**HYDE PARK STYLE “HECKLE” SPEECHES**

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Following in the grand traditions of free speech in the public sphere and orators in Hyde Park, London, you will give a 5-7 minute speech on a large wooden soapbox in front of the Campus Center at high noon. This assignment requires you to adapt to the broad Macalester College community as your audience rather than merely to other students. You can reasonably expect to have a large percentage of faculty, staff, and administrators listen in for a bit before they go to lunch. It is typical of this occasion to have several hundred people gather and listen to the most engaging speeches. Your successful speech will attract an audience rather than turn it away and you will welcome audience engagement rather than avoid it.

In many respects, this assignment is something like a public spectacle. The audience loves the experience, and nearly every student in the past has identified this assignment as their favorite in the course. Besides being fun, it will also give you a college "war story" to tell your children in future years.

The subject of your speech may be any issue that addresses civic life and the common good. That might include international or domestic issues, concerns of the Twin Cities, or issues particular to Macalester College. Your approach need not be serious, but your topic must not be frivolous.

You presence on the soapbox will undoubtedly draw a significant crowd of onlookers, friends, classmates, and hecklers. Your rhetorical obstacles will be very high as the audience is likely to be easily distracted, hungry, pressed for time, more interested in frisbee than public speaking, or interested in being the center of attention by razzing you during your speech. On the other hand, many past audiences have been very supportive and sympathetic to the speakers and have repeatedly interrupted speeches with applause and encouragement. Whether you have a good or miserable experience is largely determined by how well your topic engages the interests and needs of the audience, how much good will and credibility you are able to create in a short period of time, how much humor and wit you are able to muster, how successfully you are able to ignore or "disarm" hecklers and your capacity to be clear, organized, and heard above the din.

This assignment requires that your ideas be especially well organized and your speech be fully practiced. You should anticipate being interrupted repeatedly which is why you need a clearly organized speech to "go back to" after interaction with hecklers. I suggest that you to practice your speech late at night on the Macalester Commons so you get a good sense of how fully you will have to project your voice, what it is like to speak in the out of doors and to be the center of public attention. Remember that you will need to exaggerate your facial expressions and gestures and will practically need to shout to be heard clearly by your audience.