Introduction to Studying Public Speaking

Public speaking is a deceivingly complex activity. At the heart of public speaking is communication, which we've all been doing since we were small. It would seem, then, public speaking is something that comes natural and is very easy to do. This, however, is not the case. Public speaking is not everyday conversation. Public speaking is much more formal and there is much more social importance of what we are speaking about. For example, Al Gore’s presentations on global warming are highly organized and highly important to the world. We do not expect that he would talk in a similar manner to his family at home. The topic or content is not the only formal aspect of public speaking; the delivery is also highly formal. We do not see any President deliver the State of the Union or Inaugural address informally. The President has practiced considerably and has the exact wording of the speech polished.

These examples are from the political sphere and that is not surprising given that the study of public speaking arose in the wake of some very messy politics. Around 476 B.C.E., a tyrant named Thrasybulus took the land and property of those in Syracuse who disagreed with him and gave it to the people who supported him. Naturally, the citizens quickly ousted Thrasybulus and wanted their property back, which they did by presenting their case in court. Those who appeared before the court found that the ability to speak and argue well made them successful in regaining what was rightfully theirs. On the other hand, those who could present a better argument than the original land-owner kept what Thrasybulus had given them. In contemporary society, we have lawyers who are specifically trained in the content of the law as well as the ability to present arguments in court.
Now that we know why public speaking was important in the Classical world, what is the reason for studying public speaking today? Odds are you will never have to argue your own position in court. But, like the citizens of Syracuse, you might want to address something that is worthwhile to you. You may believe strongly in fighting for social justice or that large corporations would destroy your small town community. You may believe that your school’s raising of tuition is detrimental or you may believe just the opposite. Presenting your thoughts and opinions in a clear and coherent fashion will only add to the value of your speech. This is one of the main reasons why we study public speaking today.

Typically, we speak publicly about issues that are not clear cut. Like the citizens of Syracuse, both parties had claims to the property. If you decide to speak out about the social injustices of your community; what you may legitimately believe in and speak to, someone else may legitimately believe and speak to just the opposite. By studying public speaking we are learning the means by which we can have our positions—our thoughts and opinions—accepted.

One way to understand this purpose of public speaking is to turn to the metaphor of the Marketplace of Ideas. The Marketplace of Ideas claims that if everyone puts out their ideas the best ideas will win out and the weak ideas will not survive. But there are problems with this idea. The Marketplace of Ideas theory assumes that some ideas are inherently better than others. But there is nothing inherent about any idea that makes it better or worse than any other idea. There are numerous examples from our national history that demonstrate this. For example, at one point, racial inequality was considered the “best idea.” However, people soon recognized that there is nothing inherent about anyone that makes them better or worse than anyone else and consequently took a stand against what they saw as an injustice and fought to overcome it.

What this flaw of the Marketplace of Ideas tells us is that no position or evidence is self-evident. To have our position accepted we have to not only find evidence but interpret it. For example, according to the United States Department of Justice there were 60 executions in 2005, 53 in 2006, and 42 in 2007. What does this data alone tell us? Does it tell us that capital punishment is, for example, effective at deterring crime? Or does it tell us the opposite? I think the case can be made either way. We can see that there are less and less executions by year, so perhaps capital punishment is a deterrent. On the other hand, there are still executions occurring, so capital punishment may not be a complete deterrent. What this example hopefully demonstrates is that when we speak publicly about an issue and want our position accepted, we must offer a clear and convincing interpretation of our thoughts and opinions in a understandable and, hopefully, eloquent manner.

Communication Contexts

Oftentimes, we identify what something is by identifying what it is not, in order to understand how we are referring to public speaking in this text, we need to understand how public speaking differs from other contexts in which communication operates. In the following section, we will describe the communication contexts, which are the environment and circumstances between the participants that are communicating. I’ll use the example of Tom to explain each context.

The first is intrapersonal communication. Intrapersonal communication is communication in which there is one person. Tom may notice that the local community Arts Center is falling into a state of disrepair. As a musician, Tom may think to himself that the Arts Center is vital to the well-being of the community and seeing the poor shape of the building, Tom may think about taking up the issue in front of the city council.
Tom may think to himself about the issue and when he mentions it to his roommate, Steve, there is interpersonal communication, which is communication between two people. Intrapersonal and interpersonal communication look alike, but they are very different in that one is self-addresses (intra) whereas the other in between two people (inter). Many scholars recognize that communication begins with two people, which is called a dyad, and not with one person, which is seen as an interest to psychology and not to communication. Others believe that Tom can debate whether or not to support the Arts Center by himself and consider this important for communication studies. That is, the debate is within one person but between two positions.

Now let’s say Tom and Steve both believe that the Arts Center is a really great idea, but they don’t have enough time between the two of them. They may enlist some other friends—Kevin, Brahm, Meredith, and Cara. When they all sit down and discuss the Arts Center they are engaging in small-group communication. In small group communication there is at least three individuals and can range up to twelve. While there is at least three, any less would be a dyad, the maximum number is defined by the ability of all those involved to contribute regularly to the discussion. Turning to a different example will be helpful. In court proceedings there are normally twelve members to a jury. If there were anymore, it would be questionable if everyone could participate. Now, you might be asking, “Wouldn’t it be easier just to have two people? Maybe. But groups are usually task based whereas dyads are relationally based (e.g., platonic/romantic). The more members of a group there are, the more ideas and different perspectives can be explored—it’s the Marketplace of Ideas in action. Nevertheless, there can be groups such as Tom and his friends that exist for different purposes such as friendship and inclusion.

Tom and all his friends all like the idea of rebuilding the Arts Center, but he has to go to work at the music store downtown. Tom goes off to work and talks to his coworkers and his manager about starting a petition about the Arts Center. Tom was so excited, he even wanted to tell the chief executive officer (CEO) of the company, but Tom cannot. The business that he works at is very large and the organization’s home office is on the other side of the country. Tom cannot just go into the CEO’s office and talk about a local Arts Center. The CEO is too busy making decisions and sitting in conferences, which can be a type of small group. Tom can, however, tell his supervisor directly over him who can then tell the area manager, who can in turn tell the district manager and eventually the message, if it’s important enough, can get to the CEO. Odds are the national CEO would not need to approve Tom’s use of the store to get people to sign a petition. That decision may be made by the local or regional manager. That is, the message would not get very high in the chain of command. On the other hand, the CEO can send messages down through the chain of command. For example, if the CEO of a company wants to implement a change in the way the records are displayed, then that message would be handed down through high-level managers to low-level managers until the message was received by the workers who would be affected by the change. This context in which messages go up and down hierarchies is called organizational communication.

Now let’s say for a moment that Tom and his friends were highly successful in the efforts to rebuild the Arts Center and decide to operate their own organization to build art centers throughout the world. They visit other cultures and do research, they will find four major dichotomies: individual and collective; high and low context, high and low power distance; and feminine and masculine, which are the basic concepts of intercultural communication, which is communication between (inter) cultures. Individual oriented cultures focus on the individual whereas a collective culture focuses on the community’s interests. In high context cultures, meaning is in the setting and therefore meaning is communicated implicitly whereas in low context cultures, the emphasis is on the spoken word and meaning is explicit. High and low power distance differ in that the
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former values such things as birth order and occupation and in low power distance cultures, everyone is considered equal. Lastly, is feminine and masculine, which is different from woman and man. Feminine traits generally focus on nurturing whereas masculine traits refer to assertiveness and competitiveness. Importantly, a man can be nurturing just as a woman can be assertive.

But if Tom and his friends all just focus on their local Arts Center, they may go to the library and uncover information about the city’s budget and the value or art to a community. He then arranges the information so that the speech flows nicely. Next, he memorizes the speech although he doesn’t need to memorize the speech word-for-word. He might compose some stylistic elements of the speech, which he memorizes exactly but may not memorize other lesser elements. Finally, he practices his delivery to get the most out of it. These are the elements in the context of public speaking. The rest of this book explains this context in great detail.

But let’s say Tom gives his speech outside the Arts Center, but many people were not around to hear it. He decides that he will send a press release to the local television and radio outlets that announce the date and time of his next speech. This causes the outlets to come and record the speech and broadcast it. Tom is now in the mass-mediated context. The difference between the Tom’s public speaking and the broadcast of Tom speaking is very important. In the public speaking context, Tom can see his audience. In the mass-mediated context, Tom cannot see his audience. The difference is slim but substantial. When Tom can see the audience, he can change his speaking style to reflect the audience. If the crowd is complacent, he can energize them; if they are cheering, he can become louder or wait until they are done. If he does not know the reactions of his audience, then he cannot do this. Watching great speakers like Martin Luther King Jr. speak show how reacting to the audience can do wonders for a speech.

The last context is the computer-mediated context. As its name suggests it is communication mediated through computer technology especially through the use of the Internet. Some people may record Tom’s speech with their digital cameras and place it online. Whereas mass-mediated communication only broadcast Tom’s speech to the local community, the computer-mediated context allows anyone with an Internet connection to view the speech. Thus, one of the major differences between mass communication and computer communication is the latter’s ability to transcend geographic limitations. That is, with computer-mediated communication, people in India, Luxemburg, or Samoa can view Tom’s speech. Not only can they view the speech but they can also offer comments and make their own videos responding to Tom’s.

Some may argue that mass communication can transcend geographical boundaries too. While they can to a certain degree, computer-mediated communication is far superior. You local television affiliate broadcasts news to your local community, the national news networks broadcast to the country. Some of these national networks are picked up around the world—just like Americans can watch the British news from the BBC on public television. These are examples of mass-communication transcending boundaries, but do you ever see local British news aired in America? Have you ever seen the local news from a town in any country in Africa? China? Russia? Probably not. Have you ever watched videos on YouTube.com from Africa, China, or Russia? Odds are you have. And these videos do carry the extremely local news—the events at school or in the neighborhood—and these events that the local news wouldn’t broadcast to the area can be posted for the entire world to watch.
Understanding the Oral Tradition

As you may be able to tell, the study of communication was based in the oral tradition. The oral tradition refers to the vocal transmission of information between people from generation to generation. History, law, tradition, culture—all were passed along by orally for centuries prior to the creation of the written word. Even after the written word was invented, the "oral tradition" remained intact due to the prevalence of illiteracy. Even today there are still traces of the power of the “oral tradition.” For example, some nursery rhymes, such as *Humpty Dumpty*, date back to 16th century England. Did you ever sing it as a child? Well, you many not know it refers to a cannon used in the English Civil War which fell from its perch atop a church wall when, in 1648, it was hit by enemy fire. It can be hard to believe, given that we live in a mass and computer-mediated society, that at one time the spoken word was the primary medium of communication, even over the written word.

The oral tradition of public speaking is most closely tied to the study of rhetoric. Rhetoric is generally known as the art of using discourse to persuade people. Most often, rhetoric is used to persuade individuals to take up or reject a belief, assign meaning to a person, event or object, or even perform an action. Rhetoric is actually one of the oldest disciplines studied in the Western world; its origins date about to around 476 B.C. (Murphy, 1983)! Rhetorical scholarship originally focused on both the creation of and analysis of public speaking since it has historically been the main vehicle of persuasion. Political assemblies and campaigns are still prototypical contexts of rhetorical, public speech. Ironically, rhetorical theory emerged from written classical texts from the ancient Western civilizations of Greece and Rome.

Historically, the study of rhetoric has been based in Western thought (specifically Greek and Roman), which solely reflects European culture and beliefs and promotes a western perspective from which rhetorical analysis is practiced. However, rhetoric and the practice of rhetorical speech were not exclusive to the West. Ancient African, Middle Eastern, Asian, and Latino cultures all have rich oral traditions which have largely been left out of the history of rhetorical study. Today, scholars are increasingly turning to the works of rhetors in regions such as China, Iraq and Egypt, to aid in the development of an evolving multicultural tradition of rhetoric rather than its static and unnecessarily narrow western one. For instance, an analysis of the rhetorical style of Mencius (371 – 289 BCE), a Confucian social philosopher from Ancient China, found that he used the common theme of water to help persuade people of his political belief that “the benevolent has no enemy” (Ma, 2000). Also, did you know that Enheduanna (2300-2225 BCE), a high priestess in the ancient Sumerian city of Ur (currently known as Southern Iraq), was the first author in recorded history and is largely considered a feminist?

The Rise of Rhetorical Education

Students have been studying public speaking for thousands of years! Rhetorical education became a central part of the radically democratic city-state of Athens, Greece. Studying public speaking was essential to fulfill one’s duty as a democratic citizen. It is important for any public speaking student to understand the history of rhetorical education in Ancient Greece and Rome. When we understand the history of rhetorical study, we learn just how much public speaking has evolved to fit contemporary times yet retained many of the same ideas that emerged centuries ago. Also, we have the advantage of learning from the great minds that came before us. In the next section we will offer a general overview the rise of rhetorical education in Ancient Greece and Rome as well as mention some noteworthy individuals. So let’s head back to Ancient Greece, where public speaking became a vital part of everyday, democratic life.
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Rhetorical Study in Ancient Greece

In the ancient city-state of Athens, Greece, public speaking was a central part of everyday life. To understand the importance Athenians placed on public speaking, specifically persuasive rhetorical speech, one must know the political context from which it arose. There are two main political reforms that occurred in Athens which served as a catalyst for the emerging need of public speaking and the study of rhetoric. They are: 1) the creation of a democratic state; and 2) a system of common courts (Conley, 1990).

Athens was one of the earliest (508-322 BCE) and most radically democratic governments in recorded history. Athenian democracy was founded on the principle that power should reside in the citizenry rather than a small group of elites. This principle was upheld through the establishment of the ekklesia, or Assembly. The Assembly referred to the regular meeting of the demos, or citizenry, to deliberate and vote on all aspects of Athenian life. Although women were considered citizens, only free men, whom were 18 or older and of Athenian descent could actively participate in the Assembly. Gender based exclusion from legislative activities was not unusual; in the US, women were ban from voting until 1920! That was less than a century ago. In spite of this omission, democratic participation was so highly valued in Athens that Assembly members were paid to attend meetings to ensure that even the poor could attend (Blackwell, 2003). Thus, once a member of the Assembly any man, regardless of class, was free to speak his mind. Freedom of speech was a hallmark of the Assembly since it was believed that without free speech no amount of deliberation would yield effective policy and law. However, just because one could speak didn’t mean everyone would listen, individuals would have to learn the art of persuasive speaking to capture and keep the Assembly’s attention.

In addition to the Assembly, there was a full-time governing body of Athenian democracy called the Council which consisted of 500 high officials. Fifty council members were appointed, for a one year term, from each of Athens’ ten tribes. The main responsibility of the Council was the creation of the Assembly’s agenda. Thus, the Council acted as a preliminary voting body. If a majority of the Council voted to pass a decree that decree would then be sent to the Assembly for their consideration. Being a Council member did not carry with it the same connotations as being a member of US Congress; it did not make one a politician. For many, it was simply another democratic duty Athenian citizens had to perform. Also, it was believed that only appointing individuals best suited for the job of high office would ensure that people did not apply simply to increase his status or gain privilege. Power could not be obtained simply from one’s position but rather from an individual’s ability to persuade fellow citizens to follow a proposed course of action. Thus, public speaking skills became a highly sought after skill in Athens’ radical democracy.

The creation of the Heliastic court system, or the People’s Court, was the second development that contributed to the rising importance placed on public speaking. Any male citizen could be a member of a jury as long as he was at least thirty years old and was free of any debt to the government. Jury selection was done randomly by lot and at the last minute to prevent any type of bribery or patronage. Just as in the Assembly and Council, individuals were paid for their participation on juries to open access to even the poorest citizens. During their deliberations, jury members would determine a defendant’s guilt or innocence, as well as a reasonable sentence on guilty verdicts. The People’s Court gave citizens the power to file suit against any other citizen on criminal and civil charges. Also, it gave citizens the ability to appeal rulings by the Assembly or Council they were dissatisfied with. Whether overturned or not, the People’s Court allotted Athenian citizens an unprecedented opportunity to have their voices heard. In Athens, this common court system acted as “the ultimate guarantor of democratic rule” (Blackwell, 2003).
In the Assembly, Council, and People's Court, public speaking became the most important skill one could have. The amount of social mobility possible was unprecedented and depended, in large part, on one's ability to be a persuasive speaker. In Athens', having the power to sway the public could potentially defuse the privileges of status and bloodline. Citizens could gain office, prevail in lawsuits, and aid in the adoption or rejection of a proposed decree. In order to succeed in each of these situations, all one needed to be, at least in principle, was an effective public speaker. It was in every citizen's interest to learn the art of persuasive public speaking, thus, training to be an effective speaker was in high demand.

The Sophists were traveling public speaking teachers that believed anyone, regardless of natural ability, could benefit from speech instruction. They would trek from city to city offering their paid services which included: public performance, speech writing and instruction in argumentation and style. The Sophists believed that human knowledge could not be certain due to the subjectivity of the senses. The closest humans could come to certainty was probable knowledge, which was reached through rationale debate (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2001). Thus, they taught individuals how to argue a point from both a supporting and opposing position. A persuasive speaker would, therefore, be able to examine an issue from all areas to determine its strengths and weaknesses and address both. Yet, the Sophists also believed that language could never be objective since it was too culturally symbolic and emotionally charged to promote. Thus, learning how to be a persuasive public speaker entailed learning how to manipulate language to induce one's desired audience response. Language was simply a neutral tool that could be used to one's advantage. Ethics, therefore, only resided in the speaker, not speech.

Some noteworthy Sophists were Corax, Gorgias and Isocrates. Corax of Sicily is believed to have been the first person to develop a techne, or rational method of practicing a craft or art, for creating rhetoric. Although Corax is widely considered the first sophist, Gorgias is thought of as the most famous. A gifted speaker, Gorgias believed that having a command over rhetoric would enable speakers to exercise control over others. For Gorgias, speech, not divinity, determined the extent things are good and just. In his most famous speech, The Encomium of Helen, Gorgias argues that Helen of Troy was a victim of persuasion and should not be blamed for initiating the Trojan War. Although a weak speaker, Isocrates was best known for his techniques for teaching rhetoric. Isocrates attempted to set himself apart from his fellow sophists because he did not agree with many of their teachings. Isocrates believed speech teachers should cultivate wisdom, a sense of justice and a commitment to the civic good rather than just persuasive techniques. But not everyone in Ancient Greece found the sophists to be “good” speech teachers.

Plato is one of the most influential Greek philosophers of the Western world. Plato was suspicious of rhetoric because, ethically speaking, it could be used for both good and bad. His views on rhetoric are found in two dialogues, Gorgias and Phaedrus. In Gorgias, which is named after the famous sophist, Plato expresses his disdain for “false” rhetoric by likening it to flattery. “False” rhetoric was used to persuade people of probable truths by simply telling listeners what they wanted to hear. Thus, “false” persuasive public speech could create morally deprived listeners. In Phaedrus, Plato offers an account of “good” rhetoric—rhetoric that can persuade the listener’s soul to know transcendent truth. Plato believed that the type of rhetorical speech taught by sophists was “false” rhetoric because they did not try and persuade people of transcendent truth. Not surprisingly Plato’s account of “good” rhetoric is highly philosophical and can only be spoken by philosophically minded individuals.

Aristotle, one of Plato’s students, believed that the reason rhetoric could appear “true” and “false” was because persuasive speech was a neutral tool that can be used to argue both sides of a question. In Rhetoric, Aristotle offers a wide ranging theory on speech composition. Many of Aristotle’s concepts in Rhetoric are still used in public speaking classrooms today! These include Aristotle’s definition of rhetoric and his concept of artistic proofs. First, Aristotle defines rhetoric
as “the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion” (Aristotle, trans. 1984. Bk. I, Ch. 2). Once these means are determined, it is the speaker’s responsibility to utilize them ethically. Second, artistic proofs are constructed by speakers to make the speech more persuasive. These proofs are ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos commonly refers to a speaker's credibility and character. Pathos refers to use of emotional appeals to evoke specific feeling in the audience. Logos refers to the logical reasoning underlying a speaker's claims. Used together, artistic proofs support a speech by intellectually and emotionally appealing to an audience.

**Rhetorical Study in Ancient Rome**

Prior to becoming an empire, Roman government was best described as a democratic oligarchy in which rhetoric was a powerful political tool. Upper class young men (and even some women) were required to study the art of persuasive speech as part of their regular education. This education was firmly based in the Greek Tradition and many of the first public speaking instructor and tutors in Rome were actually from Greece! In early Roman times, knowledge of rhetoric and the ability to craft a persuasive public speech were most important in legislative assemblies and judicial courts.

The early Roman government was comprised of popular assemblies, high offices, and the Roman senate. The Roman senate, which consisted of several hundred men that previously held public office, had the ultimate authority to pass or veto popular legislation. As you can see, Rome was not as radically democratic as Athens, however free male Roman citizens could address public officials and the larger citizenry at legislative assemblies. In these assemblies, ordinary men could propose legislation as well as show support or voice concern over current policy. Positions of high offices were also voted on by all free Roman men in assembly. Due to the oligarchic character of Rome, aristocratic men spoke in assembly and were elected to high office more often than any other class of citizens. Unfortunately as this Roman city-state became an empire, the assembly's importance waned and eventually the Senate had full governmental control.

In Roman courts, individuals worked with patrons, similar to present day lawyers, who would determine the most effective ways to argue each client’s case. Depending on the magnitude of the case, several patrons could represent a single client and patrons were chosen for their speaking skills as well as their political status. These early lawyers would give long speeches about their client’s guilt or innocence. Since cases were argued in front of juries made up of at least fifty Roman citizens whom determined the verdict and, when necessary, sentence in both criminal and civic cases, patrons had to be both logically and, more importantly, emotionally persuasive. As the popular assembly became increasingly defunct, the courts turned into Rome’s premier space of public speaking. Having knowledge of the law was increasingly important for Roman citizens as Rome’s democratic climate was eclipsed by a senatorial oligarchy and ultimately befell into tyranny. Consequently, rhetorical education in the Roman Empire focused on teaching students how to eloquently and successfully plead a case.

Cicero, a well known lawyer and politician, believed that attaining true eloquence required a strong liberal education. In other words, eloquence was more than simply pleasing speech; a speaker had to obtain vast knowledge on all relevant subjects in order to be truly eloquent. The first step in learning how to be eloquent was learning the proper way to compose a speech. In *De Oratore*, Cicero summarizes the five cannons of rhetoric which comprise the speech writing process. They are: invention (the modes of discovering arguments); arrangement (the ordering of arguments in a speech); style (the use of figures and tropes); memory (the ability to recall a speech’s arguments); and delivery (diction and gesture). For Cicero, teaching people how to be eloquent public speakers was an important step in making them informed citizens. You see, to Cicero, an eloquent speaker understood that issues of justice, tolerance and fairness were at the heart of public speech and thus, public life.
As the political climate of Rome changed becoming more honorable, Quintilian, a famed lawyer and teacher, developed a course of rhetorical education that was explicitly moral in an attempt to return Rome to its previously democratic state. In *Institutio Oratoria*, Quintilian set out to create a system of lifelong rhetorical study that would perfect the natural talents of a speaker. Quintilian, in other words, wanted to mold a *good speaker* into the *perfect speaker*. Public speech, Quintilian believed, should never ignore the moral issues involved in civic life; it should deal with questions of justice and honor. This belief is most salient in Quintilian’s description of the perfect speaker as the “good man speaking well”. Not only was the perfect orator a “good man,” Quintilian believed that “bad” or immoral individuals were not effective or successful speakers. The “good man speaking well” would be both morally virtuous, active in public life and committed to the public good rather than private gain. Essentially, the perfect speaker was a morally conscious, informed and active citizen who would put the good of the state before him or herself. This perfect speaker would be an ideal leader, well equipped to guide Roman government back to its glorious past.

After learning about some of the history of public speaking education, it is easy to see the influence these ancient thinkers have had on some of the most notable speakers in US history.

**General Arenas of Public Speaking**
The rich history and culture of public speaking in the US has developed in three general arenas: 1) politics, 2) advocacy, and 3) specialty areas such as business, history, communication, etc. As you have seen, public speaking and politics have been intricately entwined as far back as Ancient Greece. Politics, generally understood as the authoritative allocation of scarce resources and values, has yielded some of our greatest speakers. Some of our most eloquent politicians have been: Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Barbara Jordan, John F. Kennedy, Eleanor Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, and Bill and Hillary Clinton. In the area of advocacy, speakers actively endorse a cause, policy or idea to bolster additional support from others. Some of our most powerful and moving advocates have been: Sojourner Truth, Margaret Stanton, Martin Luther King Jr., Emma Goldman, Malcolm X, Gloria Steinem, Cesar Chavez, Elie Wiesel, and even Bono. Practically any specialty area or academic field is full of individuals that speak at conferences, public lectures, and awards ceremonies. A few people who fall within this category are: Bill Gates, John Stewart, bell hooks, Oprah Winfrey, Steve Jobs, and Umberto Eco.

**Chapter Summary**
Public speaking is a highly complex activity with a long, distinguished history. In this chapter you have learned that public speaking is a powerful means of communication that occurs in multiple contexts. In each of these contexts, public speaking takes on a unique form. For instance, speech acts in small groups are vastly different than mass-mediated addresses. Regardless of how different these contexts are, all public speeches are based in the oral tradition and the study of rhetoric. Rhetorical study is typically traced back to Ancient Greece and Rome even though many different cultures practiced the art of rhetoric. Many of the concepts developed during these ancient times continue to have resonance today. Lastly, we offered a brief overview of the general areas of public speaking and some noteworthy speakers. In US history alone, public speaking has been a catalyst of change, a means of national support, and a conduit of understanding. So as you embark on your course of study, remember, speaking in public is more than it seems, it is a moment of possibility, when individuals become active citizens leaving their private lives to momentarily enter a public one.

**Discussion Questions**
Why did you decide to study public speaking? Would you have studied it if it was not required at your school?
Name some famous speeches. How have you experienced them (read them, watched them)? What do you think it was like to be there at the actual speech?

Have you been to any speeches? If so, how did it make you feel? Did they become ‘famous’ or ‘popular’?

Who are/were the most popular speakers in your community? State? Country? World? What makes these people great speakers? Is there anything that makes these people unique?

**Key Definitions**

- **Advocacy** when speakers actively endorse a cause, policy or idea to bolster additional support from others.

- Athenian democracy was founded on the principle that power should reside in the citizenry rather than a small group of elites.

- Computer-mediated communication is the transmission of messages across networks such as bulletin boards and the internet.

- Democratic Oligarchy is early form of Roman government in which the citizenry is allowed to vote on legislation and elect officials in popular assembly but the final power resides in the Senate which is comprised of several hundreds of prior officials.

- Dyad is two individuals.

- Intercultural communication examines the role of cultural practices and beliefs on communication.

- Interpersonal communication is communication between two people.

- Intrapersonal communication is communication in which there is one person.

- Small group communication involves at least three individuals and can range up to twelve.

- Marketplace of Ideas claims that if everyone puts out their ideas the best ideas will win out and the weak ideas will not survive.

- Mass-mediated communication is the broadcast of messages in which the speaker is not actually present in front of the audience.

- Oral tradition is the vocal transmission of information between people from generation to generation.

- Organizational communication is the context in which messages go up and down hierarchies.

- Politics is the authoritative allocation of scarce resources and values.

- Public speaking is the use of rhetoric in front of an audience; involving invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery.

- Rhetoric is generally known as the art of using discourse to persuade people...
Sophists were traveling public speaking teachers that were paid for their services which included: public performance, speech writing and instruction in argumentation and style.

References


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