

# SPEECH

## Course Syllabus

"Human communication is a subtle set of processes through which people interact, control one another, and gain understanding."  
Alfred G. Smith

"Whatever you do kid, always serve it with a little dressing."  
George M. Cohan

"Use your weaknesses: aspire to the strength."  
Laurence Olivier

### I. SPEECH:

Effective, engaging communication is a vital 21<sup>st</sup> century skill. We will enhance both your interpersonal and intrapersonal skills through a variety of innovative, student driven presentations – informative, persuasive, demonstrative, special occasion, etc. Students will research, outline and deliver speeches, as well as act as critics of their own, fellow students' and famous speakers' work. This course will reduce students' anxiety in public presentations as you become aware of your personal speech habits and characteristics and develop the indispensable tools of poise and self-confidence.

### II. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- A. Students will improve posture, voice, diction and all mechanics of speech, cultivating poise and self-confidence.
- B. You will create, conceive, research and develop specific ideas, and present them in an engaging and articulate manner.
- C. Scholars develop the skills necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of an emotionally charged speech and to offer valid feedback and criticism.
- D. You will become more self-aware of your own speech patterns, strengths, and weaknesses, to ensure continued growth as an effective communicator.

### III. REQUIREMENTS:

#### A. Course Materials-

The text, Speech - Exploring Communication, a folder for handouts, a writing implement and an open, optimistic outlook will be required. Your folder will contain all in-class assignments, research, handouts, as well as completed assignments.

#### B. Outside Research Sources-

Speech topics will vary, but research, interviews, and current events will be utilized. Suggestions are in class, and final choices must receive the approval of the instructor.

### IV. GRADING & EVALUATION:

#### A. Grading Policy-

- A = Prompt completion of assignments, consistent improvement and effort, initiative and concern above reproach. Your participation in class both as an observer/critic and as an active participant, is of vital importance as a means of evaluating your progress.
- B = No more than one zero or incomplete assignment, directions and corrections used and improvements made, consistent effort and initiative above normal.
- C = Less than three incompletes, follows directions, effort at normal level, initiative and concern below expectations.
- D = Three or more unacceptable assignments, inconsistent effort, excessive tardies or absences.
- E = Work and effort at an unacceptable level.

Significant, personalized feedback is conveyed on a regular basis through individual conferencing, written observations, coordinated assessments and classroom displays. Grades will be available and updated at approximately three week intervals on Pinnacle. When an assignment is given, it takes about a week to ensure that everyone has taken, re-worked or made up the task, and from one to five days to accurately reflect and assess it. Only then will I update your effort from the past few weeks. This ensures that your status is indicative of your actual progress - not just a reflection of a single outstanding project or a distressing test. Please see me with questions or concerns.

\*\*\* Each one of you can earn an "A" if you are willing to put forth the effort.

#### B. Make-up/Late work-

When a presentation, project, test, etc. is missed due to an EXCUSED absence, you have one day for each day absent to make up the work. If you fail to take the initiative for make-ups or fail to turn in an assignment, it receives a "0". Remember, it is your responsibility to make arrangements for all make-up work. **Reminder – absences do not change long-term assignment deadlines!**

An UN-EXCUSED absence means an automatic "E." Unexcused absences and tardies, both forms of non-participation, will adversely affect your success. You generally receive 5 points per day for class work and productive participation.

I DO NOT EXCEPT LATE WORK...you snooze, you lose! For extenuating circumstances (accepting a Nobel Prize, unexpected time travel), see me. For printer breakdowns, late games, my dog ate it, etc. PLAN AHEAD!

C. Midterm/Final Exam - You must receive passing grades to pass the course. This counts as 20% of your final grade.

#### D. Approximation of points received for individual assignments -

Attendance/Participation				1 – 5 (negative potential)
Classroom events/Quizzes				5 - 10
Minor Written Assignments/Presentations/Assessments				10 - 25
Major Papers/Projects/Tests				25 - 60
100-98% = A+	89-87 = B+	79-77 = C+	69-67 = D+	
97-93 = A	86-83 = B	76-73 = C	66-63 = D	
92-90 = A-	82-80 = B-	72-70 = C-	62-60 = D-	59 and below = E

\*\*\*As with any course, it is your responsibility to save all assignments, papers, projects etc., in order to avoid any grade discrepancy disputes later in the term. Keep everything!

### V. CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS:

- \* A Positive Attitude and Productive Participation are essential.
- \* Approx. ½ hour of homework each night is the norm – ½ - 2 hours a week; plan on it.
- \* *Deserve respect; expect respect.*
- \* Bring all necessary supplies, attend regularly, punctually, and behave responsibly.
- \* **NO gum, unauthorized electronic use, food, beverages, vulgarity, insubordination, harassment, etc. allowed in class. Infractions will negatively impact your grade.**
- \* One trip out of class per semester (restroom, drink, locker, etc.), is available; use it judiciously. If you forget materials, fail to plan ahead, etc., it will affect your grade - see that it doesn't.
- \* Do not pack up or get up until the bell; it does not dismiss you, I do.
- \* **Plagiarism is the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another and representing it as original effort.** Research wisely, paraphrase selectively, and attribute accurately; always cite your source. Start early; make it personal; do your own work!

### VI. KEEPING IN TOUCH:

I am available Monday, Wednesday & Friday from 7:15 – 7:50 a.m. or after school by appt.; my room # is 401 and my email is [dunhamm@gpschools.org](mailto:dunhamm@gpschools.org), which is the best way to reach me. Please engage in your success now. Ask for help when you get stressed, behind, or befuddled. I am not that scary. Please review the information in this syllabus with your parents.

**Welcome - now let's have a great semester!**