What type of speaking is expected for your students, academically and in their careers?

Communication is an essential component of the social work relationship. Within the profession of social work, students are taught that communication occurs through many methods. One method of communication is the use of oral language. Social workers are expected to speak well reasoned, logical manner. Social workers must be sensitive to the cultural/ethnic background of the audience. In an ideal world, social workers would be multilingual and able to speak with clients in their native language. Social work students are expected to present in multiple courses within their professional education program.

Who are their audiences?

The primary audience for social worker's are the clients with whom they are working. Social Workers also work with groups, legislative bodies, government and private funding sources and many other members in the community.

How is speaking different in social work than in other disciplines within the university?

I believe that social work, like most other professions, develops a language, or jargon, that is unique to the profession. I do not believe that speaking in social work would be unlike other disciplines within the university. Speaking in social work should be clear, concise and easily understood with whatever clientele the social worker is speaking to.

The basics of speaking are, for the most part, consistent across disciplines. Knowing the expectations of a discipline is an important part of adapting to your audience, however. The papers in the “Speaking, in my opinion…” series do not represent an official statement from the department. They do, however, give you an introduction to different faculty opinions on effective speaking.
Students in social work, who are presenting to an audience should:

Adapt presentation for your specific audience, both in terms of age specific, educational specific, and ability specific language abilities.

Present material in a clear and logical manner.

Cite any sources when referring to ideas, concepts, or words that are not your own.

Be willing to accept constructive criticism, using this as a means of growth and improving future presentations.