Why Take a Speech Course?

Many college graduates look back on all the courses they took in college and say that public speaking was one of the most valuable. Here are some reasons why:

1. **You learn how to speak to a public audience.** Knowing how to stand up and speak effectively to a group of people (who are often in a position to judge you in some way) is a valuable skill. For example, have you ever been or can you imagine yourself in any of these situations:

   - In a college class, you conduct a research project and give an oral presentation to the class on your findings.
   - At work, you have been chosen to be the United Way campaign representative. You must give a brief speech encouraging employees to contribute.
   - In court you must explain to a jury why a traffic accident was not your fault.
   - Your best friend is getting married. You are expected to give a speech at the reception about the new couple.
   - A co-worker is retiring and you have been asked to introduce him or her at a banquet.
   - A family member has died and you wish to say a few words as part of the eulogy at the funeral.
   - You wish to audition for a play or musical group.
   - You have continued your education and must take oral exams in order to graduate with a higher-level degree.
   - You wish to read an original poem or sing a song on “open mike night” at a local club.

2. **You learn skills that apply to one-on-one communication.** These skills will be particularly important in your personal life as you communicate with friends and family members. Here are some other one-on-one communication situations:

   - At a job interview, you must convince the interviewer that you are the best candidate for the job.
   - You want to return an item to the store, but you have lost the receipt. You must convince the customer service person to take the item back and give you a refund or credit.
- You are applying for a loan and must convey to the loan officer that you are a trustworthy and reliable person who will repay the loan.

- You have been selected to train a new employee at work.

- You become a parent.

3. **You will develop skills that are valuable in the job market.** Study after study has shown that after job-specific skills, the number one attribute of all working people is the ability to communicate effectively in the workplace. This ability is higher-ranked than your grade point average, degree, school’s reputation, letters of reference, or technical skills. Try to think of a job that does *not* require good communication skills.

4. **You gain self-confidence.** Giving a public speech is a challenging task, so if you learn to do it well, you will gain a great deal of self-assurance. Speaking in public is hard to do! Even people who are performers such as actors, singers, and politicians report a great deal of nervousness when they must give a public speech. However, learning to overcome our natural tendency toward fear of public speaking makes us more confident not only in public speaking situations but in general.

5. **You develop a skill that can provide satisfaction for both yourself and others.** Imagine missing an opportunity to share some childhood memories about a grandparent because you were too afraid to come up to the podium at a funeral. Or choking—while being videotaped—while trying to give a toast for the bride and groom at your brother or sister’s wedding. Or losing out on a fantastic job opportunity because you couldn’t think of anything to say during the interview. Now imagine being the person whose words are remembered for years to come because you were poised, eloquent, prepared, and effective in your content and delivery. *This class will help you to become that person.*