



COMS 1315.01W: Fundamentals of Public Speaking

COURSE SYLLABUS: SUMMER 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Stephanie Cambra

Office Location: Virtual

Office Hours: 10:00-1:00 M-F

Office Phone: N/A

University Email Address: cambrastephanie@tamuc.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: email

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

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description

COMS 1315: 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.

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Required Texts:

None

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

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.

Students will apply critical thinking skills through the Informative Speaking and Persuasive Speaking units that focus on finding and analyzing research, synthesizing data, and proposing solutions to societal issues (persuasive speaking).

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

Students will develop oral communication skills through major assignments (Passion Speech, Demonstration Speech, Informative Speech, and Persuasive Speech) that focus on audience analysis, delivery, use of operatives, organizational speech structure, and language choice. Students will learn to use flexible structure expectations as well as formalized structures. Students will learn how to apply claim/data/impact to their research-based speeches to strengthen their flow and build bridges for their audience. Students will get additional practice to build their oral delivery skills through weekly challenge speeches that focus on isolating oral delivery skills.

Students will develop visual communication skills through physical objects, vertical video, and slideshow development (Passion Speech, Demonstration Speech, and Informative Speech). Students will learn about framing, using visuals to support and enhance content, and image-based storytelling. Students will get additional practice to build their visual communication skills through weekly challenge speeches.

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

Students will develop personal responsibility by being held accountable for deadlines. Late work will be deducted by 10% per day it is late.

Students will develop personal responsibility by being held accountable for meaning, respectful communication with their peers that illustrates technological literacy and professionalism.

Students will develop personal responsibility by reflecting on the role of generative AI in work and how public speaking requires their own unique watermark. They will learn how to use generative AI as a tool rather than a creator of work (Passion Speech, Informative Speech, and Persuasive Speech).

Students will develop personal responsibility by learning ethical practices, what is plagiarism, and how to properly cite sources (Informative Speech, Persuasive Speech).

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

Students will develop social responsibility by research current events, using contemporary research, and finding the universal message that expands topic selections beyond themselves to their surrounding community and beyond (Passion Speech, Demonstration Speech, Informative Speech, Persuasive Speech). Students will get additional practice to build their understanding of societal and civic issues through weekly challenge speeches.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional Methods and Assessment

Instructional Methods

Instruction will be provided asynchronously and be a mix of videos, readings, and interactive activities. While the course is self-paced, each module has a deadline that students must follow. As a Public Speaking course, students will learn most by engaging in hands-on activities.

Course Requirements

This is an online course. Students must have access to the internet and a device to complete assignments. This is a public speaking course. Students must deliver speeches, which requires access to a camera that can record audio and video. Speeches will be uploaded as MP4 files. Presentation expectations are listed below - please read them carefully!

Presentation Expectations

Presentations in Front of an Audience

Students are expected to record and present the following speeches in front of a live audience: Passion Speech and Persuasive 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! (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.
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. 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: Demonstration Speech, and Informative 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

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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 of the Demonstration Speech. You will not show your face for the Informative Speech.
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 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.

Assignments, Student Responsibilities, Expectations, and Tips for Success

Assignments

Syllabus Acknowledgement Assessment (20 points)

Students will complete a short written assignment to show their understanding of the course expectations.

Lecture Material Reflections (100 Points)

Students will complete short paragraph-long reflections to respond to the digital learning resources. This is to help teach accountability and get students to engage with the reading and lectures on a deeper level.

Weekly Challenge Speeches (80 Points)

Students will complete weekly challenge speeches that are short (90 seconds or less) and focused on building a specific skillset (eye contact, planting their feet, vocal delivery, gestures, etc). These speeches will be turned into a discussion board to benefit from peer review and self-reflection.

Passion Speech (50 Points)

Students will prepare a 3-4 minute passion speech that they deliver in front of an audience. Students will need to have **at least five people** in attendance as the audience. This allows students to build public speaking skills and connect with those around them while navigating various schedules and time commitments. The passion speech is a topic on the student's choosing, with their preferred structure, and will require the use of a physical object as a visual aid – no slide shows!

Demonstration Speech (50 Points)

Students will prepare a 1-2 minute instructional video in the style of a TikTok Video/Instagram Reel. Students will identify their target audience, develop a script that aligns with their audience, and focus on social media trends to create an engaging instructional speech. A live audience is not required for this speech.

Informative Speech - PechaKucha (100 Points)

Students will prepare a recorded 6:40 informative speech following the guidelines of a PechaKucha (20 slides, 20 seconds each). Students will use the taught substructure for their speech and use research to

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support their claims. Students will prioritize research, speech structure, slideshow creation to support content and vocal delivery. A live audience is not required for this speech.

Persuasive Speech (100 Points)

Students will prepare a 6-8 minute persuasive speech that they deliver in front of an audience. Students will need to have **at least five people** in attendance as the audience. This allows students to build public speaking skills and connect with those around them while navigating various schedules and time commitments. Students will use their combined learned skills of research, speech structure, audience analysis, physical presence, and delivery. The Persuasive Speech is the serves as the final exam of the course.

Student Responsibilities, Expectations, and Tips for Success

Students are responsible for keeping up with assignments and due date. Students should check the virtual classroom on D2L daily, read and watch all instructional lecture materials, and engage in discussions and assignments.

Students are expected to carefully review assignment instructions and ask for clarification if they aren't sure of the expectations. This is a communication course! As an instructor, I want to support the success of all students. I welcome all questions - please feel free to email me and I'm also happy to set up a Zoom if you need more support. The best tip I can give you is to reach out! Getting to know your professor will establish a support system that extends beyond the class.

Additional tips for success:

- Be willing to engage and participate in each unit - this includes being actively engaged in discussion posts, connecting with your teacher and 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.
- Networking with your community - you will be required to deliver two of your speeches to a small audience of your choosing. You will need to have at least five people in attendance of your audience. This allows you to build public speaking skills and connect with those around you while navigating various schedules and time commitments.

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

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Example:

A = 451- 500 Points

B = 401- 450 Points

C = 351- 400 Points

D = 301- 350 Points

F = 300 & > Points

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

Example:

Assignments (Syllabus & Reflections) 24%

Challenge Speeches 16%

Major Speeches 60%

Final Exam (Persuasive Speech) 20%

TOTAL 100%

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Module	Dates	Assignments
Module 1: Foundations	Opens: June 1 DUE: June 7	Syllabus Acknowledgement Module 1 Lecture Reflections Speech Challenge 1: Introduction Passion Speech
Module 2: Demonstration	Opens: June 1 DUE: June 14	Module 2 Lecture Reflections Speech Challenge 2: Personal Stories Demonstration Speech
Module 3: Informative Speaking	Opens: June 1 DUE: June 21	Module 3 Lecture Reflections Speech Challenge 3: Children's Books Informative Speech
Module 4: Persuasive Speaking	Opens: June 1 DUE: June 28 Final Persuasive Speech Due July 2	Module 4 Lecture Reflections Speech Challenge 4: Toast Persuasive Speech

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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.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.

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>

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]

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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). 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](#)

[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

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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

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.

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>

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