George Mason University
School of Public Policy

PUBP 550 001
Advanced Skills for Policy Professionals:
Public Speaking for Executive Leadership
(1.5 Credits)

Spring Session: 25 January – 10 March 2013
Mondays, 7:20-10:00 PM**
Room 207
Founder's Hall (Arlington)

**The FIRST CLASS is on FRIDAY, 25 JANUARY
at 6 pm in room 312, Founder's Hall
(all subsequent class meetings are on Mondays at 7:20)

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Office hours: by appointment prior to class or other mutually agreeable time

This course is focused on the art and craft of public speaking in both practical and analytical terms. It is not a "speech 101" course – I assume you have at least some experience with and understanding of the basics of public speaking, whether professional or academic. Nor is it a study of rhetoric, per se. Rather, you will confront the challenges and practice the techniques of effective professional presentations, including such topics as logic and argumentation, the effective use of evidence, using a script vs. speaking from notes vs. speaking "off the cuff," and using visual aids. Additionally, we will analyze a number of example speeches, focusing on the rhetorical tools of executive leadership, with special attention to case studies of the oratory of President Abraham Lincoln and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The practical and analytical elements of the course will be brought together in a culminating assignment to write and deliver an "executive level" speech. In addition to this formal speech, you will be required to speak before the class on multiple occasions and to provide feedback on each other's presentations. You will have broad latitude in choosing the topics of your speeches, but they must be substantive public policy issues drawn from your course work or professional experience. The final speech, a formal, 15-minute presentation, will account for 50 percent of the final grade. You will also deliver three shorter speeches, which will account for 30 percent of your grade. The remaining 20 percent will be based on class participation and the quality of the feedback you provide your colleagues.

Course Objectives: The overarching goal of this course is to improve the speaking skills of students in a professional setting. At the end of the course, each student should be able to:

1. Write an effective argumentative speech.

2. Demonstrate effective presentation techniques.

3. Analyze and critique the public speaking of others.

4. Analyze the role of oratory in public leadership.

Required texts and readings:

Noonan, Peggy. *On Speaking Well: How to Give a Speech with Style, Substance, and Clarity*.
        New York: ReganBooks/Harper Collins, 1999.

Tufte, Edward R. *The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint: Pitching Out Corrupts Within*, 2d ed.
        Cheshire CT: Graphics Press LLC, 2006. (available for $7.00 at www.edwardtufte.com)

Journal articles as indicated in the course schedule (on electronic reserve).

Other course resources:

Online videos and recordings or text versions of example speeches.

Video recordings of student speeches posted on Blackboard.

Supplemental articles listed in this syllabus.

Description of Speaking Assignments:

A. All speeches must be focused on substantive public policy issues – related to student course work, professional or personal experiences, or current policy or political discussion. You may choose an overarching topic for all four speeches if you wish, whereby each speech is focused on a different aspect of the topic, culminating in the final presentation. However, you may not simply re-package or re-do one of your previous speeches.

B. All speeches must present an argument. That is, they must present a thesis or claim supported by credible reasons and evidence.

C. All speaking notes and manuscripts must be turned in after speaking.

D. Except for the first presentation, the class will be divided, with half of the students speaking each week.

Speech #1
Time: 5 min. +/- 15 sec.
Topic: What subject might you choose for your final speech? Why is it interesting or important? What approach might you take?
Vis-aids: prohibited
Speaking from: note cards

Speech #2
Time: 10 min. +/- 30 sec.
Topic: analyze/critique a speech you've heard or read.
Vis-aids: optional, but you must use vis-aids of some sort for speech #2 or 3.
Speaking from: notes

Speech #3
Time: 10 min. +/- 30 sec.
Topic: analyze a public policy leadership decision; you may analyze an issue and recommend a decision or critique a senior leader's decision.
Vis-aids: optional, but you must use vis-aids of some sort for speech #2 or 3.
Speaking from: notes or manuscript.

Speech #4 (final)
Time: 15 min. +/- 1 min.
Topic: any substantive public policy issue
Vis-aids: optional
Speaking from: manuscript (sources must be cited IAW prescribed format)
Attire: students are required to wear appropriate business dress for the final presentations.

Evaluation Criteria for Speeches: Feedback on and grading of your speeches will use the criteria in the rubric at the end of this syllabus. You will receive feedback from each other, as well as from me. It is important that you practice giving useful feedback in a professional setting. It is also useful for you to have multiple perspectives on your speeches, rather than just my evaluation. (Of course, my evaluation is what counts for your final grade.)

Guidelines for providing feedback: Effective feedback is specific and factual. It uses examples. It is generally most effective when couched in "I statements" ("*I didn't understand your point about…*" rather than "*You didn't explain clearly…*"). While some "you statements" will be necessary ("*You were pacing back and forth during your delivery*"), you should try to minimize them. Effective feedback emphasizes the positive where at all appropriate. It is always civil and respectful – with the intention of helping the recipient improve rather than making the recipient defensive. We should do our best to both provide and receive feedback with this goal in mind.

As you use the rubric, you will be thinking about your own speeches (which is a third reason for requiring you to provide feedback to each other). Think specifically about what worked best for you, what didn't work so well, and how you can learn from each other.

General Course Policies

Attendance: In contrast with most grad school courses, this course is designed primarily around in-class activity. The best way to improve as a speaker is to stand in front of people and speak. The course is designed to balance your need for preparation time with the desire to give you the maximum number of opportunities to speak. With a half-semester course, this design requires a tightly planned and choreographed class period and overall course schedule. Consequently, if you miss class you will inevitably miss important material, and your absence will affect the learning of your colleagues. However, I understand that unforeseen circumstances do arise. If you find that you will be unable to attend a class, especially on a day you are scheduled to speak, please call or send me an email as early as possible. Multiple absences, however unavoidable the circumstances, will be grounds for dropping you from the course.

Electronic Devices: Although permitted, you are not required to bring a laptop or similar device to class. Outside of class, you will need to access the George Mason Blackboard site and various other web sites. It goes without saying that it is both rude and unprofessional to be reading emails, texting, surfing the web for football scores, and so on during class. Ideally, cell phones should be turned off and put away during class. At the very least they should be put on vibrate and in a pocket or other unobtrusive place. If you are expecting a vitally important call, notify me before class begins that you may have to step out. (Vitally important = wife is expecting and may go into labor at any moment; not vitally important = my boss might call me.)

Recordings of speeches: I intend to record each speech and make them available on Blackboard. The recordings will help you improve by allowing you to view your performance (an admittedly painful, but very helpful process). It will also lead to better feedback by allowing time for thoughtful reflection rather than just spur of the moment impressions. At the same time, I am sensitive to the possibility of exacerbating the natural anxieties associated with public speaking by creating a record of performance – especially in this age of social media. If possible, the recordings will posted as "read only" (i.e., not downloadable). If that's not possible, we will each sign a pledge to use the recordings for class purposes only and promise not to forward them to any other person nor post them on any other electronic site. Additionally, I pledge that I will not use student video recordings in any subsequent presentations of the course.

Academic Integrity

Integrity is the hallmark of a true professional, whether in the academic world or other professions. The faculty of the School of Public Policy takes academic integrity seriously; therefore, we have adopted a zero tolerance policy toward plagiarism. Presenting another's words or ideas as one's own, whether deliberate or inadvertent, is a serious breach of professional ethics and is unacceptable.

The standards for spoken work are the same as those for written work. Although the attribution may be less detailed than a footnote found in a typical research paper, you must still acknowledge the source of borrowed words or ideas in your speeches. We will discuss how to do this during class. Students who violate this policy will receive a failing grade on the specific

assignment, which may result in failure of the course and, ultimately, dismissal from the university.

Students with Special Needs

If you are a student with a disability and need academic accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 703.993.2474 and inform me. All academic accommodations must be arranged through this office.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

1. Course Introduction/Techniques of Public Speaking 1; **Friday, 25 January; 6 p.m.**

    Reading Assignment:
    Begin Noonan (required course text), through p. 98.

2. Techniques of Public Speaking 2; **Monday, 28 January; 7:20 p.m.**

    Reading Assignment:
    Finish Noonan, p. 101 through end.
    Tufte (required course text), all.

    Watch:
    David McCullough, Jr.; "You're Not Special" commencement speech at Wellesley High School
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_lfxYhtf8o4 (12:46)

    In-class presentation, speech #1 (all)

3. Techniques of Public Speaking 3; 4 February

    Reading Assignment:
    Zinsser, William. "Writing English as a Second Language." *The American Scholar* (Winter 2010). http://theamericanscholar.org/writing-english-as-a-second-language/
    Howes, Charles P. "Good Speech-Writing is as Crucial as a Strong Delivery." *Presentations* 16, no. 7 (July 2002), 58.
    Wills, Garry. "What Makes a Good Leader?" *The Atlantic Monthly* 273, no. 4 (April 1994), 63-80.
    Gawande, Atul. "Failure and Rescue." *The New Yorker* (4 June 2012), http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2012/06/atul-gawande-failure-and-rescue.html

    Watch:
    Susan Cain: The Power of Introverts
    http://www.ted.com/talks/susan_cain_the_power_of_introverts.html (19:04)

In-class presentation, speech #2 (group A; group B provides feedback)

4. Techniques of Public Speaking 4; 11 February

    Reading Assignment:
    Orwell, George. "Politics and the English Language." (1946)
        www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/orwell46.htm.
    Kaufman, Sarah. "Herman Scissorhands: Cain's Magical Gestures." *Washington Post*
        4 December 2011, http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/herman-scissorhands-
        cains-magical-hand-gestures/2011/12/04/gIQALrWfTO_print.html.
    Dunne, Bill. "Feeblepoint." *Gotham Ghostwriters* (15 September 2008),
        http://blog.gothamghostwriters.com/2008/09/feeblepoint.html.

    Watch:
    Kathryn Schulz: On Being Wrong
    http://www.ted.com/talks/kathryn_schulz_on_being_wrong.html (17:52)

    In-class presentation, speech #2 (group B; group A provides feedback)

5. Public Speaking and Executive Leadership Case 1: Abraham Lincoln; 18 February

    Reading Assignment:
    Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and Second Inaugural Address.
        http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/232225/Gettysburg-Address
        http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres32.html
    Wills, Garry. "Lincoln's Greatest Speech?" *The Atlantic Monthly* 284, no. 3 (September
        1999), 60-70.
    Wills, Garry. "The Words That Remade America: Lincoln at Gettysburg." *The Atlantic
        Monthly* 269, no. 6 (June 1992), 57-71.

    In-class presentation, speech #3 (group A; group B provides feedback)

6. Public Speaking and Executive Leadership Case 2: Martin Luther King, Jr.; 25 February

    Watch/Read King's "I Have a Dream" speech.
    http://www.usconstitution.net/dream.html (text)
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smEqnnklfYs (video)

    Reading Assignment:
    Carson, Clayborne. "Martin Luther King, Jr.: Charismatic Leadership in a Mass Struggle."
        The Journal of American History 74, no. 2 (September 1987): 448-54.
    Vail, Mark. "The 'Integrative' Rhetoric of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 'I Have a Dream'
        Speech." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 9, no. 1 (2006): 51-78.

    In-class presentation, speech #3 (group B; group A provides feedback)

7. Final Speech; 4 March
     In-class presentation, speech #4 (group A; group B provides feedback)

(Spring Break, 11-17 March)

8. Final Speech; 18 March
     In-class presentation, speech #4 (group B; group A provides feedback)

Supplemental Readings

Alvarez, Alexandra. "Martin Luther King's 'I Have a Dream': The Speech Event as Metaphor." *Journal of Black Studies* 18, no. 3 (March 1988): 337-57.

This article provides an expanded perspective on the speech we'll be discussing in class.

Gerson, Michael. "The Rhetoric of the Rant." *Washington Post* (15 May 2009), http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/14/AR2009051403601.html (accessed 28 November 2012).

On the importance of civility to democracy. A good reminder that there's a difference between passionate advocacy tempered by self-control and rude rhetoric that seeks to "dominate and humiliate."

Gerson, Michael. "What the Teleprompter Teaches." *Washington Post* (27 March 2009), http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/26/AR2009032603114.html (accessed 28 November 2012).

The key point here is why a leader is often better served by carefully writing a speech rather than "winging it."

Gross, Alan G. "Lincoln's Use of Constitutive Metaphors." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 7, no. 2 (2004): 173-90.

This article is a rather geeky discussion of "enthymemes," but it has some really useful analysis and explanation. In particular, there is an important discussion of converting complex policy decisions to public rhetoric and the need to mobilize emotions, even when appealing primarily to rational decision making (183-4).

Hurt, James. "All the Living and the Dead: Lincoln's Imagery." *American Literature* 52, no. 3 (November 1980): 351-80.

This article has lots of biographical info on Lincoln that might be useful. It is focused on the psychology and roots of Lincoln's imagery.

Marcus, Ruth. "The Truth About the False Choice." *Washington Post* (1 April 2011), A17, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/presidential-myth-the-false-choice/2011/03/31/AFvoZRBC_print.html (accessed 2 April 2011).

In this short opinion piece the author takes President Obama, as well as other politicians, to task for what has become a common rhetorical technique. This topic is worth thinking about, especially from the perspective of rhetorical leadership. We often need to present issues and decisions in simple terms, so everyone can understand them, but as Marcus points out, oversimplification by presenting false choices serves neither leaders nor followers.

McCrystal, General Stanley A. "Retirement Speech," 23 July 2010.
http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4664 (accessed 28 November 2012).

You'll recall that President Obama relieved General McCrystal of command and forced him to retire because of comments by he and his staff to a Rolling Stone *reporter. His retirement speech is worth looking at because he deals with this exceedingly awkward situation with grace and a bit of humor. It's a good example of how to briefly acknowledge an "elephant in the room" that no one wants to notice or talk about, but then move on to the business at hand. (This transcript has introductory remarks by General Casey and Secretary Gates; scroll down to find the beginning of General McCrystal's address.)*

McPherson, James M. "The Hedgehog and the Foxes." *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* 12 (1991): 49-65.

I highly recommend this article, which analyzes the leadership issues Lincoln faced.

Washington, Durthy A. "'I Have A Dream': A Rhetorical Analysis." *The Black Scholar* 23, no. 2, Black Culture 1993 (Winter/Spring 1993): 16-19.

Although this article is not very well written, it provides a somewhat useful deconstruction of Dr. King's speech.

Weitzel, Al. "King's 'I Have A Dream' Speech: A Case Study of Incorporating Orality in Rhetorical Criticism." *Communication Reports* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1994): 50-6.

This analysis has good background info and addresses some important issues – especially the notion of using a prepared text versus ad libbing and the differences between printed and "as delivered" versions of the speech.

Wilson, Douglas L. "Lincoln the Persuader." *The American Scholar* 75, no. 4 (Autumn 2006): 31-43.

This article is an adaptation/summary from his book (which I highly recommend), Lincoln's Sword*. The article doesn't specifically address the Gettysburg address or the second inaugural, but it provides a good summary and context regarding Lincoln's writing.*

Public Speaking for Executive Leadership
Feedback/Grading Rubric

Speaker's Name: _____   **Evaluator's Name:** _____

Date: _____   ☐ **Met Time Standard**   ☐ **Did Not Meet Time Standard**

General Impressions/Overarching Comments

Content: Argument	☐ Excellent - Clearly stated position - Powerful reasoning; convincing to audience - Audience easily understands & follows logic - Reasons & evidence stated clearly, used effectively to support position - Counter-arguments acknowledged & addressed (as necessary)	☐ OK - Clearly stated position - Mostly convincing to audience - Minimal errors in logic; audience understands without too much difficulty - In general, reasons & evidence effectively support position, but could be better in depth or breadth - Counter-arguments are acknowledged, but could have been addressed more effectively	☐ Needs Significant Improvement - Position is unclear - Audience not at all convinced - Logic is unclear; audience cannot follow argument - Reasons & evidence are ineffective, superficial, or missing - Obvious counter-arguments or questions ignored
Content: Writing & Organization	☐ Excellent - Opening quickly grabs audience attention - Intro appropriately "previews" the speech - Transitions used skillfully to smoothly link ideas - Word choice enhances the topic and engages the audience - Concepts & ideas clearly explained; metaphors, stories, & illustrations enliven the speech - Conclusion effectively summarized the argument, answered the "so what" question, or motivated the audience to act as recommended	☐ OK - Opening somewhat clichéd or mechanical, but still effective - Intro adequate but could have been more imaginative - Transitions generally effective, with only a few unclear, overly mechanical, or repetitive - Word choice appropriate to topic & audience with only a few usage errors or lapses into jargon/slang - Concepts & ideas generally clear; could have used examples & illustrations to better effect - Few, if any, digressions or irrelevancies that distracted audience or detracted from logic - Conclusion effectively ended the speech	☐ Needs Significant Improvement - Opening overly stilted, awkward, or abrupt - Intro confusing or too brief to effectively lead into body - Transitions missing or mostly ineffective - Wording often unclear, inappropriate to topic or audience, or jargon/slang-filled - Concepts & ideas not expressed clearly; examples & illustrations ineffective or missing - Digressions or irrelevancies continually interrupt flow of logic or distract audience - Conclusion too abrupt, no sense of closure; speech ended without summary, recommendation, or explanation of "so what" for audience

Comments on Content

Delivery: Vocal	☐ Excellent - Overall, speaking style enhanced content of speech; polished & obviously well-rehearsed - Rate, pitch, & volume appropriately varied; highlighted key points - Volume appropriate throughout; audience could easily hear - Pronunciation correct throughout - Enunciation clear throughout - No verbal tics	☐ OK - Overall, speaking style matched content of speech - Rate, pitch, & volume usually varied appropriately; did not detract from content - Volume appropriate throughout; audience could easily hear - Few, if any, pronunciation errors - Few, if any, problems with enunciation - Few, if any, verbal tics	☐ Needs Significant Improvement - Speaking style did not match content; overly serious or too flippant - Rate, pitch, & volume unvarying; monotone; or sing-song - Volume consistently too soft or too loud - Multiple pronunciation errors - Words not enunciated clearly; mumbled - Distracting verbal tics; repetitive language
Delivery: Physical	☐ Excellent - Overall, polished & obviously well-rehearsed - Comfortable, confident demeanor & posture - Eye contact well maintained, included entire audience - Gestures, body language, facial expressions support & amplify ideas - Movement used to enhance presentation - No physical tics	☐ OK - Well-rehearsed; generally appropriate demeanor - Good eye contact most of the time, included most of audience - Gestures, body language, facial expressions appropriate, not distracting - Use of movement generally appropriate - Few distracting physical tics	☐ Needs Significant Improvement - Lacking in energy; posture & demeanor conveyed excessive fear or nervousness - Minimal eye contact; too much attention to notes/text - Body language stiff, uneasy; gestures mechanical or nonexistent; facial expressions limited or distracting - Distracting or repetitive movements - One or more distracting physical tics
Comments on delivery:			
Visual Aids	☐ Excellent - Creatively clarifed or illustrated content; made speech better - High quality; easy to view/read; no errors - Smoothly integrated into delivery at appropriate points	☐ OK - Summarized or outlined content - Few, if any, errors; easy to view/read - Few, if any, errors in integrating visuals with speech	☐ Needs Signficant Improvement - Connection between visuals & content unclear; visuals detracted from speech - Difficult to read or understand; multiple errors - Noticeable difficulty in presenting speech & visuals as integrated whole
Comments on visual aids:			