



Commerce Campus

COMS, 406, 01, Nonverbal Communication

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2025

Department of Liberal Studies
Communication Studies Program

Course Instructor: Stephen A. Furlich, Ph.D

Office: JOUR 118 (1st Floor)

Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 8:00AM-9:30AM; 12:15-2:00PM

Class Time: T&R. 9:30-10:45 Room: Ed. South 103

E-Mail: Stephen.Furlich@etamu.edu

Prerequisites: None

"Having knowledge but lacking the power to clearly express it is no better than never having any ideas at all." Pericles

Communication Studies B.A./B.S.

The Communication Studies program is designed as an area of study to apply scholarly communication research for a variety of careers and personal goals in an interconnected world.

Two general goals of the program for graduates are:

1. Each graduate will be communicatively informed in every communication situation they find themselves in, such as understanding others verbally and nonverbally in professional and personal situations.
2. Each graduate will be an effective communicator verbally and nonverbally in each communication situation they find themselves in, such as professional and personal contexts. Furthermore, an essential

part of effective communication is the ability to communicate strategically verbally and nonverbally to accomplish one's goals.

“Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you respond to it.”

Lou Holtz, Notre Dame Football Coach (Retired)

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook Required: Furlich, S. (2022). Nonverbal Epiphany: Steps to Improve Your Nonverbal Communication. Bowker.

Course Description

Course Description:

Nonverbal Communication will explore different aspects of nonverbal communication. The class is structured to first build an understanding of nonverbal communication from an academic standpoint. A theoretical perspective will be understood. Then, the areas of visual and auditory codes (kinesics, physical appearance, and vocalics); contact codes (haptics and proxemics); place and time codes (environment, artifacts, and chronemics); Relationship between verbal and NV communication; emotion and NV behavior; NV coding and decoding of deception will be addressed. A major portion of the course to follow will apply nonverbal communication to students' lives. An understanding of interpreting different nonverbal messages will be covered. Different contexts will also be addressed, such as personal relationships, business, and public as a few examples.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. To apply theories and concepts in analyzing nonverbal communication in a variety of contexts.
2. Emotional expressivity: To improve your own nonverbal encoding, such as the ability to convey emotions and feelings appropriately and effectively.

3. To understand current theories, principles, and research findings examining the role of nonverbal communication in the total communication process.
4. Improve their ability to effectively encode and decode nonverbal messages to enhance the quality of daily interactions.
5. Understand the influence of culture and context in formation of perceptions and impression management.
6. To gain an understanding of nonverbal codes and their effects on managing interaction, forming impressions, developing and maintaining relationships, and engaging in social influence.
7. To understand social norms governing nonverbal behavior and the consequences of violating those norms.
8. To recognize reliable and unreliable nonverbal correlates of deception.
9. Students will be able to analyze, evaluate, or solve problems when given a set of circumstances, data, texts, or art.
10. In written, oral, and/or visual communication, A&M-Commerce students will communicate in a manner appropriate to audience and occasion, with an evident message and organizational structure.
11. Students will understand and practice academic honesty.
12. Students will demonstrate an understanding of societal and/or civic issues.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Using the learning management system, using Microsoft Word and PowerPoint

Grading

Communication Studies/ Speech Major Portfolios- All Speech Majors MUST

Course Assignments/Assessments: The Department of Liberal Studies supports university policies of academic excellence as noted in the student handbook. Interpretation of grades should be considered within the university framework: A=excellent, B=good; C=average; D=inferior; and F=failure. Final grades in this course will be based on:

A=100-90, B=89-80, C=79-70, D=69-60, F=59 and below

(Tests 60%, Presentations 30%, Activities 10%)

Assessments

Tests will consist of 50 multiple choice questions.

*** Tests - (60%)**

20 %: Test 1

20 %: Test 2

20 %: Test 3

***Please only submit written assignments as attachments in WORD in the proper envelop in DL2 BrightSpace course shell. Other files such as PDF files are too difficult to grade.**

***Course Shell, Activities, Assignments for this class in then the appropriate file**

*** Papers – (30%) Note: Encyclopedias, Websites, and dictionaries do not count as sources.**

10% **Paper 1:** Context Observation – Emphasis on Content and Structure with Library Sources.

10% **Paper 2:** Personal Experience – With Library Sources

10% **Paper 3:** Application – No Library Sources

Activity Assignments (10%) – Total of 20 for the semester for 0.5% each. The specific activities are listed on the syllabus schedule specifying the chapter they are found in and when they are due.

Assignment Descriptions:

Paper 1 (10%):

COMS Major Portfolios- All Communication Studies Majors MUST save the assignment!

Observation of a particular **context**: Each student will choose a different context to observe people's nonverbal behaviors. Each student should address the following areas

1. What does research indicate occurs nonverbally within this context? What are some of the nonverbal behaviors that previous researchers have identified studying this context?
2. What unique nonverbal behaviors are occurring within this context that differs from other contexts?

3. What is consistent and inconsistent about your observations from that of previous research regarding this context?
4. What can researchers do in the future to better understand nonverbal behaviors within this context?
5. How can you use information gained from this assignment to understand nonverbal communication better in the future. APPLICATION
 - a. YOU MUST CLEARLY IDENTIFY AT LEAST 5 CONCEPTS FROM CLASS THAT WERE OBSERVED. DESCRIBE HOW SOMEONE CAN BENEFIT FROM KNOWING THIS INFORMATION.
6. Some examples are a park, airport, social gathering, sporting event, school cafeteria, mall, elevator, doctor/dentist office, etc.
7. You are a passive observer who does not interact in this context.
8. Papers will be 2-3 pages and include **5 different reference sources** (books or journal articles). Websites will not count as a source.

Paper & References on one document submitted in **Course Shell, Activities, Assignments for this class in then the appropriate file .**
5 academic sources cited, 5 course concepts identified.

Paper 2 (10%):

Personal Experience focusing on nonverbal communication: **COMS Major Portfolios-**
All COMS Majors MUST

1. All students will experience a **different customer service encounter** and report about the nonverbal communication observations from the encounter.
2. Students should address what is consistent and inconsistent from their observation from that of class material. It is essential to identify what is different from class material or at least what is new that class material has not covered.
 - a. YOU MUST CLEARLY IDENTIFY AT LEAST 5 CONCEPTS FROM CLASS THAT WERE OBSERVED. DESCRIBE HOW SOMEONE CAN BENEFIT FROM KNOWING THIS INFORMATION.
3. Some examples are buying a car, shopping at the mall, shopping for clothes, shopping for a cell phone/ plan, workout membership inquiry, eating at a restaurant etc.
4. The main purpose is to have interaction with the sales person and make note of their nonverbal actions and reactions during the communication encounter.
5. Address each of these areas (proximity, facial, tactile, chronemics, olfatics)
6. How can you use information gained from this assignment to understand nonverbal communication better in the future. APPLICATION

7. Papers will be 2-3 pages & include 5 different reference sources (books or journal articles). Paper & References on one document submitted.

Submit Papers in **Course Shell, Activities, Assignments for this class in then the appropriate file**

5 academic sources cited, 5 course concepts identified.

***Each student must get their context and customer service encounter approved beforehand in order for each student to have a different situation.**

Paper 3 Application (10%):

You will write about what you have learned that you did not know prior to the semester. You will describe how you can apply this information personally and/ or professionally. Do not state the obvious or information that most people who have not taken this class already know. For example, you learned the importance of eye contact. Be precise, how long should it be maintained, how should it be broken, what does pupil size changes mean and their procedural stages, etc. For example, you learned that smiling is important. How do you distinguish a real smile from a fake one? These are just example so expand in other topics and areas.

Papers will be 2-3 pages & 5 sources. Paper & References on one document submitted.

Papers submitted in **Course Shell, Activities, Assignments for this class in then the appropriate file .**

At least 7 course concepts identified for papers.

*** Activities - (+2%)**

A number of activities will be assigned to demonstrate or apply content from the book and class discussions. **You cannot get credit for activities that are done on days you are absent, you leave early, or come in 10 minutes late.** Late activities will not be accepted. You are expected to keep up with your own grades. You should know your standing in the course at any time during the semester. Students will receive 2% additional points to their final grade if they miss no more than 1 day. **Students may lose 10% of their final grade or will be dropped from the class for any class that they are disrespectful the first time.** This includes but is not limited to any cell phone activity, doing work for other classes, talking out of turn in a disruptive manner, sleeping, etc.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

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 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

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

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 course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These 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: Students will receive feedback through email attachments for written assignments and their exam grade will be their feedback for their exams.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Course Procedures

Assignments - Assignments must be completed on time. Late work will result in loss of points. Academic integrity is expected on all course assignments and activities. Violations of academic integrity (e.g., plagiarism, cheating, etc.) are serious offenses and will be dealt with according to university policy.

Attendance - Punctual attendance is expected at all class sessions, especially on presentation and test days. If you participate in University sponsored activities (e.g., intercollegiate sports) you must check with the instructor with appropriate documentation before you are absent. Texas A&M University-Commerce policy regarding attendance will be followed in all classes. Students are responsible for all missed work. **Students can receive 2% extra on their final overall grade for not missing more than one day and having professional classroom behaviors. Using cell phones in any fashion in class or other activities not related to the class can result in the student being administratively dropped from the class or an F in the class.**

Make-Up Assignments and Examinations - If you miss an exam or presentation it must be for one of the following types of documentable reasons: death in the family, severe personal illness, university sponsored activities, etc. If you have an unexcused absence on a day you are scheduled to make a presentation or take a test, you cannot make up that presentation or test. Additionally, because of time constraints, the instructor may elect not to grant make-up speeches for any reason. In order to take a make-up examination you must submit verifiable and official documentation to your instructor (e.g., a doctor's note for the specific day missed). If your request is approved, you may take a make-up test on the appointed day. All make-up exams must be given for qualified persons within 2 weeks of the missed test.

Extra Credit - Extra credit can be earned for participation in departmental research conducted in or outside of class, if the opportunity arises. Extra credit points awarded will be determined by the nature of the project.

Cell Phones – All cell phones must be turned off before class starts. Any student using a cell phone in class can be administratively dropped from class for the semester. You can be dropped from the class for cellphone use.

Observance of a Religious Holy Day – Texas House Bill 256 requires institutions of higher education to excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day. The student shall also be excused for time necessary to travel. An institution may not penalize the student for the absence and allows for the student to take an exam or complete an assignment from which the student is excused. No prior notification of the instructor is required.

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](#).

<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](#)

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

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

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.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students.

Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

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

Gee Library- Room 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/)

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

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/rulesProcedures/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.

Students who have concerns regarding their courses should first address those concerns with the assigned instructor in order to reach a resolution.

Fall 2025

Aug. 26, Intro., Syllabus, intro., Ch. 1 NV Evolution & History
Aug. 28, Ch. 2 NV Research Activities 1, 2 Due Sunday
Sept 2, Ch. 3 The Basics Ch. 4 Communibiology

Sept. 4, (email test 1 review sheet)

Ch. 6 Emotions

Activities 3, 4, 6 Due Sunday

Sept. 9,

Ch. 5 NV Gender Differences

Sept. 11,

Ch. 7 Gestures

Article: Psy Today Sand Pinch

Activity 7 Due Sunday

Sept. 16, Test 1 (Ch. 1-7)

Sept. 18,

Ch. 8 NV Face & Movements

Activity 8 Due Sunday

Sept. 23,

Ch. 9 Appearance

Article: Psy Today Contrapposto

Article: Psy Today S 'Shape' Pose

Activities 9 Due Sunday

Sept. 25,

Ch. 10 Empathy

Activity 10 Due Sunday

Sept. 30, (email Test 2 Review Sheet)

Ch. 11 Space

Article: Psy Today Oct. Surprise

Activities 11 Due Sunday

Oct. 2

Ch. 12 Voice

Article: Psy Today Physician Gender

No Activity Due

Oct. 7, Paper 1 Due Friday

Oct. 9,

Ch. 13 Persuasion

Activity 13 Due Sunday

Oct. 14

Ch. 14 Power

Activity 14 Due Sunday

Oct. 16 Ch. 15 Deception

Activity 15 Due Sunday

Oct. 21 Test 2 (Ch. 8-15)

Oct. 23 Ch. 16 Time

Oct. 28 Preparing Paper 2

Oct. 30 Ch. 17 Colors

Activities 16, 17 Due Sunday

Nov. 4 Ch. 18 Environment Activity 18 Due Sunday
Nov. 6 (email Test 3 Review Sheet) Ch. 19 Culture Nov. 11 Paper 2 Due Friday
Nov. 13 Ch. 20 Relationships Activities 19, 20 Due Sunday
Nov. 18 Ch. 21 Workplace No Activity 21
Nov. 20 Ch. 22 Healthcare No Activity 22
Nov. 25 Project Working
Nov. 27 No Class Thanksgiving
Dec. 1 Ch. 23 Golden Ratio Activity 23 Due Sunday

'10 Life Lessons'

Dec. 3

Paper 3: Application Due Friday

Dec. 8

**Final Exam: Test 3 (Ch. 16-23) Due
Friday**