



## **Office of English & Foreign Languages**

### **COURSE MANUAL**

#### **Public Speaking and Critical Thinking**

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**Spring 2026  
(AY2026-27)**

This document is prepared by the course instructor and contains basic information relevant to the execution of the course. It is the official record for all intends and purposes as far the elective course, *Public Speaking and Critical Thinking*, is concerned.

This course manual can be used as a general guide to the subject. However, the instructor can modify, extend or supplement the course (without tampering its basic framework and objectives) for the effective and efficient delivery of the course. The instructor will provide students with reasons for such changes.

## **Part I**

Course Title: Public Speaking and Critical Thinking

Course Code: L-EA-0248

Course Duration: **One Semester (15 Weeks)**

No. of Credit Units: **4 Credits**

Level: **UG or PG or Both**

Medium of Instruction: **English**

Pre-requisites: no

Equivalent Courses: no

Cross-Listed Course: **Yes**

### 1. Course Description

#### 1.1. Why is critical thinking a survival tool in today's world?

Why is critical thinking so crucial today? Due to the increasing flow of communication, each of us risks losing focus or falling prey to manipulation and misinformation. What enables us to resist pressure is *our ability to think for ourselves*: the ability to reason clearly, to look for logical connections between facts, and to formulate strong counterarguments. This course will facilitate avoiding the traps of your own mind and preventing others from deceiving you.

The current society requires strong coping skills from each of us. As Michael Sproule put it, there are “only two real alternatives in coping with the challenges of the era – better speech or sullen silence.” The goal of this course is the former, i. e. better speech.

#### 1.2. How will this course help you become a better professional?

This course is for those who want to pump up a whole range of skills: communication, critical thinking, public speaking, emotional intelligence, and stress resistance. The course introduces critical thinking skills, and building on them, extends to speech communication to give you a cutting edge in a variety of careers, from public service to politics, law, humanities and liberal arts. It focuses on the practical skill of public speaking, including ways to increase speakers' confidence and use of visual aids to enhance presentations. It prepares students for success in typical public speaking situations and provides them with the basic principles of organization and research needed for effective speeches.

We learn effective speaking as a tool of persuasion in various public forums, a crucial element in winning legal battles or public debates. You will develop the skills to argue more persuasively – in writing, as well as in speeches, before the court and in daily life. This will provide you with a competitive edge in the courtroom, business and with a tool for your academic studies.

#### 1.3. What will we do in the course?

We will discuss how human thinking is structured and what prevents us from thinking critically. Students will be able to navigate the flow of information and distinguish facts from opinions and misinformation, learning what cognitive errors are and how to deal with them. In the course we will learn the skills and tools of critical thinking and apply the acquired knowledge in practice by completing tasks. Here you learn the basics of fact-checking and logical analysis, you will practice discovering conceptual gaps and weak points in argumentation, and reflectively assessing your own beliefs. After the course you will have the tools of critical thinking and the habit of doubting and analyzing any information.

We will be dealing with questions like:

- How to explain to a teacher that s/he is wrong?
- How to manage your emotions in communication?
- How not to yield to manipulation of the interlocutor?
- How to feel confident during public speaking?
- How to get a project idea?

The course consists of several units, covering psychology of communication, art of storytelling and critical thinking. In the *Psychology of communication* unit, we will learn how to express our thoughts, set boundaries, and find an approach to others, improving the skills of effective communication.

In the *How to develop soft skills* unit we will understand how to develop *emotional intelligence, critical thinking and stress resistance*. You will learn why we need soft skills and how to develop them.

In the *Storytelling* unit, we will understand how to become a good storyteller and learn the secrets of successful public speaking, thus mastering the art of presenting your projects and ideas.

In the *Effective Negotiations and Constructive Disputes* unit, we will practice building arguments and counterarguments. You will learn how to skillfully defend your position.

In the *Public Speaking* unit, we will learn to speak with confidence and improvise, to speak beautifully and persuasively.

In the *Argumentation* unit we will learn how to choose convincing arguments and how to negotiate, mastering the techniques of successful argumentation.

In the *Critical Thinking* unit, you will understand how to distinguish truth from fiction, find unconventional solutions and formulate your own point of view.

## **2. Course Aims**

The course participants will learn to:

- analyze and verify information.
- avoid logical fallacies and contradictory reasoning.
- distinguish a strong argument from a weak one and correctly evaluate opponents' arguments.
- avoid cognitive distortions and resist manipulation.
- find unconventional solutions and make well-informed decisions.
- get confident public speaking: persuasive and informative speeches.
- create effective presentations.

The course will

- allow students to understand the structure and main parts of successful public speaking, help them develop their own style, and learn to lead discussions and present arguments;
- provide students with practical skills in solving logical problems and exercises, drawing conclusions, performing logical operations such as definition and classification;
- acquaint students with the basics of argumentation theory and the techniques of argumentative discourse.

### 3. Teaching Methodology

Interactive lectures, in-class debates, study of literature, presentations, quizzes.

### 4. Intended Learning Outcomes

| Course Intended Learning Outcomes  | Weightage in % | Teaching and Learning Activities         | Assessment Tasks/ Activities |
|--|----------------|--|------------------------------|
| The ability to effectively craft a persuasive speech and prepare a presentation. | 30             | Lectures, workshops, draft presentations | Presentations                |
| Self-confidence and public speaking skill  | 30             | workshop                                 | Class participation          |
| Critical thinking and argumentation  | 40             | Debates and lectures                     | quiz                         |

## Part V

### Keywords Syllabus

Argumentation, persuasive speech, informative speech, Lincoln-Douglas debate, Improvisational Speech, emotional intelligence, audience, facts, parliamentary debate format, standup as a type of public speech, debate in a public forum.

## Course Design and Overview (Weekly Plan)

| Week  | Topic and Description   | Reading/Course Materials   |      |
|---|---|--|------|
| <b>Introduction</b>                                 |   | Reading  | Time |
| Week 1  | What is communication?<br>Becoming a Public Speaker,<br>preparing your Speech,  | O'Hair & others,<br><i>A Speaker's Guidebook:<br/>Text and Reference.</i><br>Chapter 1, 2,       |      |
| Week 2  | Managing Speech Anxiety.<br>Here we will look at how one can develop <i>emotional intelligence, critical thinking and stress resistance</i> .   | O'Hair and others , <i>A Speaker's Guidebook: Text and Reference.</i><br>Chapter 4, 5            |      |
| <b>Part II. Critical thinking and argumentation</b> |   |  |      |
| Week 3  | <b>Basics of critical thinking:</b> what it is and how to start developing it<br>What Is Critical Thinking?<br>Critical Thinking Standards<br>The Benefits of Critical Thinking<br>Barriers to Critical Thinking<br>Characteristics of a Critical Thinker | Inch & Tudor, <i>Critical Thinking and Communication</i> ,<br>Chapter 1, Arguing Critically      |      |
| Week 4  | <b>Recognizing Arguments</b><br>What Is an Argument?<br>Identifying Premises and Conclusions<br>What is not an argument?  | Inch & Tudor, <i>Critical Thinking and Communication</i> ,<br>Chapter 2<br>Co-orienting Argument |      |
| Week 5  | What are the <b>types of arguments and their analysis</b> . Strength and validity of argumentation. Errors in argumentation.  | Inch & Tudor, Chapter 3<br>The Impact of Values and Culture on Argument                          |      |
| Week 6  | In <i>Critical Thinking</i> unit we will understand how to distinguish truth from fiction, find unconventional solutions and formulate your own point of view<br>Features of thinking: What prevents people from thinking critically?                     | Inch & Tudor, Chapter 4<br>Constructing Claims,<br>Chapter 5<br>The Use of Evidence              |      |

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| Week 7                        | <p><u><i>Effective Negotiations and Constructive Disputes</i></u>, we will practice building arguments and counterarguments. You will learn how to skillfully defend your position.</p>   | Inch & Tudor, chapter 9<br>Refuting the Argument                       |  |
| <b>Part I Public speaking</b> |   |  |  |
| Week 8                        | <p>The Basics of Public Speaking.<br/>What is Public Speaking?<br/><b>Anxiety and Public Speaking</b><br/>Understanding the Process of Public Speaking<br/>The Value of Public Speaking in Your Life.<br/>Getting Started in Public Speaking</p>  | O'Hair & others,<br><i>A Speaker's Guidebook</i> :<br>Chapter 23, 6, 7 |  |
| Week 9                        | <p>The Audience: Connecting to Listeners' Lives<br/>Students learn about personal narratives and view a model personal narrative speech. They learn about and practice effective posture and build on tactics <b>for managing communication apprehension</b>. They consider how biases may inhibit communication. They select a personal narrative to adapt as a speech for a particular audience. They brainstorm, outline, draft, and deliver the speech; view and give feedback on classmates' speeches; and read and respond to classmates' feedback.</p> | O'Hair & others,<br><i>A Speaker's Guidebook</i> :<br>23, 6, 7         |  |
| Week 10                       | <p><i>Storytelling</i>: Narratives in Public Speaking<br/><br/>Here we will look at how to become a good storyteller and learn the key features of <i>successful public speaking</i>, thus mastering the art of presenting your projects and ideas</p>  | O'Hair & others,<br><i>A Speaker's Guidebook</i> :<br>24, 25, 26       |  |

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|         | <p>Students analyze the elements and functions of narratives. They compare and contrast diction and tone in oral and written language. They learn to analyze an audience, identify subtle bias used in advertisements and charitable appeals, and address the effects of communication apprehension. They create and deliver a narrative speech, through all stages: brainstorm, outline, draft, deliver, view and give feedback, and read and respond to classmates' feedback.</p>                   |   |                      |
| Week 11 | <p>Persuasive Speech and emotive power of public speaking</p> <p>Students analyze various well known public speeches for their persuasive capacity and emotive power</p>  | <p>O'Hair &amp; others, <i>Speaker's Guidebook</i>: 24, 25, 26<br/>Inch, Chapter 10<br/>Persuasive Argument</p> | Was done             |
| Week 12 | <p>Several ways to deliver a speech <b>Methods of Delivery</b>, The Voice/Body in Delivery. Students compare scripted, extemporaneous, and impromptu speaking, and describe circumstances in which each is effective. They learn about primary and secondary research sources, effective nonverbal feedback as a listener, and effective facial expressions and gestures. They adapt a fiction excerpt and present it as a dramatic reading, giving and receiving feedback from their classmates.</p> | <p>O'Hair &amp; others, <i>Speaker's Guidebook</i>: Ch. 17, 18</p>  | Was done in February |
| Week 13 | <p>Public Speaking in <b>Academy and Business</b><br/>Students practice pacing, clarity, preparation, and professional demeanor. They learn how to maintain an effective online persona and prepare for voice-only</p>  | <p>O'Hair &amp; others, <i>Speaker's Guidebook</i>: Ch. 19</p>  |                      |



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|   | communications. They create and present two brief recorded phone messages, view and give feedback on classmates' work, and read and reflect on feedback from their peers.  |  |  |
| <b>Part III Media and Critical thinking</b> |  |  |  |
| Week 14                                     | Thinking Critically about the Media<br>the Mass Media and the News Media.<br><i>The role of context in perception of the media</i><br>Getting public attention: what drives the media<br>Keeping our interest: the news as entertainment<br><i>Slanting the news and Media literacy</i><br>Media and advertising<br><i>What ads do</i><br><i>Criticisms and defenses of advertising</i><br><i>Common advertising ploys</i> | Boardman, Kahane, Cavender, Ch. 11,<br>Managing the news |  |
| Week 15                                     | Speech presentations and feedback (Informative, Persuasive and Final Speeches)   |  |  |

## Part VI Relevant Readings

### Course books

1. O'Hair, Dan, Rob Stewart, and Hannah Rubenstein. *A Speaker's Guidebook: Text and Reference*. 3rd ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007.
2. Edward S. Inch, Kristen H. Tudor, *Critical Thinking and Communication. The Use of Reason in Argument*, Pearson Education Limited 2015 [Selected chapters]
3. Joe Y. F. Lau, *An introduction to Critical Thinking and Creativity*, John Wiley & Sons, 2011. [Selected chapters]
4. Frank Boardman, Howard Kahane, Nancy Cavender, *Logic and Contemporary Rhetoric: The Use of Reason in Everyday Life*, 2017. [Selected chapters]

### Recommended

Madsen Pirie, *How to Win Every Argument*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2015

Gregory Bassham, William Irwin, Henry Nardone, James M. Wallace, *Critical thinking. A student's Introduction*, 4th edition, King's College TM, McGraw-Hill, 2011.

Edward S. Inch, Barbara Warnick, *Critical Thinking and Communication*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, Pearson, 2011.