

COMM 54C: FORENSIC ORAL INTERPRETATION

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Fall 2026
Units:	5
Hours:	5 lecture per week (60 total per quarter)
Advisory:	Recommended previous or concurrent enrollment in COMM C1000, C1000H, or 1B; demonstrated proficiency in English by placement via multiple measures OR through an equivalent placement process OR completion of ESLL 125 & ESLL 249; not open to students with credit in COMM 54Y or SPCH 54Y.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area 1B: Oral Communication & Critical Thinking
Transferable:	CSU
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- Evaluate and interpret drama, poetry, and/or prose in preparation for an individual or duo performance
- Prepare and deliver a competition-level oral interpretation performance

Description

Training in the principles of oral interpretation of published works, focusing on both individual and partnered oratory. Areas of focus include interpretation of poetry, dramatic interpretation, and interpretation of prose. Students will explore and perform selections of literature with an emphasis on vocal and physical expression, original introductions, literary analysis, intercultural awareness, and historical context. Study of the history and modern application of interpretive formats is also included.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Create and perform independent oral interpretations of poetry, prose, and drama.
2. Gain understanding of interpretative speech performance history.
3. Learn to properly critique an oral interpretation, both orally and in writing.
4. Gain understanding and appreciation of people of diverse cultural backgrounds through intercultural research and presentations.
5. Apply principles of literary analysis, rhetorical strategy, and communication theory to interpretive performance.

6. Incorporate critique from instructors, peers, and adjudicators to improve interpretative skill.
7. Gain understanding of effective vocal control, physical presence, emotional connection, and character development in performance.

Course Content

1. Overview of forensics interpretation and related formats
 - a. Definition and goals of interpretation in forensics
 - b. Types of literature: poetry, prose, drama
 - c. Introduction to Readers' Theater and/or community-based oral performance events
2. Overview of interpretation events, including:
 - a. Dramatic interpretation: selections drawn from plays, emphasizing realism and character depth
 - b. Prose interpretation: narrative-focused literature such as short stories or novels with attention to storytelling elements
 - c. Poetry interpretation: interpretation of one or more poems highlighting sound, image, and poetic devices
 - d. Programmed oral interpretation: a unified performance combining at least two literary genres centered on a theme
 - e. Duo interpretation: two performers interpreting a single or programmed script with coordinated delivery
 - f. Interpreters' Theater (Readers' Theater): group oral reading emphasizing ensemble expression, unity, and interpretation from manuscript
3. Oral interpretation techniques
 - a. Instruction in various oral interpretation speech formats
 - i. Technique and delivery of interpretation of prose
 - ii. Technique and delivery of dramatic interpretation
 - iii. Technique and delivery of interpretation of poetry
 - b. Instruction in creation of original introductory material
4. Performance technique
 - a. Vocal delivery: volume, pace, inflection, tone, articulation
 - b. Physical delivery: facial expression, gestures, posture, and movement
 - c. Emotional connection and audience adaptation
5. Literary analysis and script preparation
 - a. Selecting appropriate literature for interpretation
 - b. Analyzing structure, theme, tone, and character
 - c. Preparing a manuscript for performance
6. History of interpretive speech
 - a. Examination of modern and historical oral interpretation
 - b. Review of oral interpretation performance videos
7. Critique and evaluation
 - a. Oral and written critique practices
 - b. Using rubrics and ballots for structured feedback
 - c. Instruction in and submission of properly structured written critique
 - d. Demonstration and practice of oral critique techniques
 - e. Integrating feedback for performance improvement
8. Intercultural understanding and representation
 - a. Exploring and selecting literature from diverse cultural traditions
 - b. Sensitivity to voice, identity, and representation in performance
 - c. Cross-cultural research

- d. International intercollegiate competition video review
- e. Intercultural research and reflection
- 9. Professionalism and ethics
 - a. Tournament conduct and etiquette
 - b. Collaboration and support in team settings
 - c. Self-discipline and time management for preparation

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

1. Classroom with access to audio/visual aids, especially video camera, computer with internet access, projector and viewing screen, monitor and DVD/VCR.
2. When taught as an online/hybrid section: on-going access to computer with email software and capabilities; email address; JavaScript-enabled internet browsing software.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Written introductions for presentations
 Evaluation of oral interpretation based on selection of material, quality of content, and delivery style
 Written self-evaluation
 Preparation and performance of oral interpretations in multiple genres
 Written literary and character analyses
 Peer and instructor critiques (oral and written)
 Self-reflection journals and digital performance portfolio
 Participation in rehearsals, discussions, and one or more formal performances
 Completion of intercultural research related to selected performance literature

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Instructor-led lectures on theory and technique
 Demonstrations of oral interpretation performances
 Collaborative group rehearsals
 Individualized coaching
 Structured peer critique
 Students will engage in electronic discussions and perform in competitive or public speaking settings

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Martinez, Anna. [Oral Interpretation of Literature](#). 2023.

Young, Richard T.. [Oral Interpretation: A Creative Performance Approach](#). 2024.

Gura, Timothy. [Oral Interpretation](#), 12th ed.. 2009.

Lewis, Todd V.. [Communicating Literature: An Introduction to Oral Interpretation](#). 2008.

Winebrennan, T.C.. [Intercollegiate Forensics](#), 2nd ed.. 1997.

Although some of these texts are older than the suggested "5 years or newer" standard, they remain seminal texts in this area of study.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Writing assignments
 - a. Write literary analysis essays on performance selections
 - b. Compose character development outlines
 - c. Draft self-reflection journals after performances
 - d. Write and revise original introductions for performance pieces that clearly identify sources and authors and explain the piece's relevance, especially as it connects to a contemporary social issue
2. Reading and research assignments
 - a. Read and annotate literary texts (poetry, prose, drama) for interpretation
 - b. Conduct intercultural research on selected authors or texts
 - c. Study historical materials on interpretation and competitive performance
3. Performance and demonstration assignments
 - a. Perform rehearsed selections in class and/or at competition
 - b. Deliver peer critiques using performance rubrics
 - c. Participate in interpretive rounds in the classroom or at tournaments or community events

Discipline(s)

Communication Studies