PUBLIC SPEAKING
MASTERCLASS: The Art & Science of Ideas

NONCR-GP 112

3/31/2022 - 4/14/2022 // Thursdays 6:45 - 8:25 PM // Loc: Virtual

INSTRUCTOR
Ashley N Kolaya, MPA
ashley.kolaya@nyu.edu

COURSE OVERVIEW

Intro
We've all seen bad presentations; many of us have given a few ourselves. But the reason presentations go wrong is often not what we think and, even more often, avoidable. Communicating ideas effectively, in a way that is both compelling and memorable, is a challenging but learnable skill. Understanding the basic components of how humans connect (with ideas and with each other) and how we experience inspiration, is key to crafting a powerful message.

In this workshop, you will learn the foundational principles of effective communication and idea development. You will also learn to employ presentation tools in a way that cuts across academic disciplines, cultural differences and ideological barriers to truly impact your audience on a human level.

Throughout our sessions, you’ll develop a real-life public speaking project with the help of your peers. You may choose to work on:

- a presentation you’re preparing for another course
- a cause you’re passionate about promoting
- a project/product/idea you hope to pitch
- a policy memo you’re writing
- a difficult conversation you’re thinking through
Whatever you decide to work on, the skills you build will transform the way you think about, and engage in, communication at every level.

**Learning Objectives**

This course has three learning objectives:

1. Provide students with a **working knowledge of audience-centered communication** and its ability to affect social change.
2. Equip students with the **ability to craft a meaningful, compelling throughline** for any communication.
3. Deepen students’ skills, competence and comfortability with developing and delivering presentations of any kind.

**Prerequisites**

Students in this workshop should, at a minimum, have given at least one terrible presentation and seen or witnessed a minimum of several. Students should also come prepared to discuss at least one instance in which something someone else said changed their mind about something, opened their eyes to something new or in some way altered their existing world view.

**Format**

- **Pre-class content.** Read, watch, listen to the content assigned for each session. Out-of-class time investment for this workshop is minimal (usually ~30min per session), but will increase your ability to participate meaningfully in each session.
- **Spill the Tea time.** Each session will begin with an informal discussion designed to (1) build the collective trust critical to our work together, and (2) share the impact our pre-class content or previous sessions' assignments have had on you.
- **Core Workout.** We’ll spend the majority of each session practicing the core skill identified for that session. This will involve small-group breakouts and large-group discussions.
- **Guest Judges.** Depending on the semester, we may have a variety of powerful storytellers join us throughout our time together. They’ll share insights from their work and offer feedback/insight on yours.

- **Goody Bag.** This is the takeaway from each session that you’ll work on before our next meeting. Goody bag assignments will often include something for you to say out loud to or practice with another person. So warn your roommate, alert your significant other, or pick a buddy from the workshop you can connect with during the week.

**Grading**

Participation in this workshop is not graded. Students will get out of these sessions at least what they put in, likely much more. I have one requirement, which of course is mostly unenforceable:

1. **Show up.** Literally and figuratively. The extent to which you will absorb/build the skills taught in this workshop depends largely on the quality of the participation and feedback you receive from the room. You are the room.
WEEK 1: Audience-centered Communication

- **PRE-CLASS CONTENT**
  - **WATCH:**
    - Chris Anderson, TED’s Secret to Great Public Speaking
    - One (1) TED Talk of your choice
  - **TO DO:** For the presentation you’ve selected to work on, **write out in 1-2 complete sentences the core idea you plan to share.**

- **THE TEA**
  - Discuss an example of a memorable presentation you’ve seen
  - Share the story of a presentation you’ve given that did NOT go how you’d hoped it would

- **CORE WORKOUT**
  - Topic: throughlines
  - Exercise: convert your core idea statements into a throughline

- **GOODY BAG**
  - Assignment: Litmus test your draft throughline with ~3 ppl
  - Goodies: Throughline deck
WEEK 2: Throughlines & Feedback

● PRE-CLASS CONTENT
  ○ TO DO: For the presentation you’ve selected to work on, transform your core idea into a THROUGHLINE, and record yourself sharing that throughline (on your phone/computer is fine!).

● THE TEA
  ○ Share a time you received feedback that really helped you
  ○ Share a time you received feedback that was especially UNhelpful

● CORE WORKOUT
  ○ Topic: throughlines & feedback
  ○ Exercise:
    ■ Share your throughline w your group
    ■ Each person in the group will answer the following questions in the chat box:
      ● What is new/novel about this person’s idea?
      ● What would you expect this presentation to be about? (Be specific!)

● GOODY BAG
  ○ Assignment: Finalize throughline & draft your outline
  ○ Goodies: Talk Specs worksheet; 3S newsletter
WEEK 3: Lightning Talks

● PRE-CLASS CONTENT
  ○ TO DO: Prepare a 2-minute segment of your presentation to share with the group

● THE TEA
  ○ What’s an element of public speaking you are most nervous about or want support with?

● CORE WORKOUT
  ○ Topic: Storytelling
  ○ Exercise:
    ■ Share your throughline and your 2min segment
    ■ Speak for 1min about your topic, as if you were telling a friend about the upcoming presentation you have to give
    ■ Feedback questions for group:
      ● During which moments did the speaker light up? Show natural/authentic energy? Seem the most at-ease?
      ● Did the speaker have moments that felt less engaged with us as the audience? How so?

● GOODY BAG
  ○ Watch yourself! View your lightning talk section in the session recording; note feedback you received and how you might apply that feedback to your next draft