



COMM 391E Effective Public Speaking in Intercultural Contexts

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Office Hours: by appointment only (email preferred)

Course Information:

June 16-July 4, 2025

M-F: 9:30-12:30

Course Description

Developing students' oral communication skills has been an educational priority for thousands of years. Today, in our digital era, it remains a priority as a core soft skill. Being able to speak up effectively proves pivotal to grow professionally, advance personally, and engage civically. Moreover, we must be prepared to speak up both online and face-to-face. Based upon that need, this course combines theory and practice on oral communication to improve students' public speaking effectiveness in the XXI century. Living in a globalized and diverse world requires acknowledging its key intercultural communication features.

In this course, students will learn basic information about speeches. Besides its typology, they will learn and practice strategies to prepare, deliver, and evaluate speeches. Tailoring speeches to different professional contexts (i.e., graduate school, conferences, business meetings, etc.), both individually and in small groups. Incorporating, in all stages, an intercultural gaze. Likewise, students will analyze and practice their active listening skills. In sum, this course is fundamentally practical in nature and will allow students to enhance their public speaking effectiveness.

Course Goals and Methodology

The main goals of this course are to:

- Offer basic knowledge to develop public speaking skills.
- Combine theory and practice to facilitate effective public speaking.
- Learn key stages of public speaking: preparing, delivering, and evaluating speeches.
- Practice oral communication in online and face-to-face contexts, fostering digital abilities.
- Identify and elaborate informative and persuasive speeches.
- Explain and promote active listening.
- Develop public speaking skills within an intercultural framework.

The methodology of the course will be based on lectures, readings, discussions, student oral presentations on different topics, activities, and attendance at several events (in the afternoon).

Learning Objectives

Through this course, students will:

- Elaborate and deliver informative and persuasive speeches more effectively.
- Enhance their public speaking confidence, both online and face-to-face.
- Adapt their speeches to different cultural contexts.
- Listen more actively.
- Prevent intercultural communication conflicts.
- Learn key strategies to continue enhancing their public speaking skills.



Required Texts

The textbook required for this course is

- Stand up, Speak out: The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking. (2016). University of Minnesota. <https://open.lib.umn.edu/publicspeaking/>

This book is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License, thus you are not expected to purchase any material. The instructor will post the class material on Blackboard. To log in, you will need to sign in via <https://campusvirtual.upo.es>.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- Engagement (25%)
- Journal (15%)
- Informative speech (25%)
- Persuasive speech (25%)
- Events (2) (10%)

Engagement (25%)

In-class participation will be encouraged at all sessions. Class participation will therefore be graded according to the students' previous work and reflections about the provided material. Active participation means not only attendance (being there \neq participation) but reading assigned materials before class, providing ideas with relevant basis (properly supported), asking and answering questions in class, engaging in class discussions and conversations with classmates (embracing active listening), as well as questioning information presented and discussed. Students are also expected to actively participate in in-class exercises and to do homework. See rubric.

Journal (15%)

Every week, students will write a short Journal entry (3 entries in total) to reflect upon their public speaking learning process and the material covered in this course (readings, discussions, and so forth). The instructor will provide different prompts.

Informative speech (25%)

During our second week, students will learn and practice how to prepare, deliver, and evaluate an informative speech. At the end of the week, they will have to deliver their original speech.

Persuasive speech (25%)

During our last week, students will learn and practice how to prepare, deliver, and evaluate a persuasive speech. At the end of the week, they will have to deliver their original speech.

Events (10%)

Students will attend two events during the course. We will host two guest speakers who will share their insights as experienced public speakers. Students will interview our guest speakers and participate in an open conversation with them.

Final Grade Expectations: The instructor will use the Spanish 10-point grading scale. The grades that will appear on your final transcript are also Spanish grades.

- Grade A/A- (9-10) — Outstanding performance showing a thorough knowledge and understanding of the topics of the course. The best possible grade.



- Grade B+/B (8-9) — Remarkable performance with general knowledge and understanding of the topics. Next highest.
- Grade B/B- (7-8) — Good performance with general knowledge and understanding of the topics. Indicates high average performance.
- Grade C+/C (6-7) — Fairly good performance showing an understanding of the course on a basic level. Indicates low average performance.
- Grade C/C- (5-6) — Passable performance showing a general and superficial understanding of the course's topics. Lowest passing grade
- Grade F (0-5) — Unsatisfactory performance in all assessed criteria. Failing grade.

Please be aware that anything below a 5 (i.e., a C- on the U.S. scale) is a failing grade. There is no pass/fail option at UPO. If you do not officially withdraw from a class by the withdrawal deadline, a failing grade will appear next to the course name. Check out the Student Handbook for the grade conversion table (some universities may use a slightly different scale).

General Course Policies

Each student is expected to be familiar with the course syllabus. Students are expected to focus their full attention on the class, arrive on time, and stay until class ends. Leaving the classroom on repeated occasions is disturbing to both your professor and your classmates and may adversely affect your participation grade. Please make use of the break to fill up your water bottle, use the restroom, etc.

Students are expected to listen and respect other points of view. Phone calls, social media, email, or Internet browsing at any time during class are not acceptable during class except for a specific class-related activity expressly approved by your instructor. You are responsible for any and all course material covered in class, announcements, and/or handouts if you are not present for any reason. Students will be held responsible to be up to date by attending class regularly and checking both email and the Blackboard site of the course frequently (monitor your email and Blackboard announcements at least once every 24 hours).

Communicating with instructor: Please allow at least 48 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails. The weekend is not included in this timeframe. If you have an urgent request or question for your professor, be sure to send it during the week.

Student engagement policy

Student's engagement will account for 25% of the final grade, thus highlighting its significance for high-impact learning. An engagement rubric is provided to ensure transparent and consistent grading.



Criteria	Exemplary (9-10)	Proficient (7-8)	Passing (5-6)	Poor (0-4)
Attendance	Arrives on time and stays for the entire duration of class. No absences, or if absent once, demonstrates knowledge of course material missed.	Misses no more than two sessions or is occasionally late. Demonstrates knowledge of course material missed.	Misses 3 or 4 sessions or frequently arrives late/leaves early; exhibits little knowledge/interest regarding course material missed.	Misses 5 or more sessions and does not demonstrate knowledge of course material missed.
Preparation	Consistently well-prepared; demonstrates deep understanding of readings and completes assignments.	Usually prepared; completes readings with some understanding and usually completes assignments.	Occasionally prepared. Demonstrates limited understanding of materials and occasionally completes assignments.	Rarely prepared; minimal effort to engage with course materials.
Participation	Actively participates in discussions with thoughtful comments/questions; demonstrates knowledge of the material and critical thinking skills.	Participates often demonstrating knowledge of material and critical thinking skills.	Participates once in a while or contributions lack depth or relevance.	Does not participate or is disruptive during discussions.
Attentiveness & Respect	Fully engaged and attentive during all sessions; respectful to professor and fellow students. Use of laptop/tablet for notetaking only; no cellphone use.	Generally attentive, with very infrequent lapses in focus and use of electronic devices for non-class related purposes. Respectful to professor and fellow students.	Occasionally inattentive or disengaged. Use of electronic devices for non-class related purposes thus showing disrespect towards professor and fellow students.	Rarely attentive, focused or responsive. Repeated use of electronic devices for non-class related purposes thus showing disrespect towards professor and fellow students.
Collaboration & Feedback	Effectively collaborates with peers in group or in-class activities following professor's instructions. Incorporates feedback to improve learning & performance.	Collaborates frequently with peers or in in-class activities. Incorporates feedback and makes moderate efforts to improve learning & performance.	Occasionally works well with peers but does not contribute substantially to in-class or group assignments. Responds to feedback inconsistently with minimal improvement.	Does not collaborate with peers, does not complete in-class or group assignments. Ignores feedback.

Names and Pronouns

Everyone has the right to be addressed and referred to by the name and pronouns that correspond to their gender identity, including the use of non-binary pronouns. Pronouns are not included on rosters, so students will be asked to indicate the pronouns that they use for themselves whenever they are asked to share their names. A student's chosen name and pronouns are to be respected always.

Academic Honesty

Academic integrity is a guiding principle for all academic activity at Pablo de Olavide University. Cheating on exams and plagiarism (which includes copying from the Internet) are clear violations of academic honesty. A student is guilty of plagiarism when he or she presents another person's intellectual property as his or her own. The penalty for plagiarism and cheating is a failing grade for the assignment/exam and a failing grade for the course. The International Center may also report this to your home university. Avoid plagiarism by citing sources properly, using footnotes and a bibliography, and not cutting and pasting information from various websites when writing assignments.

Learning Accommodations

If you require special accommodations or have any other medical condition you deem may affect your class performance, you must stop by the International Center to speak to Marta Carrillo (mcaroro@acu.upo.es) during the 1st week of class to either turn in your documentation or to confirm that our office has received it.

Behavior Policy

Students are expected to show integrity and act in a professional and respectful manner at all times. A student's attitude in class may influence his/her participation grade. The professor has a right to ask a student to leave the classroom if the student is unruly or appears intoxicated. If a student is asked to leave the classroom, that day will count as an absence regardless of how long the student has been in class.

About using Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The use of AI tools such as grammar checkers, ChatGPT, etc. and automatic translation tools is prohibited unless expressly permitted by the instructor to enhance the students' learning experience. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the unacknowledged use of these tools to create content submitted as one's own. If the use of any of these tools is suspected, the instructor may request notes and other materials used in preparing assignments. Students must retain these materials until final grades are posted. Failure to produce these materials when requested may negatively impact the student's grades.

Requirements

For ESL students, students will need to have a C1 level of English to register in this course.

Course contents

Unit 1. Public Speaking: Introduction

- Basics of Public Speaking: ethics, type of speeches, role of audience, active listening, context analysis, audience analysis, speeches (composition, practicing, delivery, and evaluation), communication apprehension, and online communication.
- Intercultural concepts:
 - Universalism, relativism, dialogical approach.
 - Conflict styles.
- Readings, activities, & quizzes.
- Journal 1.

Unit 2. Informative Speeches in Intercultural Contexts

- Informative speeches: core features. Examples. Steps.
- Intercultural gaze.
- Preparing informative speech.
- Activities and role playing (individual and group speeches; preparing speeches for different types of professional events).
- Event #1. Guest speaker.
- Journal 2.

Unit 3. Persuasive Speeches in Intercultural Contexts

- Persuasive speeches: core features. Examples. Steps.
- Intercultural gaze.
- Preparing performative speech.
- Activities and role playing (individual and group speeches; preparing speeches for different types of professional events).
- Event #2. Guest speaker.
- Journal 3.

***This syllabus is subject to change**