

COM 4930: Communication Practicum (Speech Lab Consulting)

Spring 2025

Instructor: Dennis N. McCarty, PhD

Class Time: We will coordinate meetings for training together.

Class Location: Rolfs 410; Rolfs 5th Floor

Office Hours: Tuesdays from 1-4 p.m. in person or over Zoom; by appointment; subject to alteration depending on the lab

Office: Rolfs 414

Email: d.mccarty@ufl.edu

Website: <http://lss.at.ufl.edu>

Phone: 501-388-0010 (We will also establish a GroupMe if you are able)

Course Objectives

Increase skills in the consultation and mentoring relationship

Develop awareness of liability issues in consultation

Refine knowledge of presentation skills across a variety of settings

Increase understanding of how scholarly training relates to life outside the classroom

Course Description

The Communication Practicum is a 3-credit course combining online classroom instruction with practical, hands-on communication experience. This is a course for students that have already completed an advanced level public speaking course and are ready to move on to mentoring others in the speech preparation process - specifically, within the Dial Center's Public Speaking Lab.

In the early part of this course, we focus on tools in preparation for working with the clients of the Public Speaking Lab. We examine concepts central to the consultation and mentoring relationship, including ethics, empowering others, and helping others with

speech anxiety. Students will also stretch their own speaking skills to consider speeches in professional settings, such as teaching, dissertation defenses, and conference presentations. Finally, students will be asked to demonstrate their knowledge by preparing a workshop on one aspect of the speechmaking process – whether that be the narrowing and selection of a topic, the preparation of an outline, strategies for rehearsing and enhancing delivery, etc.

After the first 4 weeks of the semester, students will use their skills to assist others to develop speaking presentations. Over the course of the semester, students will spend a total of 150 hours in consultation, record-keeping, reflection, and preparation (or 10 hours per week).

Course Materials

Most of our resources will be provided on the Canvas site or supplied in person. Prior instructors of this course have also suggested the following texts for your **optional** consideration:

Connor, M. & Pokora, J. (2012). *Coaching and Mentoring at Work: Developing Effective Practice*. Second Edition. McGraw-Hill Publishing.

Newton, F., Ender, S., and Gardner, J. (2010). *Students Helping Students: A Guide for Peer Educators on College Campuses*. Second Edition. Jossey-Bass.

Instructional materials for this course consist of only those materials specifically reviewed, selected, and assigned by the instructor. The instructor is only responsible for these instructional materials.

Assignments

Online Trainings (10 points)

Since you are working with students' academic information, you are required to complete both the "FERPA basics" training and the "Maintaining a Safe and Respectful Campus" training through UF.

Submit proof of completion by Aug. 30 on Canvas. You can take a screen shot of the certificates.

Peer Workshop Project (30)

Part of transferring your training to practice in this course will involve planning, constructing, and coordinating a short workshop intended to help an audience with a particular aspect of public speaking, such as nonverbal communication, respectful discourse, accommodating audience differences, etc. If multiple students want to partner up on a workshop, that is acceptable, but each individual will be expected to complete the amount of work that would be expected of a student working alone.

- **Workshop Information (5)**

You will complete a small information gathering phase for your workshop idea, reporting on what your audience may demand.

- **Workshop Outline (5)**

You will prepare your workshop, attending to its structure and credibility, with an outline and short bibliography.

- **Workshop Design (5)**

You will construct and PowerPoint presentation and activity to use in your workshop.

- **Workshop Execution (15)**

You will gather an audience, set a time for meeting, and present your workshop with an exit survey (provided by instructor).

General Lab Participation (30)

You will be graded on your effective use of the training in consultation with visitors to the lab, and this involves the following:

- Adherence to lab procedures
- Positive and professional interaction with clients
- Prompt and clear communication with the instructor

Oral Exam on Client Intake (10 points)

In order to assess student effectiveness with the consultation process, each student will complete a 30–45-minute intake with me before starting in the speech lab. I will play the role of a client coming into the lab for help with a speech. Students will demonstrate the interpersonal, administrative, and public speaking skills learned in the online training portion of this practicum.

'Debrief' Discussions (10 points)

For each client contact, students will post a debrief on the Canvas 'Discussion' page.

Each debrief should be about 1-2 paragraph in length and should focus on consulting skills that worked and those that could have been improved. Avoid reciting a play-by-play. Focus on what everyone else might learn from that consultation. Also, be sure to protect client identity in these debriefs. The post is more about you as a consultant than the client. Debriefs are due within 5 days of the client contact.

End of Semester Reflection (10 points)

Students will fill out an end-of-semester questionnaire reflecting on their time in the Public Speaking Lab and on their development as a peer mentor.

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion, as determined by your preparedness to manage lab hours and our ability, as a team, to develop well-thought-out workshop content.

Week 1:

Review syllabus

Week 2:

Complete Module 1: 'Intro to Lab and Ethics'

Office Hours (availability for lab) due

MyTraining due

Prepare Ideas for workshops

Week 3:

Complete Module 2: 'Trainer-Trainee Communication.'

Information Gathering and Outline for Workshop due

Week 4:

Complete Module 3: 'Helping with different types of presentations.'

Workshop Designs Due

Week 5:

Oral Exams (Scheduled for first lab hours)

Workshop Execution Coordinated

Weeks 5-15:

Hold 3 office hours per week in the Speech Lab

'Debrief' Discussions due weekly (on Canvas)

Week 16:

Workshops completed, and all Practicum Lab hours completed before Thanksgiving Break

End of Semester Reflection due 12/4

Late Work

Canvas debriefs are due within 5 days of client contact. Late posts will reduce your grade in the class by 1% point per occurrence. Online trainings are due as noted in the schedule of topics. Late trainings will result in a 3-point deduction per day late.

Lab Hours/Attendance

Depending on availability and demand, your Lab Hours will often be conducted via Zoom. I will share the links on our Canvas site.

When you use Zoom, please be sure to sign in using UF Zoom specifically and not just your personal zoom account. Punctuality and Dependability are important in professional settings. A practicum is intended to be a move beyond the classroom and into professional practice. Students must hold 3 office hours in the speech lab per week. We will not hold lab hours on UF holidays, and remember to communicate with me well in advance regarding potential absences related to your participation in UF-sanctioned events.

Zoom guidelines:

If you are working with a graduate consultant, you can use break out rooms for privacy.

You should have your camera on at all times.

Be sure to use best practices for Zoom meetings with lighting, camera angles, limited distractions, and dress. Be sure that you are in a distraction free room with no other people as these meetings are FERPA protected.

Recordings: If a student wants a copy of a recording, contact me with their email address, and the date and time of your consultation. I will share the recording and screen to be sure we don't accidentally share anything else.

Absences: Each unexcused absence will result in a 5-percentage point reduction from your overall grade.

Whether documented or not, all hours missed from the speech lab must be 'made up.' You will also need to arrange a substitute for your originally scheduled time in the lab. If you get a sub and can't do a direct trade with them to take some of their hours in return, you will need to schedule the office hours you missed at some other time the speech lab is published as open. This ensures you continue to accumulate all practicum hours. In any case, make decisions that make it easy for clients to know reliably when the lab will be open for their use.

Tardiness: Tardiness means you are 1-15 minutes late to your lab hours. After 15 minutes, you are considered 'absent,' not tardy. Each incidence of tardiness will result in a reduction of 1% point from your overall course grade.

Dress Code: Business casual in lab and during workshops (we'll clarify this).

Professionalism

You will get as much out of your practicum as you put in. This is an excellent opportunity to enhance your resume and learn more about consulting. You should learn a great deal and enjoy your practicum experience.

The Dial Center considers all practicum students representatives of the University. Students must maintain a courteous, professional attitude and protect the privacy and rights of clients (this includes protecting the identity of any clients that come into the lab and making no comments on social media about the lab or its clients).

You should conduct yourself as if you are working a salaried, full-time position. You will need to arrive at the lab on time and maintain regular hours. If you will be absent, you should contact Dr. McCarty immediately as well as any person with whom you have an appointment scheduled. If you have an appointment you must miss, you should arrange a substitute or a timely make-up to fit that client's needs. If you are in office hours and there is not a client in the office, you should use the time to in some way improve the lab. For instance, you might make informative handouts or videos that help students (or that can be posted on our website). We'll talk about this more later, as the main goal here is to advance the utility and presence of the lab as a resource on campus.

Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester in order to allow us to provide the most effective support. Accommodations cannot be applied retroactively, so please be sure to connect with your instructor early.

Students with any accommodations should arrange a meeting with the instructor during the first week of class (and ideally before the end of drop/add) to discuss how we can work together to meet your needs and still adhere to the essential elements/functions of the course regarding attendance and class participation.

Other policies regarding assignments, penalties, classroom rules and regulations will be dealt with by the individual instructors of this course. Please refer to your instructor's individual addendum to this syllabus for those policies.

Any questions regarding the planning, administering and teaching of SPC2608 should be discussed with individual instructors. As needed, questions can be discussed further with Dr. Dennis McCarty (d.mccarty@ufl.edu), Director of the SPC 2608 program, 414 Rolfs Hall, Dial Center for Written & Oral Communication.

Additional Resources

1. Health and Wellness

- *U Matter, We Care*: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- *Dean of Students Office*: Students who experience a family or personal emergency (death in the family, unplanned hospitalization, etc.) may contact the [Dean of Students Office](#) and request notification letters be sent to their professors. 325-392-1261
- *Counseling and Wellness Center*: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- *Student Health Care Center*: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).
- *University Police Department*: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center*: For immediate medical care call 352- 733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

2. Academic Resources

- *E-learning technical support*: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- *Library Support*: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- *Teaching Center*: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- *Writing Studio*: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- *Student Complaints On-Campus*: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information](#).
- *On-Line Students Complaints*: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).
- *Career Connections Center*: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.