

Oral Communication

Students develop their oral communication skills at Westmont by taking at least one course that emphasizes effective spoken strategies. This course encourages students to develop their abilities to articulate information, ideas, and convictions in oral discourse. Graduates are expected to be able to communicate effectively to a wide range of audiences within the academy, the church, and the public sphere.

Interpretive Statement

The course is explicitly identified as an oral communication course, and it clearly defines expectations for performance. Oral Communication includes a large scope of communicative activities other than just formal speeches, such as individual and group presentations, poster presentations, podcasts, facilitating discussions, counselling sessions, art jury discussions, etc. Students will receive instructions regarding oral communication strategies. There needs to be dedicated class time in which instruction focuses on elements of oral communication, beyond explaining the assignment and/or rubric. An instructor needs to address what it takes to be a successful communicator within the relevant context.

Certification Criteria

Students are informed that their work will be evaluated for clarity and style in a specific oral communication context (rhetorical situation) informed by purpose, audience, and genre in addition to content, including their

- ability to construct messages with insightful ideas. Message construction should also be evaluated for its contextual appropriateness—sensitivity to the audience and occasion. Audience-centeredness can include, but is not limited to, responding well to challenging questions, respecting intercultural differences, and handling unforeseen situations.
- delivery skills that emphasize the performance aspects of speech-acts, primarily quality of voice (tone, pitch, rate) as well as physical presence (eye contact, gestures, posture, appropriate appearance, and energy).
- attentiveness; for instance: good listening, receptivity to feedback, and ability to understand and respond appropriately to others.

The course requires that every student deliver at least two individual or group assignments with instructor or peer feedback to inform later oral assignments. These might be in the form of a presentation, dialogue, debate, poster session, counseling

session, sermon, podcast, or other form that demonstrates oral communication competencies and skills.

Student Learning Outcome

Students will effectively communicate orally as informed by rhetorical situation, audience, genre, and purpose.