



EAST TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY

Communication Studies Program

Department of History and Liberal Studies

COMS 1315 Section 01E
Fundamentals in Public Speaking
Spring 2026

Instructor: Lydia Lum

Office: Ferguson 132B

Office Hours: 3 pm – 4 pm, Tuesdays, Thursdays, 3 – 5 pm, Wednesdays, and by appointment. I will announce a drop-in Zoom hour, based on student input, in addition to my in-person office hours.

University Email: Put “Section 01E” in “subject” line of your email – or it will take me longer to answer. Your CWID number not necessary. I teach 2 sections of COMS 1315 in Spring 2026. My email is Lydia.Lum@etamu.edu

Class Meeting Time: 10 – 10:50 am, MWF, Ferguson 311 (SS)

"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 program goals are:

- 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.
- Each graduate will effectively communicate 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.

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbooks and Materials: *Both* books are required, but buy only #1

1. Valenzano III, J., Broeckelman-Post, M., and Braden, S. (2022). *The Speaker's Primer*, 3e National Edition. Top Hat.

(Electronic copy information purchased at bookstore and through Top Hat Publisher)

(Join Code: 180760)

Top Hat Support Team directly Mon – Fri at 1 (888) 663-5491 or support@tophat.com

Always give the support team your Join Code 180760 when contacting them.

2. Furlich, S. (2022). *Nonverbal Epiphany: Steps to Improve Your Nonverbal Communication*. Bowker. I have uploaded PDF copy into D2L for the entire class.
3. Index cards or similar materials for your assigned Speech Day presentations

Required Technology: myLeo D2L Brightspace, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and PDF.

Each East Texas A&M University course section has 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>

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

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

- Use 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@etamu.edu

University Course Catalogue Description

This course addresses how to develop and organize effective oral presentations. This class covers theories and related skills for planning, organizing, rehearsing, presenting and evaluating different types of speeches as well as rhetorical traditions, principles, and strategies used in informative, persuasive, and ceremonial speeches. Emphasis on student performance and evaluation of oral and written models of classical and contemporary speeches. Recommended for students pursuing careers in sales, human resources, training and development, teaching, law, the ministry, politics or other professions requiring public presentations. May be taken to meet a communication requirement.

Student Learning Outcomes

Specific attention is given to the preparation, delivery, and evaluation of communication. At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand theory and practice in public speaking.
2. Apply elements of audience analysis.
3. Demonstrate ethical speaking and listening skills by analyzing presentations for evidence and logic.
4. Synergize theories and principles of communication into the successful preparation and delivery of a variety of speeches as an individual or group (e.g. informative or persuasive).
5. Explore how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can help us brainstorm ideas and gather information – *without* letting it do all the work for us. This helps us effectively use technology when researching speech topics.

Student Responsibilities and Tips to Succeed in the Course

- Check ETAMU email account at least three times a week.
- Check your grades in myLeo DL2 Brightspace.
- Submit assignments through myLeo DL2 Brightspace in Content, Assignments, correct envelopes.
- If you're having difficulties, **contact me**. I enjoy helping students but need *you* to keep me informed.

GRADING AND ASSESSMENTS

Submit assignments electronically through D2L Brightspace no later than **11:59 pm CT**, unless otherwise specified.

- Label homework assignments with your name, course section, and assignment number. Example: Lydia Lum, Section 01E, Short words, short sentences.
- All written assignments must be double-spaced. Triple-space if you're unsure.
- Submit your homework papers in the correct envelope by accessing Course Shell, Content, Assignments, Correct Envelope.
- Take Top Hat quizzes by going into Top Hat, from the D2L link. You are responsible for both dashboards. If we have quizzes in D2L, access Course Shell, Activities.
- If you need a homework extension for a major exam, paper, or quiz, ask for it. I issue extensions without penalties whenever possible but reserve the right to ask you for either a doctor's note or a funeral announcement.
- Missing work should be completed and submitted within 2 weeks of the original due date, except for work due after April 10, 2026. If you expect problems, please come talk to me.
- Online discussion posts and responses to classmates cannot receive extensions. For in-person classes, discussions would not occur after class adjourns, so manage your time online.
- If you participate in university-sponsored activities, such as intercollegiate sports, please contact me with appropriate documentation *before* your absence. You're responsible for all missed work.
- During this semester, I may notify the class that if anyone hasn't submitted *any* homework (or a specific category of homework such as, but not limited to presenting a speech to the class) by a certain date, then I may deduct at least 10% of the points before grading it.

Grading: The Department of History and 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=below average; and F=failing.
- Final semester grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

Course Assignments/Assessments

A = 100%-90%

B = 89%-80%

C = 79%-70%

D = 69%-60%

F = 59% or Below

Note: My grading system has a 5% Quality Effort category. I award your score at semester's end. The more homework you submit, the more points you earn – usually. See below.

Assessments

- Speeches 40%
- In-class Activities 20%
- Quizzes 10% -- category may include one-time tasks like the “Help Professor Lum help me” questionnaire that can help boost your total Quizzes grade.
- “Nonverbal Epiphany” Paper 5%
- “A Day Without Talking” Paper 5%
- Final Reflection 10%
- Attendance 5% -- see “attendance” under “University Policies” in this Syllabus.
- Quality Effort 5% -- score is awarded at semester’s end, so it isn’t visible sooner.

As your instructor, I will return your Word Doc attachments with feedback for the paper, “A Day Without Talking” and the paper covering Prof. Furlich’s ‘Nonverbal Epiphany’ book, but my feedback for Top Hat quizzes will be the scores.

Speeches (40%)

You will each deliver an informative speech and separately, a persuasive speech about a different topic. Each speech should be 4:30 – 5:30 minutes. Practice beforehand to reduce anxiety on Speech Day (SLOs 1-5)

- The purpose of your informative speech is to inform the audience, *not* persuade them. Our Speech Days for informative speeches will occur in January and February.
- The purpose of your persuasive speech is to persuade the audience to accept your ideas about an issue, especially why your side of an issue is superior to the opposing one. Our Speech Days for persuasive speeches will occur in February and March.
- Don’t chew gum when delivering any speech aloud for class.
- Speakers may not give their speeches using phones as prompting devices. Use cue cards instead of full sheet(s) of paper.
- For each speech presentation, use at least 3 credible outside sources that you cite aloud, plus a visual aid of your choice that you integrate into your verbal delivery.
- Books and academic journal articles are required as outside sources. A journal article usually has an abstract. Internet websites, Wikipedia, dictionaries, class textbook(s) cannot count as these 3 sources. Unsure? Ask for help.
- On a combined Word Document, submit a Preparation Outline, a Speech Outline, plus a list of references on a separate page of the same Word Doc. Additional how-to’s for this will be in D2L. This grade is separate from the speech you deliver aloud to the class.
- Submit each Word Doc electronically to Content, Assignments, then the correct envelope.
- There may be a third speech presentation that’s group work. I’ll discuss during class.
- Be sure topics are appropriate for the class. I will post in D2L a list of unacceptable speech topics. We will discuss your ideas during class, and potentially vet some of them. As your instructor, however, I have final say over green-lighting speech topics.
- Two students in this section of COMS 1315 may not cover the same topic for the same round of speech presentations.

- Use only Microsoft Word to write your homework submissions. PDFs and other formats take much longer to grade. Help your cause!
- Label homework with your name, course section, and assignment name. Example: Lydia Lum, Section 01E, Outline and References.
- Follow homework instructions. Proofread before submitting your paper. **Part of your outline's grade** is based on your following these and other instructions.

In-class Activities (20%)

This includes, but isn't limited to, discussions based on assigned readings, plus brainstorming ideas for speeches for ourselves, and to help peers.

- We may begin a homework assignment during class as a group, but you may be required to finish the assignment individually outside of class.
- Critiques of speeches delivered by classmates (SLO 3). You cannot critique what you do not witness. Plan to attend all "Speech Days" so that each of your peers (and you) have audiences. I'll provide prompts for critiques, our daily schedule, and other details.
- Do not record nor track time of your speech, nor those of your peers. This classroom is a safe space to learn public speaking and presentation skills, especially for beginners. Professor Lum tracks time for each speaker and speech as part of scoring.
- You have shared governance of sorts regarding Speech Days etiquette. Meaning, you will discuss, decide, and vote on the rules the audience should follow.
- I may offer potential discussion prompts from a list. Our purpose is to expand on, and apply the course material.

Quizzes (10%) SLOs 1-5

- Quizzes are based on assigned readings. Take them without help from other people.
- Quizzes can be timed or untimed. You may use your textbooks to help with answers.
- Quizzes are an assessment as to whether you comprehend the learning materials.
- Expect at least 2 untimed Top Hat quizzes in this course.
- Both sections of Fundamentals in Public Speaking may take similar Top Hat quizzes, so answers won't be given afterward as to which of yours were correct and incorrect. Instead, your scores are the feedback you receive regarding quiz performance.
- Academic integrity is described in the East Texas A&M student handbook. Failure to abide by the rules outline may result in failing this class.
- I may add to the quizzes category short, one-time tasks such as the "Help Professor Lum help me" questionnaire worth a few points at semester start.

Paper (5%) covering Prof. Furlich's book: 'Nonverbal Epiphany,' which is PDF in D2L.

The purpose of this assignment is to improve your nonverbal communication when delivering a presentation (SLOs 1, 4). Using Furlich's (2022) book, your goal is:

- Summarize the information from the assigned chapters.
- Describe how you can specifically use this information to improve your nonverbal communication delivery on Speech Day.

I'll announce the due date after the semester starts.

For your “Nonverbal Epiphany” paper, be sure to:

- Use and underline at least 5 different concepts (ideas, terms) from Furlich (2022) when addressing these areas in your short paper.
- This assignment emphasizes using terminology and how to apply these ideas.
- Prof. Furlich’s book chapters 7, 8, 12, and 13 will help you but you may use other chapters, too.
- Use only Microsoft Word to write your double-spaced paper. PDFs and other formats take much longer to grade. Help your cause!
- Label homework with your name, course section, and assignment name. Example: Lydia Lum, Section 01E, Paper.
- Write 600 words max, double-spaced. Do not exceed 600.
- Follow homework instructions. Proofread before submitting your paper. **Part of your paper’s grade** is based on your following these instructions along with writing mechanics such as grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.
- Submit your paper electronically by accessing Activities, Assignments, correct envelope.
- Prof. Furlich’s ‘Nonverbal Epiphany’ book has ample information so your paper can easily be unique from others. If your paper closely resembles another student’s paper, you may receive an “F” on the assignment and for this entire course.

“A Day Without Talking” Paper (5%), SLO 1

- A public speaking course can help your personal, everyday verbal communication.
- But what if you took an entire day off from talking aloud to people? No voice calls? Can you do it? How glued are you to text messages and digital platforms?
- Write a first-person, double-spaced paper between 500 and 600 words about your experience, any slip-ups, and whether you got tired of being digital-only and nonverbal during this “verbal abstinence” day? How important – or not – is verbal communication in your daily life? Integrate one of the course’s 5 Student Learning Outcomes into your paper and underline it.
- Use only Microsoft Word to write your paper. PDFs and other formats take much longer to grade. Help your cause!
- Label homework with your name, course section, and assignment name. Example: Lydia Lum, Section 01E, Verbal Abstinence Paper.
- You pick your “no talking” day, but **it cannot be** any of your assigned Speech Days. Most students pick a weekend or holiday for this sort of assignment.
- Follow homework instructions. Proofread before submitting your paper. **Part of your paper’s grade** is based on your following these instructions along with writing mechanics such as grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

- I will provide due date(s) and any additional details once the semester begins. One possibility is an early semester due date to qualify for up to 2 additional points on the 5% Quality Effort grade. A second, alternative due date would omit that incentive.
- Submit your paper electronically by accessing Activities, Assignments, correct envelope.
- If your paper closely resembles another student's paper, you may receive an "F" on the assignment and for this entire course.

Final Reflection (10%) SLOs 3, 4, 5

You will submit a concise, first-person, double-spaced reflection paper that responds to a series of assigned prompts. It replaces a Final Exam but assesses how effectively you have learned in this course. In Fall 2025, both of my speech classes had make-believe job interviews, with written Q&A about using ChatGPT constructively in this course.

- I will assign prompts and instructions before Finals Week.
- I will find out whether the university requires us to convene in person on our assigned Final Exam date, or if you can submit your reflection paper electronically.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

For questions about, or difficulties with course material, email me by putting into "subject" line, "Section 01E" – **or it will take me longer** to answer. Your CWID isn't necessary. I teach 2 sections of COMS 1315 in Spring 2026. My email is Lydia.Lum@etamu.edu

- I check email at least once daily and will reply to yours within 24 hours, weekdays.
- I check email at least once on weekends and if I don't reply then, I will do so on the next weekday, unless it's a university holiday.
- Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Plan B can be an ETAMU campus computer lab, a backup PC at home, work, or a friend's home, your local library, local cafes, and FedEx and similar office service businesses.

Technical Support

- If you're having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, contact Brightspace Technical Support at 877-325-7778.
- Other support options can be found here:
<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Student Support

- The [Academic Success Center](#) focuses on providing resources to help you achieve academic success.
- Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software used by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading Word documents for assignment submission, are required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the ETAMU bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.

- If it's appropriate to say to, or in front of your grandma, then it's okay to say it to your classmates and/or to me.
- Consult the Rules of Netiquette for details about how to interact with peers in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

The Code of Student Conduct is detailed in the [Student Guidebook](#).

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

Academic Integrity

- East Texas A&M University students are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work.
- Do not submit homework for COMS 1315 that you have submitted for another course unless you receive written permission from the instructor to do so.
- For 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/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10

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

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

- 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**.
- You are fully responsible for the content of any assignment you submit, regardless of whether you used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

ETAMU Attendance

Punctual attendance is expected for class meeting periods.

- Excessive absences are defined by the instructor as missing three class periods or missing an assignment, excused or unexcused. Frequent tardiness may also be considered an absence.
- Attendance is measured by submitting appropriate assignments for the week along with attending class in person for the entire class period.

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

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

Make-Up Assignments and Exams: If you have an unexcused absence on a day you are scheduled to make a presentation or take a test, time constraints may force the instructor to not grant make-up speeches or tests.

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University, Velma K. Waters Library, Rm 162, phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835. Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

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

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

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University 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, etal.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M Rule 34.0602R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.
- For a list of locations, 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 East Texas A&M campuses.
- Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, 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, visit <http://www.etamu.edu/counsel>

This course syllabus is subject to change.

Schedule of homework due dates and planned classroom activities are in D2L.