
**“How to become a wise decision maker in a complicated world”
and “The Secrets to persuasion”**

MIREES Open lecture

On October 21st 2016, Sam Potolicchio, Distinguished Professor in Political and Social Communications at the McCourt School of Public Policy, Georgetown University, USA, and at the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, in Moscow, Russia, held two MIREES Open lectures titled “How to become a wise decision maker in a complicated world” and “The Secrets to persuasion”.

During the morning lecture, Potolicchio mainly focused on tools and techniques to influence and to persuade the audience by establishing credibility as a competent and trustworthy speaker. By explaining and illustrating techniques normally reserved for national level political leaders and through the screening of multimedia material such as interviews and political debates that occurred during the running of 1988 USA presidential elections, the lecturer highlighted how external circumstances, body language and even the camera angle can, to a large extent, interplay in determining the results and/or the audience reactions to the debate itself. Further on, Potolicchio explained how setting up plans and choosing a cognitive selection of elements is fundamental to conduct a successful debate or any kind of public speaking and to establish instant credibility as an influential speaker by establishing priorities, setting up an adequate language register according to the public, promoting interactive participation, and bearing in mind the ultimate goal of the speech itself: persuasion.

Whereas the first session was mainly concentrated on a theoretical approach to public speaking methods, the second lecture was devoted to the ability of the students to make use of typical characteristic of a “wise decision maker in a complicated world” (*e.g.* the capacity to “think out of the box”, synthesize a large amount of information etc.) by solving some quizzes meant to stimulate the development of the so-called “lateral thinking problem solving method” that, through

an unconventional approach and creative reasoning which is not immediately self-evident, enables one to think from general to particular and find different solutions to problems that may not be approachable by using only traditional and regular logic.

The seminar was fruitful as it gave the MIREES students fundamental tools to understand the basic rules of public speaking and provided a solid framework to make us able to successfully present on topics concerning our subject of study in everyday academic life.

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