

Public Speaking Pedagogical Plan *for discussion among the faculty*

Clemente Course in the Humanities™
New Bedford, MA
2009-2010
Instructor: Kathleen Torrens

Rationale for the plan:

This year, I'd like to phase our students into an outcome-oriented speaking plan. By the end of the year, I want our students to speak extemporaneously, persuasively, and confidently. While we have made strides in the past with their public speaking, the progression has been largely ad hoc and somewhat last minute.

As you can see, I would prefer the early speaking assignments to be informative, rather than debate or persuasion oriented. Students will still be making arguments, clarifying main claims and ideas, and supporting those claims with evidence. We'll develop the skills of active listening and analysis in order to arrive at skills of debate and persuasion.

My approach remains the same; I'm merely adding structure. I would appreciate feedback and questions from each of you, regarding both the overall picture and your individual pieces.

1. Introduce themselves clearly, standing up, at orientation.

Name, educational experience, goal for Clemente.

Key goal: Get them standing up and speaking!

2. Art History: Informative

a) Analyze a painting, present your analysis. (Memory can do the debate she likes, but the students don't have the sophistication (in most cases) to engage in persuasion or a debate as an effectively evaluated public speaking assignment.)

b) Present a research report on an artist.

Key goals: Clarifying and supporting main claims.

(i.e., making an argument)

3. Literature: Informative

a) Analyze a poem or story. Present your analysis.

b) Choose your favorite poem. Present the poem (read it aloud) and describe your response to the poem, why it is your favorite.

c) Present a research report on a writer, or research the background of a story/poem and present the information.

Key goals: working on extemporaneous speaking, clarifying and supporting main claims. (i.e., making an argument)

4. History: Persuasive/informative

a) John Brown on trial– the assignment you’ve done before.

b) Compare a speech by Douglass to a speech by MLK, Jr (I’m looking for incorporating two historical eras here, with an eye to making a case about something. We should confab on this one. Kind of a research report but with a clear position taken.)

Key goals: Clear articulation of a position, supported with some research, mostly extemporaneous speaking.

5. Philosophy: Persuasive/informative (a debate here?)

a) Argue against Socrates’ suicide (or something similar?) using other philosophical ideas. Will need research and citations.

b) Some kind of panel presentation or debate, similar to what you did last year.

Key goals: extemporaneous speaking, clear arguments, good listening and critical thinking skills

