

**SYLLABUS**  
**SPHR 1011: Voice and Diction**  
**Spring 2014**

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**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

**Instructor:**

**Contact Info:**

**Office Hours:**

**COURSE MATERIALS:**

**Required Text:**

*Professional Voice: Developing Your Communication Style Through Voice and Diction.*

\*This is a custom textbook published by Pearson for GWU. It is available at the GWU bookstore.

**Supplementary Readings:** You will be given additional readings and effective speaking exercises based on your own individual needs and the needs of the class.

**Blackboard site:** Lectures, grades, most handouts, and helpful resources will be posted on the course blackboard site.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is designed so that the student may gain a new awareness of the importance of speech habits in daily life as well as how dialects and poor vocal habits can contribute to the impressions people create. In addition to learning about speech and voice in general, the student enrolled in this course should have a personal interest in his or her own communication skills and in increasing his or her oral communication competence using standard American English.

This class has a discussion section that accompanies it. **You must be signed up for a discussion section in order to be registered for this course.**

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

The student should be able to

1. Prepare and present brief talks in several different styles.
2. Use different voice and speech techniques to make effective presentations.
3. Listen attentively to others and critique them appropriately.
4. Describe how the speech mechanism functions in normal speech.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of how speech is produced and used most effectively.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Questionnaire:** Students should print out and complete the questionnaire found on blackboard, under “assignments”. It is due to the instructor at the beginning of the second class period for **1 point**. Students may lose points for turning it in late or incomplete.

**In-class speeches:** Avoid reading speeches! Reading usually sounds monotone, unnatural, and unimpressive to say the least. Some people use bullet points, others use outlines. Some people use no notes, others read an essay. This is your opportunity to examine your own needs in terms of notes for speaking. You may use no more than **one side of one 8 ½ x 11 paper**; all notes will be turned in after the presentation. Grading rubrics for speeches are available on the course blackboard site. You will also use “Peer evaluation forms” from blackboard to provide feedback after the Instructional and Persuasive speech.

**1. Introductions** (2 minutes): Pretend you are introducing someone at an awards ceremony. The person can be living or dead, real or fictional, famous or not (e.g., Minnie Mouse, Albert Einstein, your grandmother). *Keep the person’s identity a secret until the last line of your speech.* Focus on developing a clear, unique, and engaging message. Use your voice and body language (e.g. posture, eye contact) to help convey your message. Be particularly careful to articulate- minimize any interfering dialect and don’t mumble!

**2. Impromptu speech** (2 minutes): You will draw a topic out of a hat. You will only have a few minutes to prepare (the 2-4 minutes while people before you are presenting). Again, develop a message and enhance it using vocal characteristics. Also practice using volume and pitch to emphasize certain words or points.

**3. Impromptu Speech re-do:** During the class following your Impromptu speech delivery you will get to present the same topic again- you may change anything about your presentation except the topic. Consider carefully how the first presentation was received and what elements should be kept or changed.

**4. Job Interview** (2 minutes): Pretend you are introducing yourself to a potential employer. Craft a memorable monologue to describe your personal attributes and demonstrate your confidence and competence as a professional speaker.

**5. Persuasive Speech** (3 minutes): The goal of this is to *convince* the audience of your viewpoint on a topic or issue. This speech is not a balanced viewpoint from both sides, but rather relies heavily on what you believe to be the preponderance of evidence in favor of your stance on an issue. You will need to do some background research and *present evidence* other than your own personal opinion. Be sure to reference your sources and avoid *plagiarism*. Make your *position very clear* and motivate the audience on some level. The topic should be original and appropriate. Because of plagiarism in previous semesters and the availability of speeches on the internet, the **following topics may NOT be used:** Abortion, Death Penalty, Legalization of Marijuana or other drugs, Legal drinking age, Recycling, War in Iraq/Afghanistan. **The more novel and creative the topic, the better!**

### **Peer-evaluations:**

You will complete peer evaluation forms for each speech. You will turn in the forms each day anonymously to provide the speaker with abundant feedback. On randomly selected speech days, you may be asked to initial the forms and turn it into the instructor, who will assess the quality of your feedback for 1 point each day. The instructor will then cut off the initials and give the speakers the evaluation forms. These points cannot be made up if you are absent without documented excuse or forgot to bring forms, etc.

## **Analytical Reports:**

### **1. Analysis 1: self**

Video tape yourself practicing your Introduction Speech. You will analyze and critique your presentation (both the practice video and in-class presentation) by responding to questions provided on Blackboard. **1.5 – 2 pages (double-spaced)**

### **2. Analysis 2: other**

You will analyze and critique a public speaker(s) outside of class (e.g., at D.C. Improv, Busboys and Poets, or museums). A complete list of possible people/places are available on blackboard with the more specific guidelines and rubric for this assignment. You will turn in a **1.5 – 2 page (double-spaced) reflective report** to describe the event and communication exchanges as well as your evaluation of what enhanced and hindered communication and how you might incorporate what you learned into your own public speaking style. You will **turn in your dated receipt** (entry fee, food purchase) to confirm your attendance at the event. If the venue does not have receipts, turn in a program or brochure.

### **3. Analysis 3: self-reflection**

You will reflect about your own voice and diction in presentations and respond to questions provided on Blackboard. **1.5 – 2 pages (double-spaced)**

**Class Discussions:** Students will share their thoughts and analyses during class discussions. These points require attendance and cannot be made up if absent.

**Discussion section:** Please see the syllabus for your discussion section. Your discussion section grade is completely determined by your discussion instructor. He/she is responsible for what goes on in the discussion section.

## **Grading Criteria:**

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

1%	questionnaire
10%	Introduction speech
5%	Impromptu Speech
5%	Impromptu Speech re-do
10%	Job Interview Speech
10%	Persuasive Speech
5%	evaluation and feedback provided to peers
10%	Analysis 1: self
10%	Analysis 2: other
5%	Analysis 3: self-reflection
4%	Participation (4 class discussions)
25%	Laboratory (speeches, quizzes about readings, voice screening, etc)

## **Grade Cutoffs**

	89-87	B+	79-77	C+	69-67	D+	59-0	F
100-94	A	86-84	B	76-74	C	66-64	D	
93-90	A-	83-80	B-	73-70	C-	63-60	D-	

## **COURSE POLICIES**

1. **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY FOR BOTH THE LECTURE AND THE DISCUSSION SECTION. If you miss class for ANY reason:** After your first two absences you will be penalized by **1% per absence** from your total class grade. For an absence to be “excused”, you must present documentation and preferably tell the instructor in advance. In addition, in-class assignments (e.g., peer feedback) cannot be made up. **You are responsible** for all material and announcements made in class. Make arrangements to get information from another class member.
2. **If you do not present your speech on your scheduled day:** You will lose **10% of your speech grade** for each class you are not prepared to present or are absent.
3. **Participate.** This is both an issue of respect as well as good work ethics. Anything you do in our classroom should be related to what we are doing in the class. Assignments for other classes, facebook, reading the news, e-mailing, writing a grocery list, etc. are examples of unrelated activities. There is no need to have a laptop open while listening to classmates’ speeches. If you appear to be distracted by something on your laptop or cellphone you will be asked to put it away ONCE. Any instance after that, you **will be asked to leave the classroom and you will be penalized by 1% of your final grade.**
4. **If you use offensive vocabulary or speak or dress inappropriately:** Points will be deducted from your speech and you may be asked to leave class. That means no bare midriffs, cleavage, hats, or other distracting or offensive attire. This also means no derogatory slang or offensive language.

### **Academic Honor Code:**

As students at George Washington University, you are expected to uphold the Code of Academic Integrity (<http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html#definition> ). Academic dishonesty is defined as **cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.** Reported infractions will be discussed privately with the student(s). If it is determined that someone has violated the Academic Honor Code, that person(s) will earn 0 points for that assignment, or possibly receive a failing grade for the course. Violations will be reported to the University Judicial Officer in the Office of Academic Integrity.

### **Support for Students Outside the Classroom**

#### *DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)*

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to:

<http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/>

(This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.)

#### *UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER (UCC) 202-994-5300*

The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:

- crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals

<http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices>

**SECURITY**

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.

**SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY:** This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice. Changes will be posted on Blackboard.