

**TEDUCATION: CREATING A CURRICULUM FOR A
TED TALKS HONORS COURSE**

HONORS THESIS

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by

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Abstract

This thesis looks at the functions of TED Talks as a pedagogical tool, and justifies their use in teaching today's students. The thesis also proposes a potential curriculum for an Honors course at Texas State based on TED Talks. In addition to the course proposal, a full set of lesson plans, discussion questions, and assignments are provided to substantiate the course and support the assertion that TED Talks are a robust source of interdisciplinary content, capable of being the focus of a university Honors course.

To my wonderful family:

Michael, Nadine, Patrick, and Kerstin

&

John Hood and Steve Beebe

whose support and guidance made this project possible.

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Introduction

What is TED?

According to their “About” page, “TED is a nonprofit devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading.

It started out in 1984 as a conference bringing together people from three worlds:

Technology, Entertainment, Design.” (“About TED”). Each year, TED hosts two large

conventions, TED Conference and TEDGlobal, where many of the world’s most

interesting, thoughtful, and intelligent people are invited to give an eighteen minute ‘TED

Talk’ on a topic with which they are impassioned and intellectually immersed. TED has

had a number of notable speakers cross its stage, including Bill Gates on philanthropy

and education, Stephen Hawking on the universe, and Bill Clinton on rebuilding Rwanda.

However, the real impact of TED does not end once the conference ends; in fact, that is

where it really begins. In addition to time and geographic constraints, many people, if not

most, would find it financially infeasible to spend the several thousands of dollars

required to travel to, lodge at, and pay TED’s registration fee (a whopping 6,000 dollars,

for which you have to apply to be able to do in the first place!) (“TEDGlobal 2014

Apply”). Considering these factors, it might seem like the focus of TED is not to spread

ideas, but to wring the pocketbooks of wealthy, self-proclaimed intellectuals by luring

them to a self-aggrandizing elitist conference in exotic locations around the world. TED

is accused of this frequently enough for them to create a page on their website called “Is

TED Elitist?” Their response is generally no, but with the explanation that “TED

certainly attracts people regarded as elite in their area of expertise, but the word 'elitist'

implies exclusionary -- and we've taken major steps in recent years to open up the live conferences to as broad an audience as possible” (“Is TED elitist”). Ironically, the root of the allegations toward TED being elitist is actually the source of its ability to amplify the spreading of ideas. TED, being a nonprofit entity, redirects the funds it collects during the conferences back into technology that allows it to spread ideas to a wider audience, including “state-of-the-art staging, lighting and camerawork that give TED Talks their sense of theater, the operation of a major website, the bandwidth to support more than half a million TED Talk views every day, [and] the operation of the global TEDx program” (“Is TED elitist”). TED posts these entertaining, thoughtful, well-produced talks on their website, where people all across the world can watch them just like the people who attended the event. Rather than being a center of elitism, TED serves as a democratizing force in the world by providing free, easy access to the thinkers and their ideas that are changing the world.

Why am I interested in TED?

I watched my first TED Talk as a junior in high school. Much to my surprise, Malcolm Gladwell found a way to make spaghetti sauce interesting, and from that point forward, I have had a perpetual addiction to TED Talks. From Sir Ken Robinson to John Hunter, and Kelly McGonigal to Bill Gates, the sheer diversity and quality of these talks still shock me when I remember that they are free to watch.

At the point in my life when I began watching TED Talks, I was not mature enough to value and seek education for its own sake. The great debt that I owe TED is the debt of inspiring me to pursue an understanding of the complex interconnectedness of the world,

and inspiring me to look within to discover where I best fit in that world. The reason why TED captivated me was its dualistic approach of combining entertainment with education; I originally turned on the talks because I found the stories and speakers interesting and entertaining, but I stayed because of the impact that they have had on me. In line with TED's overarching mission of "spreading ideas," I want to create an undergraduate level Honors course based on TED Talks.

How the Honors College and TED are connected

Before I elaborate on creating a TED Talks Honors course, I want to spend some time comparing the Honors College at Texas State to TED. I think these two entities are remarkably similar in their goals and their visions. On the Texas State Honors College "Courses" page, the College claims "Honors courses are interdisciplinary, incorporating information from or methods of several different disciplines to create a more holistic learning experience. Honors courses are also seminar-style, prioritizing student-professor discussion rather than lecture, and papers and projects rather than multiple-choice tests" ("Courses"). From this statement, I gather that the Honors College values several things:

The first is that interdisciplinary study is valued. We offer courses that twist, combine, meld, and reform traditionally separated educational domains. Dr. Olson looks at art, history, and literature through the lens of astronomy. Dr. Beebe looks at C. S. Lewis, one of the most famous authors and theologians of the past century, to derive principles of effective communication. Every Honors course involves a seemingly odd intersection of disciplines, which in reality allows for the discovery of insights that would have otherwise been untapped without help from the lens of convergence.

The second is that the interdisciplinary study serves an instrumental function in the search of a “more holistic learning experience,” and view of the world. Growing up in an educational system where subjects are stratified comes with certain advantages and disadvantages. By breaking the whole of human knowledge up into specific domains, learning becomes a less daunting task, one can discover specific interests and strengths, and specialization becomes possible. However, by learning these subjects as separate entities, we often assume that the divisions are impenetrable and wholly disconnected.

Both the Honors College and TED encourage the challenging of these assumptions through interdisciplinary approaches. According to TED’s about page “The breadth of content [of the talks] includes science, business, the arts, technology and the global issues facing our world... It shouldn't work, but it does ... because all of knowledge is connected. Every so often it makes sense to come out of the trenches we dig for a living, and ascend to a 30,000-foot view, where we see, to our astonishment, an intricately interconnected whole” (“About TED”).

The third item of value that I see in the Honors course general description is the phrase “prioritizing student-professor discussion rather than lecture, and papers and projects rather than multiple-choice tests.” This alludes to two ideas: that reality is not stagnant, and that it is also complex. In many non-Honors classes, the truth is assumed to be frozen in place for the sake of consistency. With so many standardized tests, textbooks, and online homework, it is significantly easier to simply accept the information that is placed in front of the student than to challenge it. Even if a student were to successfully challenge some of the ‘doctrine of the course’, the textbooks and online supplements do not change quickly enough to always reflect reality. It is convenient for students and

teachers to suspend disbelief for the course of the semester, and just accept the lecture material as undebatable truth. Multiple choice tests are convenient, but they have the major limitation of imposing a strict, black and white objectivity to the subject that they are testing. They foster the belief that there is one right answer, and that we undoubtedly know what that right answer is. Both of these measures support the ‘regurgitation’ model of education, where students can get by through memorizing and parroting back information to the professor. The unfortunate implication of this educational model is that students are trained to be uncritical, uncreative thinkers. Being taught in a manner that leads to successful multiple choice testing often leads to the internalization of those assumptions about reality that are inherent to the regurgitation model. If you were to take an astronomy multiple choice test during Galileo’s time, you would not only be marked wrong for subscribing to the heliocentric theory, but you might also be ridiculed and labeled a lunatic, despite the overwhelming evidence and widespread acceptance that the theory has supporting it today.

In the Honors College, we reject the dogmatic notion that we undeniably know the correct answers to things. We strive to develop a thirst for knowledge, where we are equipped to consider the validity of what we are told. In the case that we do establish something as ‘true,’ we attempt to remain open-minded to new explanations and new evidence being presented. This educational climate tends to develop more critical, creative, and flexible individuals, which have a better time adapting to and maneuvering within a complex world.

While TED does use a lecture based system, they are by no means typical when compared to a normal, university lecture, and it recognizes that human dialogue is a

powerful tool when searching for truth. According to Nathan Heller's article "Listen and Learn" in *The New Yorker*, "TED's closely governed editorial process begins with the concept: the conference's "curators" feel out a speaker's interests, looking for material that's new and counterintuitive." An integral part of TED's process involves searching for counterintuitive ideas (often discovered through viewing traditional issues through a new, interdisciplinary perspective), and letting that be the catalyst for a powerful discussion. Additionally, TED provides infrastructure for its viewers to participate in the discussion. People end up discussing the substance of the talks during breaks at the actual conferences, and online viewers are invited to start a TED Conversation if they "have an idea, debate, or question inspired by [the] talk." TED seeks to challenge its audience to consider controversial or unorthodox ideas, with the ultimate goal of using new understanding to change the world. The state of affairs in the world today is largely a result of the stagnant ideas that we have regarding ourselves, our relationships with other, and nature. Both the Honors College and TED seek to remedy this by challenging us to think in new ways, and to try new ideas. While TED Talks have historically been a one way exchange where viewers have limited opportunity to directly interact with others about these ideas, an Honors course in TED fills that gap by providing students with a forum in which they can engage with one another in discussion.

Why create an Honors course about TED?

Because of the shared approaches and goals between the Honors College and TED listed above, I believe that a course about TED and TED Talks could be a valuable addition to the current selection of Honors courses. There are a number of benefits to Honors students that could be obtained through studying TED Talks including:

- appreciation for personal and intellectual diversity
- exposure to interdisciplinary study and research
- promote and provoke intellectual criticism
- opportunities to work in a group setting to achieve a common goal
- development of public speaking and storytelling skills
- practice with writing skills
- understanding the value of active listening
- work with presentational media such as Powerpoint and Prezi

The majority of students coming into college today are millennials, and the educational and entertainment value, multimedia appeals, and “rockshow-like” filming style of TED Talks all fit strongly within the general desires of this generation. Additionally, TED Talks highlight highly successful individuals who got to where they are by following their passion, which also appeals to the ideals of millennials.

Course Justification

Rationale

The creation of any new course to be offered to university students calls for both a thorough description and justification of the course content, learning objectives, and teaching methodologies. While this is true of college courses generally, it is particularly important in an Honors College where unique approaches to traditional subjects and an interdisciplinary lens can potentially skew the actual outcomes of a course from the desired ones.

With the goal of providing a sufficient description and justification of an Honors TED course, this section first discusses the stated learning objectives and design of the course, and then provides several arguments in defense of those choices.

Learning Objectives and Course Design

The following is a list of the course's five learning objectives:

- 1. Identify and explain verbal and nonverbal behaviors common to successful public presentations.**
- 2. Construct an informative and a persuasive presentation which incorporates appropriate and effective verbal and nonverbal behaviors.**
- 3. Identify the circumstances when collaborating with others where it is appropriate and effective to exhibit leadership and/or followership skills.**
- 4. Work with small groups to complete and present a cohesive mock TEDx proposal.**

5. Identify the ethical concerns and obligations associated with public presentations.

Ultimately, the holistic purpose of the course is to watch TED Talks and extract insights about human communication from the content and actual presentations of the speakers.

Each of the five learning objectives has been constructed from a real outcome connected to the course, which becomes clear when viewed in the context of the course's design.

The course utilizes a "flipped classroom" design, where the students view TED Talks for homework, and come into class to discuss them with each other and the instructor. There are several content areas that the course covers over the course of the semester, all of which are roles or functions of a presentational speaker. Each of these areas takes a week (spread over two eighty-minute classes) to cover, and each week is split into a discussion day, where students talk about the talks and the readings to uncover communication insights, and a practical day, where students put those insights into action through in class exercises. This emphasis on both cognitive and behavioral learning is reflected in the course's learning objectives. Objectives one and three are primarily cognitive, focusing on the students' ability to identify and understand the effective behaviors and roles in presentational and group communication situations. Objectives two and four are, on the other hand, primarily behavioral, emphasizing the tangible exhibition of a skill. The behaviorally focused days in each content area are designed to give the students an opportunity to practice using these skills and to receive feedback about how to further improve. At various intervals in the course, the students' cognitive and behavioral

learning are assessed through the construction and performance of individual and group presentations.

The final objective of the course is a cognitive one regarding the ethics involved in public presentations. As a tool, communication is a powerful, amoral force. A parallel line of thought and discussion that runs along the main theme of learning and practicing effective presentational communication involves the ethical concerns and obligations that the students ought to consider when writing and delivering their presentations. The goal is not only to create great speakers, but also genuinely good ones.

Justification

As an extension to describing the nature and design of the curriculum above, this section will provide three main arguments to justify the creation of this course as an advantageous tool for teaching communication principles.

1. There is currently a need for effective oral communicators, and many college graduates enter the workforce with underdeveloped communication skills.

According to a compilation of communication research by Morreale, Osborn, and Pearson, there is a significant need in the professional world for skilled oral communicators (12-21). They have compiled fifty sources supporting the theme that “Communication education is vital to career success and the business enterprise” (12). Many studies such as Harper’s article “Business education: A view from the top,” found that oral and written communication skills ranked among the top most important areas for graduates coming into the work force (Morreale, Osborn, & Pearson, 15). Additionally, interpersonal and group communication skills are highly sought after in the business

realm. Despite a common awareness of the desirability of these skills, business leaders continue to report that college graduates entering the work force are insufficiently prepared to communicate effectively. An article in Association Trends reported on a finding by the Business Higher Education Forum that “graduates lack communication skills and the ability to work in teams and with people from diverse backgrounds,” despite otherwise strong academic ability (Morreale, Osborn, & Pearson, 14). Based on many reports such as these, there appears to be both a need for effective presentational and interpersonal communicators and a largely insufficient supply of them. This course serves the function of providing a theoretical underpinning behind successful communication and the opportunity for students to develop these skills through practical exercises and assignments.

2. Multimedia learning appeals to a variety of learning styles, and results in more accurate recollection of ideas.

A second big advantage of this course is the multimedia aspect of TED. There are three distinctive perceptual learning styles: visual, aural, and kinesthetic (Beebe, Mottet, and Roach, 40-42). Visual learners learn primarily through sight and reading, aural learners learn through hearing, and kinesthetic learners learn through tactile sensation and doing things. Additionally, most students can have combinations of these styles. Part of the reason why TED Talks are so successful is because they are filmed “in the spirit of a live rock concert, with eight cameras” (Heller). The cinematography of TED Talks itself compels a certain level of interest, and, combined with the nonverbal aspects of the presentations, creates a strong appeal to visual learners. TED also possesses a pretty obvious appeal to aural learners, as the presentations are oratorical in nature. Finally, the

course is designed to be balanced between discussion and exercises, which allow the students who are primarily kinesthetic learners to immerse themselves in each subject that is covered in class.

In addition to appealing to a broad range of perceptual learning types, TED Talks also have an advantage related to Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning. The theory suggests that the brain learns more from experiences that stimulate multiple channels instead of a solitary one. The theory holds three assumptions: 1) There are two separate channels (auditory and visual) for processing information, 2) Each channel has a limited (finite) capacity, and 3) Learning is an active process of filtering, selecting, organizing, and integrating information based upon prior knowledge (Mayer). Because each of our sensory channels has a limited amount that it can handle, appealing to multiple channels is advantageous because it allows the aggregate information received to be greater than a single channel stimulus. Mayer's experiments with multimedia learning resulted in students "*always ha[ving]* much more accurate recall of the information than those student show only heard or read the information" (Gallo, 205). TED Talks are inherently multimedia presentations, and thus promote higher levels of student retention, especially when combined with in class discussion and exercises for the kinesthetic learners.

3. Flipped classrooms provide more time for interactive, immersive activity, while giving the students flexibility in doing homework.

"Flipped Classroom" is a term used to describe the teaching practice of redistributing the traditional workload for students so that they do less interactive work at home and have

more time for interactive work when they are at school with their peers and instructor. Historically, face-to-face lecture has been the primary tool in providing a baseline level of knowledge to students. However, this style of educating (especially when done poorly) is largely non-interactive. When presenting to any decently sized lecture, it is inevitable that students will have varying levels of comprehension of the material. This often results in a very frustrating experience for the students trying to complete their homework who did not get a firm grasp on the material while listening to the lecture. Teachers who have flipped their classrooms record videos of their lectures that can be viewed online by their students, so that they can learn the material at their own pace before class, and show up ready to discuss and work with the content. Harvard physics professor Eric Mazur suggests that in a world where information sources are becoming rapidly more available “simply transmitting information should not be the focus of teaching; helping students to assimilate that information should” (Berrett, 4). In a world of smartphones and nearly unlimited access to the internet, basic recollection and reciting of information is becoming obsolete. Being able to use this new unbridled access to information in creative ways to synthesize something new is where value lies in the digital age.

This new method of teaching has several implications for the traditional student-teacher relationship and the nature of the classroom. Flipped classrooms encourage teachers to “give up their front-of-the-class position in favor of a more collaborative and cooperative contribution to the teaching process,” which puts “more of the responsibility for learning on the shoulders of students while giving them greater impetus to experiment” (Educause). Sir Ken Robinson recognizes the significance of this idea in his TED Talk “How to escape education’s death valley” when he states that “the real role of leadership

in education... is not and should not be command and control. The real role of leadership is climate control, creating a climate of possibility. And if you do that, people will rise to it and achieve things that you completely did not anticipate and couldn't have expected.”

This course seeks to embody that idea by flipping the classroom to have the students watch TED Talks at home and come to class prepared to discuss and present. This process turns what is often the stale, mechanical transfer of information to an ideological laboratory, where students have the freedom and encouragement to learn from their genuine experiences and interactions with their peers and professors.

Syllabus

Talking Like TED: The Art and Science of Presentations

[Class Days and Time] • [Room #] • [Instructor Name] • [Semester and Year]

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar style course invites students to discuss and uncover insights into presentational speaking and storytelling through the lens of TED Talks. Students will view some of the most well-received talks to determine the role of a presenter and the verbal and nonverbal behaviors which make them effective communicators.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After completing HON X3XX, students should be able to:

1. Identify and explain verbal and nonverbal behaviors common to successful public presentations.
2. Construct an informative and a persuasive presentation that incorporates appropriate and effective verbal and nonverbal behaviors.
3. Identify the circumstances when collaborating with others where it is appropriate and effective to exhibit leadership and/or followership skills.
4. Work with small groups to complete and present a cohesive mock TEDx proposal.
5. Identify the ethical concerns and obligations associated with public presentations.

COURSE TEXTBOOK

Carmine Gallo, *Talk Like TED* (2014)

We will be reading several chapters from Carmine Gallo's book, *Talk Like TED*, to supplement our understanding of presentational communication. The research compiled in the book serves as a useful theoretical parallel to the talks that we will be watching, and it provides many examples of that research being enacted in different TED Talks.

COURSE GRADES

The essential course content is in class presentations, critiques, and discussions, which cannot be recreated or “made up”. If you do not have your work ready for presentation and discussion as assigned, you don’t benefit from the discussions and critiques and the class schedule is disrupted.

- **Attendance:** Attendance is expected and required. Unexcused absences (including absences for extra-curricular activities and conflicts with other courses) will reduce the final course grade by 3 points for each of the first two absences; a third absence (-4 pts) will reduce the final grade by 10 points; a fourth absence (-10 pts) will reduce the final grade by 20 points; five or more unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the course. The attendance sheet circulated at each meeting is your attendance record; make sure you sign it.

- **Punctuality:** If you are late, you are responsible for signing the attendance sheet after the class meeting. Late arrival by more than ten minutes, persistent late arrival, or leaving the class early will be counted as an absence.

- **Excused Absences:** If you have excused absences, create an “Excused Absences” folder in your drop box. Place PDF copies of documentation in this folder; make sure that the dates of absences are clearly indicated on the documentation. You are responsible for completing and maintaining this documentation. .

- **Final Grade Percentages:**

1. Who I Am Biographical Presentation	5%
2. Discussion Questions and Topic Selection	30%
3. TED Speaker Presentation	15%
4. TEDx Proposal Group Project	15%
5. In Class TED Talk	15%
6. Final TED Talk	20%
Total	100%

Standards for Written Assignments:

A superior, exceeds expectations

- clear, effective writing, with mastery of organization, mechanics, diction, formatting, fluent expression
- coherent, consistent presentation of a thesis or story line, sustained throughout the paper, with logically related, clear points for each paragraph or line, appropriate reference to the genre or milieu in character and story development
- excellent, outstanding research, drawn from careful reading and analysis of historical and cultural resources (independently using research tools that aid understanding of language and rhetoric) and/or professional use and documentation of primary and secondary materials
- creative, original approach that goes beyond received interpretation
- engaging story and characters that develop without conceptual or mechanical distractions
- exceptionally creative/inventive realization that follows and goes beyond assignment

B excellent, meets high standard of expectations

- writing clear and effective, as above, with few exceptions
- coherent presentation of story and characters, as above
- thorough research and documentation using primary and/or secondary sources, with few or no problems in use of documentation and supporting evidence
- approach to the subject offers an advance in understanding that goes beyond cited sources
- creative/inventive realization that follows assignment

If your work does not meet this high standard, you should regularly meet and review your writing with a Writing Center Consultant who is familiar with narrative and creative writing standards.

C good, meets standard expectations

- writing generally clear but periodically flawed by lack of clarity and errors in mechanics, diction, formatting, grammar
- advances a position (story line and characters) and sustains it in part, but the realization might wander or digress; incomplete, inconsistent, or inaccurate realization of concepts; vague or inconsistent background; unfocused or irrelevant story lines, characters, description
- exhibits evidence of research, but application is incomplete, illogical, or flawed
- approach to the subject seldom if ever goes beyond obvious interpretation, lacks depth, original thought
- generally follows the assignment

D poor, lower than standard expectations

- manifests a serious deficiency in one or two of the areas under “C”

F failing, does not meet expectations

- manifests a serious deficiency in two or more of the areas under “C”

O failing with serious deficiency

- incomplete, absent, or plagiarized assignment.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: TED Orientation: What is TED, TED Criticisms, Why should there be a college course about TED?

Week 2: "Who I Am" Presentations

Week 3: "Teachers": Sir Ken Robinson, John Hunter, Rita Pierson, Christopher Emdin

Week 4: "Leadership": Stanley McChrystal, Simon Sinek, Drew Dudley, Derek Sivers

Week 5: "Storytelling": Andrew Stanton, Chimamanda Adichie, Isabel Allende, Nancy Duarte

Week 6: TED Speaker Presentations

Week 7: Identifying your message (preliminary topic selection)

Week 8: "Collaboration": Temple Grandin, Margaret Heffernan, David Logan, Jason Fried

Week 9: Group Project: Writing a TEDx Proposal

Week 10: Group Presentations: TEDx Proposals

Week 11: TED Talk final topic selections, research day

Week 12: "Presenting and Performing": Cliff Stoll, Malcolm Gladwell, Jill Bolte Taylor, Larry Smith

Week 13: In Class TED Talk presentations

Week 14: Finish presentations, group critiques and speech polishing

Week 15: TEDx Honors Conference

TEXAS STATE STUDENT HONOR CODE

As members of a community dedicated to learning, inquiry, and creation, the students, faculty and administration of our University live by the principles in this Honor Code. These principles require all members of this community to be conscientious, respectful, and honest.

We are conscientious. We complete our work on time and make every effort to do it right. We come to class and meetings prepared and are willing to demonstrate it. We hold ourselves to doing what is required, embrace rigor, and shun mediocrity, special requests and excuses.

We are respectful. We act civilly toward one another, and we cooperate with each other. We will strive to create an environment in which people respect and listen to one another, speaking when appropriate, and permitting other people to participate and express their views.

We are honest. We do our own work and are honest with one another in all matters. We understand how various acts of dishonesty, like plagiarizing, falsifying data, and giving or receiving assistance to which one is not entitled, conflict as much with academic achievement as with the values of honesty and integrity.

The Pledge for Students

Students at our University recognize that, to insure honest conduct, more is needed than an expectation of academic honesty, and we therefore adopt the practice of affixing the following pledge of honesty to the work we submit for evaluation: *"I pledge to uphold the principles of honesty and responsibility at our University."*

The Pledge for Faculty and Administration

Faculty at our University recognize that the students have rights when accused of academic dishonesty and will inform the accused of their rights of appeal laid out in the student handbook and inform them of the process that will take place.

"I recognize students' rights and pledge to uphold the principles of honesty and responsibility at our University."

<http://www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-07-10-01.html>

COURSE POLICIES

Make sure you have read and are familiar with the policies covering **Academic Honesty**, **Late Work**, and **Research Participation**. **It is your responsibility to understand and adhere to the policies on Academic Honesty. If you are not familiar with the definition or penalties for plagiarism, please discuss this with the instructor.**

Policy on Fairness. Texas State University is committed to social justice. We concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Texas State does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, sexual orientation or disability. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this course will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

Policy on Civility. To create a basic supportive environment, you are requested to follow some simple policies to ensure that all students have the opportunity to gain from their time spent in class. Students are prohibited from engaging in any form of behavior that distracts from the learning experience of others or disturbs the teaching function.

Policy on Grades and Attendance. Records on grades and attendance will be available on the course TRACS page. *There will be a one-week window for discussing any assignment after grades have been returned.* There will NOT be an opportunity to discuss attendance grades during the last week of the semester or after the semester is over. Please be proactive and discuss your concerns with the instructor within the appropriate time period. All work must be turned in on time, and the instructor reserves the right not to accept work past the time it is due.

Expectations. It is expected that students will adhere to the policies described in the syllabus. Since this is a college honors course, there are high expectations about appropriateness of behavior, level of discourse, the creation of a collaborative and supportive climate, punctuality and attendance, and respect for persons. Excellent work is expected at all times. *Superior work will earn a superior grade, while minimal effort will earn a minimal grade.* Students are encouraged to address concerns about class procedures and/or assignments so our learning experience together can be enhanced.

Professionalism. To create an environment of enlightenment and equality, we must all conduct ourselves in a professional manner. Professionalism includes completing assignments on time, taking initiative in your own learning, exhibiting a positive attitude and enthusiasm, asking for help when needed, and working effectively with others.

To create a basic supportive environment, please follow these policies in the classroom:

- ✓ Please arrive to class on time and refrain from leaving and reentering during class sessions
- ✓ Turn off and put away all cell phones, headphones and other electronic equipment upon entering the classroom
- ✓ “One Conversation At A Time.” Please listen respectfully to your peers and refrain from talking while others are contributing to class discussion
- ✓ Refrain from other activities during class discussions (i.e. reading the newspaper, text messaging, laptop work, sleeping, etc.)
- ✓ No tobacco products of any type

- ✓ Do not enter the classroom during a presentation, wait for a break to come in

It is our goal that time together is an enjoying and enriching experience. If you like and enjoy something, please speak up. If you are offended in any way, please do not remain silent. Please maintain a respectful and courteous attitude toward the ideas of others, even if you do not agree. We can, and will, learn from each other.

COURSE SUPPORT SERVICES

TRACS. Since this course requires you to use the Internet-based platform “TRACS” to retrieve course grades, assignments and evaluation forms, lecture outlines, and send/receive email related to the course, you need an active Texas State email account. For those without an active email account, activate your account on-line by visiting the following web site www.txstate.edu/computing/apps/newuser.html This web site will walk you through the process. When logging on to TRACS, go to the University webpage and click on the “TRACS” link. You will use your username and password to gain access. Students are encouraged to check their Texas State email and TRACS regularly for updates throughout the semester.

Email. Important course information will be communicated to you via Email. It is imperative that you check your Email daily and respond in a timely manner. Indicating that “I didn’t read my Email” is NOT an excuse for being unaware of information or feedback coming from me. All students should take proper steps to protect their password when logging into email or TRACS.

Withdrawing From the Course. It is the student's responsibility to withdraw from the course, if necessary. Students should check the academic calendar for official drop dates. Students with excessive absences will strongly be encouraged to drop, as a passing grade will be difficult to obtain.

Assignment Sheets

Assignment I: “Who I Am” Speech

For this assignment, prepare a five minute presentation where you will introduce yourself to the class. You should include your name, classification, and major, but the rest of the speech is open for you to tell your story to your classmates as you see fit. Additionally, bring in an object that has personal significance to you. It could be something related to one of your hobbies, a photo of a place that is important to you, or any object that you can use to show your audience something new about yourself.

Here are several possible options you might consider using in your speech:

- Explain why you chose to come to Texas State
- Tell a story about how an event or person in your life influenced your decision of major/career goals
- Discuss your job or one of your hobbies
- Tell the class an interesting fact about yourself
- Talk about something you are passionate about
- Share a personal anecdote

You can use any of the suggestions above, a combination of them, or do something entirely different. Your goal is to let your audience get to know you, so tailor your speech towards that.

Assignment II: TED Speaker Presentations

For this assignment, write and prepare for a seven minute presentation over a TED speaker and their talk. Provide a background of who they are, how they are involved with their topic, and summarize the content and presentational elements of their speech.

You can use TED's search function to find talks that are in your area of interest, browse around their website using talks on the main page or in one of their existing categories, or find a talk through some other means. The talk does not have to be related to the subjects of communication or storytelling, but be sure to address the communicative aspect of their presentation (what verbal and nonverbal behaviors make their speech effective?).

Assignment III: Group TEDx Proposal Presentations

For this assignment, you will be working in groups to create and present a TEDx proposal. Read the TEDx rules, respond to each item of the actual TEDx proposal, each subpoint of the “The Basics” page (no need to repeat items that are on the actual proposal), and then consider practical issues raised by the rules page. Submit your proposal to the instructor, but not to TED.

At a minimum, the project should address the following: event name, hypothetical date and reason for date, topics/questions/ideas your group wants to share with the audience, example speakers, at least two TED talks that would be shown, whether or not they would have a theme (and if so, what is it), event type, answer to each substantive question of the proposal, what funds will be required, how the funds will be generated, what materials/facilities your group would need, and how they would acquire those materials.

Once each of these issues has been addressed, create a twenty to twenty-five minute multimedia presentation in which each group member speaks to explain your proposal. TED requires that you show at least two already published TED Talks at TEDx conferences, and it is recommended that your group shows a brief clip from the talks you would show at your conference.

Assignment IV: In Class TED Talk

For this assignment, you will write and prepare a ten minute TED-worthy talk based on the topic you selected. Consider what you have watched, read, and discussed in this course when designing your presentation. It is highly recommended that you consult both the instructor and other students for feedback and advice before you present.

Support your presentation with research, but take care not to clutter your speech with it. Use stories, metaphors, and possibly a visual aid to illustrate the facts and figures that support your big idea.

Use of presentational media (Powerpoint, Prezi, etc.) is not necessary, but if you ABSOLUTELY MUST use it, be very deliberate not to let it become a crutch. Keep the text to a minimum, and avoid creating a slideshow that distracts the audience (it is hard enough to maintain an audience's attention without pictures and words on a screen!).

Be sure to build an inherent structure into your talk. Use previews, signposts, and transitions to verbally create a roadmap for your audience.

Finally, plan out what you intend to do nonverbally during the presentation. How much will you move? What gestures will you use when? How will you use your voice? Think about this aspect of your performance, practice it, and include it in your outline.

Assignment VI: Final TED Talk

For this assignment, you will continue to edit and rehearse your presentation. Some TED speakers practice their talk hundreds of times before actually getting on the TED stage, and with good reason: repetition of the presentation helps you to internalize your speech.

Ultimately, you want the presentation to fall between an extemporaneous (prepared, but not memorized) speech and a theatrical monologue. It should feel comfortable enough to where you could give the presentation without having to think much about it, but not so comfortable as to seem like you are reciting it.

It is highly recommended that you rehearse with other students so that you are practicing in front of an audience (and they can give you feedback).

Dress nicely and break a leg!

TED Class Lesson Plans and Discussion Questions

Meeting 1: Course and TED Introduction

Objective: At the end of this class meeting, students should be able to explain what TED is.

Time: 80 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet, Syllabus (1 per student), Sir Ken Robinson's "How Schools Kill Creativity"

Homework Due: None

Class Content:

- Introduce yourself to the class.

- Pass out a syllabus to each student, and then discuss it (course objectives, attendance, grading, honor code, course schedule). Answer any student questions about the course or syllabus.

- Begin discussion on TED by asking what the students already know about the organization. Note that TED is 1) a nonprofit, 2) devoted to spreading ideas, and 3) usually in the form of short, powerful talks. Also note that "TED began in 1984 as a conference where Technology, Entertainment and Design converged, and today covers almost all topics — from science to business to global issues." Discuss the mission of TED (spreading ideas), and how that coincides with the commitment to an interdisciplinary approach to education. Explain TEDx.

- Watch Sir Ken Robinson's "How Schools Kill Creativity." Allow for discussion. Ask what the students liked/disliked, whether or not they felt persuaded, and what they noticed about Robinson's presentational techniques.

- Assign "Who I Am" presentations.

Meeting 2: TED Criticisms and the Goal of the Course

Objective: At the end of this class meeting, students should be able to list and respond to two TED criticisms, and explain the overall goal of the course.

Time: 80 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet, TED Criticism Articles

Homework Due: Article Reading (<http://deltaskymag.delta.com/Sky-Extras/Favorites/The-Big-Idea-Machine.aspx>)

Class Content:

- Briefly review what happened during last class. Ask if anyone has any questions related to the syllabus or the course itself.

- Discuss the homework reading about what attending a TED conference is like (<http://deltaskymag.delta.com/Sky-Extras/Favorites/The-Big-Idea-Machine.aspx>). Be sure to mention the application process and the 6,000 to 8,000 dollar entrance fee (plus hotel and transportation). Have a student volunteer to walk the class through a hypothetical TED event.

- Transition to discussing TED criticisms. Have students read two short articles criticizing TED, and discuss them as a class. Also address the fact that TED has been criticized enough to convince the organization to address several of the claims explicitly on their website. Look through those criticisms with students, and then ask “Why should we be studying TED in a college level course?” It seems like many people have reasons to dislike TED, but are they true? Or are there enough good things about TED to warrant looking past its faults? Revisit the learning objectives and the overall “big idea” of the course: we can use TED to look at a variety of successful public speakers to uncover principles of effective communication.

- Answer any questions about the “Who I Am” Presentations

Meetings 3 and 4: “Who I Am” Presentations

Objective: At the end of these class meetings, students will be able to give a five to seven minute biographical presentation with the use of a visual aid.

Time: 160 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet, Video Camera

Homework Due: “Who I Am” Presentations

Class Content:

Pass out roll sheet. Address any housekeeping issues for the next few weeks.

Allow students to give their presentations (volunteer order). After all students have presented, unpack the activity.

Potential questions: Why did we do this? How did it feel to share your story with an audience of people you mostly do not know? Did anyone’s visual aid or use of it surprise you? How were people performing nonverbally? Did anyone move around during the performance and make the stage their own?

Explain the homework and assignment for next week: watch the assigned talks, read the assigned chapter, and answer the discussion questions in 1-2 double-spaced pages.

Meeting 5: “Teachers” Discussion Day

Objective: At the end of this class meeting, students will be able to articulate several elements that are shared by engaging teachers, and will identify with the role of a teacher in their public presentations.

Time: 80 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet, set of discussion questions for professor, several minute long video of non-interactive online lecture, several minutes of an engaging TED talk

Homework Due: “Teachers” Discussion Questions

John Hunter’s “Teaching with the World Peace Game”

Sir Ken Robinson’s “How to escape education's death valley”

Rita Pierson’s “Every kid needs a champion”

Christopher Emdin’s “Teach teachers how to create magic”

Class Content:

- Show a few minutes of the boring clip, then a few minutes of the TED talk. Ask students to identify what differences there were between the clips, and which one was more effective (and why).

- Move on to the discussion questions. Facilitate a discussion on the ideas from each talk, and then move towards the commonalities between them. Start basic by asking for a summary, and then begin discussing the ideological substance and the implications of those ideas.

Potential questions: What makes someone a teacher? Are you born into it? Is it a choice? What makes someone a good teacher? Ask for stories about inspiring teachers that students have had in the past, and ask them to identify what made them so impactful. Is there a difference between entertaining and engaging? How active should teachers be inside and outside of the classroom? Hunter and Robinson seem to suggest a passive, facilitating role. What do you think about that approach? Does that conflict with Pierson’s emphasis on the necessity of developing relationships with students? What are

your thoughts on how teachers should operate? Does this change if you are teaching adults? What can you do as a teacher to increase your audience's learning? Will you be a teacher this semester/in the future? What other roles do you play when you present to an audience?

- Assign three minute instructional presentations for the next class.

Discussion Questions: Teachers

1. During his talk, Hunter says that he is “standing on the shoulders of many people.” What does he mean by that? Whose shoulders are you standing on? Who is standing on yours?

2. Consider the following two quotes:

“I don't try to deny them that reality of being human. I allow them to go there and, through their own experience, learn, in a bloodless way, how not to do what they consider to be the wrong thing. And they find out what is right their own way, their own selves.” -John Hunter

“The real role of leadership in education -- and I think it's true at the national level, the state level, at the school level -- is not and should not be command and control. The real role of leadership is climate control, creating a climate of possibility. And if you do that, people will rise to it and achieve things that you completely did not anticipate and couldn't have expected.” -Sir Ken Robinson

Discuss how these two quotes reflect each speaker’s teaching philosophy, how the ideas intersect, and whether or not you agree with their approach to education.

3. Rita Pierson quotes James Comer in saying “no significant learning can occur without a significant relationship.” Is this true? How does Pierson’s idea of teaching compare to Hunter’s and Robinson’s?

4. Explain the difference between the “content and theories” and the “magic” that Emdin refers to. How can we learn that “magic?”

5. You will spend a significant portion of this semester as a teacher, through presentations, critiques, and finally, your TED Talk. Where else have you been a teacher? Where will you likely teach in the future? Reflect on your teaching philosophy, and discuss how that philosophy compares (or contrasts) with the different TED Talks you have watched for this assignment.

Meeting 6: “Teachers” Practical Day

Objective: At the end of this class meeting, students will have demonstrated teaching skill through an informative “how to” speech.

Time: 80 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet

Homework Due: Teach Me Something New (Ch. 4 *Talk Like TED*)

3 minute instructional presentation

Class Content:

- Have students give their presentations (volunteer order). Unpack the activity by discussing the speeches and the techniques the students used.

Potential questions: How did the speakers engage their audience? How did they connect the substance to the needs or desires of the audience? Did anyone do anything to make their ideas more memorable (novel way to look at a problem/issue, or memorable acronym/phrase)? How do we know if a public speech, or any communication, is successful? Should we explicitly outline our goals before creating a presentation?

- Assign homework for next class.

Meeting 7: “Leadership” Discussion Day

Objective: At the end of this class meeting, will be able to list several qualities of a leader, and will identify with a leadership role as public speakers.

Time: 80 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet, one set of discussion questions for professor, leadership styles handout (http://www.shalomdc.org/local_includes/downloads/63033.pdf), TED speaker presentation assignment sheets

Homework Due: “Leadership” Discussion Questions

Stanley McChrystal’s “Listen, learn ... then lead”

Simon Sinek’s “How great leaders inspire action”

Drew Dudley’s “Everyday leadership”

Derek Siver’s “How to start a movement”

Class Content:

- Explain the upcoming TED speaker presentations (7 minutes, summarize the content and presentation style). Answer any questions about the assignment.
- Move into discussing leadership. Pass out handout on leadership styles. Ask students for their definitions of leadership, and try to arrive at a shared definition (or provide one or several commonly accepted definitions). Talk about the leadership styles, and then move into the discussion questions.
- Have a student summarize the big idea of each talk, and then share his or her overall impression of the presentation.

Potential questions: What are the challenges and benefits associated with leading diverse groups? Has anyone ever knowingly been a part of a “lollypop” moment, either giving or receiving? Ask for examples of people or organization’s “why, how, and whats” according to Sineck’s speech. Is it always important of possible for everyone to be a leader? What is the importance of being a “first follower?” How are you a leader

whenever you are speaking to an audience? What (ethical) obligations do you have as a leader?

Discussion Questions: Leadership

1. Stanley McChrystal argues that “leaders can let you fail and yet not let you be a failure.” What does he mean by that? Why is this quality valuable in leaders? Have you ever experienced this first hand?

2. McChrystal also mentions that part of his role as a leader involves uniting a group of people with diverse and often foreign sets of experience, skills, and even language under a shared sense of purpose. What challenges are associated with this task? What are the benefits that come from it?

3. Have you ever been a part of what Drew Dudley calls a “lollipop moment?” Do you agree that leadership does not need to exist on a grand scale to still be leadership? If so, explain how we can encourage this kind of leadership. If not, discuss why we should think of leadership as something that must exist on a large scale.

4. What is Simon Sinek’s thesis on inspiring leadership? Do you agree with this approach? Why/Why not? If yes, should we always use this perspective? Name a famous person/organization and explain their why, how, and what.

5. Derek Sivers – What is the risk associated with being a leader or a first follower? What can we do to reduce this risk and encourage more people to lead?

Meeting 8: “Leadership” Practical Day

Objective: At the end of this class meeting, students will be able to demonstrate leadership and followership skills through a group problem solving activity.

Time: 80 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet, handouts with group problem solving scenarios on them

Homework Due: None

Class Content:

Split class into four groups of four/five people. Assign each group a problematic scenario which they are tasked to make a decision on (with a backup plan as well). Explicitly state that one member will be the presenter and arbiter of the group (in case of a tie). Allow them to work in groups for 45 minutes, then have each group present and discuss for the remaining 25 minutes.

Unpack the activity in the last few minutes of class.

Potential questions: How did the group decide on who would lead? Did leadership stay vested in one person, or did different people exhibit leadership at different points in the activity? Explain the five types of power (referent, expert, legitimate, reward, and coercive) and ask what types of power were present in the group. What did the followers need to do in order for the group to function? Was there a first follower who initially supported the leader?

Meeting 9: “Storytelling” Discussion Day

Objective: At the end of this class meeting, students be able to articulate several qualities of a successful storyteller, and will identify with the role of storyteller as public speakers.

Time: 80 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet, set of discussion questions for professor, guest storyteller (optional)

Homework Due: Master the Art of Storytelling (Ch. 2 *Talk Like TED*)

“Storytelling” Discussion Questions

Andrew Stanton’s “The clues to a great story”

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s “The danger of a single story”

Isabel Allende’s “Tales of passion”

Nancy Duarte’s “The secret structure of great talks”

Class Content:

Review the assigned reading and go over discussion questions for about 40 minutes. Afterwards, invite a guest storyteller in to speak for 10-15 minutes. Spend the remainder of class time having the students ask questions about the story, stories in general, or sharing similar personal stories. (Let them know that the homework assignment is to prepare a story for next class, and that if they tell a story today, it counts for that class).

Discussion Questions: Storytelling

1. What are some of the qualities that Stanton claims are part of stories? How is storytelling “joketelling?” What does it mean that storytellers “make their audience work for their food?”
2. Why does Stanton think it is important to “use what you know?” How does this fill your story with meaning?
3. What ethical obligations do we have as storytellers, based on what Adichie says? What are the impacts of breaking those obligations? How do you feel when people make assumptions about you? How can stories assist in the creation of false assumptions?
4. What do you think Allende means by stories being “truer than truth?” What is Allende’s overall argument in her talk? What role does story play in her overarching argument?
5. Allende says “The protagonists of my books are strong and passionate women like Rose Mapendo. I don’t make them up. There’s no need for that. I look around and I see them everywhere.” Discuss what this approach to writing stories says about the fundamental nature of a story? How does this affect the way you craft and tell your own stories?
6. Explain Duarte’s “presentation shape” model. Why is it effective? How does this apply the creation of your stories and presentations?

Meeting 10: “Storytelling” Practical Day

Objective: At the end of this class meeting, students will be able to present a four minute story.

Time: 80 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet

Homework Due: Chris Vogler’s *Practical Guide to the Hero of 1000 Faces*
Student stories

Class Content:

- Discuss the Vogler article, then allow students to present stories (volunteer order).
- Answer questions regarding next week’s presentations.

Meetings 11 and 12: TED Speaker Presentations

Objective: At the end of these class meetings, students will have demonstrated their ability to speak about a TED presenter's content and presentational style in a seven minute extemporaneous speech.

Time: 160 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet, Video Camera

Homework Due: TED Speaker Presentations

Class Content:

Allow students to give their presentations. If there is time remaining after the speeches, unpack them.

Potential questions: What did you do well (have students speak about their own performances specifically)? Where could they improve? What praises do they have for specific things that the other presenters did? How can they incorporate those things into their own presentations?

Meeting 13 and 14: TED Talk Topic Selection

Objective: At the end of these class meetings, students will be able to identify and explain three potential subjects for a TED Talk they could present.

Time: 160 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet

Homework Due: Unleash the Master Within (Ch. 1 *Talk Like TED*)
Tony Robbins's "Why we do what we do"

Class Content:

- Spend approximately 30 minutes discussing the reading and Tony Robbins talk.

Possible discussion questions: how does passion about a topic affect speech success? Why is that? Where do we find our passion? What does Tony Robbins claim the "six human needs" are? How can we use those to better understand ourselves and our audiences? Does everyone really have a desire to give back? Robbins exposes some of his personal story to explain his passion. What was it? What is yours?

- Transition from discussing the effects of passion generally to student's specific passions. Allow 7-8 minutes per student to talk about three potential TED Talk ideas. Ideally, the students will give comments and suggestions to one another after other students present their three topics.

Meeting 15: “Collaboration” Discussion Day

Objective: At the end of this class meeting, students will be able to list several positive and negative effects of collaborating with others, and will be able to decide whether working in a group is favorable or not in certain circumstances.

Time: 80 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet, set of discussion questions for professor

Homework Due: “Collaboration” Discussion Questions

Temple Grandin’s “The world needs all kinds of minds”

Margaret Heffernan’s “Dare to disagree”

David Logan’s “Tribal leadership”

Jason Fried’s “Why work doesn't happen at work”

Class Content:

-Start moving into the discussion questions by asking for student anecdotes about working with others.

-Work through a class discussion on collaborating with other individuals and collaborating in groups.

Potential questions: Why should we ever collaborate? Under what circumstances should we seek help from others when working on a project? When do groups fall short? What is the role of diversity in groups? What are some effective ways to communicate in a group? Is conflict a positive, negative, or neutral thing to have when working with someone else/a group?

Discussion Questions: Collaboration

1. Grandin's talk highlights the diversity of human minds, which includes a variety of strengths, weaknesses, and idiosyncrasies (though not all as extreme as Grandin's). How can cognitive and other types of diversity benefit us as we work with others to solve problems? What needs to be considered when working with a diverse group? What can we do both as a society and as individuals working in groups to foster and use diversity for the greater good?

2. The terms "conflict" and "argument" are often perceived as highly undesirable things to be involved in. What does Heffernan suggest about the effects of conflicts, disagreements, and arguments? What are the advantages? Disadvantages? How does conflict affect creativity and group problem solving? What can be done to encourage openness to idea based conflict in groups and organizations?

3. Explain Logan's five "tribal levels." Think about a time when you have worked with someone who you believed was on a different "level" than you. What happened? What is Logan's advice on dealing with people on a different "tribal level?" How does this advice apply generally to how we communicate to groups and audiences?

4. Fried takes a very different perspective from the common wisdom that working in groups is almost always a positive, constructive experience. What are the disadvantages of meetings and spending time working with others? Do those disadvantages outweigh the benefits of group collaboration at times? Provide an example of a time when working with a group would be advantageous, and another where it would not be.

Meeting 16: “Collaboration” Practical Day

Objective: At the end of this class meeting, students will have demonstrated their ability to solve a problem with a group.

Time: 80 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet, 20 pieces of regular uncooked spaghetti, a roll of masking tape, a roll of string, scissors, a marshmallow, brown paper bag, (each group needs all of the italicized items, so bring enough to provide each group with all of them), a stopwatch, a measuring tape, Tom Wujec’s “Build a tower, build a team” TED Talk.

Homework Due: None

Class Content:

- Split the class into four groups of four/five students each. Tell them that they will be working together in groups to solve a problem.

-Once separated, give each group a set of materials, and share the following instructions with them:

“Build the Tallest Freestanding Structure: The winning team is the one that has the tallest structure measured from the table top surface to the top of the marshmallow. That means the structure cannot be suspended from a higher structure, like a chair, ceiling or chandelier.

The Entire Marshmallow Must be on Top: The entire marshmallow needs to be on the top of the structure. Cutting or eating part of the marshmallow disqualifies the team.

Use as Much or as Little of the Kit: The team can use as many or as few of the 20 spaghetti sticks, as much or as little of the string or tape. The team cannot use the paper bag as part of their structure.

Break up the Spaghetti, String or Tape: Teams are free to break the spaghetti, cut up the tape and string to create new structures.

The Challenge Lasts 18 minutes: Teams cannot hold on to the structure when the time runs out. Those touching or supporting the structure at the end of the exercise will be disqualified.

Ensure Everyone Understands the Rules: Don't worry about repeating the rules too many times. Repeat them at least three times. Ask if anyone has any questions before starting.”

- Once everyone is set up and all rules clarifications have been answered, begin the challenge. (Detailed instructions are available at <http://marshmallowchallenge.com/Instructions.html>).

- After 18 minutes pass, stop the students, and measure each marshmallow structure.

-Announce a winner, and then show Wujec's TED Talk.

-Proceed to unpack the activity with the students. Did groups use the prototyping method, or did they “go all in” on a particular strategy without trying anything else. Was there any conflict in terms of what strategy the group would use, or who would fill certain roles? What constraints existed in this activity? What was the effect of limited time on the group's ability to come up with and execute solutions to the problem?

Meetings 17 and 18: Group Assignment Work Days

Objective: At the end of these class meetings, students will have demonstrated the ability to work with a group to complete a TEDx proposal.

Time: 160 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet, computer lab, TEDx Group assignment handout

Homework Due: None (work in class, and any remaining work becomes homework)

Class Content:

- Go over the TEDx proposal group assignment (with assignment sheet). Students should read the TEDx rules, respond to each query of the actual TEDx proposal, each subpoint of the “The Basics” page (no need to repeat items that are on the actual proposal), and then consider practical issues raised by the rules page. Make sure to clarify that the students do not need to submit these proposals for the project.
- At a minimum, the project should address the following: event name, hypothetical date and reason for date, topics/questions/ideas they want to share with the audience, example speakers, at least two TED talks that would be shown, whether or not they would have a theme (and if so, what is it), event type, answer to each substantive question of the proposal, what funds will be required, how the funds will be generated, what materials/facilities they would need, and how they would acquire those materials.
- Split the class or let them self-select into five groups of three/four students. Let them work for the remainder of the time to construct a hypothetical proposal and a group presentation of that proposal (including an outline of the presentation). Encourage the students to show a short segment of the two (or more) talks that they would show at their event during the presentation.

Meetings 19 and 20: TEDx Group Presentations

Objective: At the end of these class meeting, students will have presented their group TEDx proposal projects to the class.

Time: 160 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet, computer with projector

Homework Due: Group TEDx Proposal presentations

Class Content:

- Allow each group to present (three presentations day 1, two on day 2). Unpack at the end of the second day. Let students ask questions/give comments and suggestions after each day's presentations are over.

Meeting 21: Final Topic Selection Day

Objective: At the end of this class meeting, students will have selected and discussed their TED Talk topic, including three possible subpoints.

Time: 80 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet

Homework Due: Final TED Talk topic selected (with three possible subpoints) [possibly have students email them ahead of time, so that they can be forwarded to the librarian for the research day]

Class Content:

- Let students know that the class will be meeting in the library next class period.
- Allow students about three minutes each to share what they decided on, and allow other students to make comments and suggestions.

Meeting 22: Research Day

Objective: At the end of this class meeting, students will be able to find research to support their ideas for their speeches.

Time: 80 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet, librarian (meet at library)

Homework Due: None

Class Content:

- Have the librarian explain database use, and help with specific student interests (have the students submit their talk ideas before the previous class so that the librarian has time to prepare to answer specific student questions).

Meeting 23: “Speaking Well” Discussion Day

Objective: At the end of this class meeting, students will be able to list several techniques used by effective public speakers, and will consider ways to implement them in their public presentations.

Time: 80 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet

Homework Due: “Speaking Well” Discussion Questions

Clifford Stoll’s “The call to learn”

Malcolm Gladwell’s “Choice, happiness and spaghetti sauce”

Jill Bolte Taylor’s “My stroke of insight”

Larry Smith’s “Why you will fail to have a great career”

Class Content:

- Ask the students to think about the best speech/speaker that they have ever heard and to share it with the class. What made it so memorable to them?

- Begin class discussion with the discussion questions.

Potential questions: Why should we care about speaking well? (Shouldn’t strong ideas be able to stand on their own?) What commonalities do all of these speakers (and almost all TED speakers) share? What things have you seen in other non-TED presentations that the TED speakers do not do? Are those things helpful, hurtful, or neutral to message retention? Should your presentational elements change based on the audience? Can you think of any dull/weak speeches that were ultimately effective? Is there a limit on how far a speaker should go with these presentational elements? Looking back on all of the roles that we have discussed in the course, what is the job of a public speaker, and how does speaking well aid in each of those individual roles?

-Tell students to copy a paragraph or two from the transcript of one of their favorite TED Talks for the next class.

Discussion Questions: Speaking Well

1. What was your impression of Stoll's talk? He is clearly an engaging speaker, but how does he do that? Specifically, what verbal and nonverbal techniques does Stoll use to entertain and engage his audience? Would you take anything from his talk and apply it to yours? What would you do differently?

2. What was your impression of Gladwell's talk? How does Gladwell structure his talk? Did you find the talk engaging? What did he do that seized and held your attention? Could you tell what Gladwell wanted you to think, know, or believe at the end of the speech? If so, how? Would you take anything from his talk and apply it to yours? What would you do differently?

3. What was your impression of Taylor's talk? What does she do verbally and nonverbally to hold your attention? What was the effect of her using her visual aid? Could you tell what Taylor wanted you to learn from this talk? How do you know that? Would take anything away from this talk and apply it to yours? What would you do differently?

4. What grabs your attention in Smith's talk? How does the language that he uses affect your perception of his overall message? What is he doing nonverbally, and is that effect, considering his message? How would his talk change if he had just been standing still with low volume? Would you take anything away from this talk and apply it to yours? What would you do differently?

Meeting 24: “Speaking Well” Practical Day

Objective: At the end of this class meeting, students will be able to “perform” a brief monologue with engaging verbal and nonverbal cues, and will distinguish an engaging presentation from a dull presentation in terms of audience engagement.

Time: 80 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet

Homework Due: ‘Monologue’ from a TED Talk

Deliver Jaw-Dropping Moments (Ch. 5 *Talk Like TED*)

Class Content:

-Have a student begin by standing at the front of the classroom and reading their monologue (with minimal enthusiasm/nonverbal cues). Afterwards, have them repeat the monologue, but this time while emulating the nonverbal (both body and voice) cues of the speaker. Repeat this cycle until each student has gone.

-Unpack the activity by discussing it with the class.

Potential questions: Think about the differences in how you perceived the two messages that had the same content. What were the general effects of adding in the nonverbal component of the speeches? How did you react as an audience member when witnessing the second presentations? What advantages come with an engaging delivery? Are there any potential downsides? Was the style or amount of presentational elements ever distracting? How do we go about hitting a “sweet spot” between a speech that is so boring that it does not keep the audience’s attention and one that is entertaining to the point where it distracts from the message?

Meetings 25 and 26: In Class TED Speeches

Objective: At the end of these class meetings, students will have demonstrated their ability to give an extemporaneous TED-style presentation.

Time: 160 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet, Video Camera, computer with projector, rubric

Homework Due: TED Talk

Class Content:

- Allow students to give their presentations (volunteer or sign up sheet before class).
- Unpack after all presentations. What did each person believe their strengths were? Where could they improve? What would they do differently after having given the presentation to an audience? Invite the class to comment on one another's presentations.

Meetings 27 and 28: Peer Review and Speech Critiques Days

Objective: At the end of these class meetings, students will constructively criticize their own and their peer's speeches, and will edit their verbal and nonverbal elements of their presentations.

Time: 160 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet, computers, video files of student speeches

Homework Due: Paint a Mental Picture with Multisensory Experiences (Ch. 8 *Talk Like TED*) [Meeting 27]

Have a Conversation (Ch. 3 *Talk Like TED*) [Meeting 28]

Class Content:

- Have each student watch their own speech and “grade” it with a rubric. Have them edit their speech content in accordance with their self grade, and suggest delivery changes. -
- Have students go home and rehearse/internalize the changes, so that they can present next class.

Second meeting:

- Put students into five groups of three/four. Have each student give their talks to their groups with rubrics. Allow students to give feedback and impressions to the speakers. Repeat until each student has given their speech and received feedback. Encourage students to edit their speeches in response to the in-class criticisms.

Speech Critique Form

TOPIC

What was the 'big idea' of the speech?

Did the speaker make the idea relevant to the audience? How?

INTRODUCTION

Did the introduction catch the audience's attention effectively? How?

Did the speaker preview the 'big idea' of the talk?

ORGANIZATION

Was there a sense of order to the points in the speech? Did everything connect back to the 'big idea?'

Were there clear transitions between subpoints?

DELIVERY

Effective eye contact?

Effective voice?

Effective posture?

Effective gestures?

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Varied? (Stories, metaphors, statistics, etc.)

Appropriate and effective?

Visual aid appropriate and effective (if used)?

CONCLUSION

Effective summary?

Memorable closing?

Meeting 29 and 30: TED Presentations and Course Wrap Up

Objective: At the end of these class meeting, students will have demonstrated the ability to present a critically reviewed and revised, well rehearsed TED Talk to an audience.

Time: 160 minutes

Materials: Roll Sheet

Homework Due: Final TED Presentations

Class Content:

- In a predetermined order, have each student present their talk.
- After each student has presented, congratulate them and share in their success.
- If there is time available, have each share something that they are taking away from the course.

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