken each class day promptly on the hour, with each class day representing 1 point. If you are not present when attendance is taken, you are absent. There are no partial points for lateness. I reserve the right to give you a 0 for the day if you are distracted, asleep, disruptive, or otherwise non-participatory.   | 25            |

**Note on delivering speeches** - students are expected to deliver speeches while dressed in professional attire, and without the use of any aids or notes. For oral evaluations, an outline written on notebook paper is acceptable. I do not recommend the use of slides, especially not slides with heavy amounts of text.

**Course schedule**

| <b>Week</b> | <b>Dates</b>      | <b>Topic</b>  |
|-------------|-------------------|---|
| <b>1</b>    | 3/30/26 - 4/3/26  | Introductions and sign up for speech slots, <b>Icebreaker speeches</b>                |
| <b>2</b>    | 4/6/26 - 4/10/26  | How to give good feedback, <b>Icebreaker speeches, cont.</b>                          |
| <b>3</b>    | 4/13/26 - 4/17/26 | Appropriate uses of technology in speaking, <b>Informative speeches</b>               |
| <b>4</b>    | 4/20/26 - 4/24/26 | How to analyze your audience, <b>Informative speeches, cont.</b>                      |
| <b>5</b>    | 4/27/26 - 5/1/26  | What an audience takes away from a speech, <b>Informative and Persuasive speeches</b> |
| <b>6</b>    | 5/4/26 - 5/8/26   | <b>Persuasive speeches, cont.</b>   |
| <b>7</b>    | 5/11/26 - 5/15/26 | How to improvise a speech, <b>Persuasive speeches, cont.</b>                          |
| <b>8</b>    | 5/18/26 - 5/22/26 | How to handle audience engagement, <b>Impromptu speaking.</b>                         |
| <b>9</b>    | 5/25/26 - 5/29/26 | <b>Question/Answer sessions (NOTE - NO CLASS ON MONDAY)</b>                           |
| <b>10</b>   | 6/1/26 - 6/5/26   | <b>Question/Answer sessions, cont.</b>  |

## Course policies

Attendance, participation, and late policy - Students are expected to come to class having done any assigned readings and prepared to be a positive element in the classroom. If you arrive while a classmate is giving a speech you must wait outside the room until they are finished. Disrupting a classmate who is delivering a speech will be cause for -5 points on your attendance score. This policy includes a phone going off as disruption, so silence your phone during class time.

Make up policy - Speeches are difficult to reschedule due to the amount of class time needed for each one. If you miss your designated time to deliver a speech, there are no guarantees we can reschedule. It is your responsibility to ensure you are present for your speech, or communicate with the professor *well ahead of time* (ideally at least two weeks in advance) if you foresee any issues.

Personal technology policy - There are only three acceptable uses for technology in this classroom: (1) life sustaining medical devices, (2) any assistive technologies indicated by the Office of Disability Resources, and (3) digital slide decks accessed only from the computer at the front of the room. Students may not use any device containing a semiconductor during class time (including laptops, phones, earbuds, etc.). If you have slides you wish to use during a speech, you must send them to the professor before class begins or bring them on a flash drive. Any personal devices that are visible during class time will be cause for -5 points on attendance.

Artificial intelligence policy - There is no acceptable use of any artificial intelligence in this class. Any use which violates university policy will be grounds for a failing grade and referral to the appropriate university office.

Plagiarism policy - All work must be independently conceptualized by the submitting student. Any words, ideas, or images borrowed from another person must be given proper attribution either verbally or on any slides and handouts you may use. Failure to provide appropriate attribution, or any attempts to pass off another person's work as your own is grounds for failing the course and referral to the appropriate office. This policy is a foundational one in academia: don't plagiarize.

Course change policy - I reserve the right to change or modify this course, and will communicate changes in class and via Blackboard.

Professor accountability policy - If the professor needs to cancel class for any reason they will endeavor to provide advance notice ASAP via Blackboard and email. All students will receive 1.5 attendance points for any cancelled class days announced with less than 24 hours notice, and will not be penalized for missing a speech on that day. If the professor is more than 5 minutes late to any class time, all students present by their arrival receive 1.5 attendance points for the day.

Links to additional school policies - [Students with Disabilities](#), [Add/Drop Policy](#)

---

*This syllabus is subject to change and was last updated on March 27, 2026*