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# PROFESSIONAL SPEAKING (95-718)

Carnegie Mellon University, Heinz College  
6 Units, In Person Expectation  
Fall 2024, MINI 1  
Section C1, MW 02:00PM - 03:20PM HBH 2009

**Professor:** Dr. Rebekah Fitzsimmons, Assistant Teaching Professor

**Office Location:** HBH 2101F

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 10:30am-12:15pm, Thursdays by appointment

**Email:** [Fitzsimmons@cmu.edu](mailto:Fitzsimmons@cmu.edu) (please use email as primary point of contact, not Canvas messages)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Professional Speaking provides practical instruction for preparing and delivering professional presentations. Activities and assignments include: developing targeted, strategic messages; structuring content; designing meaningful visuals; working cohesively in a group presentation; exploring new technologies; and speaking extemporaneously. Students engage specific audiences using a communication style (both verbal and nonverbal) suitable for workplace environments. Overall, the course helps students develop confidence and apply effective techniques when speaking in a public setting.

## COMMUNICATIONS POLICIES

- Email is my preferred mode of communication and the fastest way to get in touch with me.
- Please **include your name and section number and CC the TA for your course** section in all emails
- Please allow a minimum of 24 hours for me to respond to all emails
- Students are expected to check their CMU emails and Canvas regularly
- I can not discuss grades via email; please come to office hours with questions pertaining to grades
- If we talk about something before class starts or in the hallway (an extension, a revision, another project you'd like feedback on), please plan to send me a follow up email confirming the details.

## **COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Identify professional standards in various industries and international contexts and devise effective, personalized strategies for preparing and delivering your presentations
- Interpret the needs and expectations of audiences and adapt the content, organization, and format of your message depending on audience, context, and purpose
- Design, write, and present logical, cohesive messages using multimodal approaches as well as standard rhetorical organizational practices (i.e. introductions, signposts, transitions, recaps)
- Create presentations that conform to professional requirements such as time constraints, engaging eye contact, adequate volume, clarity in voice projection, and consistency in pace
- Design and utilize multimodal elements of presentations (i.e. slides, photographs, posters, tables, charts, diagrams, handouts, audience participation, videos) in line with workplace expectations and universal design accessibility standards
- Analyze the implications of visual and non-verbal forms of communication on professional presence (i.e. professional attire, posture, gestures, facial expressions) and adapt those forms of communication for different presentation contexts
- Demonstrate effective collaborative work by planning and delivering a team presentation
- Prepare and practice evoking audience response, answering questions, and responding to audience feedback within a wide variety of professional contexts
- Demonstrate the ability to evaluate presentations and give and receive specific, productive, constructive feedback as a professional/managerial skill
- Utilize various techniques and technologies to self-evaluate and diagnose concrete and actionable areas of improvement as a public speaker with a mind towards consistent professional development.

## **REGISTRATION**

Once a section of Professional Speaking is full, then enrollment is dependent on: (1) the number of registered students who drop the section, and (2) the waitlist order. Students who miss the first class meeting can be automatically dropped from the course. After the initial session, registration is closed. Priority registration may be given to students for whom Professional Speaking is required.

## OFFICE HOURS POLICIES

Office hours are designated times for students to get one-on-one feedback or ask questions; you are welcome to drop in to my physical office at any point during those times. If you would prefer to meet via Zoom during office hours, please let me know via email.

- If you have a specific topic you want to discuss, feel free to email and schedule a time in advance. This can include course work or other speaking opportunities you would like help on.
- If you are unable to attend my scheduled office hours, we can set up an appointment at another time, either in person or via Zoom.
- Office hours this semester will be held both in person and via Zoom - please feel free to utilize the meeting format that fits your comfort level.
- If an emergency arises so you cannot make a scheduled appointment, please contact me by email as soon as possible.

## ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICIES

In keeping with CMU and Heinz's expectations and policies, including the In-Person Expectation (IPE) modality for this course, you are expected to attend all scheduled classes. The expectation from Heinz is that your attendance for this course will be in the physical classroom during all scheduled class periods.

However, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic as well as a commitment to accessibility presents challenges to maintaining any graded attendance policy that is equitable and based in care and safety. As your professor, I recognize and acknowledge that many of our lives may be unaffected by world events, while others will experience profound tragedies. We can not make assumptions about others' experiences and as a result, we ought to offer compassion, patience, and grace to one another as best we can. Therefore, there are options to help students who may need asynchronous attendance options. It is possible for you to earn all of the same points by attending class asynchronously; however, given the nature of public speaking and our active learning classroom, most students will see the most improvement by attending as many classes in person as possible.

For the purposes of this policy, "**attendance**" is defined as arriving physically in our classroom during our regularly scheduled class period. "**Participation**" covers a broad range of interactive opportunities, both synchronous and asynchronous, that demonstrate engagement with the course content. These participation opportunities include:

- Speaking during class discussions (asking questions, responding to discussion questions, working in small groups)

- Posting required in-class workshop materials, lightning talks, and homework assignments to Canvas and/or Flip
- Providing peer review feedback to classmates during in-class or asynchronous activities
- Attending office hours (in-person or virtually) with questions, concerns, thoughts, inspiration, etc.
- Offering constructive feedback to classmates, adding to ongoing discussions, or practicing additional skills via asynchronous discussion boards on Canvas.

This course focuses on professional development skills; as such, professional conduct will be expected of all participants. Students should expect to behave as they would in a staff or client meeting. Students should make a good faith effort to attend all classes prepared, to interact with peers and the professor on a regular basis, and to demonstrate respect for all class participants through verbal and non-verbal modes. Students who engage in abusive or harmful speech will be immediately excused from class.

Assessment for participation will be a holistic measure of a student's work on a daily basis and is based on more than mere presence in the classroom. Active participation includes engaging in active listening, offering constructive, skills-based feedback, and adding to class conversation on a daily basis. Students should refrain from doing other coursework, sleeping, conducting personal business, or other forms of "multitasking" while in class as much as possible. Students who miss a significant number of classes (which means both failing to attend the in-person class sessions AND failing to participate in the asynchronous course options) may be issued a failing grade or a grade deduction. If you are absent from class, course materials will be posted on Canvas, but you should also plan to reach out to a classmate to find out what you missed. Assignments are due on their due dates regardless of absences, unless a student is specifically issued an extension.

Students who have religious observations, medical/personal emergencies, or other major difficulties that will result in missed synchronous classes are encouraged to contact the professor and TA as soon as possible.

### **Late Arrival Policy:**

Obviously, the occasional emergency can disrupt even the most organized person's schedule; however, habitual lateness is considered unprofessional and inconsiderate. Students who arrive habitually late to class (more than five minutes late and disrupting Lightning Talks) during the semester may have their grades lowered.

## LEARNING RESOURCES

### Required Texts:

We will use an Open Educational Resource, available freely through the Internet as our base textbook for the course. The text, [Principles of Public Speaking](#), is available through the web and can also be downloaded as a PDF. Readings from this text will be required throughout the semester and will inform class lectures and activities.

### Required Software Platforms:

In order to fully participate in our course, you will be asked to use a few different online platforms.

1. **Canvas** - Our course will utilize this central Learning Management System (LMS) as the main technology hub. Students will be granted access to materials through Canvas and will use the platform to submit formal assignments. Links to the rest of the technology platforms will also be embedded into Canvas.
2. **Acclaim** - Our course will use this video assessment tool to submit formal presentation assignments, as well as to provide peer review feedback.
3. **Flip** (formerly FlipGrid) - Our course will use this video discussion board platform to record and upload short, informal homework assignments designed to help students practice public speaking skills in a low stakes environment, asynchronous opportunities for participation/make-up discussions, as well as make ups for missed Lightning Talks. A low-stakes practice space is also available for students seeking to improve their skills beyond the requirements of the course.
4. **Zoom** - I will utilize Zoom for online office hours. I will also use CMU's "Zoom in the Room" features to record our in-person class.
5. **\*YouTube\* (optional)** - Depending on your technology/OS and internet accessibility, students in the past have found it easier/faster to upload their presentation videos as an Unlisted YouTube video and submit the link to Acclaim. Please feel free to choose the option that causes you the least amount of technical frustration!

### Required Hardware:

1. **Laptop/tablet for classwork:** Many of our classes will include active, hands on practice, either alone or in small groups. Having a laptop or tablet in class is helpful for completing this work. You should also feel free to take notes or view the slides on your laptop during class.
2. **Web camera for recording videos** - You will need to record presentations and upload them to Acclaim/Flip. You may absolutely use your web camera or the camera on a smart phone or tablet to accomplish these assignments (this is NOT a course in video production!)

## Teaching Assistants

Each section of this course will have a TA. Contact information and office hours will be posted on Canvas, under the “Pages” tab in the first week of the mini. The TA can answer questions, respond to issues, direct you to resources, and work through assignments with you.

## Syllabus Modifications

This syllabus – especially the homework and assignment schedule – may be modified as the semester progresses in order to meet the course outcomes and best address the needs of members of the class. Pay close attention to course announcements on Canvas and in class for any of these changes.

## LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND MISSING WORK

### DRAFTS AND PROJECT STAGES

Drafts and project stages are a vital part of the composition process and therefore a required part of the course. Writing is a process that necessarily takes time; the project stages of this course are designed to help students focus on improving both their own personal process as well as final deliverables. As a result, all project stages must be submitted in a timely fashion; the professor reserves the right to refuse to accept a final deliverable without the accompanying required project stages.

### Extension Policy

Each student has a single extension which they may use on any individual project or project stage.

**This policy excludes elements of the group presentation. If you are experiencing difficulties during the group project, contact the professor and TA immediately.**

To request an extension, students should:

1. Email the professor and TA no later than 24 hours prior to the deadline indicating your desire to use your extension.
2. Provide a new, reasonable date and time for the assignment to be due. If the assignment is a draft or project stage of a larger project, this date needs to come before the larger project is due. Due to the nature of the mini, for larger projects, this new date should usually be within 48 hours of the original due date.
3. This new date/time will be considered the new deadline for the assignment
  - a. A note will be added to Canvas with this new due date for mutual reference

- b. The student will submit the assignment as instructed on the assignment sheet
4. The student should notify the professor and TA via email indicating the work has been submitted and is ready for grading.
  - a. If there is any difficulty submitting the assignment to Canvas, it may also be appropriate to attach a copy to that email.

### **Late Assignment Penalties**

Ideally, you will avoid turning in late work. Please plan to make use of the extension policy to avoid these types of issues. In addition to the extension policy outlined above, this course has a late work policy where assignments may be turned in late for up to 24 hours with a 20% deduction.

After 24 hours, students will need to schedule an office hours appointment to discuss circumstances and possible extended due dates.

### **Missing Work Penalties**

Due to the participatory nature of this course, it is important for work to be completed in a timely manner. In-class discussions and activities are a vital part of your success in improving your professional communication skills.

I am dedicated to working with students to ensure they have equitable access to the materials and flexibility to complete the work of the course across a broad range of experiences. However, work that is missing or is significantly incomplete may not be eligible to receive points towards the course.

Outside of the course policies and accommodations, students are expected to put forth a good faith effort to complete the work of the course.

## ACADEMIC CONDUCT

Plagiarism is a serious offense that will result in the student failing the course. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the associate dean's office for the student's program of study and the Carnegie Mellon University Division of Student Affairs. If an academic integrity violation is suspected, 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. Note that plagiarism includes:

- Presenting another writer's work (script, outline, slides, graphics, data visualizations) as your own (writer in this sense means humans and computers)
- Cutting and pasting content verbatim without using quotation marks to indicate a direct quote, or without a verbal citation in your speech;
- Inserting a direct quote or paraphrasing content without citing the source in-text using footnotes, endnotes, parenthetical citations, linked citations on a slide, or an oral citation during a speech with a corresponding Works Cited, References, or Notes page - in a manner consistent with an APA, MLA, or Chicago style guide;
- Providing incomplete or incorrect information about the source cited;
- Over-relying on templates or other writers' phrasing;
- Using someone else's script, slides, outlines, research or other content for your own presentations;
- Reusing content from another course

Also, submitting work written for another course is not acceptable. Consequently, a failing grade may be issued for that assignment. Additional penalties may be imposed.

### **A Note about Predictive AI like ChatGPT**

In this class, any use of generative AI for any graded course assignment is prohibited. Passing off any generated content as your own (for example - cutting and pasting content into written assignments, or paraphrasing AI content) constitutes an academic integrity violation. If you have questions about using generative AI in this course please talk to me first before doing so.



## RESOURCES

### **Student Health and Safety:**

During your time at Carnegie Mellon do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress.

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is here to help: call 412-268-2922 and visit their website at <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for help getting connected to the support that can help.

### **Commitment to Accessibility:**

As an instructor, I am committed to making the course material accessible to as many students in as many ways as possible. Please feel free to approach me to discuss ways in which I can accommodate your unique needs in accessing the materials.

In order to best meet this goal, I will also rely on guidance from the Office of Disability Resources at Carnegie Mellon University, which has a continued mission to provide physical and programmatic campus access to all events and information within the Carnegie Mellon community. They work to ensure that qualified individuals receive reasonable accommodations as guaranteed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Students who would like to receive accommodations can begin the process through Disability Resources secure online portal or email [access@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:access@andrew.cmu.edu) to begin the interactive accommodation process. Students with disabilities are encouraged to self-identify with the Office of Disability Resources and request needed accommodations. Any questions about the process can be directed to Catherine Getchell, 412-268-6121, [getchell@cmu.edu](mailto:getchell@cmu.edu).  
<http://www.cmu.edu/education-office/disability-resources/>.

### **Student Academic Success Center (SASC):**

SASC supports student success by providing academic coaching, subject-specific tutoring, effective communication strategies, accommodations for students with disabilities, and language support for multi-lingual learners. They have a wealth of resources and individual appointments available.

<https://www.cmu.edu/student-success/>

### **CMU Center for Student Diversity & Inclusion:**

Diversity and inclusion have a singular place among the values of Carnegie Mellon University. The Center for Student Diversity & Inclusion actively cultivates a strong, diverse and inclusive community capable of living out these values and advancing research, creativity, learning and development that changes the world.

<https://www.cmu.edu/student-diversity/>

### **Heinz College Diversity, Inclusion, Climate and Equity (DICE):**

Heinz College strives to foster an open, equitable and inclusive environment where people of all identities and experiences are welcome; all are encouraged to participate in the energetic exchange of ideas; there is a shared focus on ensuring the success of our students, faculty, and staff; and where, as a community, we unlock innovations that will improve the human condition.

The Heinz College of Information Systems and Public Policy represents over 50 nations and over 40 U.S. states, which increases our ability to foster a community with greater variation in perspectives and approaches to our work.

By design, Heinz College is an empathetic and open environment that inspires continuous learning, conversation, and intelligent action that will impact society for the better. Diversity, inclusion, and equity are not radical concepts—rather, the ongoing pursuit of these ideals, and a campus climate of belonging in which every person in our community can thrive, are fundamental to our mission.

For more information or to get involved with DICE initiatives at Heinz, Email our office at [heinzdiceoffice@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:heinzdiceoffice@andrew.cmu.edu)

# ASSESSMENT

## Assignment Instructions

Detailed instructions for all assignments are posted to Canvas. Each student is responsible for reading the assignment sheet and grade rubric before submitting the assignment. These instructions will also include assessment criteria for each assignment.

Students are responsible for submitting their assignments on time and to the correct (digital) location as directed on the assignment sheet.

## Course Grading

Assignments each receive a certain number of points, adding up to 1000 total points, over the course of the mini. Grades are not curved or weighted beyond these points.

As a note, semester grades are not rounded; in other words, a student who earns 889 points throughout the semester would earn an 88.9% or a B+.

**Table 1. Heinz College Grading Scale**

Grade	Interpretation	Points	Percentage Equivalent	Course Point Equivalent	Graduation Credit
A+	Exceptional	4.33	100-97%	970-1000	Yes
A	Excellent	4.00	96-94	969-940	Yes
A-	Very Good	3.67	93-90	939-900	Yes
B+	Good	3.33	89-87	899-870	Yes
B	Acceptable	3.00	86-84	869-840	Yes
B-	Fair	2.67	83-80	839-800	Yes
C+	Poor	2.33	79-77	799-770	Yes
C	Very Poor	2.00	76-74	769-740	Yes
C-	Minimal Passing	1.67	73-70	739-700	Yes
R	Failing	0	69% or below	699 or below	No
I	Incomplete	0			No

Source: *Heinz College Student Handbook*

## **Assignment Breakdown**

### **Formal Presentations**

Elevator Pitch Video  
Individual Presentations  
Group Presentation

**55% of final grade**

150 points  
200 points  
200 points

### **Project Stages**

Brand Statement Workshop for Elevator Pitch  
Script/Slides for Individual Presentations  
Proposals for Group Presentation Topic  
Script/Slides/Storyboard for Group Presentation

**15% of final grade**

50 points  
50 points  
25 points  
25 points

### **Peer Review and Reflective Writing**

Peer Review on Elevator Pitch  
Reflection on Elevator Pitch  
Peer Review on Individual Presentations  
Reflection on Individual Presentations  
Reflection on Group Presentation/Course

**10% of final grade**

20 points  
20 points  
20 points  
20 points  
20 points

### **Lightning Talks and Participation**

Lightning Talks  
In-Class Work  
Participation

**20% of final grade**

100 points  
50 points  
50 points

## ASYNCHRONOUS COURSE MAKEUP POLICY

### Absences:

Our course this semester has an in-person meeting expectation – please plan to attend all of the scheduled classes in person. However, if you are ill or experiencing an emergency, the course does have an asynchronous makeup option. **If you are sick, especially with symptoms of highly contagious illnesses like COVID-19, RSV, or the flu, please do not come to class.**

To receive full credit for asynchronous attendance and participation for a missed class, you must complete all of the following steps. Due to the nature of a mini course, this asynchronous participation is expected to be completed within 48 hours of the missed class, unless another deadline has been arranged with the professor.

If you are experiencing severe illness or other personal emergencies, please be in touch with the professor and TA as soon as possible. Your health and safety are our top priority; we can make accommodations to help you keep up with the coursework once you are healthy.

### To Make Up a Missed Class:

1. Notify the professor and your TA that you will be missing class as soon as possible. We don't need details but if you have a sense of how impactful your illness may be (“I'm likely to miss the next two weeks of classes” versus “I started taking medicine yesterday and am already feeling better”), we can help you develop a game plan for making up work/structuring extensions.
2. Watch the Zoom recording of class when it is posted on Canvas (usually a few hours after class).
3. Complete your lightning talk on Flip
4. Use the “Asynchronous Discussion Board” on Flip to post responses to the in-class discussion (aim to respond to 2-3 discussion questions,) as you would have if you were in class.
  - a. In general, the discussion questions are also available on the lecture slides for the class period, though the in-person discussion sometimes jumps to other topics or addresses only a few of those questions, depending on time constraints.
5. Use the Canvas Discussion Boards to complete any in-class activities that your classmates completed during class time (as applicable).
6. Notify your course TA when you have completed all of these makeup items in order to receive attendance and participation credit for the missed class.
  - a. It is the student's responsibility to notify the TA when this work is complete, or that work may not be graded.

## SCHEDULE

Date	Class Pre Work	Class Topic and In-Class Workshops	Assignments due by <b>11:59pm to Canvas</b> unless otherwise specified
<b>Day 1:</b> Monday, August 26	<b>Read Course Syllabus</b> <b>Principles of Public Speaking (PPS):</b> <b>Canvas:</b>  OPTIONAL:	<b>In Class Workshops:</b>	
<b>Day 2:</b> Wednesday, August 28	<b>PPS:</b> <b>Canvas:</b>  OPTIONAL:	<b>In Class Workshops:</b>	
<b>Day 3:</b> Monday, Sept 2 LABOR DAY	<b>NO CLASS - LABOR DAY</b>		
<b>Day 4:</b> Wednesday Sept 4	<b>PPS:</b> <b>Canvas:</b>  OPTIONAL:	<b>In Class Workshops:</b>	
<b>Day 5:</b> Monday, Sept 9	<b>PPS:</b> <b>Canvas:</b>  OPTIONAL:	<b>In Class Workshops:</b>	
<b>Day 6:</b> Wednesday, Sept 11	<b>PPS:</b> <b>Canvas:</b>  OPTIONAL:	<b>In Class Workshops:</b>	
<b>Day 7:</b> Monday, Sept 16	<b>PPS:</b> <b>Canvas:</b>  OPTIONAL:	<b>In Class Workshops:</b>	

<b>Day 8:</b> Wednesday, Sept 18	<b>PPS:</b> <b>Canvas:</b>  OPTIONAL:	<b>In Class Workshops:</b>	
<b>Day 9:</b> Monday, Sept 23	<b>PPS:</b> <b>Canvas:</b>  OPTIONAL:	<b>In Class Workshops:</b>	
<b>Day 10:</b> Wednesday, Sept 25	<b>PPS:</b> <b>Canvas:</b>  OPTIONAL:	<b>In Class Workshops:</b>	
<b>Day 11:</b> Monday, Sept 30	<b>PPS:</b> <b>Canvas:</b>  OPTIONAL:	<b>In Class Workshops:</b>	
<b>Day 12:</b> Wednesday, Oct 2	<b>PPS:</b> <b>Canvas:</b>  OPTIONAL:	<b>In Class Workshops:</b>	
<b>Day 13:</b> Monday, Oct 7	<b>PPS:</b> <b>Canvas:</b>  OPTIONAL:	<b>In Class Workshops:</b>	
<b>Day 14:</b> Wednesday, Oct 9	<b>PPS:</b> <b>Canvas:</b>  OPTIONAL:	<b>In Class Workshops:</b>	
<i>All missing and makeup work must be completed no later than 11:59pm FRIDAY Oct 11 in order to receive credit.</i>			

## PARTICIPATION SELF EVALUATION

Record your participation for each day in class - describe how you “showed up” for your own learning and development, either in-person or asynchronously. This chart will be due at the end of the semester to Canvas. You may record your observations on paper and scan the chart, or maintain and submit a digital version.

Day	Description of in-class participation (either in-person or asynchronous)
Day 1	
Day 2	
Day 3	
Day 4	
Day 5	
Day 6	
Day 7	
Day 8	
Day 9	
Day 10	
Day 11	
Day 12	
Day 13	
Day 14	

Date	Additional Participation



**Active In-Person Participation might include:**

- Speaking during large class discussion (adding ideas, responding to prompts - beyond the required Lightning Talk)
- Asking questions or volunteering information (anything involving hand raising in the large group)
- Volunteering to go first in a demo, lightning talk, post-group work discussion
- Contributing to small group discussions and work
- Taking notes and/or posting deliverables for your small group
- Reporting small group findings to the larger class
- Providing feedback on in-class work to classmates

**Asynchronous Participation** would include the digital equivalent to these activities, as listed on the previous page under “Asynchronous Class Attendance”

**Additional Participation might include:**

- Attending office hours with the professor or TA
- Using Flip prompts for additional practice
- Giving feedback or responding to classmates’ Flip videos
- Giving feedback to classmates’ Canvas posts
- Watching a classmate’s rehearsal for a formal presentation and offering feedback
- Working with the TA on a draft or a rehearsal
- Working with a tutor at the Student Academic Success Center