“... for the power to speak well is taken as the surest index of a sound understanding, and discourse which is true and lawful and just is the outward image of a good and faithful soul.”

— Isocrates, *Antidosis*

**Instructor Information**

Dr. David Lawrence  
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Office Phone: 404.385.7357  
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 1:00 - 2:30; and by appointment

Prerequisites — Admission by permit only.

Credits — This is a one credit hour seminar granting a satisfactory / unsatisfactory final grade.

**Course Description**

Communication of concepts and ideas is an important element of working in academic, corporate, and public communities. While oral presentation is a prevalent format for communication, especially in the scientific fields, written communication is usually the focus of graduate communication courses. With such a focus on written discourse, most graduate students never consider the absolute importance of being good oral communicators.

This course will help students better understand the conventions of academic and professional oral discourse. After building a better foundational understanding of this type of discourse, students will develop strategies for designing and delivering oral presentations. Students are encouraged to use current research as a basis for their work in this course. Students will be expected to participate as critical audience members, offering feedback to peers. Additionally, students will have an opportunity to engage in self-assessment by reviewing recordings of their presentations.

**Course Goals**

Through examination and practice of oral presentations, participants will learn techniques for enhancing a variety of academic presentations: e.g. conference presentations, poster sessions, proposal presentations, discussion facilitation, meeting participation, panel presentations, and interviews.

In CETL 8741, we will discuss the dominant genres and expectations of academic communication always with a focus on practical application. Participants will improve upon the basic skills of the presentation preparation process and learn to create and revise presentations suited for academic audiences, and work collaboratively in peer-review situations. Where appropriate, emphasis will be placed on extemporaneous speaking.

**Course Learning Objectives**

Students participating actively and completing CETL 8741 will be able to:

• analyze and describe rhetorical situations encountered in academic settings  
• identify and explain key elements in the process of adapting messages to particular rhetorical contexts
• apply rhetorical concepts and principles to adapt content for various academic speaking situations
• analyze and evaluate oral presentations in academic settings
• apply principles of visual design to create visual support for oral presentations
• identify the ethical dimensions of oral communication in academic settings

Required Texts

• Handouts and materials distributed in class and via T-Square

Assignments and Evaluation

Because this course is designed to complement your professional training, there are no “graded” assignments. Each participant is expected to participate fully in order to receive the “satisfactory” grade at the end of the semester. If a participant feels that he/she cannot meet the expectations of the course, I suggest an immediate withdrawal so that other people on the waiting list for the course may be accommodated. All assignments must be completed to receive a “Satisfactory” grade for the course. Failure to complete one or more assignments will result in an “Unsatisfactory” grade for the course.

Attendance

In the professional world, employers expect employees to be at work, and to be there on time. Each participant should approach this seminar with the same standards of attendance. Each participant is responsible for finding out what he/she missed, learning the material and completing all assignments. If you miss more than three class meetings, you will be assigned a grade of unsatisfactory.

Videotaping

Each participant will give a number of presentations that will be videotaped. Some of these presentations will be reviewed in class while others may only be reviewed privately with the instructor. In no case will these performances be shared outside the class without the express consent of the participant.

Conferences

Each participant is required to meet with the instructor outside of class to discuss the assessment of the first research presentation.

The Communication Center

The Communication Center is located in Clough Commons, Suite 447. It is an excellent resource for any student (undergraduate or graduate) who wants help with a communication-related project. You can visit the center for help at any stage of the process for any project in any discipline. The knowledgeable and friendly tutors are available to help you develop and revise your projects. They are not available to “fix” your projects. Please do not ask the tutors to proofread or edit your projects. For information on making an appointment please visit this website: <http://communicationcenter.gatech.edu/content/make-appointment>. If you need assistance with the appointment system, you can call 404-385-3612 or stop by the center. All services are free and confidential.
Class Schedule

Week 1 — 11 January

• The Rhetorical Situation
• A Framework for Understanding Effective Oral Presentations
• Plan — Purpose and Audience
• Exercise: Oftentimes in academia, we are called upon to introduce a guest speaker at a colloquium, conference, or some other venue. During the last 15 minutes of class, you will interview a classmate and obtain enough information about him/her to prepare a 1-2 minute speaker introduction presentation for our next class meeting.

Week 2 — 18 January

• Understanding Communication Anxiety
• Prepare — Invention, Arrangement, Style
• Ethos — A Speaker’s Credibility
• Exercise: Introducing a guest speaker presentations

Week 3 — 25 January

• Presentation — Delivery and Visual Support
• Assignment: Prepare two different types of visual support relevant to your research for our class meeting. You will walk us through your slides and how they support the claim/argument you are making. Audience members will provide feedback on your slides and presentation.

Week 4 — 1 February

• Understanding the Oral Presentation Rubric
• Exercise: Providing Peer Feedback

Week 5 — 8 February

• Presentations on your research interest/agenda (will be videotaped)

Week 6 — 15 February

• Presentations on your research interest/agenda (will be videotaped)

Week 7 — 22 February

• Presentations on your research interest/agenda (will be videotaped)

Week 8 — 29 February

• Presentations on your research interest/agenda (will be videotaped)
**Week 9 — 7 March**

- Poster Sessions
- Speaking in Various Academic Contexts

**Week 10 — 14 March**

- **Group 1 Poster Session**
- **Group 2 Self-Selected Presentation**

**Week 11 — 28 March**

- **Group 2 Poster Session**
- **Group 1 Self-Selected Presentation**

**Week 12 — 4 April**

- Revised presentations on your research interest/agenda (will be videotaped)

**Week 13 — 11 April**

- Revised presentations on your research interest/agenda (will be videotaped)

**Week 14 — 18 April**

- Revised presentations on your research interest/agenda (will be videotaped)

**Week 15 — 25 April**

- Revised presentations on your research interest/agenda (will be videotaped)