
COURSE PLAN

Part 1: Structure

Module 1

1. Setting a goal

- Why most presentations are boring: problems with context and content
- Contexts in which you should and should not be presenting
- Why any presentation should have a subject, a goal and a key message
- Goals for a presentation: informing, entertaining, motivating, making group decisions

Task: What is your subject? What is the goal? What is the key question we are trying to answer?

2. Dramatic conflict

- Rhetoric is the art of identifying and solving problems
- What is the problem? Who is the enemy?
- What uncomfortable questions I should ask?
- Formulating your key message as a movie logline
- Case studies: Steve Jobs, Elon Musk

Task: Write a logline for a presentation

Module 2

3. Creating a narrative arc

- What do I begin with? Connecting with the audience
- What do I end with? Resume, call to action and morals
- What's in the middle? Identifying key parts

Task: Write a short essay following the proposed structure

Module 3

4. Argumentation

- Stories as arguments
- Making engaging arguments using statistics (numbers are *not* boring)
- Logical reasoning

Task: Come up with four types of arguments for your message: a case study, a statistical research, quotations from experts and logical reasoning

Module 4

5. Metaphors and analogies

- Why metaphors work
- Metaphor is not evidence
- Criteria of a good metaphor
- Using analogies to explain

Task: Come up with a metaphor for your message

6. Plain Language

- Concrete vs abstract words
- Common everyday words vs jargon
- Active voice vs passive voice
- Short vs long sentences

Task: Edit a speech abstract to make it clearer and easier to understand

Part 2: Slides

Module 5

1. Basic principles of design

- What is “good design”?
- The use and misuse of slides
- Why “too much text” is only part of the problem
- 3 core principles: focus, contrast and unity

2. Typography

- Selecting a typeface
- Using white space
- Misc. typography rules

Task: Redesign a text-only slide

Module 6

3. Using icons

- Why adding pictures is almost always a good idea
- How icons work (as opposed to photographs)
- Selecting the right icon
- Adding visual interest to flat icons

Task: Add icons to a text-only slide

4. Photographic illustration

- How photographs work
- Selecting photographs
- Combining photographs with text

Task: Illustrate a message with a photograph

Module 7

5. Boxes-and-arrows diagrams

- When (not) to use diagrams
- How diagrams often *increase* complexity
- Optimize: creating hierarchy and removing excess weight

Task: Draw a “boxes-and-arrows” diagram

Module 8

6. Data Visualization

- How presentation infographics is different from media infographics
- Start with the message
- Finding the right comparison
- Removing clutter

Task: Visualize a table

Part 3: Delivery

Module 9

1. Dealing with stage fright

- Why we worry
- Shifting the attention
- Paying attention to the audience’s non-verbals

Task: Tapping exercise

2. Asking questions

- Rhetorical questions
- The problem of hindsight bias
- Open and closed questions
- How to ask interesting questions

Task: Re-write the text replacing some of the affirmations with questions

3. Answering questions

- Not all questions need to be answered
- Avoiding defensiveness and counter-aggression
- Clarifying intentions behind the question
- Answering to help

Task: Write 3 questions you don't want to be asked, write answers

Module 10

4. Speaking tempo and emotions

- Why emotion displays are important
- Not just speaking — seeing the picture
- Fundamentals of voice acting

Task: Read 1 page of classical literature text

5. Gestures

- Research on gestures in public speaking
- Gestures come from the picture in your mind's eye
- Basics of pantomime/object work

Task: Act out a pop or rock song

6. What if something goes wrong

- Arrive well before the presentation
- Troubles with projector, clicker, Zoom, etc.
- If you say something that turns out to be wrong
- Time keeping

Part 4: The final task

Module 11

1. The final task

- Create and deliver a 10-15 minutes presentation
- Real-life goals that matter
- Give feedback to other presenters