The Art of Rhetoric: Persuasive Public Speaking and Influencing Skills (SS 3112)

Credit Hours: 4

Instructor: Aamna Khalid

Schedule: Monday to Friday (2.00 PM – 4.50 PM)

“The human brain is a wonderful organ. It starts to work as soon as you are born & doesn’t stop until you get up to deliver a speech.” -George Jessel

Your success in the world depends largely on your ability to communicate in a dynamic and memorable manner. In this context, the art of public speaking is one of the most important skills to master.

This highly participative and activity-based course provides you with opportunities to refine public speaking skills through understanding the use of classical and contemporary persuasion tactics. You will develop the skills that build credibility and teach you how to positively influence people to achieve your goals. You will be able to identify your preferred influencing style and understand the key techniques used to get people to do what you want in an ethical manner. This course on rhetoric will teach you how to persuade and motivate your audience, to deliver impactful speeches using techniques tried and tested by expert public speakers. Through hands-on in-session tasks, role-plays and simulations of real-word settings, mini case-study analyses and practical demonstrations of effective and ineffective practices, the course material is designed to help you develop a professional persona that exudes confidence, displays leadership potential and sets you apart from the crowd. Within organizations there is an increasing emphasis on the ability to influence others across teams. A general shift towards more collaborative work practices means that the ability to create ‘buy in’ for ideas and initiatives is extremely valuable as opposed to using power. No matter what your industry or organization, building influence is crucial for reaching your personal and professional goals. It’s just as important for young professionals entering the workforce as it is for people who have established themselves in positions of leadership. In this course you will explore how to identify key stakeholders who could help or hinder your ideas or initiatives, how to influence in a way that minimizes reliance on positional power and how to use a value-driven approach to maximize your potential as an influencer. Hence, you will learn how to change people’s thinking and decision-making, convince
and motivate them to change their behaviors and to willingly accept your ideas. You will also
learn how to create strategic communication plans in order to pitch yourself and your ideas in a
purposeful manner, develop a credible and assertive persona and to build lasting professional
relationships. Throughout the course it is important for you to understand that a formal speaking
situation is not synonymous with a boring, monotonous and pompous presentation Thus, our
focus will be on bridging the gap between traditional and more contemporary styles of
presentations and learning to present in a creative and engaging manner even in the most
conventional and formal of situations. To this effect we will analyze popular TED talks, videos of
formal investor pitches, motivational speeches by renowned speakers and numerous other types
of presentations. In this way you will learn how to conduct an audience analysis, organize your
ideas, select appropriate words and use your speaking voice to emphasize and enunciate what
you say.