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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Public Speaking provides practical instruction for preparing and delivering professional presentations. Activities and assignments include developing targeted messages, structuring content, designing meaningful visuals, and exploring presentation technologies. Students will learn to engage specific audiences using a vocal and nonverbal communication style suitable for workplace environments. Overall, the course helps students develop confidence and apply effective techniques for communicating during in-person and remote business meetings.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
- Compare and contrast effective versus ineffective professional presentations
- Conduct an audience analysis and adapt messages to key audience members
- Establish a professional presence through nonverbal communication
- Structure a logical, cohesive message via vocal and visual transitional devices
- Design and utilize visuals effectively
- Engage with attendees and respond confidently to challenging questions from the audience
- Explore tools relevant to crafting in person and remote presentations
- Provide productive feedback to peers
- Self-evaluate professional development as a public speaker

COURSE MODALITY

The course is currently scheduled as "in person expected" (IPE); however, the modality can change at the university's or instructor's discretion for public health or instructional reasons. Individual meetings with the instructor and TA may be held via Zoom.

REGISTRATION

Once a section of Strategic Presentation Skills is full, then enrollment is dependent on: (1) the number of registered students who drop the section and (2) the waitlist order. Priority registration may be given to students for whom this course is required for graduation.

TEXT & TECHNOLOGY

- Chicago Manual of Style or Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)
- Zoom video-conferencing technology. Access via Canvas using your official CMU account only.
- Acclaim video-hosting and commenting technology. Access information is provided via Canvas > Modules. Students will use Acclaim for self-reflections on recorded presentations.
- Optional text: Munter, Mary and Lynn Russell. Guide to Presentations, Fourth Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ. Prentice Hall. *(ISBN-13: 978-0133058369)*

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

This course is designed to encourage a collaborative work environment. Professional conduct is necessary. While our class is in session refrain from accessing personal devices and doing other coursework. Demonstrate respect for everyone in the class through active listening and productive *(skills-focused)* comments.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION
This course consists of lectures and skills-building activities. The final course grade can be lowered due to excessive absences, a lack of participation in class discussions or exercises, or for late arrival to class.

ASSIGNMENTS
Instructions for assignments will be posted to Canvas. Assignments are due on the dates stipulated in the schedule of classes in the syllabus *(see Table 2)* unless otherwise announced. Include your name and section in all electronic files submitted. In-person presentation assignments will be staggered over two class meetings*. The instructor will announce via Canvas the order of student presentations.

POLICY ON EXTENSIONS
Assignments submitted past the due date earn a failing grade unless: (1) a religious observance, a documented medical condition, or official accommodation from the CMU Office of Disability Resources prevents on-time submission; and (2) the student has consulted with the instructor more than 72 hours in advance for approval of an alternate deadline.

EVALUATION
The semester grade will be based on:
- Participation -- including attendance and impromptu presentation exercises *(10%)*
- Technology Presentation with self-reflection on Acclaim *(30%)*
- Draft and Final Consulting Slides *(30%)*
- Consulting Presentation with self-reflection on Acclaim (30%)

Rubrics *(documents that detail evaluation criteria)* are included in this syllabus. Missing self or peer assessments of recorded presentations result in one letter grade deduction off that assignment. Incomplete assessments of recorded presentations result in half a letter grade off the assignment. See page 3, *Academic Conduct*, for additional policies.

Letter grades issued for each assignment will be converted to a final grade for the course based on the Heinz College Grading Scale *(see Table 1)*. Note: grades are non-negotiable.

Table 1. Heinz College Grading Scale

Grade	Interpretation	Points	Graduation Credit
A+	Exceptional	4.33	Yes
A	Excellent	4.00	Yes
A-	Very Good	3.67	Yes
B+	Good	3.33	Yes
B	Acceptable	3.00	Yes
B-	Fair	2.67	Yes
C+	Poor	2.33	Yes
C	Very Poor	2.00	Yes
C-	Minimal Passing	1.67	Yes
R	Failing	0	No
I	Incomplete	0	No

Source: Heinz College Student Handbook

CANVAS
Canvas is not used to calculate final course grades. Course grades are based on the policies indicated in the syllabus. Canvas is mainly used to distribute course content and resources (in Modules), to post assignment instructions (in Assignments), to identify topics (in Discussions), and to send communications (in Announcements).

ACADEMIC CONDUCT
Plagiarism is a serious offense that can result in the student failing the course. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the associate dean's office. Additional penalties may be imposed. If an academic integrity violation is identified, the student will be contacted to meet with the instructor to determine if a violation has occurred based on [Carnegie Mellon University's policy on Academic Integrity.](#) Violations include:
- Presenting another person's work as your own;
- Cutting and pasting content verbatim without using quotation marks to indicate a direct quote;
- Inserting a direct quote or paraphrasing content without citing the source in a manner consistent with APA, MLA, or Chicago style manual;
- Providing incomplete or incorrect information about the source cited;
- Over-relying on templates or another person's phrasing;
- Using ChatGPT, Bard, or other AI-generated content unless specifically authorized by the instructor;

GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF AI

In this course, there are situations where the use of AI tools – such as ChatGPT, Bard, Dalle-2, Slides AI, etc. – will be accepted. This will provide you with an opportunity to explore how these platforms can be used and to better understand their benefits and limitations. In this class, you may use AI tools to:
- brainstorm topics
- develop outlines
- create background visuals

Outside of those specific activities, you are not allowed to use AI tools to generate content for your written assignments or presentations unless otherwise instructed. Turning in an assignment with AI content outside of the allowable uses identified by the instructor may constitute an academic integrity violation. Using AI tools does not absolve you from your responsibilities as a student to follow the academic integrity guidelines of the university – and to ensure any content presented as part of your coursework is both cited and accurate.

If you have any questions about acceptable use of AI generated content or visuals, then ask the instructor before submitting work for this course. - *(This policy is adapted from the Heinz College ChatGPT Toolkit 2023)*

STUDENT SUPPORT: RESOURCES ON CAMPUS

ACADEMIC SUCCESS
Carnegie Mellon University has a wide array of resources and programs to support student wellness and academic achievement. For example, the [Student Academic Success Center (SASC)](#) is designed to provide academic coaching, peer tutoring, as well as communication and cross-cultural support. Students are encouraged to access these resources.

ACCOMMODATIONS
If you have a disability and have an accommodations letter from the Disability Resources office, please discuss your accommodations and needs with me as early in the mini as possible so I can offer flexibility as appropriate. If you suspect that you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations but are not yet registered with the Office of Disability Resources, I encourage you to contact them at access@andrew.cmu.edu.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
I am committed to promoting a safe and inclusive classroom environment. Please visit the [Carnegie Mellon University Center for Diversity and Inclusion](#) for programs, events, and resources that focus on developing a respectful community.

FOOD SECURITY
If you are worried about affording food or feeling insecure about food, there are resources on campus that can help. Email the CMU Food Pantry Coordinator to schedule an appointment: cmu-pantry@andrew.cmu.edu

COUNSELING SERVICES
Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) provides a safe, confidential environment for students to talk about personal and academic concerns. Please visit https://www.cmu.edu/counseling/ or call 412-268-2922 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

Table 2. Schedule of Classes and Assignments *(subject to change)*

	SKILLS	READINGS	SCHEDULE OF WORK DUE
Week 1	Engage the audience	Syllabus and Assignments	March 12: Overview of course and assignments. Instructions for connecting to classroom projection system will be provided. Select topic from list for Technology Presentation. *(Post to Canvas > Discussions > Technology Topic)*
		Acclaim module	March 14: Lecture on audience engagement tactics. View sample presentation videos provided on Acclaim.
Week 2	Demonstrate vocal control	Vocal module	March 19: Technology Presentation due *(Tuesday group delivers their presentations and completes self-reflection on Acclaim)*
			March 21: Technology Presentation due *(Thursday group delivers their presentations and completes self-reflection on Acclaim)*
Week 3	Deliver remote presentations	Zoom module	March 26: Class meets on Zoom for lecture and exercise on best practices for remote presentations.
		Research Support module	March 28: Asynchronous activities: watch Zotero tutorials on CMU Libraries site and research topic for Consulting presentation.
Week 4	Identify the concerns of decision-makers	Citation module and Key Content (example)	April 2: Consulting topic due *(Post to Canvas > Discussions > Consulting Topic)* Class exercise on audience analysis & content development
			April 4: Lecture on slide design
Week 5	Answer challenging questions	Visuals module	April 9: Consulting Key Content due *(Submit to Canvas > Assignments > Key Content)* Class exercise on handling difficult questions
			April 11: No class meeting – enjoy Spring Carnival!
Week 6	Be a dynamic presenter	Nonverbal module	April 16: Consulting Draft Visuals due *(Submit to Canvas > Assignments > Draft Visuals)* Class exercise to be announced
			April 18: Revise slides for practice session
Week 7	Present confidently, professionally, and effectively		April 23: Consulting Presentation & Final Visuals due *(All students submit slides to Canvas > Assignments > Final Visuals; Tuesday group presents and completes self-reflection)*
			April 25: Consulting Presentation due *(Thursday group presents and completes self-reflection)*

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC: PRESENTATION SKILLS

Competency: To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.
- Learning Outcome: Prepare professional and effective presentations appropriate to the objective and context.
- Learning Outcome: Prepare communications suitable for diverse audiences.

LEVELS OF PROFICIENCY	MESSAGE EFFECTIVENESS	STRUCTURE	VOCAL SKILLS	NONVERBAL SKILLS
The extent to which the presenter demonstrates the skills listed in each category.	--Prepared content based on audience demographics and roles --Ensured content is suitable for diverse audiences --Engaged the audience via tactics that encourage participation or that enhances the recall of main ideas --Included essential information the audience would need to take action --Addressed likely areas of resistance from decision-makers and other stakeholders --Closed with a call to action and thanks the audience	--Introduced self and topic; welcomes audience, builds interest --Previewed the content via an agenda --Maintained a logical sequence and categorization of information --Connected content blocks via specific verbal transitions --Reiterated main ideas or benefits in a summary --Included a question and answer session (if time allows) --Stayed within allotted timeframe	--Projected voice to the back of the room --Enunciated words clearly --Maintained a moderate rate of speech so that the audience can process the information --Avoided excessive use of filler words (e.g. uhm, uh, ahh, like, so, etc.) --Used professional language --Demonstrated vocal tactics (e.g. vocal flags, intentional pauses, and vocal emphasis)	--Maintained visual contact with other people's eyes --Scanned the room to include audience members who may have questions or comments, and to build rapport --Used gestures and facial expressions that match the verbal statements --Maintained a straight posture and plants feet when standing still --Utilized the stage to engage the audience --Wore attire appropriate for audience, topic, and assignment scenario
4 Advanced; Professional and effective	Demonstrated advanced use of all elements related to message effectiveness.	Demonstrated advanced use of all elements related to structure.	Demonstrated advanced use of all elements related to verbal skills.	Demonstrated advanced use of all elements related to nonverbal skills.
3 Acceptable; Minor modifications are recommended	Demonstrated acceptable content; however, content could be more engaging or more targeted to the audience.	Demonstrated an acceptable structure; however, structure could improve via a more complete introduction, verbal transitions, or a strategic close.	Demonstrated acceptable verbal skills; however, voice volume, clarity, word choice, and/or appropriate vocal expressions could improve.	Demonstrated acceptable nonverbal skills; however, body language, eye contact, or professionalism could improve.
2 Limited; Substantial modifications are needed	Demonstrated limited content. Modifications are needed to ensure content reflects critical thinking and is suitable for the audience.	Demonstrated limited control of structure. Modifications are needed to ensure a complete introduction, logical sequence, verbal transitions, and/or a strategic close.	Demonstrated limited control of verbal skills. Voice volume, clarity, word choice, and/or vocal expressions need improvement.	Demonstrated limited control of body language, eye contact, or professionalism. Direct eye contact or appropriate posture, gestures, or facial expressions are needed.
1 Unsatisfactory: Does not meet course requirements	Does not meet the minimum course standards for message effectiveness.	Does not meet the minimum course standards for structure.	Does not meet the minimum course standards for verbal skills.	Does not meet the minimal course standards for nonverbal skills.
Score				

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC: AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

LEVELS OF PROFICIENCY	OBJECTIVE	AUDIENCE (STAKEHOLDERS)	AREAS OF PRIOR KNOWLEDGE	AREAS OF RESISTENCE	TACTICS TO ACCOMPLISH THE OBJECTIVE
	The objective states exactly what you want listeners to fund, support, and/or implement by the time you're finished. For this assignment, select **one feasible** objective.	**Who is listening to me?** What are the roles of the audience members? Do they have specialized knowledge? Are they diverse in demographics, specialized knowledge, and/or interests? What is the perspective of the organization they represent? **Select a key decision maker:** Who is it? What are his/her special interests and biases?	**Is my proposal new to them?** Are they familiar with the problem I'm addressing? Have they heard my arguments before? Are they sympathetic to my concerns? How does my proposal or recommendation satisfy their needs?	**What argument(s) might be presented from the audience?** Do they have different priorities? Do they have concerns about the cost, risks, timing, and implementation of my proposal? What resources are available for the kind of request I'm making? Is there a political or institutional climate to consider? Do they have false assumptions about the topic?	**Ethos:** How can I establish my credibility and trustworthiness? Have my listeners met me before? What do they know about my training? Do they trust me? **Logos**: What tangible evidence (e.g. documented examples and data) can I use to support my argument? **Pathos:** How can I appeal to the imagination, curiosity, and emotions of my listeners?
4 **Advanced; Professional and effective**	Established an exceptionally clear and well-structured objective.	Outlined the roles and interests of the audience and the key decision-maker extremely effectively. Biographies were carefully analyzed rather than summarized.	Established an exceptionally clear and well-structured overview of the proposal. Considered the audience's knowledge of this topic.	Established an exceptionally clear and well-structured argument. Proactively addressed the audience's likely questions and objections using detailed language.	Established exceptionally clear and well-structured strategies. Multiple, relevant examples and/or evidence were included to build ethos, logos, and pathos.
3 **Acceptable; Minor modifications are recommended**	Established an acceptable objective, although it must be rewritten for clarity.	Outlined the audience and the key decision-maker, although additional details or analysis could be added for clarity or for persuasiveness.	Established an acceptable overview of the proposal, although it must be rewritten to better demonstrate analysis of the audience.	Established an acceptable argument, though could address probable questions and objections in greater detail.	Established acceptable strategies Supporting evidence could be stronger.
2 **Limited; Substantial modifications are needed**	Provided a limited overview of the objective.	Provided a limited overview of the audience and/or the key decision-maker. Biographies were simply cut-and-pasted, or summarized, but not adequately analyzed.	Provided a limited overview of the proposal. Essential details were lacking. The outline was far too broad to be useful; and/or it is not feasible or applicable to the audience.	Provided a limited overview of the argument. Responses to probable questions and objections were lacking.	Provided a limited overview of the strategies. Ethos, logos, or pathos were not fully established.
1 **Unsatisfactory; Does not meet course requirements**	Does not meet minimal course standards for establishing the objective.	Does not meet minimal course standards for analyzing the audience.	Does not meet minimal course standards for considering the knowledge of the audience.	Does not meet minimal course standards for anticipating likely objections.	Does not meet minimal course standards for strategic planning.
Score					

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC: STRUCTURE

LEVELS OF PROFICIENCY	INTRODUCTION	BODY	SUMMARY	FINAL CALL TO ACTION
	WELCOME • Introduced self and topic **AGENDA** • Provided a preview of the content of the presentation and used parallel structure **HOOK** • Engaged audience with a surprising fact (with source if applicable) • Connected the hook with briefing topic • Stated the objective or recommendation upfront	**POINT 1** • Transitioned from agenda to point 1 • Supported information with reliable, verifiable sources • Cited sources for point 1 **POINT 2** • Transitioned from point 1 to point 2 • Supported information with reliable, verifiable sources • Cited sources for point 2 **POINT 3** • Transitioned from point 2 to point 3 • Supported information with reliable, verifiable sources • Cited sources for point 3	**TRANSITION** • Utilized a transition statement to start the closing **REITERATED MAJOR POINTS** • Focused on the benefits to the audience	**RECOMMENDATION** • Made a specific, actionable "ask." **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS** • Students may take 1 or 2 questions from the audience after their allotted time has expired
4 **Advanced; Professional and effective**	Prepared a highly effective and well-structured introduction.	Prepared a highly effective and well-structured outline of points 1, 2, and 3. Transition statements were logical and flowed smoothly throughout the outline.	Prepared a highly effective and well-structured closing.	Prepared a highly effective and well-structured final call to action.
3 **Acceptable; Minor modifications are recommended**	Prepared an acceptable introduction; however, the introduction must be rewritten for clarity or effectiveness.	Prepared an acceptable outline for points 1, 2, and 3; however, the points must be rewritten for clarity or the transitions could be improved.	Prepared an acceptable closing; however, the closing must be rewritten for clarity or effectiveness.	Prepared an acceptable final call to action; however, "the ask" must be rewritten for clarity or effectiveness.
2 **Limited; Substantial modifications are needed**	Limited introduction. Components were lacking.	Limited outline. Missing information for points 1, 2, or 3. Transitions were lacking.	Limited closing. Major points were not effectively reiterated.	Limited final call to action. "The ask" was lacking.
1 **Unsatisfactory; Does not meet course requirements**	Did not meet the minimal course standards for the "Introduction" and/or essential components were omitted.	Did not meet the minimal course standards for the "Body" and/or essential components were omitted.	Did not meet the minimal course standards for the "Closing" and/or essential components were omitted.	Did not meet the minimal course standards for the "Final Call to Action" and/or essential components were omitted.
Score				

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC: VISUALS

	FORMAT	VISUALIZATIONS	WRITING	FONTS AND BACKGROUND
	Introduction Started with a title slide including: the presenter's name, role, title and date of presentation. Included an agenda slide to preview content. Included a "hook" slide to generate attention. (E.g. this slide could show compelling information, dispel a common myth, or use an image to ask a question or to tell a story.) **Body** Organized content into logically categorized blocks to support main objective and to aid recall. **Closing** Closed with a summary slide. Returned to the title slide or used a contact information slide for questions from audience.	Used data visualizations, diagrams, and photography to reduce bulleted text. Displayed complete data visualizations including figure or table number, title, and clear labels. Reduced clutter on tables, graphs, diagrams, and images. Ensured readability when visualizing data. Implemented animations and transitions to focus attention or to aid structure. Did not use distracting animations. Followed Chicago or APA formatting and citation guidelines for visuals.	Used "Message Titles" (i.e. sentence titles, or headlines). Matched content of each slide to the slide's title. Aligned text to aid readability. Limited the number of words on each slide. Used parallel structure in lists. Proofread work for grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors. Cited sources according to Chicago or APA style.	Used a professional typeface and readable, complimentary colors. Avoided a harsh color palette. Formatted text so it can be easily read from the back of the room. Used a simple background; it did not distract from the written content or the verbal message. Avoided excessive colors, clip art, and animations. Demonstrated fonts and backgrounds that are professional and aid branding or message effectiveness.
4 **Advanced; Professional and effective**	Displayed an exceptionally clear, logically structured, and strategic format.	Displayed exceptionally clear and well-designed charts, graphs, diagrams, and photos.	Displayed exceptionally clear, professional, and strategic writing skills.	Displayed highly professional, easy-to-read, cohesive fonts and a branded, non-distracting background.
3 **Acceptable; Minor modifications are recommended**	Displayed an acceptable format. Minor revisions could be made for a more logical or strategic flow of information.	Displayed acceptable charts, graphs, diagrams, and/or photos. Minor changes could be made for clarity or effectiveness.	Displayed acceptable writing skills. Minor revisions could be made for clarity or effectiveness.	Displayed acceptable fonts and background design. Minor changes could be made for better readability, cohesiveness, or professionalism.
2 **Limited; Substantial modifications are needed**	Displayed limited use of a professional format. Multiple, significant revisions could be made for a more logical or strategic flow of information.	Displayed limited use of professional charts, graphs, diagrams, and/or photos. Multiple, significant revisions could be made for clarity or effectiveness.	Displayed limited use of professional writing skills. Multiple, significant revisions could be made for clarity or effectiveness.	Displayed limited use of professional fonts and background design. Multiple, significant revisions could be made for better readability, cohesiveness, or professionalism.
1 **Unsatisfactory; Does not meet course requirements**	Did not meet the minimal course standards for "Format."	Did not meet the minimal course standards for "Visualizations."	Did not meet the minimal course standards for "Writing."	Did not meet the minimal course standards for "Fonts and Background"
Score				