**General Education Course Inclusion Proposal**

**EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

**Course Name and Number:** SP 100 – Public Address

**Home Department:** Communication & Performance Studies (CAPS)

**Department Chair Name and Contact Information**: Jim Cantrill, [jcantril@nmu.edu](mailto:jcantril@nmu.edu)

**Expected frequency of Offering of the course**: Multiple sections every semester (incl. occasional Summer Session I)

**Official Course Status**: Has this course been approved by CUP and Senate? YES

**Overview of course** (please attach a current syllabus as well): *Please limit the overview to two pages (not including the syllabus)*

*Course Content*

The goal of SP 100 is to provide students with the theoretical knowledge and skills that will allow them to sharpen their overall communication skills, boost their confidence levels when faced with larger audiences, and learn how to communicate ideas effectively to the target audience. By the end of the course we are hoping that students can achieve the following objectives: Students will improve their speech writing abilities by modeling efficient approaches to selecting and researching topics, using different formats for structuring and organizing a public presentation and that they will use their communication ethically though the use of internal and oral citations. Further, students should also improve in their ability to deliver a speech by being able to demonstrate effective processes of critical listening, identifying effective and ineffective aspects of oral presentations, complete thorough audience analysis, work to apply methods of reasoning, analyze and support arguments through visual and oral means, and to use their language and delivery styles to adapt to specific types of audiences in various public speaking settings. Lastly, students should be able to apply and transfer the theories, concepts, and skills from the course outside of this one course and see these skills as useful in a variety of other contexts.

*Component Learning Outcomes* (assessed via written exam answers, reports, and/or class projects)

A. Written Communication: In order to satisfy the Delivery (written) learning outcome dimension, SP100 requires students to research topics in depth and provide detailed outlines for presentations. These presentations and topics vary from student to student with the overall theme of the speech including Special Occasions, Informative, and/or Persuasive settings. These outlines are to include multiple scholarly sources that are to be referenced both in internal citations and through oral citations. These outlines are also to be free of grammatical errors, organized via a selected and appropriate organizational pattern chosen to fit the topic, situation, and audience. They are to have an introduction that establishes the importance of the topic, connects the audience to the topic, and details the thesis and the main points the speech will be founded on. The speech is also to use appropriate transitional sentences that both review and preview work that is flowed through several primary intersecting main points. Finally, students are to end with a concluding paragraph where they will recap the main purpose of the speech, reconnect the audience to the importance of the information, and leave a lasting impressionable thought. Most outlines turned in are to be written in full sentences and on average contain five+ sources. The written component of the course comprises almost half of the grade as each speech delivered will require an outline. Further, outside of speeches, there are various other written assignments assigned that range from a speaker analysis, mediated presentational analysis, and self-analysis documents that students produce.

B. Oral Communication: In order to satisfy the Delivery-Oral learning outcomes dimension, SP100 requires multiple speeches that range from 2-3 minutes advancing to upwards of 8-10 minutes. At a minimum students give three speeches in a given semester. These speeches must deliver a presentation that has been well researched and organized. It must contain a thorough audience analysis; any and all presentations aids must be clear, accurate, and displayed properly so as to not distract, but rather enhance the message/purpose of the presentation. Students are expected to use a variety of language and delivery techniques that fit the audience and situation (i.e., eye contact, extemporaneous delivery versus manuscript delivery, tone and pitch, pauses and movement, professional dress and creativity in language.)

C. Critical Thinking: In order to satisfy the Critical Thinking learning outcomes dimension, SP100 requires multiple types of assignments that require students to access, evaluate, and apply a variety of information, options, conclusions, and arguments. For each of the oral presentations required of the students a formal outline is also required. As reference previously (B), students complete a minimum of three speeches in a given semester. Through to process of writing and delivering a speech students must access information that is relevant to a topic chosen for the given audience and situation. Once they have accessed their information they will need to evaluate it for quality using markers of credibility, timeliness, and accuracy. They will then need to use the information in a specific way; to inform, entertain, and/or persuade. Their speeches are expected to be in an organizational pattern that reflects this process of identifying, analyzing, and applying their information. Further, a course might require one or more synthesis and evaluation assignments where student might be asked to watch a speech on-line or watch a speech of a peer and evaluate the speech and the delivery according to the overall learning objectives of the course. While the rubric below only uses one assignment in the course as an example of the completion of critical thinking outcomes, the elements of evidence quality, integration and synthesis, and evaluation are found in over 75% of the course.

*Target Audience*

SP 100 attracts a wide diversity of students—representing everyone from FYE students to graduating seniors in a variety of majors—and typically uses pedagogical approaches such as, peer evaluative feedback, open discussion formatting, lecture, and active learning between individuals with varied academic and life experiences. While other courses may require a public presentation, for students outside of majoring or minoring in Communication Studies this may be the only opportunity they have for formal public speaking instruction, practiced presentational skills, and a continuous feedback process that allows for public speaking skills to be routinely practiced and defined. Further, teaching students to acquire, use, and evaluate information is a staple of communication education and allows students to be more information proficient. The information literate student understands the type of information that is needed, is proficient in research, and engages in critical thinking (CT) when incorporating content into an existing knowledge base. Lastly, for those students experiencing apprehension towards public discourse or any kind, this might be the only opportunity students have to work on reducing communication apprehension slowly and incrementally, while still having multiple opportunities in one course to advance in the confidence that grows when lack of apprehension is present. Assessment feedback confirms that most students find it to be one of the most practical courses that they can apply outside of the course (i.e. other presentations in varied courses, speaking at student organization meetings, interviewing, and feeling confident in front of groups). Non-traditional students go further to report that having public speaking knowledge and skills proves to be essential to their continued career growth and success.

*Institutional Role*

In contrast to many other universities, most in fact, NMU does not require undergraduates to take a “communication” course in order to graduate (e.g., interpersonal communication, public address, small group process) *per se*. While Communication and Public relations majors and minors are required to take the course, a good majority of the enrollment each semester are students that are part of another major or minor on campus (i.e. construction management, elementary education, nursing, etc.). Over 8 of SP 100 sections in FY 2014, non-CAPS majors have accounted for 77% of registrants. We also find that students often take the course as part of their Associates Degree Concentration and an elective of interest to meet minimum graduation requirements. *Additional Considerations*

Currently, although faculty teaching SP 100 adopt the same course objectives, pedagogical approaches vary. Regardless of their pedagogical approach to the course or the different kinds of assignments they use, all instructors teaching SP 100 have agreed to coordinate activities so that at least 50% of the graded material can and will be subjected to learning outcomes analysis using the approved rubric and conform to the letter and spirit of the provisions made in this proposal. Historically, we have capped sections at 25 students though the course could be taught to larger numbers through the use of a speech lab, where students would present speeches on a set aside day, each choosing an appointment time, so that the number of speeches a semester could remain the same and the caps could be increased. This course has been taught this way in the past and it was reported by both the instructor and the students alike to be successful in fulfilling the learning objectives. It does have some instructor constraints regarding work load and the instructors’ ability to listen to and objectively critique more than a handful of speeches as on time. Were the course to become a part of the General Education program, we might adopt this later approach based upon enrollment pressures we predict will accrue with time.

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
CRITICAL THINKING**

*Attainment of the CRITICAL THINKING Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Critical Thinking Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this area. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **DIMENSION GUIDANCE** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Evidence** | Assesses quality of information that may be integrated into an argument | *Task Type*: Persuasive Speech and/or Outline  *Frequency*: At Least Once a Semester  *Overall Grading Weight*: 30%  *Expected Proficiency Rate*: Since SP 100 attracts such a wide range of students, including those at NMU with probationary of transitional status, we expect as much as a quarter of the enrollees could fail to achieve a “proficient” rating. Thus, our criterion level is 75%.  *Link Between Assessment Dimension & Assessment Plan*: Instructors will consider the extent to which students rely upon high quality support (i.e., source citations, quoted material, facts or figures, representative examples) to provide a variety of grounds for they make in addressing assignment directions for the outlines they produce, the peer review or self-review feedback reports, or the oral presentations they give. For example, a student may be asked to research and give an 8-10 minute persuasive speech, advocating for either a change in belief or behavior or opposing a change in a status quo. In turn, the instructor would evaluate the frequency, type, and caliber of supporting materials students explicitly refer to in their presentation and whether those supporting materials effectively communicate a logical, credible and well-supported argument. |
| **Integrate** | Integrates insight and or reasoning with previous understanding to reach informed conclusions and/or understanding | *Task Type*: Persuasive Speech and/or Outline (subjected to rubric analysis independent of grading scale)  *Frequency*: At Least Once a Semester  *Overall Grading Weight*: 30%  *Expected Proficiency Rate*: Since SP 100 attracts such a wide range of students, including those at NMU with probationary of transitional status, we expect as much as a quarter of the enrollees could fail to achieve a “proficient” rating. Thus, our criterion level is 75%.  *Link Between Assessment Dimension & Assessment Plan*: Instructors will consider the extent to which students use information gained in the course or from prior experiences and/or courses (e.g., employment settings, personal lives) to provide a well- reasoned and insightful synthesis in addressing assignment directions for the persuasive speeches, peer and self-review feedback essays, and outlines produced. For example a student who presents a speech on Dyslexia citing their personal experiences growing up with the disability, how it is viewed by themselves and others, and what it is and how it effects learning and relationships. The instructor would in turn evaluate the range, clarity and appropriateness of the ideas and examples that were used in informing the audience on the topic and creating a sense of shared understanding regarding what Dyslexia is and its overall importance. |
| **Evaluate** | Evaluates information, ideas, and activities according to established principles and guidelines | *Task Type*: Peer and Self-Reflection Papers, and/or Projects related to reviewing presentational effectiveness or ineffectiveness (subjected to rubric analysis independent of grading scale)  *Frequency*: At Least Twice a Semester  *Overall Grading Weight*: 20%  *Expected Proficiency Rate*: Since SP 100 attracts such a wide range of students, including those at NMU with probationary of transitional status, we expect as much as a quarter of the enrollees could fail to achieve a “proficient” rating. Thus, our criterion level is 75%.  *Link Between Assessment Dimension & Assessment Plan*: For example, individual students may be asked to produce a personal reflection paper regarding the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of their own speech as compared to the examples provided, the rubric for the assignments, and the expectations of the assignment; in turn, the instructor would evaluate the extent to which students rely upon previous instruction, activities, examples, and presentational guidelines in completing their analysis. Students might also be asked to complete a peer evaluation, requiring effective processes of critical listening, and identifying effective and ineffective aspects of oral presentations. Again, the instructor would in-turn evaluate the extent to which students rely upon previous instruction, activities, examples, and presentational guidelines in completing their analysis. |

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

*Attainment of the EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this learning outcome. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Central Message and Structure** | Central message is the primary focus (main idea or thesis) of the work. Structure is the arrangement of the parts or elements of the work that aids in understanding which includes being coherent, logical, and complete. | *Task Type*: Oral Presentations and/or Outlines  *Frequency*: At least once a semester  *Overall Grading Weight*: 20%  *Expected Proficiency Rate*: Since SP 100 attracts such a wide range of students, including those at NMU with probationary of transitional status, we expect as much as a quarter of the enrollees could fail to achieve a “proficient” rating. Thus, our criterion level is 75%.  *Link Between Assessment Dimension & Assessment Plan*: For all presentations delivered and outlines created it is expected that the student uses a format that is appropriate for the topic, situation, and audience. This outline involves elements of introductory and concluding materials, transitional sentences, citations of scholarly works used, and content that conveys a clear and accurate message. While there are many ways to format a presentation students will use the method of organization that best fits the above criteria. For example, a student may choose to give an informative speech on Biker Safety. This student will most likely adopt a topical approach to the subject matter covering three main topic points such as; staying safe on the trails, on the roadways, and on-campus. In contrast, another student may present an informative speech on the Changes to Our Health Care Laws and their speech may be organized as a pro-con speech, allowing the audience to ultimately choose where to stand having all of the costs and benefits analyzed. An instructor would evaluate the each student’s understanding of the appropriateness of the organizational pattern in clearly and eloquently conveying the central message. They will be evaluated on their use of transitional materials as well as internal organizational methods (i.e. sign posts, internal reviews and previews, etc). |
| **Substantiation** | Substantiation includes solid reasoning and valid evidence supports conclusions; sources are documented in accordance with disciplinary conventions | *Task Type*: Oral Presentations and/or Outlines  *Frequency*: At least once a semester  *Overall Grading Weight*: 20%  *Expected Proficiency Rate*: Since SP 100 attracts such a wide range of students, including those at NMU with probationary of transitional status, we expect as much as a quarter of the enrollees could fail to achieve a “proficient” rating. Thus, our criterion level is 75%.  *Link Between Assessment Dimension & Assessment Plan*: It is an expectation of the course that students not only provide a reference page detailing in APA or MLA the sources used in all presentations. It is further the expectation that all sources found on their reference page will also be cited orally using the name, date, title, and credibility of the source. All speeches are required to have some level of research. However, the research requirements may vary from assignment to assignment. It is also expected that any claims advanced are supported by qualified evidence and that any information presented is accurate and credible. For example, a student may be assigned a policy argument on an environmental issue. This assignment might require a student to complete their advocacy or opposition statements using more than 6 references, 3 of which must come from peer-reviewed journals. The student presenting the issue to their audience cannot make generalizations that are not supported by research or evidence. They are to avoid other fallacies in reasoning (i.e. false-cause, hasty generalizations and/or irrelevant arguments). When citing and evidence and/or information that supports the arguments they are expected to do it both orally and in writing on a reference page. The instructor would in-turn evaluate if the student met the research and citation requirements and further evaluate the success of the students arguments via whether their conclusions are founded on reasoning that is free of fallacies and supported by proof. |
| **Delivery-Written** | Text (clear, readable, consistent with disciplinary conventions and standard written conventions including proofreading and proper syntax etc.) appropriate to the purpose and audience. | *Task Type*: Full-sentence outlines and/or Peer and Self-reflective essays  *Frequency*: Multiple times throughout the semester  *Overall Grading Weight*: 20%  *Expected Proficiency Rate*: Since SP 100 attracts such a wide range of students, including those at NMU with probationary of transitional status, we expect as much as a quarter of the enrollees could fail to achieve a “proficient” rating. Thus, our criterion level is 75%.  *Link Between Assessment Dimension & Assessment Plan*: One of the main objectives of the course is for students to research topics in depth and provide detailed outlines for presentations. These outlines are to include multiple scholarly sources that are to be referenced both in internal citations and through oral citations. These outlines are also to be free of grammatical errors, organized via a selected and appropriate organizational pattern chosen to fit the topic, situation, and audience. Student may also complete review papers evaluating the speech of a peer, the self, and/or an example provided by the instructor. Those assignments are also expected to be free of grammatical errors, include all aspects of the assignment, are thorough in their analysis, and organized. For example, students may be required to watch a speech on the internet, such as a TED Talk, and provide feedback on speech competencies observed or ignored in a critical review paper. The instructor would then evaluate the paper for its use of organization, it thoroughness in analysis, and it writing. |
| **Delivery-Oral** | Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) and audio/visual aids appropriate to the purpose and audience. | *Task Type*: Oral Presentations  *Frequency*: Multiple times throughout the semester  *Overall Grading Weight*: 40%  *Expected Proficiency Rate*: Since SP 100 attracts such a wide range of students, including those at NMU with probationary of transitional status, we expect as much as a quarter of the enrollees could fail to achieve a “proficient” rating. Thus, our criterion level is 75%.  *Link Between Assessment Dimension & Assessment Plan*: All presentation that utilize presentational aids must be clear, accurate, and displayed properly so as to not distract, but rather enhance the message/purpose of the presentation. Students are expected to use a variety of language and delivery techniques that fit the audience and situation (i.e., eye contact, extemporaneous delivery versus manuscript delivery, tone and pitch, pauses and movement, professional dress and creativity in language.) The use of audience and situation analysis will help students in determining which visual/audio aids are most effective and which style of delivery would enhance the acceptability of the speaker’s information and/or message. For example, students may interview other students regarding their topic to be sure they are accounting for the beliefs and attitudes of their audience, prior to delivering their actual speech. The instructor could then assess, outside of the standard critique for delivery, if the student used their audience analysis in identifying the appropriate visual/auditory aids to be used and in choosing the style of delivery that would be most effective for that situation, purpose, and audience. |