



COMS 1311.04W Studies in Human Communication

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Robert Ortiz

Office Location: virtual

Office Hour (virtual): Mondays 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Office Phone: N/A

University Email Address: Robert.Ortiz@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: Email

Communication Response Time: 24 hours

Note: emails sent after 12:00 p.m.(noon) on Fridays, or anytime on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays will receive a reply on Monday or the next working day.

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, and 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, management, or other professions requiring communication skills.

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Required Texts:

Communication in the Real World: An Introduction to Communication Studies (2016). University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing. Available for free:

<https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/274>

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.
2. **Oral/Visual Communication**—Students will communicate in a manner appropriate to audience and occasion with an evident message and organizational structure.
3. **Personal Responsibility** - Students will understand and practice academic honesty.
4. **Social Responsibility** - Students will demonstrate an understanding of societal and/or civic issues.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignments, Student Responsibilities, Expectations, and Tips for Success

Communication

My only source of communication with the class will be via ETAMU email. I will not respond to personal emails. Please be in the habit of checking your university email on a daily basis. Class Announcements will be sent via Brightspace.

- In your emails to me, please include a subject title and full course number (ex. Grade Question: COMS-1311-xxx)
 - If the full course number is not included, you must provide it before I can respond. This will cause a delay in providing a timely response, which may have implications.
- I suggest reaching out to your groupmates for support, as they may be quicker to respond than I can.

Assignments

Type	Weight	Topic	Notes
Reflections SLO #1.4	100 points	varies	The purpose of these assignments is to help you reflect on course materials and make application to the learning outcomes. I will provide questions to guide your response. These assignments should be at least 250 words. Any plagiarism will result in the loss of all points for that paper. The submission

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			text box must be used to type your reflection. Files are not accepted. Each reflection is worth 25 points. x 4 reflection assignments = 100 points
Discussion Boards SLO #1,4	100 points	varies	Discussion boards require you to create your post and reply to at least 3 classmates. Each discussion varies according to requirements and the scale of points. Students should read each discussion board assignment to understand the instructions and expectations. You must be respectful during all discussions, even if/when you disagree with a classmate. If any offensive material is posted, I will remove it, and you will receive a 0 for the assignment. Any plagiarism will result in losing all points for that particular discussion. • Each post should be written with a minimum of 150 words. • Each response to your classmates must be at least 75 words. The submission text box must be used to type in your post and reply to classmates. Files are not accepted. Total Points—100 points (5 DB x 20 points each) Note: Students must have an original submission before they reply to others. So, a student cannot receive a grade for a response if they didn't have an original post by the deadline as part of the assignment expectations. If a student chooses to include the guiding questions in their submission, please note the questions are not part of the required word count because they're not original comments.

Speech Outlines SLO #1--4	100 points	varies	The outline functions as the foundation and driver of your speech, guaranteeing its structure, timing, and impact. Following the provided example (found in the assigned unit's module) is obligatory for all students. Students who do not include a references page and/or write their outline as an essay will receive an automatic 0. Total – 100 points (2 outlines x 50 points each) <i>Only PDF or Word file types are accepted. Linked documents are <u>not</u> accepted. Additional instructions and requirements will be provided in the assignment descriptions.</i>
Exams SLO #1-4	200 points	Midterm and final	Exams are used in this course to assess learning and student learning outcomes. There are two major exams, a midterm and final. The midterm covers chapters 1-11. The final covers chapters 12-16.

GRADING

I aim to post grades within 10 days of the posted deadline.

If there is a question regarding a grade you earned, please email me immediately. **Students have up to a week after the grade is posted** to seek clarification and changes if required.

Additionally, grades will not be discussed during the last week of the semester or during finals week. At this point, there is no possibility of a grade change. Final grades are **not** rounded up.

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

Point Scale: 500 points

A (90-100): 450-500

B (80-89): 400-449

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C (70-79): 350-399

D (60-69): 300-349

F (0-59): 0-299

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Unit	Dates	Readings	Assignments	Assignment Deadlines
Unit I: Introductions	8/20-28	Orientation & Setting Goals	• Introductions: Discussion Board	Discussion Post: Monday, August 24, 11:59 p.m. Discussion Responses to 3 classmates: Friday, August 28, 11:59 p.m.
Unit II	8/31-9/11 Census: 9/4	Read Chapters 1-2 and 4-6 in the textbook.	• Discussion board • Reflection	Discussion Post & Reflection: Friday, September 4, 11:59 p.m. Discussion Responses to 3 classmates: Friday, September 11, 11:59 p.m.
Unit III	9/14-25	Read Chapters 3 and 7-8 in the textbook	• Discussion board • Reflection	Discussion Post & Reflection: Friday, September 18, 11:59 p.m. Discussion Responses to 3 classmates: Friday,

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				September 25, 11:59 p.m.
Unit IV: Informative Speaking	9/28-10/7	Read Chapters 9-11 in the textbook	Informative Speech Outline	Outline: Wednesday, October 7, 11:59 p.m.
Fall Break	10/8-11	<i>No readings</i>	<i>No assignments</i>	<i>No assignments</i>
Unit V: Midterm	10/12-16	<i>No readings</i>	Midterm Exam (chapters 1-11)	Midterm: Friday, October 16, 11:59 p.m.
Unit VI	10/19-30	Read Chapters 13-14 in the textbook.	- Discussion board - Reflection	Discussion Post & Reflection: Friday, October 23, 11:59 p.m. Discussion Responses to 3 classmates: Friday, October 30, 11:59 p.m.
Unit VII	11/2-13	Read Chapters 15-16 in the textbook.	- Discussion board - Reflection	Discussion Post & Reflection: Friday, November 6, 11:59 p.m. Discussion Responses to 3 classmates: Friday, November 13, 11:59 p.m.
Unit VIII: Celebratory Speaking	11/16-24	Read Chapter 12 in the textbook.	Celebratory Speech Outline	Outline: TUESDAY, November 24, by 11:59 p.m.
Thanksgiving Break	11/25-29	<i>No readings</i>	<i>No assignments</i>	<i>No assignments</i>

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Unit IX: Final Exam	11/30-12/4	<i>No readings</i>	Final Exam (chapters 12-16)	Final exam: Friday, December 4, 11:59 p.m.
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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>

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COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Late Work

You will receive a thorough description of all assignments before they are due. Assignments must be submitted online via the D2L assignment tools. Homework assignments submitted via e-mail, messaging, or hard-copy form will not be accepted.

I expect assignments to be submitted by their due date. However, you can submit your assignment 48 hours after the due date—**without penalty**. Once that 48-hour window passes, assignments will not be accepted.

Extenuating circumstances: I know that it is impossible to consider all the possible circumstances that may prevent you from submitting your assignments on time. I am sensitive to some of those circumstances. Formal documentation will be required if you submit an assignment after the 48-hour grace window. Approval is left to the instructor's discretion and may require further action that's not mentioned. However, having assignments for other classes, a hectic work schedule, tech-related issues, or not feeling it yet are not extenuating circumstances.

NOTE: Missing a significant amount of the course limits the student's ability to meet the course objectives regardless of circumstances. Students who experience significant life events such as death, critical illness, or other related matters that result in excessive inactivity in the course should connect with an advisor to determine appropriate next steps, which may include dropping the course.

Interaction with Instructor Statement

All students will be held to a high level of professionalism. To this end, all discussions and engagement must be professional, civil, and friendly, even when students disagree with each other or with the instructor. There should be no name-calling, profanity, or disrespectful comments.

Any student who does not follow these standards may see a negative impact on their grade and will be referred to student conduct, which may result in being removed from the class.

College courses are designed to promote critical thinking. This process is an important life skill and a valuable, marketable skill in the workplace. Throughout your college education, you may encounter material (in a face-to-face or virtual environment) outside of your comfort zone, designed to cause critical evaluation and the examination of different perspectives. This is an important part of the educational process. It is the student's responsibility to make an appointment to speak with an instructor in order to open a dialogue to support your educational process in the classroom.

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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/)

<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>