**Speaking Emphasis Course Guidelines**

All students entering WCU Fall of 2019 or later must take at least 3 approved Speaking Emphasis courses, totaling 9 credits. Transfer students who enter with 40-70 transfer credits need only 2, and a minimum of 6 credits; students who enter with more than 70 credits only need to take one course (at least 3 credits). At least 1 Speaking Emphasis course must be taken at the 300 or 400 level for all students. Courses in American sign language may meet the Speaking Emphasis requirement.

General Education Goals and Speaking Emphasis courses

All Speaking Emphasis courses should meet Goal 1 (communicate effectively) and Goal 2 (think critically and analytically) of the General Education Program.

For Goal #1, courses should ensure that they cover at least two of the following Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

a) Express oneself effectively in common college-level written forms

b) Revise and improve written and/or presentations

c) Express oneself effectively in presentations

d) Demonstrate comprehension of and ability to explain information and  ideas accessed through reading

For Goal #2, courses should ensure that they cover at least one of the following Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

a) Use relevant evidence gathered through accepted scholarly methods, and properly acknowledge sources of information, to support an idea

b) Construct and/or analyze arguments in terms of their premises, assumptions, contexts, conclusions, and anticipated counter-arguments

c) Reach sound conclusions based on a logical analysis of evidence

**Speaking Emphasis Course Syllabi**

The syllabus must

* include a clear and prominent statement that the course is an approved General Education Speaking Emphasis (SE) course designed to develop oral communication skills
* clearly state that, as a Gen Ed approved course, it meets General Education Goals 1, Communicate Effectively and Goal 2, Think critically and analytically
* demonstrate that both Gen Ed Goal 1 and 2 are being met by identifying the specific SLOs, the methods through which they will be introduced and taught, and the mechanism used to assess each SLO.
* fulfill the criteria for a Speaking Emphasis course as identified below

**Criteria for Speaking-Emphasis Courses**

Speaking-Emphasis designated courses at West Chester University must meet the following criteria.

1. Speaking Emphasis courses must be designed to develop students’ oral communication skills in ways that are deemed important and desirable within a specific academic discipline or more generally across disciplines. The oral skills developed within such Speaking Emphasis classes:

a. can assume a variety of forms ranging from speaker-audience interactions (i.e. public speaking), to dyadic interactions (i.e. one-on-one interactions), to group interactions, to even mediated interactions (oral interactions that take place across a technological medium);

b. can be more generalizable communication skills (i.e. skills that can be generalized across a broad range of communication contexts such as developing students’ abilities to construct a cogent oral argument) or can be more focused within a specific academic discipline (e.g. a Speaking Emphasis course within the Nursing major might focus on developing students’ abilities to establish rapport with patients through one-on-one interactions);

c. must be clearly articulated on the Course Syllabus.

2. Speaking Emphasis courses must have at least three assignments that are clearly designed to assess and forward the development of the oral communication skills identified on the Course Syllabus. A 400-level Speaking Emphasis course could have fewer assignments if they are substantial in nature. These assignments should give students multiple opportunities to improve upon these oral communication skills (as opposed to separate assignments focused on separate skills). Oral-communication-related course assignments must identify which particular oral communication skills the assignment is designed to develop. Speaking Emphasis courses must also have a rubric for each oral-communication-related assignment that explains how students are to be assessed on their oral skills, and such rubrics must be shared with students prior to the completion of any such assignments.

3. Speaking Emphasis course syllabi should make clear the percentage of the final grade that is derived from oral-communication-related assignments.

4. Assignments for Speaking Emphasis courses should not solely involve asynchronous forms of mediated communication (e.g., recorded videos); instead they should also include face-to-face and/or synchronous forms of mediated communication (e.g., a live presentation, a Skype interview, or a group conference call).

5. Speaking Emphasis courses must include explicit mechanisms for coaching students on the oral communication skills identified on the Course Syllabus. Such coaching can take many forms—from conferences where the teacher reviews videos of students’ oral performances to a feedback grading sheet that contains comments on students’ oral performances.

6. Speaking Emphasis courses must provide students with opportunities to demonstrate *improvement* in the oral communication skills identified on the Course Syllabus. More specifically, students must have an opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency with those oral communication skills, must receive coaching/feedback on those skills, and then must have an additional opportunity (or ideally opportunities) to demonstrate improvement on those skills.

7. Since Speaking Emphasis courses involve oral assignments (that consume considerable class time) and individualized communication coaching (that consumes considerable instructor time), Speaking Emphasis courses should be limited to a class size of no more than 25 students.

8. Speaking Emphasis course syllabi should include at least one oral-communication-related assignment that is recorded and identified as a suitable candidate to add to students’ ePortfolio.

9. Speaking Emphasis course syllabi must include a clear statement that the course is an approved Speaking Emphasis course and will focus on developing students’ oral communication skills.

**Rubrics**

Speaking Emphasis courses can be delineated into 3 broad categories: Interpersonal Communication (i.e., counseling sessions, client-patient or therapist-patient interaction), in Online/Hybrid courses (i.e., asynchronous speaking), or in the Traditional classroom (i.e., in-person oral presentations, debates, recorded speech and PowerPoint presentations).

Faculty should incorporate more than 1 type of speech modality in any one course. To help faculty assess different types of presentations, we include examples of rubrics that faculty could use, and should modify, depending on the course requirements. The rubrics presented are not meant to be used in their current form, rather are examples and should be modified by the faculty. The Association of American Colleges and Universities’ Oral Communication Value Rubric is too general a rubric to be used in all forms of speaking, so we suggest including different examples of rubrics. All examples that we suggest mirror the standards laid out by the AACU.

For purposes of consistency, and since the Speaking Emphasis requirement is part of General Education, all faculty teaching Speaking Emphasis courses should be required to use assessment rubrics when assessing speaking and those rubrics should be shared with, and explained to students prior to their assessment. Faculty seeking a Speaking Emphasis course designation should include speech/oral presentation assessment rubrics as part of their course proposal to CAPC. Because this list of rubrics is not comprehensive, we anticipate that a subcommittee of CAPC (the Speaking Emphasis committee), will add examples of additional rubrics.