

WILD 494 - Senior Wildlife Seminar
Fall 2017
Thursdays: 3:00 – 4:50 PM in FOR 106

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30-3:30 pm or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Effective communication skills are critical for professionals in wildlife biology. Biologists who excel at verbal communication are better positioned to be selected for jobs, to meaningfully explain the results of research, and to compel others to take actions that benefit wildlife. The goal of this course is to enhance students' oral communication skills through instruction and practice.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Learn skills to communicate effectively and strategically in various professional settings
- Gain experience giving professional-oriented oral presentations
- Practice self-critique and constructive critique of peers to improve communication skills
- Learn about wildlife biology and conservation topics

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Communicate effectively and strategically. Students should be able to:

- identify necessary steps in preparing professional seminars and speeches;
- identify techniques for engaging audiences and delivering key messages;
- tailor oral presentations to diverse audiences; and
- understand linkages between oral communication and leadership.

Gain experience speaking in front of peers. Students should be able to:

- prepare and deliver oral presentations in front of others;
- appreciate concepts of channeling inner-purpose and nerves into positive energy when preparing and delivering speeches; and
- overcome basic anxieties associated with public speaking.

Critique presentations. Students should be able to use their knowledge of public speaking to constructively critique presentations given by themselves and others, in ways that lead to meaningful improvement.

Expand knowledge of wildlife biology and conservation. Students should have a broader knowledge of current wildlife science and management issues.

OVERVIEW OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Each student is required to give a short elevator speech and two, 15-minute oral presentations (one using PowerPoint; one without visual aids) focused on a wildlife biology or conservation topic. Each student will also be required to submit short (1-2 page) critiques of their own presentations after viewing them on video and to constructively critique the presentations of other students. A separate, detailed assignment sheet will be provided that sets forth expectations and provides guidance for preparing presentations. ***Your presentation TOPIC and FOUR preferred presentation dates must be submitted to the instructor by email no later than September 21.*** Attendance is mandatory, unless there is an exceptional circumstance and the absence is approved in advance by the instructor. There will be no final for those who have attended each class or received an instructor-approved absence. **Grading is CR/NCR.**

SCHEDULE

August 31	Review syllabus; Assignments; Introduction to Effective Communication
September 7	Movies and Discussion: <i>How to Write & Deliver Great Speeches</i> , Ross Shafer; <i>I Have a Dream</i> , Martin Luther King.
September 14	Knowing your audience and knowing your purpose: communicating strategically and finding common ground.
September 21	Communication scenarios and discussion. Instruction for Elevator speeches. Instructor models elevator speech. Presentation topics due.
September 28	Students Deliver Elevator Speeches. Instructor models the two types of presentations that students will be required to give during the remainder of course.
Oct 5 – Nov 17	Student seminars (10/5, 10/12, 10/19, 10/26, 11/2, 11/9, 11/16)
November 23	Thanksgiving – No Class
Nov 30 – Dec 7	Student seminars; Conclude Course

- The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and [Disability Services for Students](#) (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommason 154 or 406.243.2243. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate modification.
- All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at [Student Conduct Code](#)