

## **COMS 1361.17**

### **Public Speaking Fall 2017 Online August 23 – December 7**

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**Welcome to COMS 1361.08!** The purpose of this course is to enable you to better understand theories and practices of public speaking. This course is designed to improve not only your delivery techniques, but also your speech-writing and public speaking abilities. Additionally, this course is arranged to develop the skills necessary for you to evaluate critically research associated with your topic and to enter the public dialogue on issues that are important to you and your life. I am confident that there is much to gain from the study of public speaking. The skills developed by engaging in this course work can be practically applied to each of our lives. Although our participation may take place in various forms and environments, each of us will inevitably face the task of delivering, constructing, or consuming speeches. Developing your public speaking skills will prepare you for school or work presentations, job interviews, political campaigns, community meetings, and many other situations as well.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK** Gregory, H. (2012). Public Speaking for College and Career. (10th Ed). New York: McGraw-Hill.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES** 1. Analyze an audience and adapt to it. 2. Select a topic. 3. Establish their credibility as speakers. 4. Research and organize relevant material (critical thinking). 5. Begin and end a speech appropriately.

**COURSE POLICIES** Student Expectations, Responsibilities: One of the benefits of online learning is that you interact with the class material as your schedule permits. Because the course is flexible to your schedule, it requires you to be (1) self-motivated to thoroughly read the textbook, (2) to complete and submit your assignments prior to the deadline, and (3) to keep in contact with classmates and the instructor as necessary. There are four units in the course. Units will be open periodically as the semester progresses so as to avoid students completing the semester's coursework too quickly. The requirements and rules indicated in this syllabus and on our course site are non-negotiable. You should drop the class immediately if any aspects of the course, its rules, requirements and/or 2 the instructor's expectations are not acceptable to you. As a student, you are responsible for the following:

**Classroom Conduct:** Free discussion, inquiry, and expression is encouraged in this class. Classroom behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of students to benefit from the instruction is not acceptable. Please be civil to one another. Students are expected to read and abide by all rules and policies in the SHSU Student Handbook. The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link:

<https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>. Section 5.2.22 defines classroom disturbances.

**Attendance:** This course is designed to enable you to access information and complete assignments at times that are convenient to your schedule. This does not mean you may pop in and out whenever you feel like it. Failure on your part to take online tests, respond to group discussions, or submit any

assignment or speech by the deadline, will be recorded as absences. If you have trouble reading and following directions, this class is not for you! If you miss more than 2 weeks turning in work, you cannot receive full credit for the course. Please remember, your participation will be noted. I will monitor your progress weekly via assignments and the weekly check-in. Even though this is an on-line course, absenteeism still hinders the learning process and may result in your failing this course. After each speech, I will return your evaluation forms with helpful comments--it benefits you to wait and review these before submitting your next speech--following suggestions for speechmaking will only improve your grade.

**Late Assignments:** Late assignments may be accepted and makeup tests allowed, IF AND ONLY IF: (a) you make every effort possible to contact me PRIOR TO the due date and time, (b) you provide official documentation to verify your explanation as to why you could not turn in your assignment, and (c) documentation is official (i.e., written on official stationary or letterhead, and signed by the appropriate authority). Informal notes from your mother/father/friend/roommate do not qualify as appropriate documentation. If you do not meet the above criteria, you will receive a ZERO for your assignment or test. All deadlines are posted on the schedule. Be aware of these deadlines as it is your responsibility to hand in all assignments, submit speeches, and complete tests by the deadline.

**Virtual Office Hours:** As this is a fully online course all communication will take place via email.

**Responses to questions will be posted within 24-48 hours of receipt on business days (Mon-Fri).** Use the Blackboard's Virtual Office Discussion Forum to post questions relating to the course. If you have a personal question or request (e.g., asking for an extension on a deadline), please email me directly. Responses to participant questions will be posted within 24 hours of receipt on business days (Mon-Fri). If you do not hear back from me within 48 hours, please email me directly. Questions that can be answered by reading the syllabus will not be responded to. Email is the preferred contact method. I aim to respond to all emails within 24 hours, but, allow a minimum of 2 full business days for me to respond to your email, and be certain to use the subject line to clearly indicate the purpose of your message. If you do not hear back from me within 48 hours, resend the email. I will contact you only through SHSU email. If you use another email address most of the time, please redirect your SHSU-email to that account.

**NOTE:** Be sure your e-mail messages are professional, succinct, and clear. We do not get to meet face-to-face, so it is even more important to maintain proper email etiquette, professionalism, and manners during our email correspondence (e.g., saying hello and thank you). Also, be sure to follow proper grammatical guidelines in your e-mail (do not use slang or text terms). Avoid emailing me questions that you can answer by referencing the syllabus or other course material. Be resourceful and try to answer questions on your own before emailing me. **24/7 Grade Policy:** I encourage conversations about your grades or progress in the class at any point in the semester. When you receive a grade back, wait 24 hours before discussing the grade with me. If you would like to formally appeal a grade on an assignment or exam, you must prepare a written (typed) argument as to why you feel the grade is in error. This must be done within one week of receiving the grade. **Submission Policy:** All written work in this class will be submitted to Safe Assign on Blackboard. Deadline for all Safe Assign submissions is 11:59pm on the due date. Computer and/or system problems do NOT excuse late work or missed quizzes. Late work is not accepted. If you have computer/internet or Blackboard-related problems, you must immediately contact the Help Desk: <http://online.shsu.edu/campus/support-desk/>. To avoid these issues, be prepared by submit your assignments early.

**Disability Service:** Students needing accommodations in this course due to disabilities must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) before requesting accommodations. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester, as I will be more than willing to make the necessary arrangements. Contact information for the SSD is located the following website:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/disability/>

**Academic Dishonesty:** Academic dishonesty could take on several forms in this class. Knowing what constitutes academic dishonesty is important and necessary so you may avoid it. Repercussions of academic dishonesty are immediate and severe. The three most common forms of academic dishonesty include cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. "Cheating" includes the following and similar actions: (1) Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files, data listings, and/or programs. (2) Using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test. (3) Collaborating, without authorization, with another student during an examination or in preparing academic work. (4) Knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying, or possessing, in whole or in part, the contents of an un-administered test. (5) Substituting for another student, permitting any other person, or otherwise assisting any other person to substitute for oneself or for another student in the taking of an examination or test or the preparation of academic work to be submitted for academic credit. 4 "Plagiarism" means the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another's work or idea into one's own work offered for credit. "Collusion" means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit. See the code of student conduct in the student guidelines:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-ofstudents/documents/2016-2018%20Student%20Guidelines.pdf>

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** If you are a qualified student with a disability seeking accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to self-identify with the Committee for Continuing Assistance for Disabled Students at 294-1720. It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

**Religious Holidays:** Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time

after the absence. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

### **COURSE ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW**

**Discussion Boards:** Throughout the semester you will be posting five discussion boards (and replying to a classmate) including one student lounge introduction and four discussion board posts (one for each unit). Each discussion board post and reply is worth 20 points. Discussion board posts and replies that do not meet the minimum word count will automatically receive half credit. To receive full points, discussion board posts are to meet the word count, be comprehensive, in-depth, provide an excellent ability to grasp concepts and relate theory to practice, have excellent sentence structure and organization, and demonstrates exceptional ability to analyze and ask meaningful extending questions. Poor discussion posts provide superficial responses, have little relevancy or accuracy, contains minimal awareness and application to theory and the real-world, contains poor grammar and weak communication, and lacks the ability to ask meaningful extending questions. More information about the discussion boards are posted on Blackboard.

**Speeches:** Over the course of the semester you will have two speeches each worth 100 points (in unit 3 and unit 4). The first speech will be an informative speech; the second speech will be a persuasive speech. More information on the speech criteria are posted below and on Blackboard.

**Informative Speech:** Students are to present a 4-6 minute informative speech on a current, substantive topic related to an issue of state, regional, national or international importance. The topic should be one about which the class needs to be informed. The speech should present a balanced and unbiased presentation of both sides of the topic. You must use a variety of supporting material from a variety of sources. Appropriate (APA format) citation is required in the outline and in the bibliography. A visual aid is required for this speech.

**Persuasive Speech:** Students are to present a 5-7 minute persuasive speech on a current, substantive topic related to an issue of state, regional, national or international importance. The speech should contain main points designed to persuade the audience to accept your thesis. You must use a variety of supporting material from a variety of sources. Appropriate (APA format) citation is required in the outline and in the bibliography. A visual aid is required for this speech.

**Tests:** There are four tests corresponding to the four units of class. Each test contains a combination or multiple choice or true/false questions.

### **BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL SPEECHES**

**Time Limit:** Speaking within the time limits is very important because speakers in the "real world" are expected to adhere to time limits.

**Audience:** At least three people must be in camera view during your presentation (they are your audience). You must make eye contact with the audience and the camera. Be careful allowing children in the audience unless they can remain quiet and not disturb your performance (children and pets will not count as audience members). Please ask audience members to refrain from drinking, smoking, talking, leaving, etc. during your presentation. In addition, pets should not attend.

**Camera:** You need to set the camera up behind the audience (so I can see all audience members) and I must be able to see your entire body. Be sure I can see you clearly - do not be too far away. You should make an aisle down the middle of the audience (place the tripod at the end) enabling me to see your entire body. There will be a 10-point penalty for failing to do this. 6 The room should be well lit. It should mock the classroom setting (avoid sitting around a kitchen table or on pool tables). Just be sure you have room to move with your main points and display visual aids. In other words, you are in front of the audience.

**Visual Aids:** Visual aids are required for speeches. Visual aids must be able to be clearly seen and the sound must be clear (if applicable).

**Furniture:** NO LECTERN/PODIUM may be used for the informative or persuasive speeches - there will be a 10-point penalty for doing so. In addition, you should not be standing behind or leaning on any type of obstacle.

**Written Work:** A complete bibliography (APA 6th edition) should be submitted before each speech. Absence of a bibliography will result in a 15-point penalty on the outline/manuscript and speech. There is a sample of AA in your textbook. If outlines/manuscripts are not submitted, speeches will NOT be graded.

**Attire:** Appropriate professional attire is required. Public speeches are to be given in appropriate attire. Students are required to dress professionally for all speeches - this is part of your speech grade. Males: dress pants, shirt and tie, or a suit and tie. Females: work dress and dress shoes or pantsuits. No "fad" or sleeveless clothing should be worn. (This means none of the pants that cover your feet and drag the floor, no pants that hang to your knees, no denim, no mid-tummy shirts or see through clothing, no miniskirts, etc.) In the "real world" you are expected to dress professionally. Therefore, it would be a disservice to you if this were not a requirement. You may wear the same thing for each speech-no one will care.

**Professionalism:** In all speeches and writing assignments, including answers to test questions, students are expected to use Standard English (not slang, jargon, etc.). Be sure you spell correctly, use appropriate punctuation and grammar, write in complete sentences and develop paragraphs that include details that show progression of thought. If you need help, use the Writing Center at your College.

**Note Cards:** You must use note cards (not paper) when delivering your speeches. Failure to use note cards appropriately will result in a point deduction. Students are to speak in an extemporaneous mode. That is, one or two note cards per minute which contains a key-word outline of their speech.

**Submission Notes:** Please be sure that you place your name on ALL emails, posts, assignments, etc. This is very important and is professional. The typed formal outline is to be turned in to the instructor on the day, or before, the speech is due. You must cite your sources in the outline in APA format and verbally cite them in your presentation. If you use direct quotation in the speech, you must use quotation marks and provide the proper citation in the outline. If you fail to submit a bibliography, 10 points will be deducted from your grade. ALL Speech topics must be approved. Failure to get topic approval can result in a failing grade.

The following topics are not allowed: driving electric cars, abortion, death penalty, legalizing marijuana, and prayer in schools. These topics should be avoided as they have been overused and many people have preexisting strong attitudes and beliefs – this makes it very challenging to persuade someone to change his/her mind, for example. If you have a unique perspective that is innovative and challenging, I will consider approving one of these topics (but this is unlikely). Challenge yourself to select a topic that will require new research and can effectively change opinions!

**Communication Apprehension:** This course is designed to help you become more comfortable with public speaking. If you suffer from extreme communication apprehension please talk to me. I will be happy to help you in any way I can, but first I have to know there is a problem.

**Researching Sources:** Many times the information on the Internet cannot be verified (blog posts, opinion articles, BuzzFeed). It is important that you can find a variety of information that can be critically analyzed. The library has many electronic data bases that provide better information and they are easier to use. Please take the time to become familiar with the resources available to students on the library website. The library even has a public speaking resource guide for our class! See it here: <http://www.shslibraryguides.org/publicspeaking> Use this guide to help come up with a speech topic, to develop a speaking outline, and to research academic sources to support your speech. Teri Oparanozie is our class contact librarian. Please contact her with questions on library content: (936) 294-1623, [lib\\_tlo@shsu.edu](mailto:lib_tlo@shsu.edu) Students will be randomly selected and required to submit their research material to the instructor. This is to ensure material is properly cited from acceptable outlets. If you cannot provide the research material you will receive a zero for the assignment. I look forward to a wonderful semester with all of you and am excited to see each of you grow as a public speaker!

[www.shsu.edu/syllabus/](http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/)