

## Final Persuasive Speech

**Due:** 24<sup>th</sup> class--everyone must be ready to give a speech on this day

**Length:** 8-10 minutes

**Details:** Your speech should be written and **practiced** ahead of time.

- This speech is your chance to display overt rhetoric (not “over-the-top,” but “overt”)
- Use the devices and concepts we have explored this semester—e.g., rhetorical strategies, ethical concepts and appeals, etc.
- Delivering the speech extemporaneously is the best approach for most occasions since it combines the impromptu speech’s spontaneity and interaction with the audience (eye contact, gestures) with the read or memorized speech’s deeper thought, practiced style, and phrasings.
- You may, however, read your speech if you prefer—but the highest grade that a read speech can earn is A-.
- In any event, have notes or the speech up front with you.
- You will lose points if the speech runs shorter than 8 minutes or longer than 10 minutes.

**Speech Topics:** Feel free to use your imagination with the topic selection—have some fun, be inventive. Topics may be serious or humorous. Your only audience is the people in the classroom. There are only three restrictions:

- The speech must be persuasive in some manner (but it can also be satiric, comic, informative, etc.)
- The speech must be interesting
- You cannot give your speech on a topic you have written an essay about

Here are suggested topics, but feel free to create your own:

- Any “Suggestions for Writing” question at the end of any text in WORLD OF IDEAS would make a good topic for a speech—but don’t select a question about which you have already written
- What ethical principles should govern our use of rhetoric? Or, conversely, why should ethical principles not govern our use of rhetoric?
- Select one of the “additional cases” from Strike and Moss’s *Strike and Moss. Ethics and College Student Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (on reserve) and argue why the characters in that case should or should not pursue a particular course of action (use both ethical and practical reasons).
- Give the closing argument as the defense attorney for some famous criminal (e.g., for John Wilkes Booth, Al Capone, Brutus, Lizzie Borden, Jesse James)—this type of topic requires that you know some facts about the person and his/her life and crimes
- Argue for the greater importance of some belief or value over some other belief or value (e.g., the importance of compassion over justice, or of justice over compassion, or of honesty over success, or of success over honesty)
- Select a complex situation (from the real world or from the world of fiction) and argue that particular ethical principles mean that those involved should act in a certain way that you specify (include both ethical and practical reasons).
- Argue for some change in some major policy (at MIT, in Cambridge, in your hometown, in the US, in the world)
- Argue that all college-age students should (or should not) be forced to do 2 years of community service before entering college

- Argue that MIT students should be free to choose any courses they wish rather than having to fulfill General Institute Requirements (physics, math, etc.)
- Argue for a different set of courses to be the General Institute Requirements at MIT
- Argue your own topic

The point is to plunge deeply into the implications of and qualifications to your position. Make explicit appeals to ethical principles as well as to practical consequences; use all the resources of rhetoric to make your speech convincing.

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## Written Version of Final Persuasive Speech

**Due:** 25th class; **EMAIL** me a copy **before** class  
**Length:** 1500-2500 words, 6~10 typed pages