Introduction to Public Communication

Why Do You Need a Public Speaking Course?

You need the knowledge and skills necessary to speak clearly and effectively to groups of people, no matter what your vocational plans are for the future. You will probably work in a variety of professional contexts through your lifetime and serve in a variety of civic, community and social organizations. In all of these circumstances, preparation for public speaking—understanding how and why to present yourself and your message to a group of people—will make you better able to contribute to the communities in which you live and serve.

Course Description:

The Introduction to Public Communication course is designed to help the student develop and deliver oral presentations. Students will present a variety of oral assignments, both informal and formal. At least one presentation will demonstrate the effective use of visual aids and presentation technologies. In addition, the course presents communication theory that will help the student to understand communication processes and develop better listening skills.

Course Objectives:

This course will help you understand how communications professionals define the pleasing and effective use of verbal and nonverbal behaviors and how these behaviors influence your understanding of yourself and the world around you. As you proceed through this course, you will learn and use concepts necessary for preparing and performing responsible public messages. You will also learn by evaluating the messages others present. By the end of the course, you should have learned to:

• The student will be able to demonstrate a knowledge of classical and contemporary public speaking theory.
• The student will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the communication process.
• The student will be able to compose and deliver various types of public speeches including introductory narrative, informative and persuasive.
• The student will be able to demonstrate competence in using audio/visual aids in one or more presentations.
• The student will be able to describe, analyze and evaluate persuasive appeals.
• The student will be able to evaluate the performance of a public speaker.
• The student will demonstrate an understanding of the role of public speaking in business, ceremonial, civic, educational, religious, and social contexts.
Required Text:


Grading:

- Quizzes & Exams 20%
- Assignments & participation 15%
- Speeches (5) 65%

General Guidelines and Policies:

- Come to class prepared, ready to participate. Stay on top of your reading assignments and homework. Your contributions are vital to your success in this class. If you miss more than three classes, regardless of the reason, your final grade will be lowered by half a letter grade. **Note:** Students may not be absent on days when they are scheduled to speak. Only a student with an emergency documented by an acceptable written excuse will be allowed to reschedule a speech. Otherwise, you will receive a 0 for every speaking assignment you miss.

- In-class group activities cannot be made up.

- Turning in someone else’s work—whether it is from a published text or a roommate’s homework—as your own constitutes plagiarism and will result in a 0 for the assignment and possibly for the course. Also, any academic integrity violations will be reported to the Dean’s Office. Please check your student handbook for more information.

- Turn off your cell phones and put them away BEFORE class begins. If you are texting in class or looking at your phone, you will be considered absent.

A Message from the Academic Success Center

Wondering how to better tackle your reading assignments? Looking for new ways to prepare for your tests? Worried about keeping up in all of your classes? Afraid to ask for help? You’re not the first Westminster College student to have these issues on your mind!

The Academic Success Center can help you with free academic support, including drop-in tutoring hours and individual tutoring for specific subjects, as well as individualized academic consultations to help you with goal setting, time management, note-taking, reading strategies and other skills that will help you reach your academic goals.

Located on the fourth floor of Thompson-Clark Hall, the center also offers rooms for individual or group studying on a first-come, first-serve basis until 10 p.m. every night. For more information, visit www.westminster.edu/academics/learning-center/index.cfm, or contact Coordinator Jessica Shelenberger by visiting TC 412, by emailing shelenjp@westminster.edu or by calling (724) 946-6700.