

Revised 06/12/2025



EAST TEXAS A&M — UNIVERSITY —

COMS, 1315, 23764 & 22404;

Fundamentals of Public Speaking

COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Sarah Gonzales

Office Location: Virtual

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

University Email Address: sarah.gonzales@etamu.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

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

Other Materials:

- Notebook for notetaking
- 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

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speaking. This course addresses the following required objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

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

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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
 C = 690-789 Points
 D = 590-689 Points
 F = 589 & Below

Assessments

Calendar and Assessments

Module	Dates	Read	Content	Assignment
Getting Started	Opens: January 12 DUE: March 1 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 (What's My Name?) Speech - 50 points 100 total points

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Foundations	Opens: January 26 DUE: March 29 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: February 9 DUE: April 26 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 Evaluation - 40 points Video Critique- 20 points 100 total points
Informative Speaking	Opens: February 23 DUE: May 2 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 Other Materials as Assigned	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
Persuasive Speaking	Opens: March 9 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

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				210 total points
Comprehensive Unit	Opens: January 12 DUE: May 2 Closes: May 2	All Units	All Units	Course Participation- 100 points (20 per unit) My three takeaways- 50 points My final reflection- 50 points

****Census Day is September 10, 2025****

****Midterm Grades will be posted on October 20, 2025****

****Final Grades will be posted on December 15, 2025****

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University 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

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

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

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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@etamu.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

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.

<https://inside.etamu.edu/admissions/registrar/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf>.

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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 [Procedures 13.99.99.R0.01](#)

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

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University 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.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

Graduate Students Academic Integrity Policy and Form

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<https://inside.etamu.edu/aboutus/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10.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

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: [Student Disability Services](#)

<https://www.etamu.edu/student-disability-services/>

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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, et al.) 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 34.06.02.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.etamu.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, please visit www.etamu.edu/counsel

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.

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

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

East Texas A&M University 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

Department or Accrediting Agency Required Content

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

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