

**Strategic Presentation Skills**  
**Course #90-718**  
**Via Zoom**

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**Office (zoom) 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*

**LEARNING IN THE TIME OF COVID:**

Given the uniqueness of our time and the modality of the course, please note the following and let me know if you have any questions/concerns.

- We're using Zoom. Please use the name you would like to be referred to throughout the course as the name that appears in your Zoom screen.
- I'll record our classes in the cloud and upload links to Canvas.
- When you enter the course, please mute your audio.
- Because Zoom cannot handle two concurrent speakers, we will use the Zoom "Raise Hand" feature. When I call on you, please unmute yourself.
- Please have your video 'on' during the class. It helps everyone feel connected. It's okay if you have COVID hair, a cat in your lap, and/or unclean laundry on the chair behind you. If having your video on is a problem due to internet bandwidth constraints or another technical issue, please notify me by e-mail before the course begins.
- In the event a TA is assigned to this course, they will help me monitor the chat box. If there isn't a TA, I will not ignore the chat box, but it will be tougher for me to pay close attention to it as well as our discussion and the hands that might be raised on screen. Please know that I'm not ignoring anyone on purpose.
- After the class, I will stay in Zoom for a while, just like in face-to-face classes. If students have questions/comments, they can stay for a few minutes and chat with me and other students.

**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
- Understand and 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. 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. If at any time you feel that the course is not meeting your expectations, please contact me. 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 200. Final course grades will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Point Range
A	169-200
B	150-168
C	133-149
R - Fail	Below 133

Assessment Activity	Possible Points
Interview exercise	15
Informative speech	40
Demonstrative speech	40
Persuasive speech	50
Exploration of fallacies	15
Virtual presentation	40
Total	200

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. Note that participation points are not awarded. It is not possible to pass this class if more than three classes are missed.

## 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.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Week/Date	Topic & Activity	Homework	Items Due
<b>Week 1</b> 5/25/21	Course introduction, impromptu exercises	<i>Prepare</i> for interview question exercise	N/A
<b>Week 2</b> 6/1/21	Enhancing presentations, interview question exercises	N/A	Interview question exercises
<b>Week 3</b> 6/8/21	Informative and virtual presentations, guest speaker	<i>Prepare</i> informative speech	N/A
<b>Week 4</b> 6/15/21	Informative speech	<i>Prepare</i> demonstration speech	Informative speech
<b>Week 5</b> 6/22/21	Demonstration speech	<i>Prepare</i> group persuasive speech & virtual presentation	Demonstration speech
<b>Week 6</b> 6/29/21	Group persuasive speeches	N/A	Group persuasive speech (incorporating exploration of fallacies) & virtual presentation