

#513 Public Speaking in the Church 1
Western Reformed Seminary
John A. Battle, Th.D.

COURSE INFORMATION

Course goals

In this course you will learn about the proper production and delivery of the spoken word, including breathing, posture, and voice quality. You will learn basic principles of public speaking, and the various types of speaking. You will practice preparing and delivering several short messages, some of them dealing with various Christian-related subjects, and others more “secular.” These messages will be of various types—informational, explanatory, persuasive, and motivational. The purpose of this class is to enable you to be comfortable presenting spoken messages in a variety of modes and situations. This class is preparatory for more advanced classes in public speaking, and in sermon preparation and delivery for ministerial students, or in Bible teaching for non-ministerial students.

Required reading

During this class you will read Part 1 of this book:

- Virgil A. Anderson, *Training the Speaking Voice* (3rd ed.)

Part 1 of this text continues with voice production and method, emphasizing the proper production and projection of the human speaking voice. This information, properly assimilated and put to use, will enable you to speak forcefully and at length without discomfort or physiological harm. It is, while often technical, an excellent resource for studying the human speaking voice, and for improving individual strengths and overcoming weaknesses and faults. It contains a multitude of helpful exercises for public speakers.

Exercise log

Training the speaking voice requires many sessions of individual exercises, usually done in privacy. During these sessions you will need to be using various volumes, properly projecting your voice over various pitches; so you should practice in a place where you will not bother others or be self-conscious (the wide open spaces are best!). Each student is required to document at least 20 exercise sessions of 20-30 minutes each. Exercises may be chosen from those in Anderson, *Training the Speaking Voice*, or may come from other sources, as long as they contribute to the same end. The exercise log should contain the date, place, elapsed time, and a summary of exercises performed. Of course, many of the shorter

exercises can be done in addition at various odd times throughout the day. The student should seek to do these exercises until they, and the skills they are seeking to develop, become natural and habitual. Your log will be checked three times during the semester.

Speeches and messages

During the semester you will be giving several different short speeches. Your speeches will be evaluated by the professor and by the other students in the class. You will also help to evaluate the speeches or sermons made by the other students.

You will be provided with a blank thumb drive on which your speeches will be video recorded in high definition. There is a \$10 charge for the thumb drive; if you wish, you may bring your own thumb drive instead. You will be expected to review your speech, noting the evaluations and suggestions made in the class, and making your own self-evaluation. In the next available class we will discuss your speech.

Unless otherwise stated, you will be allowed to have brief notes with you and refer to them briefly as you speak.

Each speech or message will have a time limit. It is important that you limit yourself to that time limit when you give the speech. Any deviation beyond 30 seconds (too long or too short) from the required length of the message will result in a lower grade. There will be a timekeeper who will give signals.

Here are the speeches you will be delivering:

1. Introduce yourself to a Christian audience that does not know you. Include your Christian experience and goals. Include at least one humorous incident in your life. (3 minutes)
2. Select a book you have read that you have found valuable (besides the Bible). Introduce this book to an interested audience. Tell about the author, about the purpose and design of the book, and give a brief survey of its contents. Explain why it is valuable, perhaps giving some personal effect it has had on your or others. (4 minutes)
3. Tell a Bible story to a group of children. Indicate ahead of time what age range of children you are addressing (the choice is yours). Try to be dramatic without going overboard. Do not use notes in this presentation, so that you can gesture more freely. Include an application that they would benefit from. (5 minutes)
4. Select something complicated to explain, that you know about. This can be an object that is operated in some way, or that works in some way, or some other complicated concept, skill, event, or object. Explain this to an interested audience that has only an average general knowledge, making it understandable without undue oversimplification. You may use a drawing or other visual aid in this message. (5 minutes)

5. Select a controversial topic about which you have an opinion. This subject may be one about which Christians differ, but need not be so. It can be either secular or religious. Give a presentation seeking to persuade the audience to your point of view. Be sure to be “fair and balanced,” fairly representing the opposite view or views. (6 minutes)

Grading

- Attendance and participation 10%
- Required reading 15%
- Exercise log 15%
- Speech delivery (10% each) 50%
- Speech self-evaluations (2% each) 10%