Speech-Syllabus

Mr. Arias
Room 811
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Class Description

This course is designed to make you a stronger, more confident public speaker. We all talk. We all communicate. And whether we realize it or not, we all have messages worth sharing. The goal of this class is to help you improve in all three areas—clearly, thoughtfully, and effectively.

Throughout the semester, we will explore both formal and informal speaking. You will learn and practice three foundational speech types: the informative speech, the persuasive speech, and the improvisational speech. These skills will serve as the foundation for additional speeches later in the term, including the Brown Bag Speech, Country Ambassador Speech, Award Acceptance Speech, Commencement Speech, and Tribute Speech, along with frequent daily sponge-based mini speeches.

I understand that public speaking can be intimidating—sometimes uncomfortable, sometimes downright scary. Because of this, I will never ask you to do something I am not willing to model myself. I will prepare, perform, and take risks alongside you. Some days we'll be polished; other days we'll be figuring things out together. This classroom is meant to be a space for growth and practice, not perfection.

You will be rewarded for effort, willingness to participate, and honest attempts at each speaking task. Growth matters more than polish. That said, grades will be affected if a student consistently refuses to engage or brings negative or dismissive energy into the learning environment.

Speaking is encouraged and valued in this class—but purposeful speaking matters. Not every moment requires a voice, and part of becoming an effective speaker is learning when to speak and when to listen.

We have a textbook that is part of this course: The Art of Public Speaking 12th/13th Edition by Stephen E. Lucas. The version I have in book form (12) is a bit dated (2015) but gets the job done. I will rely on the pacing of this book to move across the semester.

Course Philosophy & Grading Approach

The philosophy of this course is rooted in effort, growth, and authenticity. Public speaking is a skill developed through practice, risk-taking, and reflection—not through perfection or strict compliance. Students who follow assignment guidelines to the best of their ability, prepare thoughtfully, and make an honest effort to improve will be graded favorably. While speech timing will be discussed and practiced as an important professional skill, it is treated as a guideline rather than a rigid rule in most cases. Meaningful communication, clarity of message, and audience connection matter more than hitting an exact time mark. Grades in this class reflect a student's willingness to engage, participate, and grow as a speaker over time, rather than their ability to meet inflexible technical requirements.

Grading Breakdown

Grades are earned through **effort, preparation, and participation**.

- **Speech Performances:** 60%
- **Daily Work & Practice:** 40%

Semester grades follow school policy: quarter grades = 90%, semester assessment = 10%.

Class Expectations

Students are expected to:

- Arrive on time and be ready to work
- Complete daily sponge activities at the start of class
- Participate respectfully and support classmates
- Come prepared with required materials
- Maintain a positive, professional learning environment

Attendance & Communication

Speech is a participation-based course, and attendance is important. Students are responsible for checking in about missed work after absences.

Students with concerns about an upcoming speech should speak with the instructor **at least 48 hours in advance** so support can be provided.

Late Work

- **On-time:** Eligible for full credit
- **One day late:** Up to 70% credit, depending on circumstances
- **Two days late:** Generally not accepted

School policies regarding excused absences will be followed. Extensions may be granted at the teacher's discretion when communication occurs in advance.

Behavior & Technology

Students are accountable for behavior that supports learning. Disruptive or disrespectful behavior will be addressed progressively.

Cell phones and technology must follow school policy and should support learning, not distract from it.

Support

Extra help is available:

- **Before school:** 7:15–7:50 AM
- **After school:** Until 4:00 PM

If you are nervous, struggling, or unsure how to improve—talk to me. This class is about growth.

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Student Name (printed)_____

Student Signature_____

Parent Name (Printed)_____

Parent Signature_____

Date_____

The above signatures validate that my son/daughter shared this syllabus with me and we spoke about Speech and the expectations.

Las firmas anteriores validan que mi hijo / hija compartió este programa de estudios conmigo y hablamos sobre la clase de Oratoria y las expectativas.