



Department of Communication

Robinson Hall, Room 307, 4400 University Drive, MSN 3D6, Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Phone: 703-993-1090; Fax: 703-993-1096; Web: <http://comm.gmu.edu/>

Call for Basic Course Textbook Proposals COMM 100: Public Speaking (Adapted from process developed by Joseph Valenzano III)

Purpose

The Basic Course Program of the Department of Communication at George Mason University is seeking proposals from qualified publishers of higher education textbooks and learning resources to plan and execute the delivery of a textbook and accompanying learning resources for the COMM100: Public Speaking course. There are currently over 70 sections of COMM100 offered annually.

Course Overview

COMM 100: Public Speaking is one of the two basic courses that meet the Oral Communication General Education requirement for undergraduate students at George Mason University. However, each major has the option of requiring that students take a specific Oral Communication course, and many majors, including Engineering and programs in science, require that their students take COMM 100. Currently, approximately 2000 students take COMM 100 each year (in addition to the approximately 2000 that take COMM 101, which is our Interpersonal and Group Interaction course), and as GMU continues to grow, we anticipate that these numbers will also increase. This call is only for COMM 100, and we will release another call for COMM 101 in the near future.

At GMU, the basic course is taught by Graduate Teaching Assistants (PhD students), Graduate Lecturers (MA students), adjunct faculty, and full time faculty. Many of our instructors are new instructors who are teaching for the first time, while others have decades of experience teaching this particular course. The Basic Course Director, Dr. Melissa Broeckelman-Post, oversees the overall course curriculum and design, training, long-term planning, and assessment for both basic courses. The Basic Course Coordinator, Mr. Lance Schmeidler, assists the Director and oversees day to day operations of the course, scheduling, updates, and additional training. For the purposes of this call, the Basic Course Director and Basic Course Coordinator will serve as the selection committee, but will assemble an advisory committee that includes other faculty who frequently teach the course to provide feedback throughout the process.

Because this is a General Education course with many different sections taught by numerous instructors with a range of experience, and because assessment is increasingly important in our program, we have standardized many elements of the course, including the textbook, syllabus, major assignments, grading rubrics, and more. To facilitate consistency across the many sections as well as to reduce copying costs and generate revenue, we have developed a student handbook that is currently paired with a national textbook in a single custom textbook. We are also currently using a blend of publisher-generated online course materials and our own department-generated online resources

through a combination of Blackboard and the publisher's custom LMS product, but would prefer to move toward using a single set of online learning resources.

Until now, our Public Speaking course has been a traditional face-to-face public speaking class that primarily involves in-class presentations. There have been two major speeches (an informative speech and a persuasive speech) along with nine other shorter speeches that helped students build toward those major speaking assignments. However, as part of our textbook selection and course evaluation process, we will consider whether other course formats and assignments might better meet our students' needs.

Course Learning Outcomes

COMM 100 focuses specifically on developing public speaking competence, but both of our basic courses must meet the following university level learning outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate understanding of and proficiency in constructing and delivering multiple message types.
2. Students will understand and practice effective elements of ethical verbal and nonverbal communication.
3. Students will develop analytical skills and critical listening skills.
4. Students will understand the influence of culture in communication and will know how to cope with cultural differences with presenting information to the audience.

Necessary Selection Criteria

There are several criteria that are requirements for the new textbook and learning resources that we will choose for the upcoming years:

1. First and foremost, we are looking for a high-quality textbook and/or set of learning resources that will help us meet our course learning outcomes, while also helping us develop an innovative course that meets the needs of today's students and helps to prepare them for their future courses, careers, and lives as citizens. We will consider readability, content coverage, and compatibility with our course structure and student population. If there are areas that are not adequately met with your current resources, please explain how those deficits might be remedied through supplemental resources and/or custom content (whether generated by us or by your associates). We would like this to be an opportunity for creative collaboration, not just a simple textbook adoption.
2. We must be able to create custom materials that will be published and purchased by students along with textbook, such as the syllabus, assignments, models of completed assignments, grading rubrics, and more. These could either be integrated into a custom text or as a standalone supplement to a national text, and the overall cost to students will be an important consideration in this decision. The custom materials that we create must also generate revenue for our department; this revenue is crucial for our department's success and support in many areas.

3. We would like to have an overall textbook and learning resource solution that can be adapted as the course changes. We typically make at least some revisions in the course materials every year, usually prior to the fall semester, and would like to continue to have this flexibility.
4. Our textbook and learning resource solution must be able to keep up with student enrollments and be delivered in a reliable, timely fashion. We understand that there are factors outside of your control that can present great challenges, such as changing student enrollments and bookstore managers that sometimes refuse to order an adequate number of copies before the semester begins. However, it is important that our publisher work as a partner with us to push enough copies of the text into the bookstore, make it possible to get more copies to the bookstore quickly if too few copies are ordered, and to adapt the print numbers if our enrollments change.

Bonus Selection Criteria

In addition to the minimum requirements, there are several things that we would like to potentially see integrated into a textbook and learning resources proposal. For all of these, cost, ease of use, and data on effectiveness will be important considerations.

1. We are interested in seeing any resources that facilitate learning outside of the classroom. These might include online learning modules, video mini-lectures, model speech demonstrations, and others. Additionally, we would like to see any data you can provide that assesses whether these resources contribute to effective learning and/or an overall better course experience. Put more bluntly, we want to see whether students will actually utilize the resources and whether those resources increase learning; we do not want to add technological “bells and whistles” that will not be an integral part of students’ learning. If you have such resources and assessment data, we would also like to know whether they can be integrated into our own Blackboard site alongside online content that we generate, or whether those resources will need to be used through a proprietary publisher-based LMS. At this point, we are *not* looking for an option to create a hybrid or fully online course; instead, we are looking for tools that allow for a “flipped” classroom approach.
2. Ongoing assessment is increasingly important for accreditation issues, and even more so for our continuous improvement of the basic courses. If you have resources or tools that will facilitate assessment across the entire program, we would like to learn about them.
3. In addition to our traditional COMM 100 course, we also have COMM 100 sections for the Center for International Student Access (CISA) ACCESS program, which serves students who are academically qualified for admission to GMU but need additional language learning support. Currently, these sections use a different textbook and learning resources than the traditional course. Additionally, plans are underway to offer sections of this course in Songdo, Korea beginning next fall, and those students will potentially have different needs than the students on our Fairfax campus. Currently, we are treating all three of these as separate but related courses within our program, but we would like to hear about supplemental resources that might allow us to better meet the needs of all three groups of students.

Selection Process

Our overall plan is to work through a three-stage textbook and learning resource selection process. Stage 1 will be a solicitation for written proposals. We will review the proposals and identify those that best demonstrate the ability to meet our needs. In Stage 2, we will invite representatives for those proposals to come to campus for a presentation that will be open to the department and for a meeting with the advisory committee. In Stage 3, which will take place in Spring 2014, we will deliver pilot sections of the course to assess the textbooks and as much of the potential course content as possible. If we are satisfied that one of the learning solutions provides an optimal choice, we might be ready to make a final decision for a full-scale adoption for Fall 2014. However, it is possible that we might need to continue some of the pilots into the first part of the summer or fall if we are not fully satisfied with any of the options.

If your textbook and materials are chosen for the pilot in Spring 2014, there is no guarantee that we will choose your textbook and materials for a full-scale adoption in Fall 2014.

Timeline

Week of September 9, 2013: Call for Textbook Proposals sent to publishers

By 3pm October 11, 2013: Proposals due in hard copy form (2 copies, plus 2 copies of the books and additional resources that you are recommending). Please send to

Dr. Melissa Broeckelman-Post
Department of Communication
George Mason University
4400 University Drive
MS 3D6, Robinson A 318
Fairfax, VA 22030

November 1-15, 2013: Invited presentations and selections made for the Spring 2014 pilots.

January 21, 2014: First day of the Spring pilot courses

Proposal Structure

We are well aware that some schools seek one-page proposals and copies of multiple books and ancillaries from each publisher. That is NOT the process we will use, so please do not inundate us with copies of multiple textbooks and packages of ancillaries. We do expect the proposals to be multiple pages in length, but also ask you to be judicious in what you include. The written proposal (not including a cover page or ancillary materials) should be about 5-10 pages in length, single spaced, using 12 point Times New Roman font. Proposals should generally utilize the format described below as well as include a copy of the primary textbook and other materials you are including in your proposal (i.e. ancillaries, chapters from other books, etc.):

1. *Introduction:* Brief explanation of your publishing approach and an overview of the book or books and/or other learning resources that you will refer to in the proposal. We strongly encourage you to only pitch 1 or 2 primary books, but if you think you can best meet our needs with multiple books, please justify that choice. You can pull chapters from several books to create a primary text, and in that case, we ask that you pitch each book in the custom publication.

2. *Meeting our Course Outcomes:* Please carefully explain how the textbook and learning resources that you propose fit our course description and course outcomes. Please be specific when detailing how your textbook and ancillaries meet each course learning outcomes and/or how materials might be developed to meet any outcomes that are not fully met with your existing resources. Additionally, if your proposal includes the use of digital resources, please detail how those resources meet our course learning outcomes and explain how they would be accessed. For example, can we build the materials into our own Blackboard course shell, or do the materials need to be accessed through your online platform? Whenever possible, please also share any research or assessment data that demonstrates whether your resources are effective in helping to meet these course learning outcomes, along with data showing whether students typically use those resources when they are available.

3. *Delivery and Cost Models:* Please provide us with the methods of delivering the primary and/or custom book to students and what each method would cost. For example, you might include eBook, paper, unbound, or other options. Please also include full color vs. grayscale print costs. We anticipate using either a consumable book that merges the textbook and our custom material in a single volume OR a national textbook that students can resell plus a consumable workbook or manual that includes only our custom text. Additionally, you should include a discussion about how the royalties are generated from our custom course content.

4. *Performance Data and General Agreements:* Please include a summary of how you interface with the university bookstore and data on your past performance in meeting textbook needs in the past: meeting prescribed delivery times; if bookstores refuse to order enough copies in their initial order, how many days will it take to get books on the shelves after a second order is placed; are there other venues through which students can purchase the textbook, etc.? Please also include details about how you will adapt to changing enrollments, along with when and what information you will need from us to help manage the textbook print quantities as efficiently as possible. Finally, please provide an overview of types and level of support that you will provide throughout the implementation process if we choose your textbook and resources, along with penalties that will be applied for poor performance. The specific details and parameters for the support and penalties will be worked out later and should be mutually agreed upon, but we want evidence of how you have managed some of the typical obstacles that pop up in the process.

5. *Summary Narrative:* The proposal should include a summary narrative of what options you are providing, and what ideas you have put forth using your materials to achieve our goals.

Additional Comments

We want this to be an open, transparent, and collaborative process so that we can create the best possible course for our students. We also want this to be a fair process to every publisher as well as a process that does not inundate or overwhelm our faculty. We welcome questions and dialogue throughout the process, but ask that all questions be directed to Dr. Broeckelman-Post at mbroecke@gmu.edu. She will serve as the point person throughout this process. Every one of our faculty colleagues has numerous responsibilities, and we ask that you respect their time. DO NOT try to identify and contact others who are involved in the process, drop by our offices for impromptu meetings, or start sending copies of multiple textbooks. In the interest of full disclosure, you should be

aware that we might consider a text co-authored by one of our basic course faculty, but we would not be working through this selection process if we were not truly considering all possibilities and seeking the solution that best meets the needs of our students.