COM 271: Media Performance
Section 001 ● Spring 2024

Meeting Time: Monday – 5:30 p.m. to 8:20 p.m., starting January 22, 2024
Location: Fell 280
Instructor: Jim Gee
Office: Williams Hall 355 or online. Links for all virtual meetings will be posted in Canvas.
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (other times by appointment)
Contact: jpgee@ilstu.edu • 217-369-8755 (cell)

Required Text

Hausman, C., Benoit, P., & Messere, F. (2019) Announcing for broadcast and the internet. New York, NY: Routledge. ISBN: 978-1138294516

New, physical copies of the text are available for about $99 at the campus bookstores and from online retailers like Amazon.com. Amazon and others offer both digital and paperback copies for rent. Used copies are okay and should be relatively easy to find.

Required Materials, Technology, and Resources
For this course, you will need:

- The textbook.
- Access to the internet: While we will be meeting this semester "face-to-face" in Fell 280, I will be available to consult with you over Zoom at other times. In addition, you'll be turning in assignments by uploading them to Canvas or recording them on another platform (for example, Flip).
- The Canvas App for Students: We will be using Canvas extensively. While you are always welcome to email me directly at jpgee@ilstu.edu, I will try to use the Canvas app as much as possible. I strongly suggest that you configure the Canvas to provide you with "push" notifications for our course.
- A computer with a webcam and microphone: Some of your assignments will require you to record performances and upload them before class.
- Access to an audio recording device. Most students have smartphones, which work wonderfully for this purpose. We'll discuss alternatives in class.
- A quiet place to work: You should identify a place where you can record free of distraction and ambient noise. We'll discuss some strategies for achieving this in our first class meeting.
- A pair of headphones or ear buds, like those used with a portable music player.
- Pad and pen for use in class – we'll need to take notes on occasion.
- 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 Microsoft 365 software suit available to all students for free at Office365.IllinoisState.edu. We will be using OneDrive to share large media files. Written assignments should be turned in as Microsoft Word files. See this helpdesk article for assistance using Microsoft 365.

Course Catalog Description
Introduction to basic concepts of on-camera and vocal performance for television, radio, and streaming services to enhance students experiential learning in mass media concentrations. Prerequisites: COM 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. The course used to be called *Broadcast Performance.* It is now called *Media Performance*, since 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 art and 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 Canvas (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 video conference 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 and recorded 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 available in the "Syllabus" menu of our Canvas course site. This will aid you, should you wish to read and work ahead. It may be updated from time-to-to time; you will be informed both in class and through your campus email account when that happens. Again, the most up-to-date plan of study can always be found on our course Canvas 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

POLICIES (How This Class Works)

Class Meetings and Masks

This course will be meeting in-person on Monday nights, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:20 p.m. While masks are no longer required in face-to-face classes, you're welcome to wear one if you wish. I might myself, depending on the course of the COVID-19 pandemic this semester. See the Environmental Health and Safety website for current information.

You should be prepared to spend the full time in class each week (we'll take plenty of breaks!).

In addition to regular meetings, however, you will also have homework to do between class sessions. You'll record performances, read textbook chapters, do short writings and essays, etc. Much of this will be done through our Canvas course site, although we may take advantage of other online tools like Flip.

Attendance

This course relies heavily on 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. Poor attendance will indirectly impact a large percentage of your grade. Likewise, deadlines are important for your learning, so turning in assignments ontime is equally important.

Absences

If you anticipate needing to miss a class period, you must communicate with me *in advance* with enough time for us to arrange an alternative. You should also make connections with fellow students in the course so they can provide you notes of our class discussions and other activities.

While the Dean of Students office provides a courtesy notification service to students for extended absences, this does NOT constitute an automatically excused absence. While you are welcome to take advantage of this service, you are still expected to make arrangements with me as soon as possible to make up missed work.

In the event of an extended period of absence or an inability to complete work due to extended illness, we'll work with the Dean of Students office to assist in making alternative arrangements. We will be guided by the University's policies on the subject, including the policy adopted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit the Dean of Student's Absence Notification page for more information.

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
I am willing to work with you if you expect to miss class period. If you need to miss a session, or if you are unable to complete an assignment on-time, it is important that we make an arrangement ahead of time. **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.

The bottom line: Learning is COM 271 is a partnership – if you communicate with me, I'll do everything I can to be flexible and work with you to find an acceptable alternative.

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. I also strongly encourage you to sign up for ISU Emergency Alert text and email messages at https://security.illinoisstate.edu/emergency_alert/

In the event of any campus closure, I will provide guidance concerning any required changes to the plan of study via email and Canvas.

Recordings
Generally, the only recordings made for this class will be ones you produce. They will be available online only to other students enrolled in this course and should not be copied or shared with others.

The University wants to make students aware that a course may be recorded by the faculty member for later use. Please understand that each faculty member makes an individual decision on whether recording and/or sharing their class materials is warranted. Any recordings that a faculty member makes available are for use by students enrolled in the class and are for the purpose of individual or group study only. The recordings may not be reproduced, shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to publicly accessible web environments. Please do not independently record the course without prior authorization from the faculty member or an approved accommodation from Student Access and Accommodations Services office.

Assessment (How Much You've Learned and the Grades You've Earned)
You will be graded on how well you develop your performance abilities over the course of the semester. This will be demonstrated through recorded exercises, major Performance Projects, and Reflections 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 800 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
Reflections and Short Analyses	100 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. **In-Class Exercises ("ICE") will often require you to both produce a media sample ahead of class and talk about it in class.** The criteria for in-class exercises will vary, but generally, if you give it a good try, you'll score well. Note: if you're absent for the in-class exercise, regardless of the reason, you won't receive credit for it.

Grading Scale
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 Questions
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.

Artificial Intelligence
The nature of learning in this class is very personal, meaning that, you are expected to produce performances without the aid of artificial intelligence resources. Specifically, recorded performances should not be altered through the use of AI. For example, using AI to remove "ums" and "ahs" in your speech will not significantly affect your grade, but it could remove opportunities for me to provide meaningful feedback, and thus, negatively affect what you get out of our class.

Likewise, written assignments is our class center mainly on what you've read and how you apply that to your own personal experiences. You are welcome to use AI-enhanced services like Grammarly if you need assistance in written assignments. However, you should not use Generative AI services (e.g., Chat GPT or Adobe Firefly) to create actual content for written assignments. To be blunt: Using Generative AI services is NOT a substitute for reading the textbook!

Academic Honesty, Cheating, and 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 and any additional syllabus language. All work is to be appropriately cited when it is borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Unauthorized and/or unacknowledged collaboration on any work, or the presentation of someone else's work, is plagiarism.

Content generated by an Artificial Intelligence third-party service or site (AI-generated content) without proper attribution or authorization is another form of plagiarism. Further, you are expected to produce your own, original, unaided texts and other media for this course. So, using an AI service without advanced permission for essay exams or other assignments would constitute an act of academic dishonesty in this class.

If you are unsure about whether something may be plagiarism or another form of academic dishonesty, please reach out to me to discuss it as soon as possible. Any allegation of academic dishonesty may be referred to Student Conduct and Community Responsibilities, a unit of the Dean of Students Office, for possible review. If found responsible for academic dishonesty, a grade penalty can also be applied.

Special Needs
Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit the website at StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu.

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. Illinois State University is committed to creating and maintaining a working, learning and living environment that is welcoming, supportive, respectful, inclusive, diverse and free from discrimination and harassment.

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, disruptive behaviors such as sleeping (yes, that's really happened!), reading materials irrelevant to class purposes, texting, or disrupting the class in other ways will be addressed in a conversation between you and me.

Professional Etiquette
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 speak with you during breeaks or 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 of failing the course, in keeping with the University's Student Code of Conduct.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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 at (309) 438-2008 (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.

Campus Safety and Security
Illinois State University is committed to maintaining a safe environment for the University community. Please take a few moments to make sure you are signed up for ISU Emergency Alerts at IllinoisState.edu/EmergencyAlert.

Student Technology Training
All students are encouraged to take the online Introduction to Technology tour found here: IllinoisState.edu/Quickstart. Additionally, technology support can be found at Help.IllinoisState.edu, which offers online chat and help articles as well as phone support at (309) 438-HELP (4357). Walk-up support and computer repair & purchases are available from TechZone located on the first floor of the Bone Student Center as well as TechZone.IllinoisState.edu.

Two software packages are available at no additional charge—Microsoft Office 365 and Adobe Creative Cloud. Students can download these packages for installation on their personal computers.

# # #