CSE/ISE300 Communications S12

- Time: Tue/Thur 5:20-6:40PM
- Location: Room E4315 Melville Library, 4th floor, east wing
- Required Book: The Elements of Style, 4th edition (Sep 1999), by Strunk & White, 978-0205313426, $10 new (or $5 bookstore rental)
- Free Online Webbook: Technical Writing, by David McMurrey
  http://www.prismnet.com/~hcexres/textbook/
- Recommended Text: Pocket Guide to Technical Communication, 5th ed. (2010), by Pfeiffer, 978-0135063965 $43 SBU new, $22 rent; $29 Amazon new
- Instructor: Professor Larry Wittie  TA: Eric Papenhausen
- Office: CS Building, Room 1308  TA Help: 12-1:30pm Wed, 2110 cs
- Phone: 631-632-8750  (not 2-8456)
- Email: lw@ic.sunysb.edu
- Office Hours: 4-5pm + 7-7:30pm Tue/Thu or by appointment
- Course Homepage: http://www.cs.sunysb.edu/~lw/teaching/cse300

Final versions of memo2 due at start of class today, Tues, 13 March.
Graded quizzes soon. In-class grading of memo2 today.
CSE/ISE 300

Talks: 20-29 Mar. & 10-12 Apr. on 2-pg Memo2

Why I Need a New Work Computer

Plan to give a 6- to 8-minute talk based on your Memo2 paper. Prepare 4 to 8 powerpoint slides.

If you would like to give your talk on a specific date or dates, send email to lw@ic.sunysb.edu with the Subject: 300 talk day. I will pick talk dates for all class members who do not send email.

The new talk dates are:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
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<tr>
<td>Day 1: 20 March</td>
<td>Day 2: 22 March</td>
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<td>Day 3: 27 March</td>
<td>Day 4: 29 March</td>
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<td>Day 5: 10 April</td>
<td>Day 6: 12 April</td>
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Guidelines for Speech Preparation and Delivery

The goal of most oral presentations is quite simple: You must present a few basic points, in a fairly brief time, to an interested but usually impatient audience. Simplicity, brevity, and interest are the keys to success. If you deliver what you expect when you hear a speech, then you will give good presentations yourself.

Speech Guideline 1: Know Your Listeners
These features are common to most listeners:

- They cannot “rewind the tape” of your presentation, in contrast to the way they can skip back and forth through the text of a report.
- They are impatient after the first few minutes, particularly if they do not know where a speech is going.
- They will daydream and often need their attention brought back to the matter at hand (expect a 30-second attention span).
- They have heard so many disappointing presentations that they might not have high expectations for yours.
Speech Guideline 2: Use the Preacher’s Maxim
The well-known preacher’s maxim goes like this:

First you tell ‘em what you’re gonna tell ‘em, then you tell ‘em, and then you tell ‘em what you told ‘em.

Speech Guideline 3: Stick to a Few Main Points
Our short-term memory holds limited items. It follows that listeners are most attentive to speeches organized around a few major points. In fact, a good argument can be made for organizing information in groups of threes whenever possible. For reasons that are not totally understood, listeners seem to remember groups of three items more than they do any other size groupings—perhaps for these reasons:

- The number is simple.
- It parallels the overall three-part structure of most speeches and documents (beginning, middle, and end).
Speech Guideline 4: Put Your Outline on Cards, Paper, or Overheads
The best presentations are “extemporaneous,” meaning the speaker shows great familiarity with the material but uses notes for occasional reference. Avoid the extremes of (1) reading a speech verbatim, which many listeners consider the ultimate insult, or (2) memorizing a speech, which can make your presentation seem somewhat wooden and artificial.

Ironically, you appear more natural if you refer to notes during a presentation. Such extemporaneous speaking allows you to make last-minute changes in phrasing and emphasis that may improve delivery, rather than locking you into specific phrasing that is memorized or written out word for word.

Depending on your personal preference, you may choose to write speech notes on (1) index cards, (2) a sheet or two of paper, or (3) overhead transparencies. The main advantages and disadvantages of each are listed in Figure 4–14.
Speech Guideline 5: Practice, Practice, Practice
Many speakers prepare a well-organized speech but then fail to add the essential ingredient: practice. Constant practice distinguishes superior presentations from mediocre ones. It also helps to eliminate the nervousness that most speakers feel at one time or another.

Speech Guideline 6: Speak Vigorously and Deliberately
Vigorously means with enthusiasm; deliberately means with care, attention, and appropriate emphasis on words and phrases. The importance of this guideline becomes clear when you think back to how you felt during the most recent speech you heard. At the very least, you expected the speaker to show interest in the subject and to demonstrate enthusiasm. Good information is not enough. You need to arouse the interest of the listeners.

You may wonder, “How much enthusiasm is enough?” The best way to answer this question is to hear or (preferably) watch yourself on tape. Your delivery should incorporate just enough enthusiasm so that it sounds and looks a bit unnatural to you. Few, if any, listeners ever complain about a speech being too enthusiastic or a speaker being too energetic. But many, many people complain about dull speakers who fail to show that they themselves are excited about the topic. Remember, every presentation is, in a sense, “showtime.”
Speech Guideline 7: Avoid Filler Words
Avoiding filler words presents a tremendous challenge to most speakers. When they think about what comes next or encounter a break in the speech, they may tend to fill the gap with filler words and phrases such as these:

uhhhhh . . .
ya know . . .
okay . . .
well . . . uh . . .
like . . .
I mean . . .
umm . . .
Speech Guideline 8: Use Rhetorical Questions

Enthusiasm, of course, is your best delivery technique for capturing the attention of the audience. Another technique is the use of rhetorical questions at pivotal points in your presentation.

Rhetorical questions are those you ask to get listeners thinking about a topic, not those that you would expect them to answer out loud. They prod listeners to think about your point and set up an expectation that important information will follow. Also, they break the monotony of standard declarative sentence patterns. For example, here is a rhetorical question used by a computer salesperson in proposing a purchase:

I’ve discussed the three main advantages that a centralized word-processing center would provide your office staff. But is this an approach that you can afford at this point in the company’s growth?
Speech Guideline 9: Maintain Eye Contact

Your main goal—always—is to keep listeners interested in what you are saying. This goal requires that you maintain control, using whatever techniques you can to direct the attention of the audience. Frequent eye contact is one good strategy.

The simple truth is that listeners pay closer attention to what you are saying when you look at them. Think how you react when a speaker makes constant eye contact with you. If you are like most people, you feel as if the speaker is speaking to you personally, even if there are 100 people in the audience. Also, you tend to feel more obligated to listen when you know that the speaker’s eyes will be meeting yours throughout the presentation. Here are some ways you can make eye contact a natural part of your own strategy for effective oral presentations:

- **With audiences of about 30 or less:** Make regular eye contact with everyone in the room. Be particularly careful not to ignore members of the audience who are seated to your far right and far left (see Figure).
- **With large audiences:** There may be too many people or a room too large for you to make individual eye contact with all listeners. In this case, focus on just a few people in all three sections of the audience.
- **With any size audience:** Occasionally, look away from the audience—either to your notes or toward a part of the room where there are no faces looking back. In this way, you avoid the appearance of staring.
Speech Guideline 10: Use Appropriate Gestures and Posture
Speaking is only one part of giving a speech; others are adopting appropriate posture and using gestures that will reinforce what you are saying. Note that good speakers are much more than “talking heads” before a lectern. Instead, they do the following:

- Use their hands and fingers to emphasize major points
- Stand straight, without leaning on or gripping the lectern
- Step out from behind the lectern on occasion, to decrease the distance to the audience
- Point toward visuals on screens or charts, without losing eye contact with the audience

The audience will judge you by what you say and what they see, a fact that again makes videotaping a crucial part of your preparation. With work on this facet of your presentation, you can avoid problems like keeping your hands constantly in your pockets, rustling change (remove pocket change and keys beforehand), tapping a pencil, scratching nervously, slouching over a lectern, and shifting from foot to foot.
CSE/ISE 300
Due Today Is the Two-Page Memo2
Memo2 is an English essay due Tuesday, 13 March 2012, as both a printed copy and a single .doc file emailed to lw@ic.sunysb.edu
Subject: 300 memo2  Why I Need a New Work Computer.

Assume the reader is your computer-savvy, but non-expert boss in a company with 20 or fewer employees. The boss has announced that the firm will buy new computers for some employees, those most needing new ones for their jobs. Justify why the firm will benefit from buying you (or your team) new computer(s). Be clear why you need a new machine, what computer model with what features, and what total price from what source. Address your boss politely. Avoid subtle insults such as “As you probably know,”.

Use 1.5 lines spacing and 12 point fonts. Make memo lines 6 inches long (1.25 inch margins on left and right) with 30 or 31 lines per full page of text. Make the text of your memo 60 to 75 lines long, on 2 to 2.5 pages, with 850 to 1150 words. Number all pages.
CSE/ISE 300

Two-Page Memo2: Paper & Email Due Today

For your technical memo2: Why I Need a New Work Computer, put the paper’s title, your name, and the paper’s last print date centered on a cover page or at the top of the first page starting your “2.2-page” memo. Explain why you need a new computer, its type, and how it will increase your value to the firm. (In doing so, let me know what is your job and your company’s business, but in a way that will not bore your boss, who knows what business, but not why you need a new machine for your own job.) Describe the key technical features of your new computer; tell why each one is critical for you to do your job more efficiently. Precisely specify the computer brand, model, cost, and vendor. Convince your boss to spend a little money. (In a References section after your 2.2 pages of memo text, list all web and printed references used for your memo, including the precise URLs of all websites which gave you details about your desired new computer. Cover page, salutation, and final References list do not count in the 2 to 2.5 pages. Just memo paragraphs count as text; feature lists, quoted material, and images do not.)
General Guidelines for Speech Graphics

More than ever before, listeners expect good graphics during oral presentations. Much like gestures, graphics transform the words of your presentation into true communication with the audience. The following 10 guidelines will help you use graphics to enhance each speech. Then the next section will provide guidelines for a common form of speech graphic: PowerPoint slide shows.

Speech Graphics Guideline 1: Discover Listener Preferences

Some professionals prefer simple speech graphics, such as a conventional flip chart. Others prefer more sophisticated graphics that require equipment such as video projectors connected to laptop computers. For example, if your instructor in this course uses presentation graphics, he or she may make use of overhead transparencies, video clips, or a PowerPoint program (see the next section for PowerPoint guidelines).

Your listeners are usually willing to indicate their preferences when you call on them. Contact the audience ahead of time and make some inquiries. Also, ask for information about the room in which you will be speaking. If possible, request a setting that allows you to make best use of your graphics choice. If you have no control over the setting, then choose graphics that best fit the constraints. Details about lighting, wall space, and chair configuration can greatly influence your selection.
Speech Graphics Guideline 2: Think about Graphics Early

Graphics done as an afterthought usually look tacked on. Plan graphics while you prepare the text, so that the final presentation will seem fluid. This guideline holds true especially if you rely on specialists to prepare your visuals. These professionals need some lead time to do their best work. Also, they can often provide helpful insights about how visuals will enhance the presentation—if you consult them early enough and if you make them a part of your presentation team.

The goal is to use graphics of which you can be proud. Never put yourself in the position of having to apologize for the quality of your graphic material. If an illustration is not up to the quality your audience would expect, do not use it.

Speech Graphics Guideline 3: Keep the Message Simple

Listeners may be suspicious of slick visual effects that appear to be more important than the speech itself. Many prefer the simplicity of overhead transparencies and flip charts. However, even if you may prefer to use PowerPoint slides, video, or other sophisticated graphics, remember that graphics should support the speech, not draw attention to themselves.
Speech Graphics Guideline 4: Make Any Wording Brief and Visible
Some basic design guidelines apply whether you are using posters, overhead transparencies, or computer-aided graphics.

- Use few words, emphasizing just one idea on each frame.
- Use much white space, perhaps as much as 60% to 70% per frame.
- Use “landscape” format more often than “portrait,” especially since it is the preferred default setting for most presentation software.
- Use sans serif large print, from 14 to 18 point minimum for text to 48 point for titles.

Your goal should be to create graphics that are easily seen from anywhere in the room and that complement—but do not overpower—your presentation.

Speech Graphics Guideline 5: Use Colors Carefully
Colors can add flair to visuals. Follow these simple guidelines to make colors work for you:

- Have a good reason for using color (such as the need to highlight three different bars on a graph with three distinct colors).
- Use only dark, easily seen colors for text, and be sure that a color you choose contrasts enough with its background (for example, yellow on white would not work well).
Because graphics reinforce text, they should be shown only while you address the particular point at hand. For example, reveal a graph just as you are saying, “As you can see from the graph, the projected revenue reaches a peak in 2008.” Then pause and leave up the graph a bit longer for the audience to absorb your point.

How long is too long? A graphic outlives its usefulness when it remains in sight after you have moved on to another topic. Listeners will continue to study it and ignore what you are now saying. If you use a graphic once and plan to return to it, take it down after its first use and show it again later.

Speech Graphics Guideline 7: Avoid Handouts
Because timing is so important in your use of speech graphics, handouts are usually not appropriate. Readers will move through a handout at their own pace, rather than at the pace the speaker might prefer. Thus, handouts cause you to lose the attention of your audience. Use them only if (1) no other visual will do, (2) your listener has requested them, or (3) you distribute them as reference material after you have finished talking.
Speech Graphics Guideline 8: Maintain Eye Contact While Using Graphics
Do not stare at your visuals while you speak. Maintain control of listeners' responses by looking back and forth from the visual to faces in the audience. To point to the graphic aid, use the hand closest to the visual rather than the opposite hand. Using the opposite hand would cause you to cross over your torso, forcing you to turn away from the audience.

Speech Graphics Guideline 9: Include All Graphics in Your Practice Sessions
Dry runs before the actual presentation should include every graphic you plan to use, in its final form. Running through a final practice without graphics would be much like doing a dress rehearsal for a play without costumes and props—you would be leaving out parts that require the greatest degree of timing and orchestration. Practicing with graphics helps you improve the smoothness of your delivery and the effectiveness of your transitions in the speech.

Speech Graphics Guideline 10: Use Your Own Equipment