

COMM190A

Course Syllabus

Fall 2025

If you prefer to download your own copy of the syllabus, there's a version of this syllabus formatted as a Word document [here](#)

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Contact Information

Instructor

Name: Emily Caldes Firgens

Contact Information

Email: N/A

Office: Knott 102C

Office Hours

TBA

Course Meeting Time

Course Meeting Time:

M/W/F 9-9:50am

Course Format:

Classroom In-Person (IP)

For student Zoom resources:

 **Zoom Resources** (<https://msmary.instructure.com/courses/2804/pages/zoom-resources-for-students>)

Synchronous Location (if applicable):

In-person at the Emmitsburg Campus, Knott AC 207

Course Description

In this course, you will practice skills for being an effective public speaker in all situations. You will learn habits and techniques that increase your individual strengths as a speaker; engage in formal and informal peer feedback and coaching to correct your weaknesses and fix your bad habits; and learn to connect with the specific people in any given audience. Along the way, we will learn a selection of key terms, ideas, and theories that explain what makes a person persuasive and eloquent so you have a vocabulary for evaluating your own speaking skillset and the skills of others.

Learning Objectives



Course Learning Objectives

1. Become a better public speaker than when you entered the class
2. Develop a roadmap for improving your speaking skills in the future
3. Learn foundational theories of persuasion and eloquence

University Program Goals

As a Catholic University grounded in the liberal arts, we ask all students to complete a common, sequenced, and interdisciplinary core curriculum. The University intends the whole of its undergraduate program to enable students to:

- The Catholic Vision of the Human Person: Understand and articulate the Catholic vision of the human person, particularly as it relates to the nature of the good, the relationship between faith and reason, and the human relationship with God;
- The Western Tradition: Integrate diverse modes of human inquiry and expression through rigorous study of the Western tradition, including its American expression;
- Competencies: Master the skills of analysis, interpretation, communication, and problem solving;
- Major Field of Study: Understand the purposes and concepts of at least one major field of study and become proficient in its methodology;
- Social Justice in a Global Community: Understand the diversity of human cultures in a global community, to see and seek to respond with justice and solidarity to all in the global community, to protect human dignity, to work for peace and freedom, and to respect the integrity of creation;

A Life Well-Lived: Continue a life of learning, growth in faith and mature spirituality, and service to the common good.

Textbooks & Reading Material

There are no textbooks or assigned readings in this course.

Course Policies



Assignment Policies

Late Work

Late work can earn a maximum of a C. Exceptions to this rule are possible if you reach out to me to discuss alternate arrangements.

Missing Work

All assignments must be completed to earn a passing grade in this class.

Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence

Per our campus's policies and regulations [here](https://catalog.msmary.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=511)  (<https://catalog.msmary.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=511>), any academic integrity violation will at minimum result in a failing grade for the assignment in question. Repeated violations will result in a failing grade in the course. I allow the use of generative AI to brainstorm, find ideas, draft outlines, and check grammar/style. I do not allow using generative AI to impersonate you in classroom contexts, such as using it to write a full speech draft for you, and will consider such uses academic integrity violations equivalent to plagiarism.

Attendance

Attendance

After three absences, each additional absence will result in a 2% deduction from your final grade. Exceptions to this rule are possible if you reach out to me beforehand to discuss specific reasons for missing class and make plans for making up the missed time. Unexcused absences on class periods when your classmates are giving speeches will result in a full letter grade deduction on your own speech in that round.

Grade Scale

A	95 - 100	An achievement. You went above and beyond assignment expectations.
A-	90 - 95	
B+	87 - 89	Good work that exceeds assignment expectations.
B	83 - 86	
B-	80 - 82	
C+	77 - 79	Average—you did the assignment.
C	73 - 76	
C-	70 - 72	
D+	67 - 69	Below average. You did the assignment poorly.
D	63 - 66	
D-	60 - 62	
F	59 and below	Failing. You did not understand the assignment or put forth any effort

Name	Percentage	Point Value
Major Speeches	60%	600
Explanatory Speech	10%	100
Persuasive Speech	20%	200
Motivational Speech	15%	150
Your Speech	15%	150

Homework	40%	400
Outlines	15%	150 (50 points each)
Evaluations	10%	100 (50 points each)
Speech Proposal	15%	150

Student Responsibilities ▼

Classroom Environment

Public speaking is a stressful experience for most new speakers. Everyone is in the same boat, needing to learn basic skills about public speaking, and needing to practice those skills—and work through making mistakes—in front of a live audience. With that in mind, I expect everyone to bring a team attitude to the classroom, to support each other as everyone works to improve and elevate each other. I will not tolerate disrespectful behavior or discriminatory action.

Technology in the Classroom

I do not prohibit the use of cell phones or laptops in class, but I might gently fetch your attention back if you seem distracted. My expectation is that you take notes on material taught during lectures and demonstrate your mastery of that material in your self-evaluations, outlines, speeches, and peer review, and I trust you to monitor your own technology usage with that expectation in mind. I have one exception to this rule: if you are consistently on your phone or otherwise clearly—and disrespectfully—distracting yourself while your classmates are giving speeches, I reserve the right to repeat that behavior back to you during your own speech.

Assignments and Descriptions

Speaking Assignments

1. Explanatory Speech – In 4 to 6 minutes, introduce us to something in your life we don't know about by explaining it and your history with it. It could be a belief, hobby, or skill of yours, but it

must be something you're already familiar with, and it must be complicated enough to need explaining. This speech practices using relatable narratives to convey clear information.

2. Persuasive Speech – In 6 to 8 minutes, relying on five expert sources, do two things: (1) explain the cause and consequences of a societal problem and (2) persuade us of the change that needs to happen to solve that problem. Your goal is to convince the audience that the problem matters and your solution will work. This speech practices using expert sources to build a complicated argument, delivering that argument with clarity and precision, and rebutting counterarguments while relating to audience members who disagree with you.
3. Motivational Speech – In 4 to 7 minutes, motivate your audience to take some action to fix a pressing need in their life. Your goal is to make them feel so strongly about some problem in their lives and/or community that they are likely to take action to solve that problem, and to offer them a tangible solution that they could easily put into action by themselves. This speech practices balancing emotional appeals with direct appeals to the needs and values of an audience.
4. Your Speech – Late in the semester, you will write a topic proposal for a fourth major speech of your choice. It can be in any genre, any length requirement (as long as it is longer than three minutes and shorter than ten), and any topic. The only requirement is that, in your topic proposal, you justify why your chosen speech will help you make progress on your learning goals. You will propose the speech's grading rubric and will grade it yourself.

There are four major speeches in this course, all of which will be performed live in-class. In addition to those speeches, You will complete three varieties of graded homework in this course: speech outlines, self-evaluations, and one speech proposal. I'll posted detailed instructions for them on Canvas and the schedule below shows their due dates. All homework is due as an upload to Canvas at midnight on its due date.

I grade homework based (1) on how well you demonstrate your knowledge of class material; (2) how thoroughly you answer the given assignment's questions; and (3) the professional quality (free of typos and grammatical mistakes) of your writing.

Course Calendar

See the syllabus's schedule [here](#)

[\(\\$CANVAS_COURSE_REFERENCE\\$/file_ref/g52c5276fac6d6cd19e612779e3832028?wrap=1\)](#) for the full calendar.

Technology Requirements

Technology tools and skills needed to be successful in your courses:

- Understand basic computer hardware and software
- Know how to use a keyboard and a mouse
- Be able to manage files and folders using operations such as save, copy, rename, delete etc.
- Be competent in the use of Microsoft Office or applications similar to Word, Excel, PowerPoint
- Be able to send and download files and attachments.
- Know how to communicate using live.msmary.edu email
- Know how to use the Internet to access your course, perform online research, and use search engines and databases.

Technology Requirements:

Please review the Information Technology Support Center's (ITSC) [minimum software and hardware requirements](#) 

<https://msmaryedu.sharepoint.com/ITSC/SiteAssets/SitePages/Students/Laptop%20Specs%2022-23.pdf>). Please note that courses often cannot be successfully completed on a Chromebook, tablet, or cellular device. Consistent access to a reliable computer and Internet connection are required for all courses.

If students have technical difficulties submitting assignments in Canvas, they should contact Canvas Help for assistance *before* the due date/time. Representatives from Canvas will provide technical support and an email confirmation regarding the status of the request. Students must forward the email to the professor along with their assignment to earn full credit if the problem cannot be resolved prior to the deadline.

If you have computer issues or are unable to access your Mount e-mail contact ITSC at 301-447-5805 or submit a support ticket by emailing itsc@msmary.edu (<mailto:itsc@msmary.edu>).

Mount Policies & Info

Academic Integrity ▼

An academic community, regardless of delivery modality (e.g., in-person, online), must operate with complete openness, honesty and integrity. Responsibility for maintaining this atmosphere lies with the students, faculty and administration. Therefore, the achievement of personal and academic goals through dishonest means will not be tolerated. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to:

1. **Cheating:** the unauthorized use, access, or exchange of information before or during a quiz, test or semester examination. Unauthorized collaboration on a class assignment, submitting the same work in two courses without the professor's permission, and buying or selling work for a course are also forms of cheating.
2. **Plagiarism:** the representation of someone else's words or ideas as one's own. The various forms of plagiarism include but are not limited to copying homework, falsifying lab reports, submitting papers containing materials written by another person, and failing to document correctly in one's written assignment words, arguments or ideas secured from other sources including content available from websites, and/or generated through A.I. without the instructor's permission. Plagiarism detection software may be used with assignment submissions to verify original work.
3. **Providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the professor** in the creation of work to be submitted for academic evaluation including papers, projects and examinations; presenting as one's own the ideas or words of another (including those generated from A.I.) for academic evaluation without proper acknowledgement and permission from the instructor.
4. **Doing unauthorized academic work** for which another person will receive credit or be evaluated.
5. **Misrepresenting student identity:** posing as another or having someone pose as you is an act of academic misconduct. Identity verification may be required to complete course activities and assessments.

6. **Attempting to influence one's academic evaluation** by means other than academic achievement or merit including unauthorized access to computer systems.
7. **Assisting in misconduct:** cooperation with another in an act of academic misconduct. A student who writes a paper, posts a paper or exam questions online, or does an assignment for another student is an accomplice and will be held accountable just as severely as the other. Any student who permits another to copy from his or her own paper, examination, or project shall be held as accountable as the student who submits the copied material. Students are expected to safeguard their work and should not share papers, projects, homework, or exam answers with other students unless specifically directed to by their professors.
8. **Failure to protect University accounts and computer systems** such as sharing of accounts, passwords, and other assigned resources whether with intention or through negligence.

Canvas Information

Canvas is where course content, grades, and communication will reside for this course. Should you need assistance using Canvas click on the "Help" icon on the far left of your screen at the bottom of your blue navigation menu. From that link you will have access to:

- A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document with direct links to support
- Canvas Guides for Students
- Live chat with Canvas Help Desk (24/7). MSMU has the premium subscription. Please don't hesitate to contact them for help.
- Live phone support, also 24/7
- For Canvas passwords or any other computer-related technical support contact the [ITSC Help Desk](https://inside.msmmary.edu/more/information-technology/itsc.html)  (<https://inside.msmmary.edu/more/information-technology/itsc.html>).
- ITSC@msmary.edu (<mailto:ITSC@msmary.edu>)
- 301-447-5805

Classroom Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability who requires an academic adjustment, auxiliary aid, or similar accommodation, please contact Mount St. Mary's Learning Service director to discuss eligibility for accommodations and academic adjustments at 301-447-5006 (V/TTD).

Mount Report: Campus-wide Reporting

In the spirit of providing students a quality education and ensuring student success, offering an appropriate array of support services, and supporting student concerns, Mount St. Mary's University takes seriously concerns and complaints brought to its attention.

As such when a student encounters a problem on campus or feels they have been treated unfairly, the student should first attempt to resolve the issue informally with the employee, department, service, process or administrative procedure involved. Many issues can be resolved by making an appointment and honestly communicating the concern(s).

If a student is not satisfied after working to resolve the matter directly, they may use the **Mount Report**  (<https://msmary.edu/reporting.html>) process to file a formal student complaint.

Mount Report Link  (<https://msmary.edu/reporting.html>)

The Student Complaint Process does not apply to grade appeals, complaints of sexual harassment, or any student-to-student complaints.

The Mount Report process can be used for reporting violations of Title IX policy*. Please refer to the **Mount St. Mary's University Catalog**  (<http://catalog.msmary.edu/>), **Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment**  (<https://msmary.edu/title-ix-sexual-harassment-discrimination-policy/index.html>), or **Student Code of Conduct**  (<https://inside.msmary.edu/student-affairs/files/msmu-student-code-of-conduct.pdf>), respectively, for procedures regarding these types of complaints.

Intellectual Property



The use of copyrighted materials in this course to support teaching and learning is done so with permission from the copyright holder or according to Fair Use Guidelines and the TEACH Act. As such, you are permitted to download a copy of copyrighted works posted in our secured course site in Canvas for your personal use, but you are not authorized to redistribute to others (e.g., make copies to distribute, forward as attachments). Similarly, the intellectual property of students (e.g., presentations/posts in discussion forums) should not be shared with or redistributed to others.

Netiquette



Please consider these guidelines as you actively participate in our course.

Be constructive: Our goal is to develop a safe, collaborative, and constructive learning community. Constructive posts are encouraged. Often sharing a differing perspective or opinion advances our shared learning. When responding to a classmate, respectfully indicate why you do or do not agree with their view. If you would not make a comment face-to-face, please do not do so online. Refrain from using any offensive or foul language, always discuss or respectfully debate content, but never attack a member of our learning community. Try not to dominate any discussion, but do regularly share your experiences and knowledge.

Be considerate: Though mobile technologies have enhanced our ability to access course content from anywhere and at any time, we should not expect instantaneous responses to our posts or questions. Give others a reasonable amount of time to respond within the participation guidelines established by the course instructor. Once you have posted or replied in a discussion thread, regularly check the thread for new comments, and respond accordingly.

Be professional: Often in the online environment, facial expressions and body language are absent and what you intended to be constructive may be interpreted otherwise. In addition to spelling and grammar considerations, you will want to read your comments before you post to ensure that your intent is accurately conveyed. Often a bit of politeness goes a long way, so if someone helps out, thank that person online just as you would face-to-face. Refrain from using all caps as that is perceived as shouting in the online setting. If you

receive a private message, reply in private. There may be a reason the other participant chose to comment in private. You should not forward to another or post publicly.

Be respectful: This institution and its instructors embrace learners from diverse backgrounds and seeks to develop and support an inclusive learning community. Please be sensitive to the diversity of all members in our learning community and ensure your comments are inclusive to all members. Learning is about sharing ideas and concepts. We do not all have to agree with an opinion or comment, but we should be open to and respectful of others' ideas and comments. MSMU supports open discussion, but does not tolerate sexist, bigoted, racist, or demeaning content. Your instructor can and will censor or remove a post if he/she deems it violates institutional guidelines or course expectations. You will be contacted in the event of any such censorship to identify how the content violated guidelines and to discuss supportive roles in our learning community.

Be appropriate: When participating in synchronous conferences or posting video to the LMS remain professional and appropriate in your setting and in your attire at all times.

Stay positive: Keeping a positive attitude can go a long way to building a supportive learning community and toward reducing personal stress. If you are having any difficulties or concerns with the course (e.g., using Canvas, understanding an assignment or activity, comfort with a discussion) please contact your instructor or a peer for support. Often early communication and requests for assistance can alleviate larger issues later.

Privacy Policy

To ensure your privacy and security with communications, assignment submissions, and assessment feedback, only the Canvas Learning Management System (course communications, grading) and MSMU email (other written communication) will be used.

Explanatory Outline

- Due Sep 5, 2025 by 11:59pm
- Points 50
- Submitting a file upload

In this draft of your speech outline, you should set out, in bullet-pointed keywords, the basic structure for your explanatory speech. This is not a final draft: I expect your outline to change, based on my feedback, between now and when you deliver your speech. But this draft should contain enough information that I can assess your chosen topic, judge how good of a plan you currently have, and give advice about what (or what not) to say.

Specifically, I'm looking for the following:

1. An concise introduction that has a clear thesis statement, attempts to build ethos in some way, and makes a clear preview/transition into the body of the speech.
2. Main points in the body of your speech that flow chronologically, tell a detailed story about your personal experience with your chosen topic, and give enough information to explain that topic.
3. Clear transitions between main points.
4. A conclusion that quickly summarizes your thesis.
5. Enough detail per each bullet point that I can follow your train of thought--and so you can, too!--but not full sentences or paragraphs per each point.

Outside of those requirements, everything else about this outline is up to you. You'll need to learn what works for you when you're relying on an outline to give a speech, so adjust the level of detail, formatting, and whatnot to suit your own needs. Your outline is ultimately only useful if it helps you deliver and remember your speech, so make it your own, and make it useful.

Explanatory Speech Outline			
Criteria	Ratings		Pts
Introduction A concise introduction that has a clear thesis statement, attempts to build ethos in some way, and makes a clear preview/transition into the body of the speech.	10 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Main Points in Body Main points in the body of your speech that flow chronologically, tell a detailed story about your personal experience with your chosen topic, and give enough information to explain that topic.	10 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Transitions 3. Clear transitions between main points.	10 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Conclusion A conclusion that quickly summarizes your thesis.	10 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Detailed Bullets Enough detail per each bullet point that I can follow your train of thought--and so you can, too!--but not full sentences or paragraphs per each point.	10 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Total Points: 50			

Explanatory Speech

- Due Sep 15, 2025 by 11:59pm
- Points 100

In this 4-6 minute speech, use personal narrative and informative description to explain something. It could be a hobby of yours, a skill you've learned, a sport you play, a piece of knowledge, or anything else that is complicated enough to need explaining but not too complicated to be explained within the time limit. The point is that you not only inform us about it, but that you help us understand why it matters. You should spend roughly the first half of your speech using narrative to explain your relationship to your subject--how did you first learn about it? what does it mean to you?--and the second half of your speech informing us about your subject.

Successful explanatory speeches tell us detailed stories that put us in your shoes, so to speak, and help us see for ourselves where your interest in your chosen subject came from and why it matters to you. In other words, they establish a clear and relatable ethos, and then rely on that ethos to keep an audience interested in learning something about your subject.

You *should*...

- ...*tell a specific story* that grounds the subject you're explaining in the events of your life. Think of your own experience, work, family, and tell of the things you know that no one else does. Your story doesn't need to be heart-warming or gut wrenching—it can be funny or lighthearted—but above all it should be *real*.
- ...*explain something that your audience doesn't have complete prior knowledge of*. It's fine if some of your peers know a lot about your topic, but as a general rule, you should try to explain something that roughly 3/4ths of the audience doesn't know as well as you do.
- ...*be invitational, not persuasive*. Avoid preaching or editorializing. Since this speech is about practicing using ethos strategically, make it about you, not us; speak in the first person.
- ...*speak conversationally*. Talk like you normally would in conversation. Don't try to make the speech formal or super polished. You want to talk with us, not at us.
- ...*pay close attention to organization*. Bad organization habits will haunt you the whole class if you let them develop in this first speech. Have a concise introduction with a clear thesis statement and preview of your main points; have transitions between each of your main points; and conclude the speech with a focused review of your key ideas.

You *should not*...

- ...*use outside sources or a visual aid*. Our goal is to practice just a few skills at a time, and we're going to cover how to expertly fold outside sources and visual information into a speech in the next one.
- ...*go over or under the time limit*. In the classroom, a speaker who doesn't respect the time limit inconveniences everyone else. In the "real world," if you go over time, frequently your audience will simply leave the room—say, if a meeting ends—and in any case your audience will resent you and think worse of your speech, especially if you keep them long. If you find yourself nearing the six-minute mark, don't just speed up and try to spit out everything you planned to say, and instead jump to the conclusion of your speech.

You can find a detailed rubric for the speech under the "files" tab on Canvas.

Explanatory Rubric			
Criteria	Ratings		Pts
Credible and Relatable Ethos	10 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Clear Topic that's Important in Your Life	10 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Detailed Personal Narrative about Origin of Your Interest in Topic	10 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Clear Explanation of Relevant Aspect of Topic	10 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Concise Introduction has Clear Thesis	5 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	5 pts
Strong Conclusion	5 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	5 pts
Within Time Limit	5 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	5 pts
Extemporaneous Memory	10 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Narrative Vivacity Where Appropriate	5 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	5 pts
Stylistic Clarity Throughout	5 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	5 pts
Appropriately Personal Style	5 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	5 pts
Poised and Engaging Vocal Delivery	10 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Maintains Eye Contact	10 pts Full Marks	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Total Points: 100			

Persuasive Outline

- Due Oct 3, 2025 by 11:59pm
- Points 50
- Submitting a file upload

In this draft outline for your persuasive speech, lay out, in keyword bullet-point format, how you plan to structure your speech. The length of this outline should vary depending on how comfortable you are with more or less detail on the outline and how much research you have already completed for the speech. Specifically, I will be grading these outlines based on whether you include the following details:

1. Have a policy claim as your thesis in your introduction that clearly (1) names the precise problem you're saying should be solved, (2) identifies the policy you think will solve the problem, and (3) names who or what institution should put that policy in place.
2. Have an outline organized around the four stock issues. Your arguments in your outline do not need to be finished or fully detailed, but you do need to at least lay out how you will argue according to the stock issues structure, and to attempt make at least one claim per issue.
3. Have at least two outside sources cited in-text on your outline and in a works cited page at the end of your outline. In places where you don't have sufficient evidence yet, it's fine to just write a little about your thought process for that area of the speech, mentioning the kinds of evidence you think you will need and are looking for.
4. Have persuasive and argumentative language: be direct in arguing for what you believe.
5. Have the nuts and bolts of good organization: a preview in your concise introduction, transitions between every main point, and a firm conclusion.

Persuasive Speech

- Due Oct 13, 2025 by 11:59pm
- Points 200

Goals

To practice persuading an audience with a well-organized and well-researched argument, in this 6-8 minute speech, your goal is to convince us that an urgent societal problem is worth fixing and that your proposed plan to fix it is the best one. You need to cite at least five credible sources and present using a visual aid. You should plan to spend roughly half of your speech talking about what the problem is and why it matters and the other half about what your proposed policy is and why we can be sure it will fix the problem. Successful Persuasive speeches (1) introduce us to a clearly urgent problem, (2) outline in stark terms why that problem *must* be fixed, (3) propose an easy-to-understand policy to fix the problem, and (4) demonstrate that we can be reasonably sure the policy will work as intended.

This is the hardest speech in the class and deserves more time and attention than any of the class's other assignments.

General Guidelines

You *should*...

- *...argue about something you care about.* No one is persuaded by someone who is unenthusiastic about their own ideas; likewise, if you don't care about the topic you pick, you'll have a hard time convincing your classmates to care, either.
- *...have a specific organization, governing body, institution, or etc. in mind that could actually implement your policy.* In other words, don't argue that "we should make food in Patriot better," because your audience might agree with that in the abstract, but won't know *who* could actually make that change happen. Instead, in this example, you might argue that "our university should re-examine its food sourcing contracts in order find a better catering company as soon as possible."
- *...understand each of the four stock issues and organize your speech around proving each of them.* If you don't know what we're talking about when we talk about stock issues, or about "advantage" or "solvency," then ask questions and make sure you know before you give the speech. Everything about the canons of invention and organization in this speech rely on the stock issues.
- *...have at least one piece of evidence to support each of your main stock issue claims.* One of the easiest ways to lose points on this assignment is failing to give evidence for the "harm" stock issue, for example. You need to *prove*, not merely assert, your argument, and that means your argument must be fully backed by evidence. A single missing piece can make the whole thing fall apart. For another example, if you fail to prove, with evidence, that the problem exists in the first place, then your entire speech has no logical basis in reality. Obviously, that's bad.
- *...write the speech with people who utterly disagree with you in mind.* Anyone can make an argument sound convincing to someone who already agrees with them. The hard thing—and the thing we're practicing in this class—is making an argument that convinces someone who previously disagreed with your position.

You *should not*...

- *...be afraid to ask questions.* This is a complicated speech and a large difficulty spike following the narrative speech. Moreover, it deals with skills—citing dense information quickly and constructing an argument using principles of argumentation theory—that are simply hard to learn. Ask questions to your peers, ask me questions, ask for help whenever you're confused. Most of all, don't feel bad if you're struggling to figure this speech out. Pretty much everyone finds this speech difficult. That doesn't mean you're going to do poorly on the speech—in fact, it probably means you're learning.
- *...assume that arguments you find persuasive will seem persuasive to everyone else.* Of course you find your own arguments persuasive—you thought them up in the first place! You should get in the habit of asking yourself how people with completely different views would hear your speech.
- *...be confrontational to people who disagree with you.* Nothing makes an audience tune you out faster than the feeling that you've disrespected them. If you want to persuade someone of something, you must first convince them that you're reasonable and that you have their best interests in mind. If you don't do that, all your arguments will fail—they'll only preach to the choir, so to speak.
- *...ask your classmates to actually take action about the policy you're proposing.* This sounds counterintuitive at first, but there's a difference between convincing someone that action should be taken and motivating them to actually take action themselves. We're dealing with motivation in the third speech. For now, focus on convincing your classmates that your policy should be put in place, and don't worry about getting them to do anything about it yet. We're still taking one thing at a time.

Grading

This assignment is worth 20% of your final course grade (200 points). Below are general grade guidelines. See the assignment's rubric for the specific point values attached to each canon.

- **"A" speeches** go above and beyond these tasks to make a thorough and convincing argument, and in doing so demonstrate a clear understanding of the assignment.
- **"B" speeches** accomplish these tasks with good success, with some errors and room for improvement. They are well-evidenced, on the whole, but maybe are missing a single piece of evidence here or there that could have shored up the argument, or are strong in terms of invention but have flaws in organization, style, or delivery.
- **"C" speeches** are average: they name a problem and a policy, but don't spend nearly enough time talking about one or the other, or are otherwise lacking major pieces of evidence for significant parts of their argument. They leave the audiences knowing *what* policy you want to put in place, but not necessarily convinced *that* the policy must be put in place.
- **"D" speeches** are below average, with significant errors, lack of organization and research, and a clear lack of rehearsal. They leave your audience unsure about the exact nature of the problem and/or policy that you attempted to discuss.
- **"F" speeches** do not abide by the requirements, demonstrate little to no rehearsal, and do not show evidence of proper research, organization, and/or formatting.

Persuasive Speech

Criteria	Ratings			Pts
At least five sources cited out-loud	10 pts Full Marks	5 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
"Harm" Claim, With Evidence	10 pts Full Marks	5 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
"Significance" Claim, With Evidence	10 pts Full Marks	5 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
"Advantage" Claim, With Evidence	10 pts Full Marks	5 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
"Solvency" Claim, With Evidence	10 pts Full Marks	5 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
No Fallacies	10 pts Full Marks	5 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Clear Ethos on the Topic	10 pts Full Marks	5 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Detailed Policy from Clear Institution	10 pts Full Marks	5 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Concise Introduction with Clear Policy Thesis	10 pts Full Marks	5 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Transitions Between Every Main Point	10 pts Full Marks	5 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Signposts Keep Argument Easy to Follow	10 pts Full Marks	5 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Conclusion Summarizes Your Argument	10 pts Full Marks	5 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Within 6 to 8 Minutes	10 pts Full Marks	5 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Use of Outline Mostly When Citing Sources	30 pts Full Marks	15 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	30 pts

Criteria	Ratings			Pts
Natural and Poised Delivery	10 pts Full Marks	5 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Useful Visual Aid	10 pts Full Marks	5 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
No Jargon	10 pts Full Marks	5 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Vivacity Where Appropriate	10 pts Full Marks	5 pts Half	0 pts No Marks	10 pts
Total Points: 200				