

Writing 2298F
Swaying the Vote:
An Introduction to Political Speech Writing

Section: 001

Time: Tuesday 10:30-12:30, Thursday 10:30-11:30

Room: UCC-53

Instructor: Dr. Aaron Schneider

Email: aschnei4@uwo.ca or Sakai email

Office: Lawson Hall 3270

Office Hours: Mon 11:30-12:30, Wed 10:30-11:30 or by appointment

Course Description and Objectives:

Swaying the Vote will introduce students to the craft of political speech writing and familiarize them with the role of the political speechwriter. This course will focus on developing a *practical* understanding of the key elements of political persuasion. To that end, in addition to reading, watching, and analyzing a wide variety of political speeches, students will write, revise, and perform their own speeches. Particular attention will be paid to the ethics of political public speaking, and to the nuances of adapting persuasive messages to specific audiences. During the term, as well as developing their ability to write and perform political speeches, students will

- build on and extend the understanding of rhetoric they developed in Speech 2001;
- improve their critical listening, reading, and writing skills;
- develop an understanding of the various types of political speeches;
- gain experience with the collaborative writing process typical of professional speech writing;
- develop and refine communications skills that will be useful in both the classroom and the workplace.

Required Texts:

Lehrman, Robert A. *The Political Speech Writer's Companion: A Guide for Writers and Speakers*

Course Requirements:

Introduction Speech	0%
Audience Adaptation Exercise (500 words)	10%
Platform/Campaign Speech: Script (750 words)	20%
Platform/Campaign Speech: Performance	10%
Situational Response Speech (750 words)	20%
Position Speech: Script (1250 words)	30%
Position Speech: Performance	10%

Note: Assignment due dates are listed on the class schedule.

Assignments/Assignment Format:

Introduction Speech: This is an ungraded speaking exercise designed to acclimatize students to public speaking before they are evaluated on their performances. Students will introduce themselves to the class in the role of a politician. Their goal will be to present their life story in a way that maximises its potential political capital.

Audience Adaptation Exercise: Students will be given the script of a short speech (2-3 pages) presenting a specific political message to a specific audience along with detailed descriptions of the original audience for the speech and a second audience. They will be asked to re-write the speech for the second audience, and hand in a brief explanation of the changes they made along with their re-write.

Platform/Campaign Speech: Students will be asked to write a speech that briefly, but memorably, outlines the key points of a political platform. Students will perform this speech in class.

Situational Response Speech: Students will be presented with a variety of political situations (potentially including, but not limited to, an unexpected tragedy, a scandal, an attack by an opposing party), and will write a speech that addresses the situation and the questions/problems/ challenges/etc. that it presents.

The Position Speech: This will be the final assignment in the class. It will ask students to draw on everything they had learned in the course, and give them hands-on experience with the job of the speechwriter. Students will be divided into pairs, and each partner will write a speech for the other to perform following this step-by-step process:

Partner A will explain his/her position on a specific political issue to Partner B. Partner B will then draft a speech for Partner A that expresses his/her opinion, and works to achieve the rhetorical goal he/she has specified. Partner A will give Partner B feedback on the draft, and Partner B will revise the draft. Partner B will hand in the script of the speech, and Partner A will perform the speech in class.

The object of this assignment will be to allow the students to experience writing a speech for another person to perform, as well as give them a sense of what it is like to perform a speech written by someone else.

Note: Complete assignments will be posted on Sakai.

Submitting Assignments

Written assignments must be handed in during the class in which they are due, or placed in the Program in Writing drop box (outside of Lawson Hall 3270). Any written assignment not handed in on the day that it is due will be assessed a penalty of 5% per working day that it is late.

Speeches must be performed when scheduled. A speaking schedule will be posted on Sakai once the speaking order has been chosen. See "Attendance policies" below for policies on missed performances.

Attendance policies:

Attendance is required to improve as a writer and as a speaker. If you miss more than six hours of class meetings (the equivalent of two weeks of class meetings) your final grade will be penalized a full letter grade (for example, an earned grade of 80% would be reported as a 70%); if you miss more than nine hours of class meetings, you will not be given a passing grade for the course.

This policy will only be waived for medical or compassionate reasons. If you have good reasons for waiving an absence of one class meeting, discuss these with your instructor within one week of that absence. If your absence is extended and prolonged (over one week of continuous non-attendance), then you should discuss it with your academic advisor in your home faculty, who may require documentation. That advisor may then contact all of your instructors.

A complete record of attendance will be posted on Sakai and updated regularly. It is your responsibility to check this, and keep track of how many hours you have missed.

Note: a class meeting missed in order to write a test, exam, or other form of ‘make-up class’ in another course **will** count as non-attendance, and **will** attract penalties as defined above if applicable. Instructors at the University of Western Ontario **shall not require** a student to write a make-up test or similar at times which conflict with that student’s other scheduled class times. If you are asked or ‘required’ to do this, you should immediately contact an academic counsellor in your Dean’s office. If you elect to miss a class in order to write such a test, that is **your** choice; your absence will not be excused.

See also: ‘**Medical Accommodation Policy**’ below.

Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism

The University Senate requires the following statements, and Web site references, to appear on course outlines:

“Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>.

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).”

Prerequisites

The University Senate requires the following statement to appear on course outlines:

“Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

The prerequisite for registration in this course is a) a final grade of 65 or more in one of Writing 2101, 2121, 2111, or 2131, or b) a final grade of 70 or more in Writing 1000F/G, or c) Special Permission of the Program.

Medical Accommodation Policy

For UWO Policy on Accommodation For Medical Illness, see:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>

(downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading)

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical or other grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth 10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds cannot be granted by the instructor or the Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication, and the Program requires students in these circumstances to follow the same procedure when seeking academic accommodation on non-medical (i.e. non-medical compassionate or other) grounds.

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth less than 10% of their final grade** must also apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Where in these circumstances the accommodation is being sought on **non-medical grounds**, students should consult in the first instance with their instructor, who may elect to make a decision on the request directly, or refer the student to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive medical documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons (e.g. to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an 'Attendance' policy in the course). **All** medical documentation **must** be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Special Requests: Special Examinations, Incomplete Standing, Aegrotat Standing

Please refer to the "Information for All Students in a Writing Course" for more detailed information.

Briefly, remember that your instructor does not have the discretion to initiate, consider, or grant (or not) such requests; you must go directly to the Dean's office of your home faculty.

Class Schedule

*All chapters are from Robert Lehrman's *The Political Speechwriter's Companion*, the required text for the course.

**Case studies will be speeches that students watch (in class or on their own time) and that will be analyzed in class. The speeches will be chosen to reflect, reinforce, and expand on course content, and will range from famous historical speeches to contemporary speeches. During the Fall 2013 term we will examine the 2012 American election, and study the candidates' public speaking strategies as they unfolded over the course of the campaign. We may also look at more immediately contemporary speeches when it is appropriate.

***See above for brief descriptions of the assignments. Complete descriptions of the assignments will be posted on Sakai prior to the assignments being introduced.

Week 1: *Introduction to the Course*

Tuesday September 10:

- Overview of the course
- Choosing the speaking order
- Case Study

Thursday, September 12:

- Chapter 1: The Political Speech
- Chapter 2: Persuasion

Week 2: *Performances/Audiences and the Importance of Diction*

Tuesday, September 17:

- **Introduction Speech Performance**
- Chapter 3: Audiences

Thursday, September 19:

- Chapter 6: Language People Understand
- Chapter 7: Language People Remember

Week 3: *Performances/Introducing Monroe's Motivated Sequence/Beginning Your Speeches*

Tuesday, September 24:

- **Introduction Speech Performance**
- Chapter 5: Structure

Thursday, September 26:

- Chapter 11: Beginnings
- Case study related to Monroe's Motivated sequence
- **Audience Adaptation Exercise due**

Week 4: *From Beginnings to Endings*

Tuesday, October 1:

- Chapter 12: Presenting the Problem
- Chapter 13: Solutions

Thursday, October 3:

- Case study

Week 5: *Ending Big*

Tuesday, October 8:

- Chapter 14: Writing Conclusions
- Case Study

Thursday, October 10:

- Case Study
- **Situational Response Speech due**

Week 6: Supporting Materials or Those Essential Extras

Tuesday, October 15:

- Chapter 8: Anecdote
- Chapter 9: Wit

Thursday, October 17:

- Chapter 10: Support
- **Platform/Campaign Speech Script due**

Week 7: The Difficult Job of the Speech Writer

Tuesday, October 22:

- Chapter 17: The Uneasy Partnership: Advice for Speakers and Writers

Thursday, October 24:

- Initial consultation between Position Speech partners

Week 8: Performances/Case Studies/Consultation

Tuesday, October 29:

- **Platform/Campaign Speech Performance**

Week 9: Performances/Case Studies/Consultation

Tuesday, November 5:

- **Platform/Campaign Speech Performance**

Thursday, November 7:

- Additional consultation between Positions Speech partners

Week 10: The Ethical Politician (No, This Is Not a Joke!)

Tuesday, November 12:

- Chapter 16: Speechwriting and Ethics
- Case study

Thursday, November 14:

- Case Study

- **A complete draft of the Position Speech Script is due (you must show it to me, and then provide a copy to your partner so that he/she can begin practising)**

Week 11: Putting it All Together/Gender and Political Public Speaking

Tuesday, November 19:

- Review of weeks 1-10
- Case studies

Thursday, November 21:

- Case Study
- Final consultation between Position Speech partners

Week 12: Performance

Tuesday, November 26:

- **Position Speech Performance**

Thursday, November 28:

- **Position Speech Performance**

Week 13: Performance

Tuesday, December 3:

- **Position Speech Performance**

Thursday, December 5:

- **Position Speech Script Due**