



COMMS 1315: Fundamentals of Public Speaking

COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2025

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Sarah Gonzales

Office Location: Virtual

Office Hours: M-F, 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM; 3:00 PM- 4:00 PM; By appointment

University Email Address: sarah.gonzales@tamuc.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: email

Communication Response Time: Within 24 hours, emails received over a holiday or on weekends will be responded to on the next business day.

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbooks

Required: The Challenge of Effective Speaking in a Digital Age by Rudolph F. Verderber, 17th Edition

Other Materials:

- Notebook for note-taking
- Computer/Tablet
- Materials as assigned throughout the semester

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to basic communication theory and the concept of public speaking beyond initial expectations. This course focuses on research, composition, organization, delivery, and analysis of speeches for various purposes and occasions. This course is designed for students who want to improve skills in public speaking. Emphasis is on critical thinking and refining techniques of speaking. This course addresses the following required objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the foundational models of communication.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

2. Apply elements of audience analysis.
3. Demonstrate ethical speaking and listening skills by analyzing presentations for evidence and logic,
4. Research, develop and deliver extemporaneous speeches with effective verbal and nonverbal techniques.
5. Demonstrate effective usage of technology when researching and/or presenting speeches.
6. Identify how culture, ethnicity and gender influence communication.
7. Develop proficiency in presenting a variety of speeches as an individual or group (e.g.narrative, informative or persuasive).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional Methods

Instructional methods will include, but are not limited to:

- assigned readings
- group discussions via online discussion boards
- video and digital instruction

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

- Be willing to engage and participate in each unit - this includes being actively engaged in discussion posts, connecting with your peers, asking questions, and providing timely feedback for peer and self-critiques
- Ask questions! The more you communicate with the teacher and your peers, the more you will take away from this class.
- Time management is a wonderful skill to build - we will build our time management by honoring deadlines and using our course time wisely.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

Total points corresponding to the final letter grades

A = 890- 1,000 Points

B = 790-889 Points

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C = 690-789 Points

D = 590-689 Points

F = 589 & Below

Assessments will be scored using a points system. The assignments for the semester and their point values are available below in our **tentative** calendar for the semester. The calendar (and due dates) are subject to change - but no additional assignments will be added to what's listed.

Calendar and Assessments

Module	Dates	Read	Content	Assignment
Getting Started	Opens: Jan 13 DUE: Feb 3 Closes: May 2	Syllabus Chapter 1: Foundations Chapter 2: Your First Speech Chapter 3: Listening Other Materials as Assigned	Course Expectations Communication Foundations Presentation Basics Listening, Learning, & Relationships Other Materials as Assigned	Virtual Learning Environment Acknowledgment- 20 points Syllabus Acknowledgement - 20 points Discussion Post #1 - 40 points Introduction Speech - 50 points 100 total points
Foundations	Opens: Feb 3 DUE: March 9 Closes: May 2	Chapter 4: Determining a Speech Goal Chapter 15: Ceremonial Speeches Chapter 11: Delivery Other Materials as Assigned	Types of Speeches Ceremonial Speeches Furthering Your Delivery Style Other Materials as Assigned	Discussion Post #2 - 40 points Tribute Speech - 40 points Peer Critique and Self Evaluation - 20 points 100 total points
Demonstration	Opens: March 1 DUE: April 6 Closes: May 2	Chapter 5: Adapting to Audiences Chapter 10: Language and Oral Style Other Materials as Assigned	The purpose of a demonstration speech Adapting to Audiences Social Media and Presentations Other Materials as Assigned	Discussion Post #3 - 40 points Demonstration Video - 40 points Peer Critique and Self Evaluation - 20 points 100 total points
Informative Speaking	Opens: March 1 DUE: April 6 Closes: May 2	Chapter 12: Informative Speaking Chapter 6: Topic Development Chapter 7: Organizing the Speech Body Chapter 9: Presentational Aids Other Materials as Assigned	The purpose of an Informative Speech No such thing as a new topic Effective Research Strategies Introductions and Conclusions The Formula of Writing and Speaking	Discussion Post #4 - 40 points Informative Speech Manuscript - 50 points Informative Speech Presentation - 100 points Peer Critique and Self Evaluation - 20 points 210 total points

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			Other Materials as Assigned	
Persuasive Speaking	Opens: March 31 DUE: May 2 Closes: May 2	Chapter 13: Persuasive Messages Chapter 14: Persuasive Speaking Chapter 16 : Group Presentations Other Materials as Assigned	The Tenets of Persuasion Proposing Solutions: Persuasion and Action Working with a Group from a Distance Other Materials as Assigned	Discussion Post #5 - 40 points Persuasive Manuscript - 50 points Persuasive Video Presentation - 100 points Peer Critique and Self Evaluation - 20 points 210 total points
Comprehensive Unit	Opens: Jan 13 DUE: May 2 Closes: May 2	All Units	All Units	Course Participation- 100 points (20 per unit) Video Review- 50 points My three takeaways- 50 points My final reflection- 50 points

****Census Day is January 29, 2025****

****Midterm Grades will be posted on March 24, 2025****

****Final Grades will be posted on May 12, 2025****

Presentation Expectations

Presentations in Front of an Audience

Students are expected to record and present the following speeches in front of a live audience: Demonstration & Informative Speech. What does this mean? Students will need to get **a minimum of 5** friends/family members/community members to sit and watch their presentation. Below are the requirements for these presentations:

Live Audience Speech Recording Requirements

1. USE Note Cards to Present! (rather than hold your entire outline during the presentation, you will need to use note cards to present---No more than 5 note cards, one-sided, and get those eyes up to talk to your audience)
2. Record yourself doing your speech in front of a live audience of at least 5 adults. (you must show your audience in your recording)
3. To start your speech, show your face, tell me your name and course, show me your audience, hand the camera over, and then begin your speech.

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4. Stand up while presenting your speech. Your dress should be professional. Please record at a slight distance so I can see your whole body in the shot. No close-ups.
5. Your speech must be videotaped in one take. No editing or modifying of your video is allowed.
6. I will not grade a speech if the video quality is poor or volume is too low.
7. Do not shoot your video outdoors, with small children, animals, or television in the background making distracting noises.
8. You must have access to a laptop screen, projector screen or flat screen television where you can project and utilize your PowerPoint.
9. Make sure your link works to view. If I have to jump through hoops to view it, you risk losing points or not getting credit at all.

Virtual Presentations

Students will also create virtual presentations, which seek to build skills to engage with technology and communicate effectively in digital spaces. This applies to: Introductory Speech and Persuasive Speech. These presentations do not have to be in front of a live audience, but they do need to follow the below requirements:

Virtual Speech Recording Requirements

1. Be memorized! Because these presentations can be edited, the expectation is that you will utilize effective camera angles, speaking directly to the camera or to anyone else who is on screen with you without the assistance of a script or notecards.
2. **Show your face** and effective nonverbal communication for at least half of the video presentation.
3. Ensure you have effective lighting and volume for your video. If I struggle to see or hear you, then I will not grade it.
4. Creativity is encouraged! The introductory speech is a basic “Zoom-style” introduction video. The other two virtual presentations will require the use of editing, visual aids, and a healthy dose of creativity. These expectations for these videos will be laid out in greater detail in the specific assignment on D2L.
5. Make sure your link works to view. If I have to jump through hoops to view it, then you will risk losing points or not getting credit at all.

LATE WORK POLICIES

Keeping with the theme of professionalism, students are expected to manage their time wisely. Each unit has a starting date and end date. All assignments for the unit are due on the final day of the unit before the next unit begins.

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Students will have five days (5 days) past the original due date to submit late assignments for **a late grade**. Once the five-day late period has passed, students will not be able to submit the assignment for a grade.

DIGITAL CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Given that this class is intended to prepare students for professional environments (whether in college, grad school, or in the working world), students are expected to treat each other with respect at all times. One practical manifestation of this is keeping an open mind. The nature of the course can lead to discussions with opposing opinions. It's imperative we engage in civil discourse and listen to the opinions and viewpoints of others. Different viewpoints are encouraged! But they must be communicated professionally. Disrespect will not be tolerated.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Students will need a laptop/personal device to complete and turn in assignments, as well as to access all lecture materials. Students are responsible for having reliable devices and access to internet to complete this course.

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are the technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all coursework in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These

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methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course-Specific Procedures/Policies

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University-Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

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<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)
[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

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Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedure/s/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.

<http://telusproduction.com/app/5108.html>

AI use policy [Draft 2, May 25, 2023]

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed. In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

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13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty
13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

Department or Accrediting Agency Required Content

Departmental-Specific Procedures

Student Grievance Procedure

Students who have concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor in order to reach a resolution. Students who are unsatisfied with the outcome of that conversation or have not been able to meet individually with their instructor, whether in-person, by email, by telephone, or by another communication medium, should then schedule an appointment with the Department Head. In the event that the instructor is the Department Head, the student should schedule a meeting with the Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Humanities. Where applicable, students should also consult [University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.05 \("Student Appeal of Instructor Evaluation"\)](#).

Collection of Data for Measuring Institutional Effectiveness

In order to measure the level of compliance with the accreditation, throughout the semester I may collect some of the ungraded texts you produce solely for an assessment of program effectiveness that in no way affects students' course grades or GPAs.