

Public Speaking: Secrets from the Classical Tradition

MR 3:00-4:15, Denny 103

Prof. Christopher Francese (francese@dickinson.edu)

Department of Classical Studies

East College 106

Office Hours: M–Th 1:30–3:00, or by appointment

Learning goals

- tailor an argument to an audience (balancing reason, evidence, and emotion, articulating common ground)
- craft a message at the word and sentence level (using metaphor and other devices to add vitality and polish)
- deliver a speech effectively (timing, gesture, voice modulation)

Required Books

HWA = Marcus Tullius Cicero, *How to Win an Argument: An Ancient Guide to the Art of Persuasion*. Translated and edited by James May. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016.

HBR = *On Point: How to Become a Fearless Public Speaker*. Boston: Harvard Business Review, 2019.

Sallust = Sallust, *Catiline's Conspiracy, The Jugurthine War, Histories*. Translated by William Batstone. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Grading Breakdown

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|---------------------------|-----|--|
| Participation | 15% | attend, do the reading, discuss well, give good feedback |
| Talk 1 | 10% | February 6 |
| Talk 2 | 15% | March 2 |
| Talk 3 | 15% | March 30 |
| Talk 4 | 15% | April 23 |
| Talk 4 revision | 15% | May 8. In lieu of final exam, given at an open forum, Althouse 106, 7:30-9:30 p.m. |
| post-talk reflections (4) | 15% | Reflect on what went well and what you would like to improve on, what you learned from reading and listening |

Criticism and Feedback

You must be prepared to receive frank, honest and constructive criticism of your presentations from the instructor and your classmates, and to offer such criticism to others. However, insensitive, abusive or overly personal remarks are not acceptable. You are expected to be respectful of others, and what they say. You work as a team to improve each other's skills. What is said in class—speeches and criticisms—stays in class.

Criteria

It is not necessary, and I do not expect, that you already be a confident or natural public speaker to do well in this class. Many different kinds of personal styles can be, and are, effective. You should aim to be yourself, while striving to improve. Criteria for evaluation of the speeches are spelled out in a rubric to be discussed in the class. These criteria evaluate not natural ability but elements that can be mastered by anybody with thought, preparation, and practice.

Schedule

Week 1 (1/20)

1/20: Introduction

1/23: Bring in favorite speech to share, transcribe four minutes of it; say what you like about it.

- Roy Peter Clark, "[What I learned about writing from reading Greta Thunberg's speech to the U.N.](#)" *Poynter*, October 15, 2019 (2,000 words)

Week 2 (1/27)

1/27: Framing an argument [*inventio*]

- Jay Conger, "The Necessary Art of Persuasion," *HBR* pp. 46–57
- Cicero, *HWA* pp. 12–19 (invention and arrangement)
- Connor Neill, "[How to Start a Speech](#)" (video: 2:29)
- [Chris Anderson, "How to Give a Killer Presentation," *HBR* p. 12–19 optional]

1/30: Virtues of Style [*elocutio*]

- Cicero, *HWA* p. 69–102 (style)
- George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language," *George Orwell: A Collection of Essays* (Garden City, NY, 1954), pp. 162–177 [originally published in 1946]
- [Galen Rowe, "Style," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 121–129.] (optional)

Week 3 (2/3)

2/3: Gesture and Delivery [*actio*]

- Cicero, *HWA*, pp. 110–118
- Nick Morgan, "How to Become an Authentic Speaker," *HBR*, pp. 89–92.
- Amy J.C. Cuddy et al., "Connect, Then Lead," *HBR* pp. 100–107.
- Kasia Wezowski, "Six Ways to Look More Confident During a Presentation," *HBR* pp. 117–119

2/6: Talk 1: Significant Object**Week 4 (2/10)**2/10: **Talk 1: Significant Object**

2/13: [reflection piece due]

Week 5 (2/17)

2/17: Persuasion, propaganda, and demagoguery

- “American Propaganda: The Four Minute Men” [PBS](#) (2:33)
- “Four Minute Men: Volunteer Speeches During World War I,” [History Matters](#) (2,800 words)
- “Victory in 240 Seconds — How the ‘Four-Minute Men’ Sold World War One to the American People” [Military History Now](#), Dec. 10, 2014 (1,200 words)

2/20: Praise and Blame

- Sallust, *Catiline’s Conspiracy*, pp. 10–47. Audio.

Week 6 (2/24)

2/24: Invective

- John Ferguson and J.P.V.D. Balsdon, “Marcus Tullius Cicero.” [Britannica](#) (2,600 words)
- read and/or listen to Cicero, *Catilinarian Oration* 1. [Audio](#) read by Samuel Rowe. [Translation of Yonge](#) (1856) as read in the video. [Loeb Classical Library Edition](#) (18 pp., translated by MacDonald 1977).

2/27: Invective

- write a one-minute invective in the style of Cicero's *First Catilinarian* against anything you would like to banish from your life (be it a vegetable, a snack food, a TV show, or what have you)

Week 7 (3/2)3/2: **Talk 2: Honorary Degree due**3/5: **Talk 2****Spring Break****Week 8 (3/16) Cancelled due to virus****3/16 [reflection piece on talk 2 due]**

Week 9 (3/23)3/23: **Ronald Reagan, "A Time for Choosing"** (October 27, 1964)

- [Video](#) (29:32)
- [Transcript](#)
- Analysis: G. Kamiya, "[1964, October 27: Campaigning for Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan delivers 'The speech.'](#)" In G. Marcus, & W. Sollors (Eds.), *A New Literary History of America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).
- Thomas W. Evans, "[The Speech](#)," in *The Education of Ronald Reagan: The General Electric Years and the Untold Story of His Conversion to Conservatism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), pp. 111–125.
- **Reaction:** What do you think are five the most effective phrases or lines of this speech, and why?

3/26: **Storytelling**

- Stephen Denning, "Telling Tales," *HBR* pp. 71–78.
- **Annotate the transcript of Reagan's "A Time for Choosing" speech in Word**, using the comment feature (Review Tab > Comment). For each story told, try to assign it to one of Denning's categories (p. 75: "sparking action," "communicating who you are," "transmitting values," etc.) and explain briefly what action it is trying to spark, what it's trying to communicate about who the person is, what values it's trying to transmit, etc. **Submit your annotated version on Moodle.**

Week 10 (3/30)3/30: **JFK, Inaugural Address** (January 20, 1961)

- Context of the speech: John Murphy, "[A Rhetorical Life](#)," from *John F. Kennedy and the Liberal Persuasion* (Lansing, MI: Michigan State Press, 2019), pp. 28–38.
- [video](#) (15:36)
- [transcript](#)
- Analysis: Burnham Carter, Jr., "[President Kennedy's Inaugural Address](#)," *College Composition and Communication* 14 (1963), 36–40.

Remarks at the Rudolph Wilde Platz, Berlin (June 26, 1963)

- [transcript](#)
- [audio](#) (9:48):
- [video](#) (with crowd shots) (10:31)

Televised address to the nation on civil rights (June 11, 1963)

- [video](#) (13:41) and transcript

Reaction: Burnham Carter identifies several effective features of Kennedy's Inaugural address. Watch and read the Berlin speech and the televised address on civil rights and collect as many examples as possible of these devices from those speeches as well.

4/2: **FDR wartime speeches**

“Day of Infamy” speech (Dec. 8, 1941)

- [Audio](#) (7:42) with transcript (click on “see transcript”)
- Analysis: “[FDR’s ‘Day of Infamy’ Speech: Crafting a Call to Arms.](#)” *Prologue Magazine*, Winter 2001, Vol. 33, No.4 (2,000 words)

“Fall of Rome” speech (June 5, 1944)

- Context of the speech: “1944: Celebrations as Rome is Liberated.” [BBC: On This Day, June 5, 2008](#). (650 words)
- [Audio \(16:23\) with transcript](#) (click on “see transcript”)

Reaction: what do you think are the main rhetorical goals of these speeches? Who are the main audience(s) and how does he address their concerns? (cite specific examples to back up your points)

Week 11 (4/6)

4/6: **Revision**

- Read all [drafts of the “Fall of Rome” speech](#).

Pick four or five of what you think are the most interesting or revealing changes between the first and final drafts. Write out the original and final phrases or sentences and **try to explain the changes in terms of FDR’s rhetorical goals in this speech**. (If a line is totally new obviously there is no original version of that line, and if a line is cut, just try to explain the cut.) **Submit this on Moodle.**

4/9: **Barak Obama “A More Perfect Union”** (March 18, 2008)

- Context of the speech: on [Wikipedia](#)
- [Video](#) (37:10)
- [Annotated transcript](#) on Genius.com ([plain transcript](#))
- Analysis: Roy Peter Clark, “[Why It Worked: A Rhetorical Analysis of Obama’s Speech on Race](#),” Poynter.org, April 1, 2008.
- **Reaction:** Find [another speech or speeches by Obama](#) on a different topic and collect 3 examples each of the strategies Clark identifies (allusion, parallelism, “two-ness” [i.e., conceptual pairs], autobiography). What is the intended effect in each case? (this could be an attempt to drive home a particular idea, to emphasize a word, to make a joke, to evoke a particular emotional response, etc.)

Week 12 (4/13)

4/13: Work on talk 3

4/17: **Talk 3 due. Submit video via Moodle.**

Week 13 (4/20)

4/20: **Apologizing**

- Holly Weeks “[Lessons from Andy Pettitte: How Not to Apologize](#),” *Harvard Business Review* February 21, 2008 (also on Moodle as .docx)

- Aristotle, *Rhetoric* Book 2 section 3 (pp. [185–189](#)) on lessening anger
- Roy Peter Clark, "[Blindsided: How Christie used passive verbs to turn himself into a victim](#)," Poynter.com January 17, 2014.
- Tiger Woods, "[Full Transcript of Tiger Woods's Statement](#)," *New York Times* Feb. 19, 2010. ([video](#) 14:00)

Response: How effective was Tiger Woods' apology in your view? What made it effective or ineffective, based on the principles described by Weeks, Aristotle, and Clark?

4/23 Apologizing

- Write a 300-word apology for the movie villain of your choice, taking care to make it convincing in line with the principles described by Weeks, Aristotle, and Clark.

Week 14 (4/27)

- [Catiline encourages the conspirators](#) (Sallust, *War with Catiline* 20, pp. 19-21) ([audio](#) 4:40)
- [Catiline's Last Speech](#) (Sallust, *War with Catiline* 58, pp.44-45) ([audio](#) 5:00)
- "Julius Caesar (100–44 BC)," *BBC History* (328 words)
- Caesar at Vesontio (*Gallic War* 1.39–41) ([.docx](#) 1400 words; [audio](#) 8:18)
- "Pep Talk Tips: Great Examples from Film and TV," *Wall Street Journal*, June 15, 2015 ([video](#) 2:07)

Response

As discussed in the audio message (4/24), pep talks given to soldiers before battle in classical texts follow a pattern. There a short introduction or exordium, then the talk itself relies essentially on three types of arguments in urging the soldiers to fight bravely: those based on

- what is advantageous (*utile*, outlining the benefits to be had);
- what is just (*iustum*; including the idea that the cause for fighting is righteous, and the enemy are evil doers); and
- what is honorable (*honestum*, such as the idea that it is honorable to die for one's country, shameful to flee, etc.

Which of these arguments is most important in each the three speeches, the two written for Catiline by Sallust, and the one by Caesar? Give some examples to back up your points.

4/30: Find a pep talk you think is effective in a film, transcribe it, and say why you think it works.

Friday, May 8, 2:00 p.m. **Talk 4 due.**

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Services (ADS). They will confidentially explain the accommodation request process and the type of documentation that Dean and Director Marni Jones will need to determine your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. To learn more about available supports, go to www.dickinson.edu/access, email access@dickinson.edu, call (717)245-1734, or go to ADS in Room 005 of Old West, Lower Level (aka "the OWLL").

If you've already been granted accommodations at Dickinson, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can meet soon to review your Accommodation Letter and complete your Blue Forms. If you will need test proctoring from ADS, remember that you will need to provide them with at least one week's notice.