



# COMM1311.003

## Introduction to Communication Studies

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Spring 2026- Face-to-face

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**Office Location** JO 3.540

**Office Hours:** Monday and Wednesday 9-9:50 Am and 1-2 PM. Please don't hesitate to stop by as meeting with students is one of my favorite activities. If you need a different meeting time email me and we can arrange a virtual appointment at another time. Please give me all relevant data to your availability so we can schedule as efficiently as possible.

**EMAIL:** Email is the best way to communicate with me. Please watch the mini skills lecture in the Start Here module in Blackboard (e-learning is the purpose, Blackboard is the platform company's name. They are the same thing). Please allow me 48 hours to respond. I keep the right to not reply to emails on weekends. I have over 150 students this semester and ADHD, sometimes I miss something. If you don't get a reply, please kindly email again.

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### General Core Area 010 Communication

**Description:** Courses in this category focus on developing ideas and expressing them clearly considering the effect of the message, fostering understanding, and building the skills needed to communicate persuasively. Courses involve the command of oral, aural, written, and visual literacy skills that enable people to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.

**Objectives:** **Critical Thinking (CT)**—to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information  
**Communication (COM)**—to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication

**Teamwork (TW)**—to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal

**Personal Responsibility (PR)**—to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making

## *General Course Information*

### Course Pre-requisites

COMM 1311 is an introductory course that does not require prerequisites. It is assumed that students who enroll in the course have the grammatical, logical, and rhetorical skills necessary for university-level writing.

### Course Description

This course introduces you to the study of communication by examining research, theories, and skills to enhance your interpersonal, public speaking, and small group communication. COMM1311 is primarily a “hands-on” application course, which means students engage in discussions, participate in exercises, work in teams, and research and deliver an informative speech and a team presentation.

### Student Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, I am confident you will be able to:

- Recognize and apply basic interpersonal communication theories and concepts.
- Demonstrate competence in researching, preparing, and delivering an informative speech.
- Collaborate effectively with others to research, prepare, and present team products.
- Display civil communication in interpersonal, public speaking, and team interactions.

### Required Textbook

Lane, Shelley D., Abigail, Ruth Anne, and Gooch, John Casey. *Communication in a Civil Society* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Routledge, 2024. ISBN: 978-1-032-51326-3 (paperback); ISBN: 978-1-003-40171-1 (eBook), DOI: 10.4324|99781003401711

<https://www.bkstr.com/texasatdallasstore/shop/textbooks-and-course-materials>

An ebook format is available at: [https://www.routledge.com/Communication-in-a-Civil-Society/Lane-Abigail-Gooch/p/book/9781032513263?source=shoppingads&locale=en-USD&gad\\_source=1&gclid=CjoKCQjwvb-zBhCmARIsAAfUI2s-upSQa47ijpxNiqvtcqUTxOvM9MQmHqakhnCYJfqJQnGBrGLIPsoaAlxKEALw\\_wcB](https://www.routledge.com/Communication-in-a-Civil-Society/Lane-Abigail-Gooch/p/book/9781032513263?source=shoppingads&locale=en-USD&gad_source=1&gclid=CjoKCQjwvb-zBhCmARIsAAfUI2s-upSQa47ijpxNiqvtcqUTxOvM9MQmHqakhnCYJfqJQnGBrGLIPsoaAlxKEALw_wcB)

**NOTE:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of this text is recommended for this course, as it provides new information not addressed in the 1<sup>st</sup> edition. A copy of the text is available for in-library use only, on Course Reserves, at the Service Desk, 2nd floor, McDermott Library (13855).

## **Content Consideration:**

In this class we will discuss communication research that covers topics including: gender, sex, sexuality, race, religion, power, abuse, infidelity, and identity. We will discuss academic research on academic merit and dominant understandings of these topics in communication studies. Please see the academic freedom section in this syllabus for further information.

## **Academic Freedom:**

Higher education is predicated on the exchange, vetting, and deliberation of often controversial and unsettled ideas. In this particular class, for example, we explore how communication scholars, sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, and historians understand issues like sexuality, race, racism, and gender. I teach peer reviewed academic research and understanding on these topics from experts in my and their fields.

We are not here to simply express personal opinions or repeat political talking points, but rather to engage a set of ideas and research findings that have a long and complicated history and are therefore subject to ongoing debate.

Committed students and scholars can, and do, disagree on the topics we will be discussing. As an academic, I encourage you to delve deeper into the academic understandings of these issues. Contemplate the scholar's epistemological foundations and traditions, their methods, and their conclusions from data. How are these scholars in conversation with other academics who agree and disagree with the author's assertions? Whose understandings of these topics are being included and whose are being silenced? In what ways do the scholars engage with philosophical traditions, cultures, and schools of thought to create their argument, and how does your understanding of these schools of thought influence your understandings of the academic discourse surrounding the topics?

In this class I teach the prominent understandings of these issues within the discipline I have a PhD in. I am open to an academic based discussion utilizing peer reviewed published academic articles on these topic and not political or pop cultural talking points of these topics.

While you may question your professors, and in fact sometimes may be encouraged to do so, professors maintain the right to determine the content of class lessons and the flow of classroom discussion. Curiosity and a healthy amount of skepticism are key components of learning, but respecting your professors as leaders of the classroom environment is also critical. Classrooms are not public forums, such as public sidewalks or greenspaces; they are spaces where discussion is curated by your professor based on relevance to the topic at hand.

As we will talk about all semester: Stay curious my friends. Where your lived experiences and worldview shape your communication and reality, you have the ability to be reflexive, curious, and flexible when dealing with uncomfortable topics.

### **Recording Melodee:**

I do not consent to any recording of me or my lectures in this class. If you have an accommodation that includes recordings, I have virtual versions of lectures already in Blackboard for you.

### **Course Navigation**

Access COMM1311 on eLearning by using your UT Dallas NetID to login to the [eLearning](#) website. The Announcement Page on the COMM1311 course site provides introductory information and directs you to the menu on the left where essential course components appear. Begin with “Start Here” to take the required Syllabus Quiz. Once you master the Syllabus Quiz, you’ll be given access to the Weekly Learning Folders where you can view your homework and assignment links for Week 1. To become familiar with the eLearning tool, see the [Student eLearning Tutorials](#) webpage and [Getting Started with eLearning](#).

UT Dallas provides eLearning technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The [eLearning Support Center](#) includes a toll-free telephone number for immediate assistance (1-866-588-3192), an email request service, and an online chat service. Informative speeches will be delivered in class. A classmate will video your speech using your phone, and you will be responsible for posting the recorded presentation in eLearning using a Box share link. For assistance with all matters that are Box-related, see: [issupport@utdallas.edu](mailto:issupport@utdallas.edu) Instructions for using Box share links will be provided in class.

<b>Interpersonal communication unit</b>	
Syllabus quiz	Required but not graded
Chapter quiz over chapters 1 and 2	40 points
Chapter quiz over chapters 3 and 4	40 points
Chapter quiz over chapters 5 and 6	40 points
Chapter quiz over chapters 7 and 8	40 points
Practical application: Civil communication	40 points
Practical application: Stereotypes	40 points
Practical application: the rabbit listened	40 points
Non Verbal discussion board	40 Points
	<b>TOTAL POINTS 320</b>
<b>Public Speaking Unit</b>	
Discussion boards	Required but not graded

Public speaking challenge: Introduction/organization	25 points
Public speaking challenge: visual aid	25 points
Working outline and annotated bib	50 points
Peer feedback	50 points
Final outline	50 points
Visual aid	20 points
Speech	100 points
	TOTAL POINTS 320
<b>Group Communication Unit</b>	
Chapter quiz over 9 and 10	40 points
Vacation Standard Agenda	50 points
Persuasive tinder	50 points
Picture day	50 points
Panel discussion/Talk Show	100 points
Teammate peer evaluation	30 points
	TOTAL POINTS 320
<b>Other assignments</b>	
My three take-aways	30 points
Mid semester check in	10 points
	CLASS TOTAL 1000

## Grading

Grading is based upon the UTD Undergraduate Catalog. Points are accumulated for a total of 1,000 points possible for the semester. Your grade will be based upon the total number of points you earn, not the percentage of points acquired. As a result, there is no “rounding up.” There is no grade negotiation at the end of the semester. Monitor your grade closely throughout the semester so you stay in control of it.

**I am a human who is also operating from a lens of my own world experience. If you disagree with a grade, please make an appointment to see me within ONE WEEK of receiving a grade. If you have a question about a quiz questions, please email me the question and your concern. I do not respond to grade disagreements via email, only in person (except quiz questions). Please come with a flushed out rationale why you do not agree with my grading and I absolutely will take your thoughts into consideration.**

## TURNING THINGS IN-

I do not accept pages or google docs. My Dell computer does not have the software to open Pages. If you use these applications to write, save the documents as PDFs before turning them into me. Please save all assignments as your lastname and the assignment title, particularly the speech visual aid. Please do not use anything but PowerPoint for the visual aid (Canva saves as PowerPoint without issues, google slides messes up the formatting sometimes, so check formatting before submitting).

I do not accept cloud links except to BOX from UTD. Failure to give me permission to access the assignment in Box or submitting work in Pages will result in late grading and you will have to prove you completed the assignment on time with time stamps.

### Grading Scale

Grade	Total Points		
A+	970-1000	A	Outstanding work that meets all assignment requirements, showing creativity, superior research skills, professionalism, and an exceptional understanding of assignment objectives and resource materials.
A	930-969	B	Work that meets all assignment requirements, showing creativity, solid research skills, professionalism, and a clear understanding of assignment objectives and resource materials.
A-	900-929	C	All basic assignment requirements are met yet product has some limiting issues that reduce the student's success and/or indicates less knowledge of class resources or training.
B+	870-899	D	Weak, unsatisfactory work that is missing some assignment requirements, and/or indicates little knowledge of class resources or training.
B	830-869	F/Failure to Post	Unacceptable work that misses most requirements; little or no effort evident in the assignment.
B-	800-829		
C+	770-799		
C	730-769		
C-	700-729		
D+	670-699		
D	630-669		
D-	600-629		
F	less than 599		

### Extra Credit

A maximum of **20 extra credit points** can be earned during the course. These are the only extra credit options.

- Visit with me during office hours (in person or virtually) in a 15 minute get-acquainted session (10 extra credit points). **This option is available through Week 14 only.**
- Practice the Informative Speech with a COMM Lab coach (10 extra credit points per coaching visit).
- Receive assistance with your Informative Speech Outline from a COMM Lab coach (10 extra credit points per consultation).

**To make a COMM Lab appointment, see**

<https://studentsuccess.utdallas.edu/programs/commlab/> Once there, information is provided for attending in-person and virtual appointments and “How to Download Extra Credit/Attendance Reports” to send to your instructor for confirmation of your visit.

## **Class Attendance Policy**

As indicated in the course description, COMM1311 is primarily a “hands-on” application course. Much of the instruction centers upon class exercises, class and team discussions, and practice and formal speaking activities.

**NOTE:** Five of the public speaking and team challenges are completed during class time. If you are not present to participate, you will not receive credit for the challenges. Attendance is also mandatory when Informative Speeches are delivered.

You are expected to attend every class and arrive on time. If you have personal circumstances that cause you to miss class frequently, see me as soon as possible. It may be that you need to take the class another semester when your timely physical attendance is more assured. Unexcused absences allowed to accumulate without teacher involvement will not be negotiated at the end of the semester. Attendance is taken within the first 15 minutes of class. There are no allowances for arrivals after 15 minutes, unless there are unusual circumstances which should be communicated to the instructor.

I offer my in-person students access to my recorded lectures for support in studying. If absences become an issue I will remove the recordings and replace them with just the slides. They are not in Blackboard for you to not come to class, they are there for extra support when needed.

There are only two exceptions for class absence.

- **Excused Absences.** Absences are excused for observance of religious holidays if communicated in advance and accommodations are made. If documentation is provided, absences are also excused for personal illness requiring a physician's assistance or hospitalization, emergencies related to a student's family (hospitalization or death), special curriculum requirements (field trip, etc.), official university activities, or military duty. Documentation for an excused absence is due upon your return to class, or before the missed class if the absence is anticipated. The excused absence policy for family deaths can be found here: [Student Bereavement Policy](#)
- **Bonus Absences.** You have two unexcused absences without penalty, if the absence does not occur on a public speaking/team challenge day or when Informative Speeches are delivered. Use these absences when you have uncertain health, are studying for another class, slept in, arrive at campus late, have a doctor's appointment that cannot be rescheduled, etc. Your first two unexcused absences are counted as bonus absences. Subsequent unexcused absences result in a deduction of 10 points each.

### **Bad Weather clause:**

In Texas we tend to see our worst weather in February. If UTD cancels classes, please check Blackboard for directions on how we will pivot the syllabus for the week.

### **Work/Late work**

I don't accept late work on speech related, discussion board, or group assignments unless discussed and approved before the assignment is conducted. Come talk to me if you have an issue.

You have two "oh shoot" days to use on daily work (quizzes and practical applications). You do not need my permission to use them, and they give you up to TWO extra days to complete the assignment. Submit your work late to the original assignment link AND the "Oh shoot" assignment link in Blackboard.

### **Plagiarism Policy**

The following is true for all submissions, whether small assignments, working outlines or final outlines:

- All work that you submit must be original work for this semester, this class, and this section of COMM1311. You may not submit work from other classes or other semesters (called "self-plagiarism").
- You are required to document any source of information (book, article, video, music, website, photograph, lecture, slide deck, etc.) with APA 7th edition format or MLA. Using words that someone else has created, researched, and/or reported is called "plagiarism." Using information or words from several sources and stringing them together is called "patchwork plagiarism." Accidentally leaving citations or quotation marks out of your document is labeled as "unintentional plagiarism." No form of plagiarism is acceptable at UTD. UTD holds you accountable whether or not you intended to plagiarize in an assignment.
- All written work, drafts, final documents, and peer reviews – will be generated by students themselves, working individually or in groups as directed by assignment instructions. You may not use writing services, another's work, or AI writers (e.g. ChatGPT). Original work is proven with outlines, drafts, proposals, and accurate citations throughout the writing process as well as a consistent tone in the student's writing. By submitting original work, students are best able to meet the class objectives of critical thinking and personal responsibility and are in a better position to acquire the creative, analytical skills needed for distinctive professional careers.
- Use of AI to generate outlines is not allowed for these reasons:

Research Sources in Question: AI generated Works Cited must be fact-checked for credibility and authenticity – some recommended sources do not exist or may not have the variety of supporting materials required for successful speech outlines. Searching for your own research sources is the first step in getting acquainted with the information for your topic. When you outsource this responsibility, you can miss the "big picture" that a personal search provides. Also, AI is known to be biased, and one-sided arguments severely decrease the credibility of your finished document.

Conforming to Assignment Requirements: AI generated outlines often do not meet the precise specifications expected in successful outlines.

**Authentic Wording:** AI compiles an outline based upon a wide range of sources and does not incorporate your personal thoughts and words as you speak to a particular audience on a specific occasion. The best outlines are ones that display your natural voice. It's difficult to learn and present information that you have not personally researched and that is not written in your own speaking style.

**Ethical Concerns:** AI combines ideas and words from many authors and sources. It is not ethical to present these ideas as your own. Even if you cite the prompts you used in interacting with AI, a similar prompt is not guaranteed to produce the same information.

If you rely on AI to create and write your outline and then present it as your own, you are committing plagiarism. (Engleberg, Daly, & Ward, 2025). You can find more detailed information in the UTD Student Code of Conduct.

Engleberg, I. N., Daly, J. A., & Ward, S. M. (2025). Chapter 1.4 Ethics and Free Speech. In *The Norton Field Guide to Speaking* (2nd ed., pp. 50–55). W. W. Norton & Company. Room policies:

I reserve the right to limit technology use: No technology is acceptable on speech days except for recording students. I will call you out if you are doing things on your technology during class time that is not related to my class for an excessive amount of time.

I reserve the right to limit food/eating. Please don't bring noxious food to class.

### **Speech day policies:**

NO food or technology

Phones must be on Do Not Disturb – if your phone goes off during a speech you will be deducted 10 points from YOUR speech grade. If my phone goes off you gain 10 points (this has happened twice).

Do not enter or exit the room during speeches unless there is a real emergency. Doing so will cost you 10 points on your grade.

### **Email policies:**

It doesn't bother me personally if emails are short (some professors care, so make sure you know who). AND ALSO, please make them conversationally professional. Give your recipient all of the information they will need to put your message in context, even if replying in a chain of emails. So if you are asking about a follow up to a question you asked in class, remind me the question from class. Be as clear and complete as you can, each time. ALWAYS INCLUDE YOUR SECTION NUMBER IN EMAILS. Don't submit emails with just attachments and no text, its inconsiderate.

I try my best to email back in 48 hours, if you have not received a reply by then feel free to email again. I reserve the right to not answer emails on weekends, I generally try to tell you when I can't answer emails.

WEEK (Mon-Sun format)	TOPIC	Monday	Wednesday
Week 1) 1/19-1/25	INTRO	NO -CLASS	Syllabus
Week 2) 1/26-2/1	Chapter 1: A first look at civil communication	Lecture	Activity Due : Practical application : Civil communication Due: Syllabus quiz Due: Getting to know you worksheet and AI policy
Week 3) 2/2-2/8	Chapter 2: Perceiving the self and others	I am not going to be here, so we don't have class. Please watch the video lecture before Wednesday.	Performance lecture and activities  Due: Chapter 1 and 2 quiz
Week 4) 2/9-2/15	Verbal and non-Verbal communication	Chapter 3 Verbal communication lecture and activity	Chapter 4 : non-Verbal communication Due : Practical application Stereotypes Due : NV Discussion board original post Due : quiz over 3 and 4
Week 5) 2/16-2/22	Listening and Interpersonal communication	Chapter 5: Listening	Chapter 6: Interpersonal Due: Practical application: The Rabbit listened Due: NV discussion board reply posts Watch: Informative speech assignment lectures  Due: Chapters 5 and

			6 quiz
Week 6) 2/23-3/1	Audience analysis and speech organization	Lectures over chapters 11 and 12	Due: Graded in-class group activity: Fake speech introductions and outline Due: Speech topic post
Week 7) 3/2-3/8	Speech delivery, informative speaking, a little persuasive speaking	Lectures over chapters 13-15	Visual aid lecture Due: graded in-class group activity on visual aids Due: Speech topic reply post
Week 8) 3/9-3/15	workshop	Mandatory in-class workshop	Mandatory in-class workshop Due: midsemester check-in
Week 9) 3/16-3/22	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
Week 10) 3/23-3/29	Chapter 7: Communication in intimate relationships	Lecture	Lecture and activity Due: Speech working outline and annotated bibs to me AND your Pokemon Group peer
Week 11) 3/30-4/5	Chapter 8: conflict	Lecture	Lecture and activity Due: Chapter 7-8 quiz Due : Peer review back to me and your peer
Week 12) 4/6-4/12	Chapters 9 and 10: group work and processes	Lectures	Introduce team activities Group in-class graded assignment: Start Vacation standard agenda with pokemon group Due: Chapter 9-10 quiz Due: Final outline with annotated bib and attached peer feedback Due: visual aid (once submitted you can't edit)
Week 13)	speech	Two Pokemon	Two Pokemon

4/13-4/19		groups in class The rest on campus working on groups	groups in class The rest on campus working on groups
Week 14) 4/20-4/26	speech	Speeches wrap up and in-class group work	Group work
Week 15) 4/27-5/3	Group work	Group work	Group work Due: Picture day Due: Vacation Standard agenda Due: persuasive Tinder Due: talk show/Panel script and worksheet
Week 16) 5/4-5/10	Talk/show	Due: in-class Presentations and scripts	Presentations and last day wrap up Due: my three take- aways Due: team peer eval  Last day of class 5/8
Week 17) 5/11-5/17	Final exam week	NO FINAL EXAM	