



**EAST TEXAS A&M**  
UNIVERSITY  
COMMERCE CAMPUS

Department of History & Liberal Studies

COMS 1311 Section 01W

Human Communication (Prerequisites: None)

Summer 1, 2026

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Instructor:

Office Location: Ferguson Social Sciences First Floor: Room 131

Office Hours: On-Line

Office Phone: 903.886.5226

University Email Address: Stephen.furlich@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: Email

Communication Response Time: 24 hours

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Course Description**

COMS 1311: This course addresses theories and related skills for evaluating types of communication including a survey of computer mediated communication, nonverbal communication, political communication, gender communication, small group communication, as well as strategies used in informative, persuasive, and ceremonial communications. Recommended for students pursuing careers in sales, training and development, human resources, teaching, law, the ministry, politics, event planning, corporate training, upper-management or other professions requiring communication skills.

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

## Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

### Required Texts:

COMS 1311: Valenzano, J. Broeckelman-Post, M. and Parcell, E. (2021). *Communication Pathways* (2e). Top Hat. ISBN: 978-1-64485-403-7.

Furlich, S. (2021). *Sex Talk: How Biological Sex Influences Gender Communication Differences Throughout Life's Stages*. Bowker.

- The royalties that I receive from book sales in this class are donated to charity that year. A list of charities that are given donations will be provided upon request.
- If a student expresses discomfort about reading this book for the paper assignment to the instructor, academic articles can be requested to read as an alternative.

## Student Learning Outcomes

As a Core Curriculum requirement, this class focuses on four common Student Learning Outcomes:

1. **Critical Thinking** - Students will be able to analyze, evaluate, or solve problems when given a set of circumstances, data, texts, or art.

Critical thinking will be assessed through online discussion boards and end of the semester paper that requires synthesizing information.

2. **Oral/Visual Communication** - Students will communicate in a manner appropriate to audience and occasion with an evident message and organizational structure.

Students will learn about audience analysis for delivering presentations to various audiences. Test questions will cover this content.

3. **Personal Responsibility** - Students will understand and practice academic honesty.

Students will learn about ethical communication for delivering presentations to various audiences for social and academic honesty. Test questions will cover this content.

4. **Social Responsibility** - Students will demonstrate an understanding of societal and/or civic issues.

Students will learn about political communication for better understanding societal and/or civic issues. Test questions will cover this content.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Instructional Methods and Assessment

#### Student Responsibilities

Checking ETAMU email account three times a week. Checking student grades in MyLeo DL2 Bright Space, Submitting Assignments through MyLeo DL2 Bright Space in Content, Assignments, Appropriate envelopes.

E-Mails: Label your Name, Class, and Section number, Examples: Smith, 1311-01W, in e-mails such as in subject lines.

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## Assignments, Student Responsibilities, Expectations, and Tips for Success

### \*Statement Summary - (2%)

There is a letter in (Click on **Content**) (**Click on label Statement of Freedom of Thought**) in this course with the title addressing a **Statement for Freedom of Thought and Expression**. Each student will **write one double spaced paper over the statement's content**. The first half of the paper should summarize the statement's main ideas and suggestions. The second half of the paper each student should write how these ideas and concepts can be applied and useful inside the classroom. Each student should **underline and bold in the first half 3 major themes or ideas** from the statement and in the second half **underline and bold the student's 3 major applications or values** inside the classroom. Outside sources are not required. Each student will **submit their paper in**

### Activities, Assignments, then the appropriate file

in the envelop for this class labeled Statement assignment **only in Microsoft WORD**.

### \* Tests - (68%)

20% Test 1

23% Test 2

25% Test 3

Test questions will come from the assigned chapters as well as any notes sent out. Students must take the tests without any assistance from other people. They may use their textbooks but the tests will be timed. Academic integrity is described in the student handbook for East Texas A&M University. Failure to abide by the rules outline may result in failing the class. If a week has both a test and discussion in that week, the discussion will not be part of that test but will be covered on the next test. Due to multiple sections of this class taking similar tests, **test answers will not be given after the test as to correct and incorrect answers**. The students' scores will be the feedback that they receive concerning their test performance. **Students preparing for tests should study how concepts are related to each other, how they differ, and come up with personal examples of the concepts. The test questions are usually not straight forward definitions but often give an example and ask the student which concept the example best represents.**

### Discussion- (10%)

All discussions are finished by the Friday of the week they are assigned at 5:00 PM Central Time. A list of questions is given at the end of the syllabus for each section. The first student to post a comment or question for a section should consider addressing one of these questions. Students are required to **post 2 questions and respond to 2 other questions** that are posted each week. **Students need to come up with their own original questions to post and not re-post previous questions from other**

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**students or the syllabus. Likewise, students need to refrain from answering the same questions other students previously fully answered.** Some repetition is acceptable if it helps to develop the ideas and concepts. The objective is to expand and apply the course material. Students cannot post questions or comments for any section except the present one. Hence, you need to stay on top of your participation for each section. **It is helpful for viewing in DL2 Brightspace if students begin a new post with each of their original questions they post rather than connected to a previous comment or posting more than one question together.**

**\* Paper - (10%) Note: Papers will be submitted in Activities, Assignments, Proper Envelop.**

**\*Please only submit written assignments as attachments in WORD in Activities, Assignments, Proper Envelop. Other files such as PDF files are too difficult to grade.**

**Paper: 1-2 pages 'Understanding Sex'**

**If your paper closely resembles another students' paper you will receive an 'F' in the course. There is plenty of information in the assigned chapters for each paper submitted to be unique.**

**Emphasis is on using specific terminology from the book and how to apply those ideas.**

The purpose of this assignment is to analyze the role of biological sex with gender communication differences. Your goal is to describe in detail using the book Furlich (2021) concepts addressing how biological sex influences both what is said and perceived during communication. You should have at least 1½ pages.

Furlich (2021) has several chapters covering the role of biological sex with gender communication. For the first ½ page minimum, address how the same intended message can be communicated differently between a male and female. Describe the specific ways and the biological reasons for these differences.

For the second ½ page minimum, explain why the same verbal and nonverbal communication received can be understood differently between a male and female by describing the biological reasons.

The third ½ page minimum should apply what you learned for better self-awareness when communicating with others. What are some specific things you can do to better communicate and understand others by taking into consideration biological sex influences?

You must use at least **7 different concepts** (ideas, terms) **UNDERLINED** from Furlich (2021) addressing and applying these areas. Some biological terms should be addressed. Clearly indicate the concepts (ideas, terms) used by underlining them. Some chapters from Furlich (2021) to address are **Ch. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12**. Feel free to use

more. The paper should be at least **1 1/2 pages** double-spaced with one-inch margins. **Emphasis is on using specific terminology from the book and how to apply those ideas.**

**Quizzes:** (10%)

There are 19 quizzes. Quiz questions are located for each chapter on the left side of the course Top Hat ebook in a specific envelop for each test. Each week that has a discussion will have quiz questions for each particular week. The purpose of these questions are to learn important concepts for each chapter.

## **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

Weights of the assessments in the calculation of the final letter grade.

Statement Summary = 2%

Tests = 68%

Paper: = 10%

Discussion = 10%;

Quizzes = 10%

TOTAL = 100%

## **COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR**

### **Human Communication Course Schedule – Summer 1, 2026**

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

**Dates are Monday of each week. Assignments start on Monday and end by Friday of each week.**

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Assignments due by Friday each week 5PM Central Time USA

Week 1: June 1: **Statement Summary Due Friday 5PM.**

**DISCUSSION 1,**

**Quiz 1:** Read Syllabus., ch. 1, ( The Basics of Communication), **Political Comm.**

**Quiz 2:** CHAPTER 13: NATURE OF FORMAL PRESENTATIONS (Audience Analysis)

**Quiz 3:** CHAPTER 14: ORGANIZING YOUR PRESENTATION (Outlining)

Week 2: June 8: Discussion 2:

**Quiz 4:** Ch. 2 COMMUNICATION, CULTURE, AND DIVERSITY, (**Intercultural Comm. Extra Notes**)

**Quiz 5:** Ch. 16 (Informative Speaking), Watch Informative Speech Videos

**Test 1: Test 1 (Ch. 1, Ch. 2, Ch. 13, Ch. 14, Ch. 16 Audience Analysis, Political Comm., Intercultural Comm.)**

Week 3:  
June 15

**DISCUSSION 3:**

**Quiz 6:** Ch. 5 (Language)

**Quiz 7:** Ch. 4 (Dialogic Communication)

**Quiz 8:** Ch. 7 (Listening)

**Quiz 9:** Ch. 11 (Mediated Relationships)

**Quiz 10:** Ch. 15 Delivery (includes Speech Anxiety, Support Material)

(Business Comm.), (History), (Digital Media & Online World), Quant/ Qual., read Furlich (2021) Ch. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12

**Test 2: Test 2 (Ch. 4, 5, 7, 11, 15, Business Comm., Digital Media & Online World, Quant. & Qual. Research, History, Speech Anxiety)**

Week 4:  
June 22

**DISCUSSION 4:**

**Quiz 11:** Ch. 18 (Small Group Communication)

**Quiz 12:** Ch. 6 (Nonverbal Communication)

**Quiz 13:** Ch. 17 (Persuasive Speaking)

**Quiz 14:** Ch. 12 (Interpersonal Conflict)

**Quiz 15:** Ch. 19 (Leadership)

**Quiz 16:** Ch. 8 (Relationship Development)

**Quiz 17:** Ch. 9 (Relationship Maintenance)

**Quiz 18:** Ch. 10 (COMMUNICATION IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS), (Comm. & Personal Identity)

**Small Group Additional Notes,**

**'Understanding Sex' Paper Due Friday**

Week 5:  
June 29

**All Assignments Due July 2**

**DISCUSSION 5:**

**Research Methods/ Theory, Motivation Appeals**

**Send email ch. 12 inter. Conflict already assigned (error)**

**Quiz 19:** Ch. 3 (Perception & the Self)

Interpersonal, Leadership/ Conflict

**Test 3: Test 3 (Ch. 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 17, 18, 19), Comm. & Personal Identity, Motiv.**

**Appeals, Small Group, Leadership/ Conflict, Gender Comm., Interpersonal,**

**Research Methods/ Theory**

## Discussion Questions

**Week 1: Discussion 1:** Are there any jobs that communication is not present or required? What are some similarities and differences between giving a speech and having a conversation? What does it mean that communication takes place within a system? What is the political public sphere? What role does the Internet have with political comm.? What role do mass media messages have with political comm. in democracy? What role does comm. play with mass movements, such as protests? How effective are negative political advertisements and why? How is collective language used in political comm.? How does a person acquire culture in their life? How does standpoint theory describe cultural influences on people's perceptions? Is uncertainty reductions theory a natural occurrence for all people, why or why not? How does a speaker decide which delivery style to use (manuscript, impromptu, memorized, extemporaneous)? How is culture defined? What is a global village? What is a person's identity? What role does culture have with cultural schema theory? Why is audience analysis important? How to use audience analysis?

### Week 2: Test 1

**Discussion 2:** What impact does information overload have on society and what are some ways to deal with it? How does the media influence society through communication? What are some ethical concerns regarding media communication? How is language arbitrary? What are differences and similarities of each person's 'I' and "me" described 'language allows self-reflection' section of ch. 4? What is the difference between selective listening and defensive listening? What is empathy and how does it differ from sympathy?

### Week 3: Test 2

**Discussion 3:** How does the media influence society through communication? What are some ethical concerns regarding media communication? How can communication be improved for on-line classes/ face to face classes? How does the media influence society through communication? What are some ethical concerns regarding media communication? In what ways can the Socratic method be used successfully? What are some advantages/ disadvantages of Protagoras' approach to argument?

**Week 4: Discussion 4:** What are some of the same and some of the different influences on one's identity from generalized others and particular others described in ch. 9? Is uncertainty reductions theory natural for all people? What are some major differences between groups and teams? What are some ways to prevent groupthink? Are groups playing an appropriate role in the workplace, too big, or too small? How is systems theory understood within small group communication? What are some positive/ negative aspects of groups? What are some ways to bring a team together through symbolic convergence theory? What role does nonverbal communication play at work, home, school etc.? What are some major points to keep in mind about nonverbal communication? How prevalent is deception in our society and how well are people at identifying it? Are groups playing an appropriate role in the workplace, too big, or too small? What role does meta-cognition play with leadership? What role does critical thinking have with leadership? How can conflict be defined? How can conflict be positive? What are some ways to handle conflict effectively? What is schemata and how does it impact or expectations? What are some major differences between interpersonal communication and communication in general? What role does nonverbal communication play in interpersonal communication? Are there always turning points in relationships? What are some examples of turning points? What impact does technology, such as the internet, play in people's perceptions and expectations off-line? How does popular media influence our perceptions/ expectations in life (such as dating, careers, popular behaviors etc.)? Most scholars who research gender comm. have the same perspective about male and female communication, does: this influence perspectives about gender communication in an inaccurate way? Should John Gray's works be ignored as most gender scholars ignore, or is there some value? Do biological generational ancestry influence gender comm.? What are some ways to instill more biological research into comm. research regarding gender comm.? Language differences were not observed by untrained raters but were recognized by trained observers. Should this training become more popular or not? What role if any does male compartmentalizing and women interconnectedness have in gender communication? What role does turning points have in relationships? How can families be viewed as systems? How can identification be used with interpersonal communication?

### **Week 5: Test 3**

**Discussion 5:** Motivational appeals have been used for years. Can anything be added to Monroe's motivated sequence to improve it? How much of an impact do motivational appeals have versus people's free will to choose or not to choose to buy something? What is the difference between a research report and critical essay? How can the subjectivity of understanding exactly when a theory is developed become more understandable and objective?

## **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](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](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@etamu.edu](mailto: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 ETAMU 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>

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# COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

## Course Specific Procedures/Policies

[instructor should insert any specific course policies]

## Interaction with Instructor Statement

[To be determined by the faculty member teaching the course]

## 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.

## Statement on Student Grievances

Students who have questions or concerns about the instructor's course policies or the conduct either of the instructor or a classmate should first consult with the instructor. In the event of a lack of resolution or satisfaction on the matter, the student may bring their concerns to the head of the History and Liberal Studies Department, Sharon Kowalsky ([Sharon.Kowalsky@etamu.edu](mailto:Sharon.Kowalsky@etamu.edu)). If this does not result in a satisfactory conclusion to the matter, students may bring the issue to the attention of the Associate Dean of Students per procedures outlined on pp. 15-19 of the Student Guide Book.

## 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.etamu.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>

### ETAMU Attendance

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

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

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

### 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](#)

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## [Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

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

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

### **AI Use Policy**

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there may be 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 instructor's 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.

### **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**

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

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

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu)

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

<http://www.etamu.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, 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.

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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](http://www.etamu.edu/counsel)



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