

**Carnegie Mellon University**  
**HeinzCollege**

INFORMATION SYSTEMS • PUBLIC POLICY • MANAGEMENT

**Professional Speaking/Strategic Presentation Skills**

**Course#: 95-718/90-718**

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**Office hours by appointment**

*“ ... you should say what you mean,” the March Hare went on.*

*“I do,” Alice hastily replied; “at least—at least I mean what I say—that's the same thing, you know.”*

*“Not the same thing a bit!” said the Hatter.*

*- Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland*

## 1. Course Description

This course focuses on creating and delivering credible, professional, and meaningful presentations for a variety of audiences. Students will learn to connect with their audiences and increase their confidence when standing before a group or camera. These skills are important to students, job-seekers, and professionals, and while the experience of presenting isn't everyone's favorite (or forte), they are frequently evaluated across most career industries. In addition to honing their own techniques, students will also learn to work together to deliver a message as a group, as well as gain tips to relax and avoid common presentation pitfalls.

## 2. Course Objectives

The following learning objectives will be assessed through student individual and group presentations and self/peer evaluations:

- Identify and use appropriate elements for effective presentations
- Adapt message accordingly to connect with audiences
- Design and deliver logical, evidence-based, trustworthy information in an accessible format
- Differentiate techniques necessary for specific types of presentations

## 3. Course Materials

There are no required books for this class, however, articles and videos may be assigned and provided throughout the course at the professor's discretion. All rubrics for presentations will be posted in Canvas.

#### 4. Expectations

This class naturally makes many students nervous. Being evaluated on the spot by professors and peers is uncomfortable for a lot of people. It's expected that everyone will show respect to one another. Please note, there is a difference between anxiety and lack of preparedness, and it is usually obvious. It is expected that everyone will arrive prepared on days where there are student presentations, with no exceptions. Students should be patient with one another while also holding presenters to the standards outlined in all rubrics.

My goal is to make this a pleasant learning experience for you. *I ask that you be respectful of others by arriving to class on time and not using your electronic devices in class without discussing the purpose with me first.* Please let me know if you do not understand class material or requirements or if any special circumstance prevents you from completing a class requirement on time.

#### 5. Evaluation/Grading

All assignments and class participation are graded on a point scale as outlined below. The maximum points one can achieve for the entire semester is 210.

Attendance is critical to success in this class. Not only will you learn much from each other, but you are also required to evaluate each presentation made, and you cannot do that if you don't witness them. Engagement points are awarded; students are expected to support one another and encouraged to respond to presenters' invitations for questions. *It is not possible to pass this class if more than two classes are missed. It is not possible to pass this course without completing all assignments.*

Final course grades will be assigned as follows:

- A+: 95%-100%      A: 90%-94.99%      A-: 85% – 89.99%
- B+ 80% – 84.99 %,      B 75% – 79.99%      B- 70% – 74.99%
- C+ 65% – 69.99%      C 60% – 64.99 %      C- 55% – 59.99 %

<b>Assessment Activity</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>
Fallacies exercise (5 min)	15
Informative speech (7 min)	40
Interviewing exercise (7 min)	40
Demonstrative speech (7 min) OR mini poster presentation speech	40
Group persuasive presentation (25 min)	50
Exploration of fallacies in persuasive presentation	15
Engagement	10

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>
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## 6. Academic Integrity

You are responsible to know and adhere to all University policies on academic integrity. The Heinz School provides a booklet on Plagiarism and Cheating and the University lists all policies on the web at [www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/Cheating.html](http://www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/Cheating.html). Please acquaint yourself with their contents. Any cheating or plagiarism will result in failure in the course and your case will be referred to the Associate Dean, who may decide to take further action.

Although it seems difficult to cheat in a class where you're presenting, it's not impossible. To avoid plagiarism, make certain you cite all sources. If you're not sure whether or not you need to cite something, cite it. You're not expected to come up with all new, brilliant ideas for every assignment. You can talk about what makes someone else's ideas brilliant, though, and meet with great success. In other words, be yourself, show your brain, and acknowledge that there are other smart people in the world who have contributed to this topic.

## 7. Recording academic classroom activities, lectures, etc.

Classroom activities, lectures, etc. may not be recorded by anyone other than myself without written permission in advance.

## 8. Use of electronic devices

Few things make presenters feel worse than an inattentive audience. Even boring presenters hate to see the tops of heads rather than faces (or that tell-tale expression when you're looking at another screen on Zoom). Please don't disrespect each other by performing unrelated activities during class. *Unless proof of necessary accommodation is provided, no student may have their laptop open in class.*

## CLASS SCHEDULE

<b>Week/Date</b>	<b>Topic &amp; Activity</b>	<b>Homework</b>	<b>Items Due</b>
<b>Week 1</b> 8/29/24	Course introduction/ Best presentation practices/ethical presentations	<i>Prepare</i> for fallacies exercise	N/A
<b>Week 2</b> 9/5/24	<b>Fallacy exercise</b> (5 min) Challenges in presenting Interviewing best practices	<i>Prepare</i> for informative presentations & interviewing exercise	Fallacies exercise
<b>Week 3</b> 9/12/24	<b>Informative presentations</b> (7 mins)	<i>Prepare</i> for interviewing exercise	Informative presentation
<b>Week 4</b> 9/19/24	<b>Interviewing exercise</b> (7 mins)	<i>Prepare</i> for demo presentations/mini- poster presentations	Interviewing exercise
<b>Week 5</b> 9/26/24	<b>Demo presentations</b> (7 mins) OR <b>Mini-poster presentations</b> (7 mins)	<i>Prepare</i> for group presentations	Demonstration presentation OP Mini-poster presentation
<b>Week 6</b> 10/3/24	<b>Group persuasive presentations</b> (25 mins)		Group persuasive presentation
<b>Week 7</b> 10/10/24	<b>Group persuasive presentations</b> (25 mins)		Group persuasive presentation

**Please note:**

Student Wellness - The last few years have been challenging. We are all under a lot of stress and uncertainty at this time. I encourage you to find ways to move regularly, eat well, and reach out to your support system or me [rebekaha@andrew.cmu.edu] if you need. We can all benefit from support in times of stress, and this semester is no exception.

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.

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: Pantry Coordinator, [cmu-pantry@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:cmu-pantry@andrew.cmu.edu), 412-268-8704 (SLICE office).

CMU offers resources for students with international status, who primarily speak languages other than English, and/or have attended high school or undergraduate programs in the US. If you or someone you know is interested in honing language and cross-cultural skills for academic and professional success, please visit: <https://www.cmu.edu/student-success/programs/language-support/index.html>.

#### Diversity Statement:

We must treat every individual with respect. We are diverse in many ways, and this diversity is fundamental to building and maintaining an equitable and inclusive campus community. Diversity can refer to multiple ways that we identify ourselves, including but not limited to race, color, national origin, language, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, ancestry, belief, veteran status, or genetic information. Each of these diverse identities, along with many others not mentioned here, shape the perspectives our students, faculty, and staff bring to our campus. We, at CMU, will work to promote diversity, equity and inclusion not only because diversity fuels excellence and innovation, but because we want to pursue justice. We acknowledge our imperfections while we also fully commit to the work, inside and outside of our classrooms, of building and sustaining a campus community that increasingly embraces these core values.

Each of us is responsible for creating a safer, more inclusive environment.

Unfortunately, incidents of bias or discrimination do occur, whether intentional or unintentional. They contribute to creating an unwelcoming environment for individuals and groups at the university. Therefore, the university encourages anyone who experiences or observes unfair or hostile treatment on the basis of identity to speak out for justice and support, within the moment of the incident or after the incident has passed. Anyone can share these experiences using the following resources:

Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion: [csdi@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:csdi@andrew.cmu.edu), (412) 268-2150

Report-It online anonymous reporting platform: [reportit.net](http://reportit.net) username: tartans password: plaid

All reports will be documented and deliberated to determine if there should be any following actions.

Regardless of incident type, the university will use all shared experiences to transform our campus climate to be more equitable and just.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities - If you have a disability and have an accommodations letter from the Disability Resources office, I encourage you to discuss your accommodations and needs with me as early in the semester as possible. I will work with you to ensure that accommodations are provided 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](mailto:access@andrew.cmu.edu).