

## STRATEGIC PRESENTATION SKILLS 90-718

Strategic Presentation Skills provides practical instruction for preparing and delivering professional presentations. Activities and assignments include: analyzing audience members, writing outlines, creating cohesive visuals, and speaking extemporaneously. Students target and engage specific audiences using a communication style suitable for workplace environments. Overall, the course helps students develop confidence and apply effective techniques when speaking in a public setting.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES (using Bloom's revised taxonomy)

Students will be able to...

- Remember:** Identify elements requisite for effective presentations: message effectiveness (e.g., strong introduction, smooth transitions, logical flow, closure), verbal skills (e.g., pace, clarity, filler words), and nonverbal skills (e.g., gestures, eye contact, posture).
- Understand:** Compare/contrast effective and ineffective presentations based on rubric elements.
- Apply:** Adapt the message to the perspectives of various stakeholders through written and oral communications.
- Analyze:** Analyze recorded presentations (e.g., impromptu speeches, briefings, webinars) and write reflections.
- Evaluate:** Provide feedback to peers and complete self-evaluations.
- Create:** Produce effective presentations for a variety of academic and professional contexts.

### NASPA COMPETENCY 5

To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

- 5.1 Learning Outcome: Prepare professional and effective documents appropriate to the objective and context.
- 5.2 Learning Outcome: Prepare professional and effective presentations appropriate to the objective and context.
- 5.3 Learning Outcome: Prepare communications suitable for diverse audiences.

### NATIONAL COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION (NCA) COMPETENCIES

According to the NCA position on expectations for speaking and listening, "... skills must result in effective outcomes and seen as appropriate **(a) by the audience, (b) in the context enacted, and (c) for the purpose specified.**" See the link on Canvas for NCA Speaking and Listening Competencies for College Students (Basic and Advanced Skills) that are covered in this course.

### ACCOMMODATIONS

If a student provides evidence of learning for a specific topic, demonstrating an advanced level of proficiency (see rubric), a different assignment will be provided.

### OPTIONS FOR DIFFERENTIATION

Students are provided options to complete assignments that correlate with a field of study or personal interest.

## INSTRUCTIONAL FORMATS

### FACE-TO-FACE INSTRUCTION AND INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS

In addition to **lecture and direct instruction methods**, face-to-face sessions include **interactive workshops** (e.g., peer conferencing, learning centers, and impromptu speaking exercises) to develop and practice presentations.

### FLIPPED INSTRUCTION (ASYNCHRONOUS)

At times, lecture materials are posted in preparation for an upcoming in-class workshop/discussion. The online materials can also be used as a review after the lesson. From an instructional perspective, the flipped lessons are demonstrations of **asynchronous presentations** (webinars).

### ONLINE INSTRUCTION (SYNCHRONOUS)

We meet **synchronously** to discuss how to create, record, and edit online presentations for client/co-worker meetings. After this lesson, each student assumes a **leadership role** and hosts an **asynchronous webinar**. This recording must be professional and ready for distribution.

### VIRTUAL REALITY (VR)

During TA sessions, students practice speeches using a VR app on the Oculus Rift +Touch, which was developed specifically for Dr. Hyatt's SPS course and aligned with her oral communications rubric. After each session, students receive feedback via machine learning algorithms and artificial intelligence (using IBM Watson's speech to text). Students write reflections about their experiences using the system, referencing the AI feedback, as well as their own learning objectives and observations.

**Note:** Dr. Hyatt is conducting research on the impact of teaching strategies and student learning. This research will involve analyzing student coursework. Students will not be asked to do anything above and beyond the normal learning activities and assignments that are part of this course (e.g., create speeches, practice speeches, and write reflections); however, students will be exposed to a new technology tool to complete these tasks.

Students may refuse to participate in this research project. Their choice will not influence the grade for this course or their academic career at CMU. If students choose not to participate in the research, they must complete all required coursework using the application; however, their data will not be included in the research. Data will be analyzed after the course is over and final grades are submitted. Participants will not receive any compensation.

- The Eberly Center will provide support on this project regarding data collection and interpretation.
- **Students who do not wish to participate should let Dr. Hyatt know in writing (during the first week of class).** This syllabus is posted to Canvas prior to the start of class; it is also discussed on the first day.
- For additional information, a full description of the project is posted to Canvas.

## COURSE POLICIES

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

If you plagiarize, you are in violation of academic integrity. Violations of this nature are subject to disciplinary action. An automatic failing grade is assigned for the course and the incident is reported to program administrators. A plagiarism detector, **Turnitin**, is used for submissions. Review the information on plagiarism at <http://www.plagiarism.org>.

### ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICIES

**Attendance:** This seven-week course is highly interactive. You cannot improve your speaking skills if you do not attend class. Missing four sessions is an automatic “R” grade. Missing three sessions reduces your grade by one whole letter (“A” becomes a “B”). Missing two sessions reduces your grade by a half letter (“A” becomes an “A-”). Legitimate excuses for an absence (e.g., interview, conference, illness) are accepted, as long as they are provided **in advance** via email.

**Promptness:** Arriving late to class is not acceptable; it is a disruption to the learning environment. When students are giving a speech, especially for a grade, they do not want distractions from peers. Opening/closing the door, walking in front of the video camera, unloading gear is very distracting to the speaker. If you’re late, please wait outside until the presentation is over. Then, enter the room before the next speaker. You’ll hear clapping.

**Participation (during presentations):** Typing on a computer or checking your phone is very disruptive during a presentation. Since audience participation is expected, failing to engage appropriately is -10 points.

**Participation (in-class workshops):** On workshop days, students are required to bring printed materials (e.g., documents and/or rubrics) to class (as noted in written and verbal directions). Since participation is expected during workshops, failing to print materials (in advance) is -10 points.

Note: Leaving class (to print work) or arriving late is not professional behavior. The participation score is worth 0 points since this is a requisite element of the class; however, points are deducted as outlined above. If a student wants to know if he/she lost points on a specific day, it must be done at the end of that specific class session. I will not recall individual incidents from memory at the end of the semester.

### LATE WORK POLICY

**ALL work**, regardless of your class time, is due by **9:00 AM** on the assigned day (noted on Canvas via written directions and discussed verbally in class). For reflections worth 10 points, late work is not accepted. You will receive an automatic “0” in the gradebook. For major assignments, the highest grade assigned for late work is a “C” (75% of the total points).

Assignments are submitted to Canvas and reflections are posted to ACCLAIM (with your recorded videos).

### GRADING POLICY

Each assignment is worth a predetermined number of points (see rubrics). At the end of the semester, a student’s score is calculated by combining his/her points for all assignments (minus any deductions as outlined in this syllabus) and dividing that score by the total number of points [e.g., 329 (student’s score) / 350 (total points) = 94% = A (grade)]. There are no weighted assignments. See the attached *Heinz Grading Scale* chart.

## Heinz Grading Scale

Grade	%	Interpretation
A+	98 - 100	Exceptional
A	93 - 97	Excellent
A-	90 - 92	Very Good
B+	88 - 89	Good
B	83 - 87	Acceptable
B-	80 - 82	Fair
C+	78 - 79	Poor
C	73 - 77	Very Poor
C-	70 - 72	Minimal Passing
R	69 - below	Failing
I	NA	Incomplete

### OFFICE HOURS

Office hours are noon-1:30 on class days. On other days, feel free to schedule an appointment. With proper notification, evening and weekend webinar appointments are available, too. In addition to my office hours and TA sessions, students may visit the Global Communication Center in Hunt Library ([www.cmu.edu/gcc](http://www.cmu.edu/gcc)) for additional support.

### PLACEMENT & EXEMPTION POLICY

Strategic Presentation Skills, 90-718, is a program requirement. There are no exemptions for this course unless deemed appropriate from your program director based on your past or current work experience. Faculty will not review transcripts.

### REGISTRATION & WAITLIST POLICY

Due to time limitations for presenting work in a face-to-face format, a maximum of twelve students are registered for each section. Once a section is full, admission to the course is dependent on (1) the number of registered students who drop the section, and (2) the waitlist order.

### TA SESSIONS (Required for VR app)

Three TA sessions are required using the VR app; however, students are encouraged to utilize the app as often as needed throughout the semester for various types of speeches.

### TECHNOLOGY (Required)

ACCLAIM, a flexible video platform, allows professors and students to set up folders, embed videos, and share comments with each other. See <https://www.getacclaim.com> for more details.

### WELLNESS STATEMENT (adapted from the CMU counseling services website)

Take care of yourself! Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, 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 the best option.

## WELLNESS STATEMENT (continued...)

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings of anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is available to help you: **call 412-268-2922** and/or visit their website at <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty, or family member for help. If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal or in danger of self-harm, call someone immediately, day or night:

**CaPS:** 412-268-2922

**Re:solve Crisis Network:** 888-796-8226

If the situation is life threatening, call CMU Police at **412-268-2323** or **911**.

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## SEMESTER OVERVIEW

Once students are registered for the SPS course, they will have access to the complete syllabus via Canvas. I do not post topics on the “shareable” syllabus required for the registry. Posting topics in advance (intended for in-class impromptu speaking exercises and required speeches) provides an opportunity for students to seek assistance from outside resources prior to the course or memorize speeches.

On Canvas, students will find folders that contain weekly content, videos, directions and due dates for assignments, samples of work, and rubrics. The content is divided into three areas:

- Nonverbal Communication (2.5 weeks)
- Verbal Communication (2.5 weeks)
- Visual Communication (2 weeks)

Graded assignments include an audience analysis, briefing, elevator pitch, outline, reflections, visuals, and a webinar. Rubrics are posted on Canvas; however, a sample is attached to this syllabus.

## Virtual Reality (VR) App Self-Evaluation Rubric

**Directions:** After a VR practice session, the user completes the rubric and questionnaire via an online data collection tool. The goal of this project is to determine if practicing in VR helps the user improve his/her presentation skills in front of a live audience at the end of seven weeks.

Note: The VR system does not give feedback on content. The user will write a reflection about message effectiveness.

**User's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**VR Session:** 1<sup>st</sup> \_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> \_\_\_\_ 4+ \_\_\_\_

	<b>TIME</b>	<b>PACE AND FLOW</b>	<b>HAND GESTURES</b>	<b>EYE CONTACT</b>	<b>VOLUME AND CLARITY</b>
	The extent to which the presenter demonstrates appropriate use of time.	The extent to which the presenter demonstrates appropriate pace (rate of delivery) and flow (fluidity of content) while using appropriate pauses, not filler words (e.g., umm, ah, like, so, you know).	The extent to which the presenter demonstrates appropriate hand gestures.	The extent to which the presenter demonstrates appropriate eye contact.	The extent to which the presenter demonstrates appropriate volume and clarity.
<b>PROFESSIONAL</b>	The time for the presentation aligns with the range established by the presenter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rate of delivery is consistently maintained (not too fast or too slow).</li> <li>The presenter does not get lost in thought, stumble over words, or repeat sentences (due to memorizing and forgetting the speech).</li> <li>Pauses (1 – 2 seconds), not filler words, are consistently used to engage the audience, build interest, and transition to the next discussion point.</li> <li>Filler words (if any) are not noticeable or distracting.</li> </ul>	Hand gestures align with the content (referencing what the presenter is saying) and do not distract from the message.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scans the room (often) to include audience members (equally).</li> <li>References the screens (computer and/or presentation screen) to share content; does not read word for word without looking at the audience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volume is consistently maintained (not too loud or too soft).</li> <li>Words are clear.</li> </ul>
<b>PROFICIENT</b>	<p>Additional practice is suggested.</p> <p>The time for the presentation is within an acceptable range.</p>	<p>Additional practice is suggested in one or more areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pace is too fast or too slow (at times).</li> <li>The presenter occasionally gets lost in thought, stumbles over words, or repeats a sentence.</li> <li>Pauses could be utilized more effectively to engage the audience, build interest, and transition to the next discussion point.</li> <li>Filler words are noticeable, but not distracting.</li> </ul>	<p>Additional practice is suggested.</p> <p>Too many gestures (or lack thereof), implies nervousness or indecisiveness. These gestures (while noticeable) do not distract from the message.</p>	<p>Additional practice is suggested in one or more areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scans the room to include audience members; however, too much time is spent on specific individuals or on a specific side of the room.</li> <li>Reads word-for-word from the screen(s) without looking at the audience (at times).</li> </ul>	<p>Additional practice is suggested in one or more areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volume is too loud or too soft (at times).</li> <li>Some words are difficult to understand.</li> </ul>
<b>DEVELOPING</b>	<p>Additional practice is required.</p> <p>The time for the presentation is not within an acceptable range.</p>	<p>Additional practice is required in one or more areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pace is too fast or too slow.</li> <li>The presenter gets lost in thought, stumbles over words, or repeats sentences; it is a bit distracting and impacts the message.</li> <li>Pauses (or lack thereof) are a bit distracting, not engaging.</li> <li>Filler words are a bit distracting.</li> </ul>	<p>Additional practice is required.</p> <p>Too many gestures (or lack thereof), implies nervousness or indecisiveness. These gestures are obvious and distract from the message.</p>	<p>Additional practice is required in one or more areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited eye contact with most audience members.</li> <li>Spends a significant amount of time reading directly from the screen(s).</li> </ul>	<p>Additional practice is required in one or more areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volume is not maintained throughout the presentation.</li> <li>Many words are difficult to understand.</li> </ul>

**Professor Hyatt**  
**Strategic Presentation Skills 90-718**  
**Course Review**

**Directions:** Reflecting on the syllabus, describe your learning experiences and effort this semester.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Mini \_\_\_\_\_ Class Time \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Check ONE</b>
I met <b>all</b> of the objectives and competencies.	
I met <b>most</b> of the objectives and competencies.	
I met <b>some</b> of the objectives and competencies.	
I <b>did not meet</b> the objectives and competencies.	

Explain your answer.

What activities/content did you like about the course? Why?

Given the limitations of time and the number of students in the course, what content/topics should be added or deleted from the course?

Based on your responses, what grade do you expect to receive in this course? \_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments: