Advocacy Speech Assignment Description

Objectives
After completing the advocacy speech, students should be able to:
• Develop a compelling case that vividly explains current problems and provides appropriate solutions
• Make language choices that motivate the audience to take specific actions
• Deliver the speech in a compelling manner that engages the audience despite environmental distractions

Description
The advocacy speech asks you to motivate the sympathetic members of your audience to take actions that contribute to solving the problem you have identified. The persuasive speech asked you to reach out and attempt to persuade the members of your audience that disagreed with you. Now, you must work on getting those members of your audience that agree with you to take some type of action. In this speech, you will foster the audience’s shared beliefs, identify a pressing problem, provide appropriate solutions, and motivate the audience to act.

Shared Identity and Adversaries: The advocacy speech focuses much more on the stylistic use of language than the other speeches this quarter. Through strategic use of language, you can reinforce the shared values and beliefs of your audience. In reinforcing the shared values of the audience, you can define yourself against an “adversary.” This “adversary” could be any individual, organization, or institution that opposes your cause. In other words, the advocacy speech asks you to reinforce the values and beliefs that “we” (the sympathetic members of you audience) share and explain why “they” (your adversary) oppose your solutions.

Course of action: You must need to motivate the audience to take specific actions. By “actions” here, I mean a realistic set of activities or behaviors that the audience can perform in order to advance your cause. You should specifically outline the course of action that the audience should take. What does the audience need to do in order to support the cause? Boycott certain products or companies? Support a specific advocacy group? Participate in another rally? You should avoid being vague and calling for actions like, “carry on the good fight!”

Example: Let’s say that your speech supported same sex marriage initiatives. You could reinforce the shared identity of the friendly members of the audience by drawing on values like, fairness, equality, and tolerance. You could define the adversary (either supporters of a Federal definition of marriage like Congressmen or the Administration or supporters of Washington efforts to defeat same sex marriages) as holding a different set of beliefs like intolerance, narrow-mindedness, and fear. Having established the problem as one of unfair treatment, you would explain what the audience could do in order to help in the fight for same sex marriages. They should attend an upcoming rally, they should support candidate that outline a clear preference for same-sex marriage (and list them), etc.

Speech Requirements
In addition to motivating your audience to action, the advocacy speech must satisfy the following requirements:
• Time: The speech should run 4-5 minutes. Your assignment grade will be lowered by 5 points for every 45 seconds you speak under or over the target time range.

• Notes: You must deliver the speech extemporaneously. That means, the speech should not be memorized or scripted.

• Sources: You must orally cite at least one source available in print. This does not mean that your claims do not need support; simply that an advocacy speech requires less overt citation. You should support your claims with a variety of sources (examples, statistics, etc.)

• Language: You must craft some phrases that inspire action and convey the passion that you feel for this topic (and the passion your audience should feel). You should use the stylistic devices discussed in class, in the reading packet, and in your textbook (see 440G).

• Call to action: You must explain a specific action(s) that the audience should take in order to support the cause and weaken the adversary.
Hints on doing well

• **Realize that this is a real speech**: Your goal in this speech is to motivate the sympathetic members of your audience to take action to help solve the problem you have identified. I’m not asking you to pretend that your audience is wildly friendly or composed of anyone else besides the people you see standing there. You have in your audience people who agree with you and people who don’t. You are trying to get those who do agree to do something. Everything flows from this goal. You know your peers; why are they not acting now and what can you say to get them to take actions (however small)?

• **Don’t be crazy**: When students assume that this is simply a pretend speech in front of a pretend audience, they start making all sorts of crazy claims. You are trying to motivate people to action, but this doesn’t mean that you should leave this plane of reality. Words have consequences and you must maintain defensible consequences. Remember back to the reading on rhetoric; you are engaging in win-rhetoric for this speech, but the defensible kinds. You can talk about the problems with the values or motivation of the adversary, but you shouldn’t simply engage in unprincipled attack speech. Here’s a hint: if you find yourself making multiple references to how the adversaries are fascists, you’ve gone too far.

• **Be serious in your efforts to be heard**: This speech is a unique opportunity to stand in a public area and demand attention. People will literally stop in their tracks and listen to your argument. The implication here is that it had better be a good argument and you had better be serious about your argument. I’m not saying that there can’t be humor in your speech, but that you should be serious about your topic and your intent. In the past, I have been discouraged when I see students playacting instead of speaking. They get out there and scream and render their garments, but it feels disingenuous. Alternatively, students simply stand there and read their notecards. Both actions miss the point of the assignment, which is to actually engage an audience of strangers with your honest and serious arguments. It is tough and threatening, but if you really commit yourself to being heard as a serious and engaging speaker, you will get so much from this assignment.

• **Clearly outline the nature of the problem**: The audience needs to know exactly what you are talking about as the key problem. Don’t be vague; be precise. Use the stock issues to explain in detail the nature of the problem. So, in a speech in favor of same-sex marriage, you should be able to explain why the status quo is hurting same sex couples; don’t simply repeat that the status quo is homophobic. You should explain in detail how and why the status quo is harming same-sex couples.

• **Outline a clear call to action**: This proves to be a challenge for students. Basically, you have outlined a problem (or problems) in your speech and provided a couple of solutions. The call to action is what we, as you audience, need to do to help the solutions come into being. What can we do to help? Contribute money or time to a specific agency? Boycott some product? These are likely to be smaller acts (we, your audience, are not congressional leaders), but they should logically support the solutions you recommend.

**Grading Criteria for the Advocacy Speech**

In an *excellent speech* (81-90), the speaker will:
1. identify with the sympathetic members of the audience by explaining how a specific set of shared values are demonstrated or imperiled by the topic
2. clearly explain the existing problems in vivid detail using specific examples and strong language devices
3. strongly critique the opposition and their role in perpetuating the problem without demonizing them
4. provide specific topical and solvent solutions and explain how these solutions fit within existing social movements
5. build to stirring and realistic call to action that compels people to act
6. have a clear and natural sense of speech arrangement
7. incorporate support/evidence that clearly supports and advances claims
8. deliver an excellent introduction and conclusion
9. use language devices and speech delivery to build different levels of intensity and add to the urgency of the problem
10. speak extemporaneously and incorporate dynamic interaction with the audience
11. speak energetically and passionately, without falling into a parody of advocacy speaking
12. fill the space with projection and demand the attention of passers-by
13. conform to time limits
In a **good speech** (72-80), the speaker will:
1. identify with the sympathetic members of the audience through a shared set of values or beliefs
2. clearly explain the existing problems in detail
3. explain the role that opponents play in perpetuating the problem
4. provide specific and realistic solutions
5. provide a clear call to action
6. have a clear sense of speech arrangement
7. include quality support
8. have a good sense of speech arrangement
9. use language devices and speech delivery to build different levels of intensity and strengthen the argument
10. speak completely extemporaneously
11. speak energetically and passionately
12. fill the space with projection
13. conform to time limits

In an **adequate speech** (63-71), the speaker will:
1. highlight a set of values or beliefs shared by the audience
2. clearly explain the existing problems
3. explain the role that adversaries play in this problem
4. provide realistic solutions
5. explain how the audience can enact the solutions with a call to action
6. have a good sense of general speech arrangement
7. include support for all major claims
8. have a proficient introduction and conclusion
9. use language devices and delivery to illustrate and emphasize the argument
10. speak somewhat extemporaneously, but with an over reliance on notes
11. speak energetically
12. speak with projection
13. conform to time limits

**The poor speech is deficient in the criteria required for the adequate speech.**

In a **poor speech** (54-62), the speaker will:
1. ignore the shared values of the speaker and audience
2. lack a compelling problem
3. ignore the role adversaries play in this problem
4. provide unrealistic or non-topical solutions
5. provide a weak call to action
6. poorly arrange the speech so that it is difficult to follow
7. rely on weak evidence that does not support the speech’s main arguments directly
8. lack a clear introduction and conclusion
9. fail to use good language devices or examples
10. rely too heavily on notes
11. speak in a lackluster manner
12. be difficult to hear in an outdoor setting
13. fail to conform to time limits

In a **failing speech**, the speaker will:
1. fail follow the guidelines of the assignment
2. demonstrate no concern for the speech
ADVOCACY SPEECH EVALUATION

Name: ______________________________________

+ = excellent, √+ = good, √ = adequate, √- = flawed, - = poor/missing
Note: The percentages here are guidelines. All these categories are mutually dependant.

Arrangement (10%)
____ The speaker gained attention, established good will, and oriented the audience in the introduction
____ The speaker established a feeling of closure in the conclusion
____ The speaker arranged the main points in a manner that motivated sympathetic members of the audience to action

Delivery (40%)
____ The speaker delivered the speech extemporaneously and energetically
____ The speaker interacted with the audience
____ The speaker projected enough to fill the space
____ The speaker moved and gestured purposefully and in a way that intensified audience interest
____ The speaker used pauses and intonation to increase audience interest
____ The speaker ended strongly and confidently

Invention and Style (40%)
____ The speaker clearly and effectively explained the dangers of the current problem
____ The speaker clearly and effectively explained topical and solvent solutions
____ The speaker clearly and effectively explained an effective and realistic call to action
____ The speaker used evidence appropriately to strengthen the commitment of sympathetic members of the audience
____ The speaker effectively incorporated stylistic devices that contributed to the persuasiveness of the speech
____ The speaker delivered sentences that were crisp and powerful

Overall (10%)
____ The speaker delivered convincing arguments that motivated the sympathetic members of the audience to act
____ The speaker established credibility
____ The speaker held the interest of the audience

Additional Comments: ______________________________

Time: __________ 4-5 min.       Time Penalty (if any): ________      Grade for Speech: ________