

**MIKE DUGAN, M.A., O.A.E.**  
**WESTERN NEVADA COLLEGE**  
**Course Syllabus for COM101 – Oral Communications**

**Revised 7/25/2010**

Message phone: 775-423-7565	Email: <a href="mailto:mdugan@wnc.edu">mdugan@wnc.edu</a>
-----------------------------	---

OFFICE HOURS: I have no office; therefore, no office hours. I am usually available the hour before class in the classroom or in a nearby area and will stay after class as long as possible if you need help. You may also Email questions, requests for assistance on a presentation, requests for general information and rough outlines at any time. As long as the system is working I will try to reply within 24 hours.

Please note that this document is a work in progress, and the instructor reserves the right to change it as class requirements dictate.

A syllabus is a “contract” between the student and the instructor. It describes what the instructor expects from the student so that he/she can learn the subject and earn an appropriate grade. It also describes what the student can expect from the instructor to give him/her the best possible opportunity to learn the subject. Additionally it contains information a student may need to know beyond the strictly academic needs of the course. What follows is our contract. Learn its contents as your grade and skill at the end of the term are based on what it contains.

TEXT: There is no text for this class. I do this because effective public speaking is a PERFORMANCE "art" and as such you will learn more in this class by listening to what I have to say and watching what I do than you can from a book. A text can tell you what to do but not HOW to do it. *In 45+ years of competitive speaking and teaching I have not found a text that is as valuable as your own observation and practice of demonstrated behaviors.* There are, however, “book chapters” I have written that go along with the lectures you will be getting in class. They are assigned as homework during the term and can be found by going to my web page (<http://www.wnc.edu/~mdugan/>) and clicking on the COM 101 course. This is also the location of various forms you will need during the semester.

NOTE: The course schedule you will find there is **not** current because the actual schedule will depend on the number of students in the class when the fall semester begins and because there are some changes in progress.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: An introduction to the principles and practices of public speaking. A study of communication with the emphasis on speaking effectively. Traditional and modern theories of the communication process, self-evaluation of speaking and listening skills, choice of topics, research, using electronic media to access modern oral communication aids, organization and outlining, appreciation of intercultural forms of communications and presentations, and the

study and practice of informative, interpretive and persuasive forms of public speaking may be included.

**DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES:** If you have a disability for which you will need to request accommodations, please contact the Disability Support Services office (Bristlecone building, Room 103) at 445-3266 or 445-3275 as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

**STUDENT E-MAIL ADDRESSES:** Beginning June 30, 2010, WNC no longer provides students with an email address. Each student is required to provide the college with a personal email address so that they can be contacted when a school-wide notice is required. **Add your personal email address to your college record by logging into your WEB-REG and follow the "Update Address" link.** For information regarding only my class (notice that special information needs to be brought to class or a change of some sort) I need the same information. Since many, if not most, email addresses are nicknames or coding of some sort (brincobuster@wahoo.com or classclown@jester.com for example) **during the week following the first class meeting you are to send me an email that includes your name so I know who you are.**

**THE CLASSROOM IS A NO ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION ZONE:** Unless you are a certified emergency worker (medical or law enforcement personnel) or a military member on watch and are **REQUIRED** to be immediately available by cell phone, your cell phone must be turned OFF prior to the start of the class session. This ban includes texting and the use of computers for anything other than taking notes (no internet connections allowed). Persons who are on emergency recall must let me know before the class session starts. Those persons who are required to be on call must place their phones in the vibrate mode. For family emergencies have the caller contact Campus Security at 427-6213. Make sure the caller gives Security your name and classroom number.

**I have failed two students who violated this rule so be aware that I am serious about not having preventable outside distractions during class.**

**STUDENT BEHAVIOR:** Under most circumstances people are considerate of others. This becomes very important in the classroom environment because of the number of people trying to learn various subjects. In this context it is important to remember that disruptive behavior cannot be tolerated. Western Nevada College has established a [Student Behavior Policy](#) with which every student and instructor should become familiar. Violation of this policy in my classes will result with the student(s) being told to leave the class and not return until he/she (they) can behave in a courteous and considerate manner. Being told to leave the class because of behavioral problems also counts as an absence; see the ATTENDANCE policy listed later in the syllabus.

**GOALS:** Students will recognize and demonstrate communication skills based on instruction and discussion which acknowledges that effective human communication is a process which involves the selecting, sorting, and sending of symbols in such a way as to help a listener elicit, from his/her own mind, a meaning similar to that intended by the speaker. Students will demonstrate their skills via the presentation of speeches to entertain, to inform and to persuade (to convince or to activate/motivate) as well as an impromptu speech. Students will lead and participate in group discussion reaching problem-solving or fact finding goals, and will respond to comments and questions from the audience while maintaining objectivity (their cool).

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES: Upon completion of this course, the students will be able to demonstrate increased abilities in public speaking, personal communication and career communication contexts.

I. Public Speaking Contexts.

- A. Demonstrate the presentation of speeches to inform, to entertain, to persuade, and participation in group problem solving situations.
  - 1. Use an attention getting opener.
  - 2. Verbalize a clear thesis and preview of the main points.
  - 3. Keep the main points clear by using an arrangement pattern suitable to the topic (logical, chronological, relational, etc.), and transitions that show relationships between points.
  - 4. Conclude the presentation with a brief summary of the points covered followed by a MEMORY to keep the information in the minds of the listeners.
  - 5. Use visual aids (when called for) to help clarify a point, make it interesting, and establish "authority."
  - 6. Maintain clear articulation, vocal variety and expressiveness, which complement the message, indicate sincerity and enthusiasm, and demonstrate a conversational style of speaking.
  - 7. Use effective pauses and reduce or eliminate the use of fillers.
  - 8. Communicate confidence and control over content and delivery.
- B. Respond to comments and questions from the members of the audience using behaviors that convey knowledge, confidence and integrity while maintaining control over the Q &A environment. This is to be done without getting flustered, impatient, or angry under ANY circumstances.

II. Group Communication Contexts.

- A. Lead and participate in group discussions reaching problem-solving goals or fact-finding goals.
- B. Maintain group cohesiveness by using task and maintenance behaviors.
- C. Properly use visual aids to help in problem-solving and/or fact-finding situations.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS: Each person is required to give a minimum of 7 graded tasks as follows:	
A	#1 - A speech to entertain (original story telling). This is just another speech you will use to pass along information to your listeners but this time you will be able to tell a story you want to make up about something your have done, something you have seen or something that has happened

	<p>to you. The object of this presentation is to get you to use gestures properly. Imagine that you are on a stage and need to make sure the people in the nose-bleed section can SEE the actions and emotions involved in your story. You are also encouraged to make the maximum use of your vocal talents. <b>Minimum and maximum times will be determined based on class size and number of class meeting available during the term.</b> Value = 100 points.</p>
B	<p>#2 – An impromptu speech. The subject will be drawn from the Yak yak jar which contains approximately 200 random subjects. After drawing the first topic you will have 15 seconds to decide whether or not you wish to speak on the subject. If you decide you do not like the topic you must draw AND SPEAK on a second topic. You will have 1 minute to organize your thoughts. This exercise is designed to show you the difference between being prepared to speak and “talking off the top of your head.” Minimum time = 3 minutes, maximum time = 5 minutes. The evaluation grades will be based solely upon your presentation skills including, but not limited to fillers, use of language, gestures and eye contact. Value = 50 points.</p>
C	<p>#3 - A speech to inform. Don't make this difficult, it just means that you are going to tell us about something... pass along information. <b>Minimum and maximum times will be determined based on class size and number of class meeting available during the term.</b> Value = 150 points.</p>
D	<p>#4 - A speech to persuade. I will explain the three most commonly used forms of persuasive speeches (supportive, convincing, and motivating), the two-and-a-half easiest approaches (comparative analysis and problem/solution(s)) and show you how they fit into the outline format I will give you and <u>insist</u> that you use. <b>Minimum and maximum times will be determined based on class size and number of class meeting available during the term.</b> Value = 250 points.</p>
E	<p>#5 - A speech of your choice (entertain, inform or persuade) but this time you must use at least one visual aid and use it (or them) properly. Normally the visual aids that are available are a board attached to a wall, a video, a computer connected to a projector, an overhead of some sort, handouts and- SOMETIMES - an easel. I will show you HOW to use them, after that the choice of which one(s) to use is up to you. <b>Minimum and maximum times will be determined based on class size and number of class meeting available during the term.</b> Value = 300 points.</p>
F	<p><b>Each student will provide an outline of the speech (#1 and #3 through #5) to me immediately prior to presenting his/her speech. The outline must not be stapled but must have a paper clip attached, even if it is only a single sheet. The paper needs to be 8½ X 11 with smooth edges all</b></p>

	around because I make copies. Failure to do so will result in a 5 point reduction of the outline score. 5 points will be deducted for each week of delay in receiving any outline. Value = 25 points per outline.
G	There will be one written exam with a value of 50 points.
H	Total possible points from all the sources mentioned above = 1,000.

GRADING POLICY: Grades are based on a 1,000 point scale as annotated in this table.

A = 1000 – 900
B = 899 – 800
C = 799 – 700
D = 669 – 600
F = 599 and below

Any decimal points above the N99.00 level will be bumped up to the next grade. For example a final score of 799.05 will earn a grade of B. No plus (+) or minus (-) grades will be issued in this class.

As long as it fits the speech type (entertaining, informative or persuasive) scheduled for that week, presentations that are to be used in another class or in a public environment may be practiced and used as your graded speech.

Being absent when called upon to speak reduces your gross score by 10% of the total possible for that speech. Not being prepared to speak when you are called upon to do so results in the same point percentage reduction as an absence on a speaking day (-10% of the possible gross score).

Speaking for less than the minimum time or for more than the maximum time will reduce your gross score by 15 points. The minimum time assumes that you will make an honest effort to comply with the requirement. With the exception of #2, the impromptu speech, if you are under your minimum time by one minute or more **you will not have satisfied the speech requirement.** You will have to repeat the speech type, if not the subject **and you will be penalized 10% of the speech value for not being “prepared to speak.”**

ACADEMIC HONESTY. The work that you do for this class must be your own. If you use the ideas or exact words of someone else in one of your speeches, you must give that person credit. Failure to do so is *plagiarism* and will result in an automatic grade of zero for that speech. Plagiarism is a serious academic infraction that will not be tolerated. I reserve the right to give

students a grade of F in the course for academic dishonesty. See the [WNC Academic Integrity Policy](#) for more details.

**ATTENDANCE:** Attendance is mandatory. If you miss three class meetings for *any* reason your grade will automatically drop to a "B", missing four classes reduces it to a "C" and five absences reduces it to a "D". Six or more absences will result in a failing grade unless **YOU** officially withdraw from the course. In those cases the points you have otherwise earned will NOT be considered for grading.

Time will generally be available during class meetings for make up speeches (only one per customer) and this does not include group participation. Students needing this second chance must confer with me immediately upon missing a speech to make this opportunity possible. This also applies to those speeches that have to be redone because the first attempt was one minute or more less than the required minimum time.

#### THE RULES:

- ▶ **No speech, or comment relating to that speech, may contain negative reference (intentional and/or incidental) to local individuals and/or organizations.**
- ▶ Vulgarity, even if it is generally accepted in your social circle, is not allowed in my classroom.
- ▶ Gender bashing is not allowed in my classroom.
- ▶ Personal attacks are not allowed in my classroom. This includes arguments about such trivial things as the best brand of pickup truck or best tasting bubble gum. If a "disagreement" goes beyond my instruction to terminate, all parties involved will leave the classroom for the remainder of the class time for that evening and will be counted as absent. Return to the class will be subject to the requirements of the Student Behavior Policy.
- ▶ The following is a policy instituted by the administration at the Fallon Campus. **Food in any form is not allowed in the Fallon classrooms. Only covered beverages are allowed in the Fallon classrooms.** Please use the break areas in the lobbies or art gallery or outside patio for eating areas.
- ▶ Chewing any type of food product (including gum) or wearing head gear while you are speaking is not allowed.
- ▶ Humor is strongly encouraged in my classroom.
- ▶ Attempting to solve the world's problems is strongly discouraged in my classroom.
- ▶ Speeches based on religion, politics or any other "hot" issues are not allowed in my classroom. UNR has a debate team so if you're interested in argumentation....
- ▶ If you need to establish the audience (let us know what type of people we are, ex. Pregnant girls who are 8½ months along, Life Guards in training, Travel Agents, Astrophysicists, etc.), do so **BEFORE** you begin your speech.
- ▶ If you are late and I am speaking please enter as quietly as possible and take your seat.

- ▶ If you are late and a student is speaking, wait outside until the Q & A period then enter quietly and take your seat.
- ▶ You must be prepared to speak on the **first** speaking day for each presentation.

MY GUARANTEE: If you follow my instructions you will be a more effective speaker at the end of the semester no matter what your skill level is at the beginning of the term.

An effective speaker gives the impression of comfort and knowledge whether or not they actually exist in the speaker's mind. Effective speaking does NOT require serious topics. Because of the limited amount of time and the large number of students, in this classroom it is better for you to choose topics:

That interest YOU.

About which you have a good amount of knowledge without having to do extensive research.

With which you can have some fun.

In following those guidelines you will be able to make the subject matter interesting to your listening audience.

MY BASIC RULE: If you do not feel that you should be allowed to have fun in a college class then you need to think hard about staying in my speech class. Part of learning to speak effectively in public is learning how to relax and enjoy the experience as much as possible. Choosing topics that allow you to have some fun heightens the probability that you will be more relaxed and, therefore, more effective. In this way you will learn to be less tense and nervous when you stand up to speak in a public environment outside the classroom.

This will help you in your business and social life in that you will be able to clearly and concisely present your ideas/arguments with the positive image of the effective speaker. People who appear to be credible and knowledgeable are more likely to be listened to and have their ideas accepted than those people who present random thoughts in a manner that leave the listener with the impression that the speaker doesn't really know what he/she is talking about. This classroom environment is the perfect place to practice being that audience oriented speaker that people will listen to.

Finally:

**RELAX AND HAVE FUN!**