Specific Criteria for Each Stage of the SpCm 212 Test-Out

Stage One: Written Exam

Preparation

- The exam consists of 50 multiple-choice questions.
- To pass this stage, the student must answer 80% of the questions correctly.
- Note that understanding the course concepts is closely related to your ability to develop a speech that meets our evaluation criteria since those are based on the textbook.

Written Exam Procedures

- You should report to the Testing Office in room 2062 of the Student Services Building (2nd floor) at the time you registered to take the written exam for the SpCm 212 test-out.
  - Bring 2 number 2 pencils and your student ID.
  - The testing office will proctor the one-hour written exam.
- The Testing Office will report scores to the Speech Program near the end of each month.
  - Results will be posted by the last four digits of your student ID#
  - Students who failed to pass the written exam at the required level [79% and below] will NOT give the oral presentation and will NOT receive test-out credit.
- If you passed the exam, you should finish preparing for the oral portion of the test-out.
  - Begin developing your speech as you read the textbook to prepare for the written exam. You'll do better on the test and better on the speech as a result.
  - Use the time between the written and the oral exams to refine your outline and rehearse your presentation.

***After you have successfully passed the Written Exam, you will receive an email from the Speech Communication Program providing you with rubrics and further specific evaluation criteria for the Outline and Persuasive Speech, in addition to the details provided below.***

Stage Two: The Outline

Each student must prepare a full preparation outline for the speech. The outline should account for all of the material used in your speech and will run 2-4 pages. It must follow one of the patterns of organization for persuasive speeches presented in the textbook in Chapter 6. The general requirements for the outline are detailed in Chapter 7 of the textbook.

Stage Three: The Speech Assignment

You are asked to develop a Persuasive Speech for the purposes of the test out. This is a speech that aims to persuade the audience on an issue. The speech must be on an issue of policy. The speech should be adapted to an audience of your peers at ISU. Remember, the persuasive speaker is especially concerned with appropriateness, clarity, and making the information comprehensible, well researched, convincing, and even engaging for the audience.
General Requirements:

- The speech should be **6-8 minutes** long. Failure to meet the time requirement closely will cost you points in the evaluation.
- The speech should be **delivered extemporaneously** from a speaking outline. You may use some notes to deliver your speech, but you may not use more than three one-sided, 8x11 sheets of paper. (Hint: visual aids are often very useful for helping speakers remember the order of their ideas.)
- **Each speech must include oral citations for a minimum of five credible sources.** Failure to cite the sources orally will cost you points.
  - Citations must be from a variety of types of sources: not all books, not all interviews, not all magazines, and perhaps most important, not all Internet.
  - All of the sources for the speech should also be cited on the bibliography.
  - The expectation for seven sources is a minimum. Evaluators will not only consider whether you successfully cited five sources, but also whether you have the sources that were necessary to develop your point.
  - Successful SpCm 212 students are expected to have strong research skills, and this is also an area of evaluation in the test-out. We expect college-level research. In general, it is also expected that you will utilize the kinds of sources available through the ISU Library (i.e. peer-reviewed journals, etc.).
- The speech topic must be **substantive** and should cover an issue over which there is some debate.
- The **speech introduction must** state the these of your speech clearly. Remember that audiences really value the speaker who can combine personal experience or passion with good solid information; don't neglect to tell us why the topic matters to you even as you help us understand why it might matter to us.
- The body of the speech must include **2-5 main points organized according to one of the patterns of organization** discussed in the textbook.
- The speech must have a **clear conclusion** that signals the end of the speech and reinforces the central idea.
- The speech presentation **must include a visual aid**. An overhead projector will be available for electronic visual aids. Arrangements for any other type of visual aid are your responsibility.

Topic Requirements

- The purpose of this assignment is to develop a message designed to persuade the audience for or against a question of policy.
  - Speeches on questions of policy deal with specific problems and typically argue that a particular course of action should be adopted to solve those problems.
  - Your goal is to persuade your audience that some group “we” belong to—each of us as individuals, the ISU community, the Ames community, Central Iowa, Iowa or even “We” as the People of the United States who might act through Congress, or “we” as members of the United Nations—should take a particular action to solve, or take a step toward solving, a particular problem.
  - One big challenge is to engage this particular audience, so you have to be clear about what their role is in the situation. Once you have a topic, you will then analyze the problem or need for action, provide a specific and researched course of action to solve the problem, and demonstrate why your particular solution is practical. Adapt your material--
including examples and wording—to your audience. It is your job as speaker to interest the audience in your material.

Delivery Requirements

• To pass the performance aspect of the test-out, you must deliver the speech extemporaneously. It cannot be read; it should not be impromptu or memorized. It should be free of distracting errors in grammar, pronunciation, and word usage.
• Think of yourself as really talking to this audience. Look at them, gesture toward them, make your vocal delivery varied and interesting.
• Aim to make us believe that you are enjoying the opportunity to share what you have learned with others.

Oral Test-out Procedures

• You will be notified via email of the location of the test-out exam by Monday of the week before class start (i.e. the week of the oral test-out).
• At 1:00 p.m. the Friday before classes, you should be prepared to turn in your final speech outline and to deliver your speech. Report to the classroom identified via email notification (we will also post a list outside room 308 Carver Hall during test-out week).
• Understand that speech rounds are typically completed between 2:30 and 3:00 p.m. and that you will be expected to stay until all test-out candidates have completed the oral portion. You will be free to leave when the faculty member in charge of your group excuses your room.
• Speech Communication faculty and Teaching Assistants for Speech Communication 212 will evaluate speeches. To gain test-out credit, students must earn at least a B (80%) on the speech.
• Results for the outline/oral portion of the SpCm 212 Test-out will be confirmed via email by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday the first week of classes. The pass/no-pass decisions of the judges in each test-out room are final. If feedback about your performance would be useful to your development as a skilled communicator, you are invited to schedule an appointment with the Assistant Director of Public Speaking or another 212 Staff member to view the recording of your test-out speech.
• The Speech Program will forward the results for the outline/oral portions of the exam to the Testing Office who will report the results to the registrar. If you passed the exam, the T credit is applied to your record when grades for the following semester are processed.

FAQs

What happens if I do not earn Test-Out credit?

• If you are already registered for the course or if you can find a spot in a lab section and add the course, you can take it in the semester that begins right after the test-out or during a later semester. Some students find the summer session an intense but valuable experience.
• Another option is to re-take the Test-Out the next time it is offered, but the University Testing Office will charge you another $100.00 on your U-bill. **You are limited to 2 attempts at passing the SpCm 212 Test-out.**

**How good are my chances of passing?**

• You can increase your chances of passing the written exam by obtaining a copy of *A Speechmaker’s Reference* and following paying special attention to the areas indicated for review.
• You can increase your chances of passing the outline and speech assignments by carefully reviewing the explanation on the attached pages and by studying textbook tips and examples. Make sure you meet all the basic requirements for the assignment you select.
• The success rate for people who actually come to the test-out has fallen in recent semesters to about a 50% pass rate.
  ▪ About half of the students who failed to pass during the last 4 test-out sessions have failed to pass the written exam and the other half have not successfully earned the necessary B on the speech assignment.
  ▪ The people who do not pass the oral portion typically are not fully prepared or have ignored the assignment requirements--the speech is too long, too short, is plagiarized, fails to meet source or visual aid requirements, is read to the audience, is disorganized and hard to follow, or does not meet the definition of the assignment (the speech is persuasive, motivational or argumentative, or fails to meet the expectations of an instructional speech).
• Remember that this is not simply a communication competency test, but a course test-out. By following the directions in this packet you will help make sure that you are fulfilling the expectations of your evaluators.

**Who can I contact if I have questions after reading this information?**

• You may contact the testing office (515) 294-5058 for general questions about the written exam such as "Was my registration form received?" "What time did I register for?"
• You should contact the Speech Communication office at (515) 294-7670 for general questions about the speech performance such as, "Where and when will I deliver my speech?" and "Will there be an overhead projector available?"
• You should contact the Course Director at lefebvre@iastate.edu for specific questions over your work or concerns about the process.