COM 271: Broadcast Performance  
Section 001  ●  Spring 2017

Meeting Time: Tuesday – 5:30 p.m. to 8:20 p.m., starting January 17, 2017  
Location: Fell 125  
Instructor: Jim Gee  
Office: ITDC 110 (see map)  
Office Hours: Tuesday and Wednesday, 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (other times by appointment)  
Skype: jimgeectlt (during office hours or by appointment)  
Contact: jpee@ilstu.edu  •  217-369-8755 (cell – no text messages, please)  •  309-438-8931 (office)


New copies of the text are available about $75 from online retailers like Amazon.com. It will also be available at the campus bookstore. Amazon and others offer both digital and paperback copies for rent. Make sure you get the 4th edition (with the red cover), and NOT the older versions with blue or green covers! You will need the textbook by the second week of class (January 24).

Required Materials, Technology, and Resources
- A USB Drive. Some audio recording projects for this class will be submitted through ReggieNet. However, you may encounter file size limits for larger projects. You should have the project on a USB drive on the day they are due as a backup.
- Access to an audio recording device. Most students have smartphones, which work wonderfully for this purpose. We’ll discuss alternatives in class, including options available through Milner Library.
- A pair of headphones or ear buds, like those used with a portable music player.
- Pad and pen for use in class.
- A valid ISU email address (“@ilstu.edu”) which is checked daily. If you have not done so, please consider adding your University email account to your smartphone. It is easy; I am happy to walk you through the process.
- Access to the Office 365 software suit available to all students for free at Office365.IllinoisState.edu.

Course Catalog Description
Introduction to basic concepts of on-air performance for television and radio to enhance students’ experiential learning in broadcast concentrations. Materials charge optional. Prerequisites: COM 111, 161, and 160 or 167.

Overview (What’s in It for You!)  
This class will help you develop your on-air performance and presentation skills. While the course is called Broadcast Performance, we’re really talking about many forms of electronic media—terrestrial radio and television, satellite, cable, the internet, and emerging mobile technologies. In other words, this course should help you in any situation where you need to perform in front of a microphone or a camera. You’ll improve your performance through practical exercises, alone and in groups, and through study of the science behind oral (and aural) communication.

One of the best ways to improve our performance is to analyze the performance of others. We’ll spend time this semester sampling various forms of mediated electronic communication and dissecting, discussing, and synthesizing what we see and hear.
Success in the Course
I’ve found that students who succeed in this course
- have exemplary attendance and attentiveness in class.
- arrive on time and are ready to go by the start of class.
- eat something before class (seriously!).
- work and read ahead of assignment due dates.
- prepare for and participate in class discussions.
- turn in assignments on ReggieNet (or through other means as directed) well before the start of class.
- regularly check your ISU email for important updates and changes.
- proactively communicate with me (meaning you email, call, or Skype with me when you have a question or need some help).
- engage in metacognitive (“thinking about thinking”) practices that maximize learning (we’ll talk about this in class).

Learning Goals
In this course, we will work to
- become a more effective communicator through the development of vocal and visual performance skills.
- develop an appreciation of how the biases of a medium affect and inform performance by
  - developing a critical understanding of the nature of broadcast media through the study of performance examples
  - understanding the importance of good performance and how it affects the audience’s ability and desire to process and retain information.
  - understanding how non-verbal communication, both on- and off-camera, can affect our presentation.
- understand the basic physiology of producing voice.
- understand how preparation, including writing choices, informs and enhances performance.
- develop the ability to project confidence in scripted, extemporaneous, and ad-libbed situations.
- understand the terminology and equipment associated with live electronic performance.
- understand and demonstrate techniques associated with conducting interviews.
- understand voice and performance issues specific to different types of content, including commercial, entertainment, and news/public affairs.
- understand how those we admire in the media achieve great effect by practicing the techniques used in this course.

Plan of Study
The specific plan of study, outlining tentative activities for each class period, will be appended to this syllabus. This will aid you, should you wish to read ahead. It may be updated from time-to-time; you will be informed both in class and through your campus email account when that happens. The most up-to-date plan of study can always be found on our course ReggieNet site, under the Syllabus link (found on the top left of the page).

Success Week
Illinois State University calls the week before the final exam period Success Week. The goal is to provide you with time to prepare for exams free of last-minute assignments. You can read more about it at http://policy.illinoisstate.edu/academic/4-1-5.shtml

Classroom Technology Policy
We will, as a group, discuss how we will use technology in our classroom. I believe it is important for you, as participants in the learning process, to have a say in what our classroom technology policy will encourage and discourage. Generally, as our class will demand critical thinking and concentration, we will encourage behaviors that show courtesy to our fellow learners, avoid distractions, and allow us to concentrate on the important work at hand. We will formulate our technology policy during the second week of class, and it will be posted on our ReggieNet course site for future reference.
Severe Weather or other Cancellations
You should assume class will be held as scheduled unless the campus is officially closed by the University administration. Notifications of campus closures will come through a variety of channels, including the main website at IllinoisState.edu. In the event of a campus closure, I will provide guidance concerning any required changes to the plan of study via email and ReggieNet. I may assign an alternative, online lesson to be completed by the next scheduled class period. Generally, if we miss a class due to campus closure, you should expect to cover the missed material before the next scheduled class period.

Attendance
This course relies heavily on classroom discussion and group work. Moreover, since we meet only once a week, missing one night of class is the equivalent of missing three class periods in a row in other courses! Therefore, good attendance is paramount and will reflect a large percentage of your grade. As your instructor, I am required to take attendance at the start of class. Students with more than three unexcused absences for the semester may have their overall final grade lowered by one full letter. That’s in addition to any points lost for late assignments.

Absences
I am willing to work with you if you expect to miss a day of class. However, assignments to be turned in during class may not be made up except if an arrangement for your absence is made prior to class. I may (at my discretion) assign you an alternative assignment in lieu of that in-class exercise grade. Arrangement is defined as an agreement made in advance between you and me. Notification is not enough; for example, sending an e-mail ten minutes before class is not acceptable. As stated before, students who miss an in-class assignment without prior approval will not be allowed to make it up and will receive no points for it. In the event of an extended period of absence, we will be guided by the University’s policies on the subject. In the event of a death in the family, we will be guided by the University Bereavement Policy included toward the end of this syllabus.

Late Assignments
Deadlines are important in life; they are doubly important to broadcasting and mass media students who wish to go on in “the biz.” If you think you are going to miss a deadline, it is vital that you communicate with me at least a day before the project is due. I will not generally accept a project that is submitted after the deadline; I will certainly not accept a project submitted after the deadline WITHOUT prior arrangement. In addition, I reserve the right to require a written paper (no less than three pages in length) describing the circumstances leading to the late assignment, a critical analysis of why you missed your deadline, and a strategy for improving your ability to meet deadlines.

Grading
You will be graded on how well you develop your performance abilities over the course of the semester. This will be demonstrated through classroom exercises, performance projects, and quizzes on reading and lecture content.

There’s a great deal of subjectivity in performance. To help chart your progress, I will use rubrics (which you’ll get when an assignment is made) so you have a clear idea of the criteria I will use to evaluate your progress. Remember, this is not a competition; everyone brings their own level of experience and natural talent to this class. You will be evaluated on how much progress you demonstrate and not how you compare to your classmates.

We will have a series of take-home essay exams in which you will apply the content of the textbook to real world examples. There will be no final exam, but we will meet during the final exam period. You will also submit a professional critique paper, no less than five pages in length, relating the course material to a professional communicator that you’ve either researched or interviewed (details to come later in the semester). Below are the approximate number of points that will be accumulated during the semester; the exact total may vary slightly from 750 points, but the relationship (i.e., the ratios) between the categories should not change much.
In-class Exercises ("ICE") 120 points
Performance Projects 300 points
Quizzes and Short Analyses 50 points
Essay Exams 180 points
Professional Critique Paper 100 points

There are no direct grades for participation. Rather, we will engage in exercises most days that will be counted for a grade. The criteria for in-class exercises will vary, but generally, if you give it a good try, you’ll score well. Obviously, if you’re absent for the in-class exercise, you won’t receive credit for it.

*Please note:* At the end of each semester, I will round grades to the nearest whole percent—this means, if you have an 89.4%, it is a “B”. If you have an 89.5%, it is an “A”.

A (89.5% or more)
B (79.5% - 89.4%)
C (69.5% - 79.4%)
D (59.5% - 69.4%)
F (59.4% or less)

**Evaluation Challenge**
I will make every effort to provide us with ways of objectively identifying expectations for your performance as a student and my evaluation of that performance. I do not give grades; you, as the student, demonstrate competence and critical thinking and earn grades. However, no grading system can be totally objective. If you believe you have earned a grade other than one you receive, we will use a procedure that has been successfully used in COM 110 courses at Illinois State University. I will provide you with details as needed.

**Cheating/Plagiarism**
You are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*. All work is to be appropriately cited when it is borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Unauthorized and unacknowledged collaboration on any work, or the presentation of someone else’s work, is plagiarism.

Students found to inadvertently commit acts of dishonesty will receive appropriate penalties specific to the assignment in question. Students found to commit intentional acts of dishonesty will receive a failing grade in the course and will be referred for appropriate disciplinary action through the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

**Special Needs**
Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853.

**OUR LEARNING COMMUNITY**
Performance is tough. As performers, we open ourselves to criticism on the most personal of levels. You must show attentiveness, empathy, and tolerance toward your peers. In other words, be encouraging and supportive, and leave smugness and snarky comments at the door. Discourteous individuals will be asked to leave that day’s class. Any major or habitual disruption of the class will result in a lowering of your grade.

We want this to be a positive learning environment. Your use of language, the content of your presentations, and your attire should reflect this. The obscene, the vulgar, or the prurient cannot be tolerated. We’ll discuss guidelines for presenting “edgy” content in class as we explore assignments.
Professional Courtesy: Professional courtesy includes respecting others' opinions, not interrupting in class, being respectful to those who are speaking, and working together in a spirit of cooperation. We will all demonstrate these behaviors at all times in this class. With that in mind, sleeping, reading materials irrelevant to class purposes, texting, or disrupting the class will not be tolerated and will result in you being considered absent for that particular class period.

Professional Etiquette: On presentation days, you have dual responsibilities as a performer and an audience member. Performances should not contain vulgar language or imagery that go beyond expected community (i.e., broadcasting) standards. If you are unsure about this, please consult with me ahead of time. When you are an audience member, you should be attentive and provide constructive, respectful feedback when the presentation is finished. Because most people are nervous when they present, you need to be supportive both verbally and nonverbally. Please do not enter or leave the room while a presentation is in progress.

Addressing Behavioral Concerns: I will work with you should any issues, like those outlined above, arise. I will schedule a meeting outside of class time to discuss these expectations and work with you to develop a behavioral modification plan. If these behaviors persist, you will be at-risk for failing the course, in keeping with the University’s Student Code of Conduct.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mental Health Resources: Life at college can get very complicated. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. However, many of these issues can be effectively addressed with a little help. Student Counseling Services (SCS) can help you cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. Student Counseling Services is staffed by experienced, professional psychologists and counselors, who are attuned to the needs of college students. The services are FREE and completely confidential. Find out more at Counseling.IllinoisState.edu or by calling (309) 438-3655.

Illinois State University Bereavement Policy: Bad things happen to good people—a death in the family is one of the worst things any of us will have to deal with in life. I will do everything within reason (and more) to make sure the impact on your learning at such a time is minimized. With that in mind, the University has policies to guide us. In brief, if you have a death in the family, you will need to contact me through the Dean of Students office (you are welcome to communicate with me directly, too, but your first call should be to the Dean of Students), and we’ll make reasonable arrangements. Details can be found at the following website: http://policy.illinoisstate.edu/students/2-1-27.shtml

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Please print this form, complete it, and be prepared to turn it into the instructor when requested.

I, ________________________________, have read the syllabus, the appended “plan of study”, the appended requirements for written assignments, and the Classroom Technology Policy developed in class. I agree to abide by the terms set therein.

Signature: _______________________________ Date: _______________________________