



St. Olaf College General Education Curriculum Oral Communication (ORC) Requirement

Description:

A course that incorporates specific instruction, practice, and feedback to develop oral communication competence and confidence.

Intended learning outcomes:

Students will demonstrate:

1. the ability to listen and speak effectively in one or more of the following modes: interpersonal communication, small group communication or public presentations.
2. the ability to use listening and speaking as means of learning.
3. increased confidence in their listening and speaking abilities.

Course guidelines with Curriculum Committee comments:

1. An oral communication course must provide explicit instruction in effective oral communication through assigned readings, lectures, class discussions, and/or other instructional features of the course.

Comment: The oral communication requirement is intended to help students achieve a level of oral communication competence appropriate to the generally educated student. Thus, oral communication instruction should introduce strategies that improve students' effectiveness as speakers and listeners. Instructors may choose the modes of instruction that best support their overall course objectives.

2. An oral communication course must emphasize speaking and listening as principal and integral means of learning. The course must provide several opportunities for students to practice their oral skills in course assignments, and it must provide students with specific feedback on the development of these skills.

Comment: Course assignments providing opportunities to practice speaking skills may take a variety of forms: individual presentations; debates; student-led discussions; group presentations; and individual interviews. In order to

develop understanding, skill, and confidence, oral communication courses should include a minimum of three opportunities to practice oral skills. While these assignments may vary, in order to emphasize development, they should comprise a coherent sequence.

As in the case with speaking assignments, the means of providing feedback to students may take a variety of forms, such as individual conferences, written comments on assignments, in-class discussion, oral or written peer-evaluation, and self-evaluation.

Courses that offer explicit instruction, three or more opportunities for practice, and specific feedback will provide students at least the equivalent of one-quarter credit of oral communication education. This component, however, is integrated with the principal content of the course, so that students are simultaneously "learning to communicate" and "communicating to learn."

3. Oral communication courses may emphasize any of the modes of communication, including presentations, small group debates or discussions, and/or one-on-one communication.

Comment: Faculty are encouraged to be selective in choosing the mode(s) of oral communication that best support the principal learning objectives and disciplinary practices of the course. For example, a course in counseling psychology might emphasize one-on-one communication, while a course in ethics might emphasize debate.

Information for instructors proposing ORC credit for a specific course:

The St. Olaf Curriculum Committee is responsible for reviewing and approving proposals to designate individual courses as meeting the Oral Communication requirement. Instructors may seek ORC credit as part of a proposal for a new course, or may seek to add ORC credit to an existing course. ORC credit is attached to the *course*, not to the instructor or to the specific term in which the course is offered. A proposal for ORC credit must show how the course meets each of the ORC course guidelines; the comments following each guideline provide additional information about how the Curriculum Committee interprets and applies that guideline in reviewing proposals. Instructors are encouraged to consider the comments as well as the guidelines themselves in preparing proposals. Forms and additional instructions for submitting proposals electronically are available on the website of the [Office of the Registrar](#).

The process for submitting a proposal for ORC credit is the same as the process for submitting a proposal for any other GE credit; the only difference is that the Curriculum Committee confers with the Director of Oral Communication in reviewing

submitted proposals. Questions about preparing proposals should be addressed to the Director of Oral Communication.

August 2011