GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
School *of* **Continuing Studies**
Public Relations and Corporate Communications

Georgetown University, MPS PR/CC | Fall 2016

MPPR-885-01: SPEECHWRITING[1]

Class Meets: Monday, 8 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. **Class Location: [C222]**
Professors: Patrick Granfield and Andrew Imbrie

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What makes a speech persuasive, effective and memorable – and how do you write one? How can storytelling help a political, corporate, or community leader achieve their goals? What is the role of the speech in our country's evolving dialogue?

This course will explore the techniques speechwriters and speakers use, from research to rhetoric, to shape messages that move people and change the world.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Through regular writing exercises, close reading of contemporary American oratory (including speeches being delivered this fall) and lively discussion, you will learn how to:

* critique a speech, which is a prerequisite to crafting one;
* research for speechwriting, which is critical for making your speech stand out;
* find someone else's voice, which is important for making your speech effective;
* write more clearly, which is essential no matter what you do for a living;
* speak more comfortably in public, which is useful for understanding your speaker's needs; and,
* hit that sweet spot where a speaker, an audience, and a message intersect – which is how speechwriters succeed.

Along the way, you will also generate a portfolio of writing samples that can help you explore and develop your own persuasive skills, and perhaps even get your foot in the door to interview for your next job.

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[1] With our own modifications, this syllabus is based on the one used by Stephen Krupin for "MPPR-885-01 Speechwriting" during the Fall of 2015.

ATTENDANCE

In-class discussion, writing, and editing are essential to mastering the content of this course. Students are expected to attend every class and arrive on time. If you are detained from attending a class or arriving before it begins, you are responsible for notifying us via email **prior to the start of class**. *Missing more than two classes will result in a final grade reduction of one level (for example, an A will be converted to an A-).* Absences from classes, beyond the initial two, will result in further reduction of the final grade. If you are absent for more than four classes, you will be in danger of failing this course.

WORK SUBMITTED

Format: When you email us a speech, your file should be:

- in Word format
- in 12-point Times New Roman
- with page numbers on the bottom right. The length of each assignment is based on words and minutes, not page numbers, so there's no need to mess with the margins. (We'll use 150 words-per-minute as the standard ratio.)

Your speeches must also have one more element on top: the perfect headline you'd like *The New York Times* to write when it covers your remarks. Think more "Immigration Reform 'the Yellow-Brick Road' to Jobs, Smith tells California voters" than "Smith Talks about Economy." It's often best to draft a headline before you even start writing. It will help you crystallize what you want to say and help you say it more clearly to your audience.

Speeches are sometimes deliberately ungrammatical, so we don't mark off for constructions like sentence fragments. But be precise. Spell-check your work. Proofread carefully. Before you send us your assignments, ask yourself whether you would feel confident giving this draft to your boss or the leader for whom you are writing hypothetically.

Deadlines: Hard deadlines are a fact of life for every speechwriter. Assignments will be given Monday nights after class, if not before. Completed assignments must be e-mailed no later than 3pm on the Friday before the next class. Our goal is to give you enough time to complete the assignment, whichever fits your professional schedule – and to give us time to edit and grade them and return to you timely feedback.

We won't accept (nor guarantee a returned copy of) any assignment emailed more than 24 hours after the deadline, and any assignments handed in late, without an excellent excuse or a reasonable request in advance, will cost a single letter grade.

Revising: It has been said that there is no great writing, only great rewriting. The iterative revising process – tightening, polishing, clarifying, punching-up – is an essential part of a speech's life cycle, no less central to it than a podium and a microphone. We've never seen a first draft that is word-for-word the same as its final draft. So if you are going to understand what

makes speeches work, and if you're going to grow as a writer, it's important to learn how to be an editor and how to be edited.

This means two things for our class:

First, a selection of speeches will be discussed in writing workshops each week, either in small groups or as a class. The number one rule here is respect. When you're editing, be careful to assess the writing, never the writer. And when you're being edited, remember: critique and criticism are not synonyms.

Second, you have the option of revising up to two assignments after they have been returned to you. The grade on your revised copy will count, and the grade on the first draft will be erased. Here's how it works: If you want to revise an assignment for a shot at a higher grade (it's not automatic), you must email us within 24 hours of receiving your graded first draft (i.e., Tuesday night). You then have another 24 hours to email us the revised draft (i.e., Wednesday night).

The revised draft must have tracked changes. You may revise a given assignment only one time, and can revise only assignments handed in on time.

COURSE POLICIES

While you're here, out of respect for all of us, please do not use your phones for any reason. Please do not use your laptops to work on other courses' assignments, work on your day job, scroll through social media, shop online, check sports scores, or otherwise zone out. It's more obvious than you might think, and will negatively affect your in-class participation grade. We'll have one break every class during which you can text, email and browse as much as you like. We will not offer incomplete grades, except in the most exceptional, unforeseeable circumstances. Job requirements do not qualify.

You are responsible for classroom information and instructions, whether you are present in class or not. If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to obtain class notes.

We encourage you to ask questions during class. Chances are if you're wondering about something, at least one of your colleagues will be as well. Always feel empowered to raise your hand and voice your question.

REQUIRED READINGS

The resources for this course include articles, book excerpts, speeches, multimedia, and two key books. The readings are chosen to give you a solid foundation for understanding and internalizing the coursework.

Cook, J. (1991). *The Elements of Speechwriting and Public Speaking.* New York:

Macmillan. ISBN: 978-0028614526 $9.54

Lehrman, R. (2010). *The Political Speechwriter's Companion: A Guide for Writers and Speakers.* Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1604265491 $40.00

All articles, book excerpts, cases, and multimedia listed on the course schedule will be distributed in advance, via the class Blackboard group or accessible online.

Recommended Readings

Safire, W. (2004). *Lend Me Your Ears: Great Speeches in History.* New York: W. W. Norton. ISBN: 978-0393059311 $29.84

ASSIGNMENTS

You are expected to submit work on time and of high quality. Please refer to the course schedule and plan your timetable for completing assignments in advance. We encourage you to actively ask questions prior to submitting any assignment. As long as you submit your assignments for review (with a specific question in mind) at least three business days before the assignment is due, we would be happy to review your specific question and discuss it with you. Feedback on all final assignments will be provided in a timely manner; no more than 2 weeks after the assignment was turned in. All grading criteria, including word length and essential content, will be distributed in advance and discussed in class.

GRADING

Graduate course grades include: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C, and F. **There are no grades of C+, C-- , or D**.

Your grade will largely reflect the clarity, quality, and creativity of your writing. We value highly your effort and improvement over the course of the semester, and those will factor heavily into your grade as well.

- 25 percent of your grade will be based on in-class participation. This includes contributing to our discussions, in-class writing, demonstrating that you've done the reading, oral reports, and constructively helping your peers rewrite in workshop.
- 60 percent will be based on your weekly writing assignments.
- 15 percent will be based on the final commencement speech that ties together all of the elements and strategies we will discuss in this course.

Grading Metrics:

Please reference the below grading scale and assignments:

Grading Scale:

A   100-94
A-   93-90
B+   89-87
B   86-83
B-   82-80
C   79-70
F   69 and below

The instructors will provide a warning by mid-semester to any student who appears to be on track for a poor final grade.

A NOTE ON POLITICS

Some of your writing and critiquing will be on political speeches, which are among the most valuable examples of American rhetoric. Whether your politics and ours are similar is irrelevant in this course. Whether we agree with the positions you take in your writing will determine zero percent of your grade in this course; it is determined solely by the quality of your argument and mastery of the techniques discussed in class and our readings.

When you choose topics on which to write, choose ones that matter to you. You'll write more passionately and more persuasively that way, and you'll have more fun doing it.

GUEST SPEAKERS

We're going to have some great guest speakers. Some of them go to work every day writing highly scrutinized speeches for high-profile leaders. From the moment they walk into the room, the stories they tell are to be considered off the record – no tweeting about it, no posting, no publishing of any sort. Those ground rules will encourage our speakers to be more candid and make their presentations much more interesting, and it's the least we can do in return for their valuable time.

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

Georgetown offers a variety of support systems for students that can be accessed on main campus or at the downtown location:

- MPS Writing Resource Program 202-687-4246
  http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu/
- Academic Resource Center 202-687-8354 | arc@georgetown.edu
  http://ldss.georgetown.edu/
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services 202-687-6985
  http://caps.georgetown.edu/
- Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action (IDEAA) (202) 687-4798
  https://ideaa.georgetown.edu/

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY

Students with documented disabilities have the right to specific accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the course. Students with disabilities should contact the Academic Resource Center (202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; http://ldss.georgetown.edu/index.cfm) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. If accommodations are recommended, you will be given a letter from ARC to share with your professors. You are personally responsible for completing this process officially and in a timely manner. Neither accommodations nor exceptions to policies can be permitted to students who have not completed this process in advance.

GEORGETOWN HONOR SYSTEM

All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity in pursuit of their education at Georgetown. Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to, failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are held to the Honor Code. The Honor Code pledge follows:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and To conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

PLAGIARISM

Stealing someone else's work is a terminal offense in the workplace, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another." More guidance is available through the Gervase Programs at http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53377.html. If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing and the need to credit, check out http://www.plagiarism.org.

If you're tempted to Google something and lift someone else's words, remember that we have Google too. We won't treat violations lightly.

SYLLABUS MODIFICATION

The syllabus may change to accommodate discussion of emerging topics and the work travel schedules of the instructors. Also, the schedules of guest speakers may require some shifting of the agenda. The instructors will make every effort to provide as much advance notice as possible for any alterations.

YOUR INSTRUCTORS

Patrick Granfield serves as Director of Communications for the Secretary of the Army, prior to which he served as a speechwriter to Secretary of Defense Ash Carter. He also worked on the Policy Planning Staff at the Department of State, where he served as a special advisor to General John R. Allen and speechwriter to Secretary of State John Kerry. Prior to his appointment at the State Department, Patrick served as Rahm Emanuel's chief speechwriter during his first two years as Mayor of Chicago. Before arriving in Chicago, Patrick helped to launch *The National* newspaper in the United Arab Emirates and served as the paper's opinion editor. He has written op-eds under his own name or as a ghost writer for *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Baltimore Sun*, among other publications. Patrick graduated from Dartmouth College with a B.A in history and taught history at St. Anselm's Abbey School in Washington, DC, where he now serves on the Board of Trustees.

Andrew Imbrie joined the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department in July 2013 as a speechwriter to Secretary of State John Kerry. Previously, he served as a professional staff member and speechwriter on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Other professional experience includes work with the U.S. Missions to NATO and the European Union. He has taught speechwriting to graduate and undergraduate students at American University. He received his B.A. from Connecticut College and his M.A. from the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. He holds a Ph.D. in international relations from Georgetown University.

COURSE SCHEDULE, subject to revision as we go.

August 31: The Political Speech, Persuasion, and Audiences

Why are speeches important? What makes a good speech? We will discuss the fundamental elements of persuasion (ethos, pathos, and logos), and how to write for and understand whom you persuade. We will discuss your interests and goals. In class, you will pair up and write brief introductions of your partners.

Read:
Lehrman, Chapters 1-3
George Orwell, *Politics and the English Language*
Zadie Smith, "Fail Better," *The Guardian*
John Quincy Adams, "Speech on Independence Day," 1821
Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July," 1852

*OFFSITE/ CLASS

Note that we will be scheduling an additional class/offsite during the semester. Date TBD.

Sept 12: Structure

How do you structure a political speech? What are the strengths of Monroe's Motivated Sequence? We will investigate how to describe problems in ways that reaffirm beliefs, alert the audience, and motivate people. Analyze and critique MMS speeches in class.

Read:
Lehrman, Chapters 5,12-13
Cook, Chapter 2 (pp. 66-79), Chapter 10
LBJ, "We Shall Overcome," 1965
Ted Kennedy, Democratic Convention Address, 1980
Hilary Benn, Speech in UK Parliament on Syria airstrikes, 2015

Write: 300-word MMS speech on a topic of your choice

Sept 19: Storytelling & Jokes

How do we use stories to make political speeches entertaining and memorable? What role do humor, irony, and wit play in a speech, and how can we help politicians to earn credibility and goodwill from the audience? In-class joke writing and storytelling.

Read:
Lehrman, Chapters 8 and 9
Cook, Chapter 11
Ronald Reagan, Farewell Address, 1989
David Foster Wallace, Kenyon College Commencement, 2005
Conan O'Brien, Harvard Commencement, 2000
John Kerry, Yale Class Day Speech, 2014
John Kerry, Advancing Afghan Women Keynote at Georgetown University, 2013

Write: Rewrite MMS Speech to incorporate one story and joke. Pitch 2-3 jokes for the White House Correspondents Dinner.

Sept. 26: Research and Support

How do you find the right facts and weave them into a cohesive argument? We will discuss how to research an event and find sources that work.

Read:
Lehrman, Chapters 4 and 10
Cook, pp. 58-66, 79-85, 86-90
Ronald Reagan, "A Time For Choosing," 1964
Colin Powell Remarks at UN Security Council, 2003
John Kerry, "Remarks on COP-21 and Action Beyond Paris, Dec 2015

Write: Write two, 250-word floor speeches on the same topic, one arguing each side. Must include supporting facts. Must include killer final lines.

Oct. 3: Language People Understand and Remember

How to write for clarity; how to make language memorable and vivid.

Read:
Lehrman, Chapters 6 and 7
Cook, Chapters 1,5, and 9
John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, 1961
Mandela, Statement from the Dock, 1964
George W. Bush, Address to Joint Session of Congress, 2001

Write: Write a 300-word pitch for a charity.

Oct. 17: Beginnings & Endings

What makes a memorable beginning to a political speech? We will discuss the principal techniques speechwriters use to begin a speech, win attention, and establish credibility with the audience. How to end with a four-part close. In-class exercises.

Read:
Lehrman, Chapters 11, 14
Cook, pp. 58-66, 86-90
Socrates, "The Defense Speech ("Apology")
Martin Luther King, "I Have a Dream," 1863
Ronald Reagan, "The Space Shuttle 'Challenger' Tragedy Address, 1986
Bono, NAACP Award Acceptance Speech, 2007
Winston Churchill, "Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat," 1940

Oct. 24: The Stump & Delivery

What makes an effective stump speech? We will discuss how to write an applause line and produce a memorable slogan. In-class exercises.

Read:
Lehrman, Appendix A (Analysis of 2007 Obama Stump Speech), 229-249
William Jennings Bryan, Cross of Gold
Marco Rubio, Stump Speech, 2016
Hillary Clinton, Stump Speech, 2016
Paul Wellstone Stump Speech 1990

Write: Use all the tools you have leared to craft a 500-word stump speech in your voice or the voice of a presidential candidate, CEO, or celebrity.

Oct. 31: Risk Communication & Speechwriting

We will discuss how to craft messages for political leaders speaking during high-concern situation, such as natural disasters, terrorist attacks, and public health emergencies. Guest lecture and in-class exercises.

Read:
Lehrman, pp. 322-325
Crisis Comms Templates
Risk Comms Principles
77 Questions
WHO Media Handbook
Risk Comms West Nile Virus

Nov. 7: Toasts, Eulogies, Tributes & Commencements

What makes a good ceremonial speech? We will explore how to write toasts that are sincere, humorous, and gracious.

Read:
Lehrman, pp. 315-321
Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address
Pericles' Funeral Oration
Robert Kennedy, Speech after Martin Luther King's Death, 1968
Ronald Reagan, Tribute to JFK, 1985 and Pointe du Hoc 1984
Barack Obama, Eulogy for Rev. Clementa Pinckney, Charleston, 2015

Write: Commencement analysis – a 500-word rhetorical analysis of the commencement address given at your college graduation.

Nov. 14: Op-eds and Ethics, the Speechwriter and the Politician

How to write and sell op-eds to newspapers or politicians. Is there a speechwriter's code of ethics? We will discuss the relationship between speechwriter and politician – and how to make the most of it.

Read:
Lehrman, Chapters 15-17
Jimmy Breslin, "Digging JFK Grave was his Honor"
David Brooks, "The Courage of Small Things"
Bill Burns, "The Fruits of Diplomacy with Iran"
John Kerry, "Allying Ourselves with the Next Egypt," 2011

Write: Turn a speech into a 700-word op-ed (speech will be provided).

Nov. 21: Creativity & Persuasion

Read:
Heath, *What Makes Ideas Stick*
Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*
Gandhi, "Quit India," 1942

Write: a 400-word speech for a newly released product at Apple. Must be anchored in, or at least include, a story.

Nov. 28: Commencement workshop

Read:
Jimmy Valvano, ESPY Speech, 1993
Randy Pausch, Achieving Your Childhood Dreams, 2007
Meryl Streep, Barnard, 2010
JK Rowling, Harvard, 2008
Steve Jobs, Stanford, 2005

Write: a one-page proposal for your final commencement

Dec. 5: Commencement workshop & Delivery I

Write: a 1000-word first draft of your final commencement

Dec. 12: Commencement workshop & Delivery II

Write: a 1000-word final draft of your commencement