



COMMS 1315 (WWW, 9RW, CAW, CMW): Fundamentals of Public Speaking
COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Sarah Gonzales

Office Location: Virtual

Office Hours: M-F, 8:00 AM - 11:30 AM; By appointment

University Email Address: sarah.gonzales@tamuc.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: email

Communication Response Time: You can expect a response typically within 24 hours.

Emails received over a holiday or on weekends will receive a response on the next business day.

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbooks: THIS IS A FREE OER TEXTBOOK, NO PURCHASE NECESSARY

Title: Exploring Public Speaking

Edition: 4th

Authors: Barton & Tucker

Publisher: University System of Georgia

Year: 2016

Link to textbook: <https://oer.galileo.usg.edu/communication-textbooks/1/>

Other Materials:

- Notebook for note-taking
- Computer/Tablet
- Materials as assigned throughout the semester

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

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

Course Learning Objectives

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 will be scored using a points system. The assignments for the semester and their point values are available below in our **tentative** calendar for the semester. The calendar (and due dates) are subject to change - but no additional assignments will be added to what's listed.

TAMUC Calendar- Fall 2026

Calendar and Assessments

Module	Dates	Read	Content	Assignment
Getting Started	Opens: Aug 20 DUE: September 11 Closes: December 11	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 Speech - 50 points 100 total points
Foundations	Opens: August 31 DUE: September 14 Closes: December 11	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

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Demonstration	Opens: September 15 DUE: October 11 Closes: December 11	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 - 40 points Peer Critique and Self Evaluation - 20 points 100 total points
Informative Speaking	Opens: October 12 DUE: November 15 Closes: December 11	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: November 16 DUE: December 11 Closes: December 11	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 210 total points
Comprehensive Unit	Opens: August 20 DUE: December 11 Closes: December 11	All Units	All Units	Course Participation- 100 points (20 per unit) Video Review- 50 points My three takeaways- 50 points My final reflection- 50 points

****Census Day is September 4, 2026****

****Final Grades will be posted on December 12, 2026****

Presentation Expectations

Presentations in Front of an Audience

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Students are expected to record and present the following speeches in front of a live audience: Demonstration & Informative 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! (rather than hold your entire outline during the presentation, you will need to 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. You must have access to a laptop screen, projector screen or flat screen television where you can project and utilize your PowerPoint.
9. 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.

LATE WORK POLICIES

Keeping with the theme of professionalism, students are expected to manage their time wisely. Each unit has a starting date and end date. All assignments for the unit are due on the final day of the unit before the next unit begins.

Students will have five days (5 days) past the original due date to submit late assignments for a late grade. Once the five-day late period has passed, students will not be able to submit the assignment for a grade.

DIGITAL CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Given that this class is intended to prepare students for professional environments (whether in college, grad school, or in the working world), students are expected to treat each other with respect at all times. One practical manifestation of this is keeping an open mind. The nature of the course can lead to discussions with opposing opinions. It's imperative we engage in civil discourse and listen to the

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opinions and viewpoints of others. Different viewpoints are encouraged! But they must be communicated professionally. Disrespect will not be tolerated.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Students will need a laptop/personal device to complete and turn in assignments, as well as to access all lecture materials. Students are responsible for having reliable devices and access to internet to complete this course.

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 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>

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STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COURSE

CWID and Password

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.

Technology-Related Issues

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.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students will need reliable computer and internet access for this course. Students must be able to effectively use myLeo email, myLeo Online D2L, and Microsoft Office.

Learning Management System (LMS) – D2L

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 the technical requirements:

- View the [Learning Management System Requirements Webpage](#).
- Learn more on the [LMS Browser Support Webpage](#).

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 on the [Brightspace Support Webpage](#).

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your instructor. Correspondence will always be through university email (your “myLeo” mail) and announcements in myLeo online (D2L). You will not RECEIVE email through D2L, so be sure to check your ETAMU email for communication. Students are encouraged to check university email daily.

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Include the Following in Emails with Instructor:

- Course name and subject in the subject line
- Salutation (Good afternoon, Dr. Jackson)
- Proper email etiquette (no “text” emails – use proper grammar and punctuation)
- Student name and CWID after the body of the email (possibly add to student signature on email)

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY 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.

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 online in the [Student Guidebook](#).

Students should also consult the [Rules of Netiquette Webpage](#) for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum.

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy, please view the [Attendance Webpage](#) and the [Class Attendance Policy](#)

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

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

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

Use of Artificial Intelligence

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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

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: [Office of Student Disability Services](#)

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

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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 ETAMU 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.

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health – Counseling Services

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, 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

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.

As an Institutional Member of the National Association of Schools of Music, East Texas State A&M University supports the Association's commitment to student health and wellness. The following web address provides links to information for resources related to physical and mental well-being, as well as assists in offering preventative measures that students can take to avoid serious and/or chronic conditions: [Musician Health and Safety - East Texas A&M University](#)

Department and Accrediting Agency Statement:

School of Music Mission Statement:

The School of Music at East Texas A&M University promotes excellence in music through the rigorous study of music history, literature, theory, composition, pedagogy, and the preparation of music performance in applied study and ensembles to meet the highest standards of aesthetic expression.

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