



COMM1315 PUBLIC SPEAKING  
SYLLABUS  
SPRING 2026

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*“As a comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”*

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**Contact Information**

Instructor: Barbara L. Baker, Ph.D.  
Office Address: JO 5.207  
Visiting Hours: 2:30-3:30 pm. on TTH or by appointment via Microsoft Teams  
E-mail address: [barbara.baker@utdallas.edu](mailto:barbara.baker@utdallas.edu)  
Email is the best way to contact me. Student emails usually are answered within two business days.

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

COMM 1315 - Public Speaking is designed to introduce students to an in-depth examination of the principles of public speaking. Emphasis is on speech preparation (including audience analysis, research, outlining, and practice) and performance. Students will prepare and present various types of speeches, including those related to informative, persuasive, and special occasion speaking. Speeches in this section are presented in face-to-face settings. Both individual speeches and a team presentation are required.

**Course Prerequisites:** COMM1315 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.

**TEXTBOOK:**

Gregory, Hamilton. *Public Speaking for College & Career*: 2025 Release. McGraw Hill, 2025.  
**ISBN10: 1265266875 | ISBN13: 9781265266875**

**NOTE:** Make sure you get the 2025 version. The earlier, 12th edition, will not suffice for this course. There is an e-book version. The publisher provides the lowest price options for the 2025 text at the following link: <https://www.mheducation.com/highered/product/public-speaking-for-college-and-career-gregory.html?pd=search&viewOption=student#mh-ecommerce-product-accordion-34496518-heading-mh-ecommerce-accordion-list-b6ae944ab3>

A copy of the text also will be available for in-library use only, on Course Reserves for COMM 1315, at the Service Desk, 2nd floor, McDermott Library.

**MODALITY AND EXPECTATIONS**

This course meets Face-to-Face; you must attend and participate in class two days a week, keeping up with the presented materials, both in class and online. Students also will complete some assignments online. The course platforms are in-person plus through e-Learning, Turnitin.com, UTD e-mail and MS Teams.

In this course, students are expected to

1. Purchase/rent the required text and review any other supplemental course materials
  2. Check emails daily (M-F) and read weekly announcements. **Course emails to me should**
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**show the course prefix and section number (remember, I have five classes, including two sections of COMM 1315).**

3. Read and complete all assignments on time according to instructions.
4. Submit all written assignments online through eLearning unless otherwise specified.
5. Attend classes prepared to participate in activities and to treat others with respect.
6. Make me aware of any personal issues that are influencing your class attendance or completion of assignments. If addressed sufficiently early, we may be able to handle them in a mutually agreeable manner.

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## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

### **General Core Area 010 Communication**

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 both informatively and 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.

#### **General Core Objectives:**

<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Students will engage in creative and/or innovative thinking, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, synthesis of information, organizing concepts and constructing solutions
<b>Communication</b>	Students will demonstrate effective written, oral and visual communication in public speaking and team contexts
<b>Teamwork</b>	Students will demonstrate the ability to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal and consider different points of view.
<b>Personal Responsibility</b>	Students will demonstrate the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

#### **Specific Course Objectives**

**Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:**

1. Demonstrate ethical and critical thinking skills in selecting, researching, & adapting topics for informative, persuasive, & special occasion speeches.
2. Demonstrate an ability to properly structure written & visual components of presentations.
3. Apply specific elements of audience analysis to successfully target diverse types of audiences.
4. Demonstrate proficiency in researching, developing, & presenting a variety of speeches.
5. Deliver extemporaneous individual & team presentations using effective verbal & nonverbal techniques.
6. Exhibit respect, responsibility, & restraint when collaborating with team members.
7. Demonstrate ethical & effective listening skills when providing feedback to classmates.
8. Demonstrate effective analytical skills through analysis & critique of other presentations

#### **What Will You Gain From the Course?**

The above general and specific course objectives are in line with the top 5 skills and qualities employers are seeking in college graduates, according to the National Association of College and Employers (NACE) Job Outlook Survey results:

- Ability to verbally communicate with others
- Ability to work in a team structure
- Ability to make decisions and solve problems
- Ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work
- Ability to obtain and process information

## **TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Even in the face-to-face sections of COMM 1315, a portion of the course occurs on-line in E-Learning. Much of the course content and materials are accessible through eLearning. Most assignments also will be submitted on-line. Thus, in addition to a confident level of computer and Internet literacy, certain minimum technical requirements must be met to enable successful learning experiences. 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.

Access COMM 1315 on e-learning by using your UTD NetID account to login to the course e-Learning site at <http://eLearning.utdallas.edu>. This takes you to the "Start Here" page where you can access the Syllabus and other important information. Read through the Syllabus and then access the first Module, with the initial assignments for the first week. Subsequent modules will open as the semester progresses. You can use the menu to the left where essential course components appear.

### **Student Resources for Technical Help**

- 1. For eLearning issues, check out the e-learning Helpdesk 866-588-3192 (or check out their webpage at <https://ets.utdallas.edu/elearning/helpdesk>**
- 2. For computing help, contact the Computing Help Desk at [assist@utdallas.edu](mailto:assist@utdallas.edu)**
- 3. For other issues, try the Office of Information Technology at <https://www.utdallas.edu/oit/helpdesk/>**

### **The Course Structure**

The course is divided into 14-15 modules covering key concepts in the course. Each week, a new module will open in e-learning. All supplemental material, as well as instructor PowerPoint slides will be posted on-line to e-Learning, as much as possible. Additional material (required and supplemental) will include various short readings, videos posted on-line, handouts, etc. Major assignments will also be posted online. Therefore, you should aim to familiarize yourself with this course on e-Learning soon after the semester begins, as well as read through this detailed syllabus so you understand the basic requirements and expectations of the course, as well as resources for students.

Because class materials are intended to supplement the classroom experience, each will be made available to all students registered for this class (with the exception of the text, which you must obtain on your own). You may download any of them during the course; however, these materials are for registered students' use only. **Classroom materials (including any recordings) should not be reproduced, or shared with those not in class, or uploaded to any other online environment**, except to implement an approved AccessAbility Resource Center accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct (see class policies below).

**Attending class regularly does NOT mean just logging in online. Although recordings may be made of a particular class session, this is NOT a remote or hybrid course.** Anyone who logs into class remotely (if offered) without permission will be counted absent for the day (if you are ill or have another emergency, contact me, and I may make a remote option available to you with permission). Keep in mind that the class might be offered remotely by the instructor in case of weather, emergency, or any other situation.

### **Reaching the Instructor Outside of Class**

I will communicate with you outside our classroom by using Teams, or through e-learning, or by emailing your UTD email address. **The best way to reach me is by emailing me at [Barbara.baker@utddallas.edu](mailto:Barbara.baker@utddallas.edu) and include your name and section number in the subject line** (keep in mind I have other students and classes, so make it easy for me to recognize who you are).

Please use Professor Baker or Dr. Baker as the preferred mode of address in any correspondence to me. I will reply to student emails as quickly as possible, ideally within 2 working days (48 hours) at the latest. I will be keeping a record of all e-mail transactions over the course of the semester to aid in any questions or concerns. Make sure you use your UTD email, as personal e-mail is not confidential. You can set your UTD email address to forward to a personal e-mail, however. I also am available through Microsoft Teams, or in person during my office visiting hours. Please make appointments for any in-person meetings, even those during my office visiting time.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

Assessment is crucial to determine how well students meet the course objectives. Assessments occur through a variety of assignments throughout the semester. All assignments are graded based upon a cumulative point system. Complete descriptions of all assignments will be posted in eLearning as well as general assignment descriptions included below in the syllabus. **1000 points are estimated, but the instructor reserves the right to alter that total, up or down, depending on the progress of the class during the semester as well as other unforeseen events.** For this state-mandated core required course, students are expected to deliver their oral presentations on the days that they are assigned (those days will be noted in advance). **No exceptions except for verified emergencies.**

### **Assignments Overview:**

<b>Projected Assignments</b>	<b>Projected Value</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Speech—Introductions	50
Personal Goal application paper	25
2nd Speech (possibly virtual) + outline	125
Informative Speech with visual aids	125
Informative speech outline & delivery notes	125
Self-assessment of informative speech	50
Persuasive Team Presentation with PPT	100
Team Presentation formal outline	100
Team Project self & team assessment	50
Ceremonial/Special Occasion speech	50
Low impact activities & homework	150
Possible quizzes or other miscellaneous	50
<b>TOTAL POINTS PROJECTED</b>	<b>1000</b>

**NOTE:** All these assignments will be discussed more as the semester progresses, with each of the main assignments being fully described on the specific assignment rubrics given out for each during the semester. Participation/activity/homework points may be adjusted up or down, depending on the progress of the semester. They include activities related to public speaking and teams. Depending on our progress, or other circumstances, one or more assignments may be cut and point totals reassigned.

## **GRADING**

### **1. Preliminary Grading Scale (from the University Grading Scale):**

Final grades will be assigned according to the UTD Undergraduate Catalog scale using “+” and “-“ (see below).

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Total Points Earned</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Total Points Earned</b>
A+	970-1000	C	730-769
A	930-969	C-	700-729
A-	900-929	D+	670-699
B+	870-899	D	630-669
B	830-869	D-	600-629
B-	800-829	F	Less than 599
C+	770-799		

**REMEMBER, POINTS  
MAY BE ADJUSTED AS  
THE SEMESTER  
PROGRESSES!**

**Note that the scale above, taken from the UTD Undergraduate Catalog, is NOT identical to how e-Learning MyGrades computes scores, so the e-Learning grades may not be completely reflective of your final grade in class. Final totals will be calculated using numerical points AND percentages.**

## **2. Grade Privacy**

Due to Federal privacy laws, I cannot discuss any grade in class (or in the hallway after class). Nor can I discuss your grade over unprotected e-mail or via telephone. Nor can I post any grades. To discuss any concerns about your grades or grading criteria, you should make an appointment to see me. **Please do NOT wait until the last few weeks in the semester to raise concerns about your course performance.** Keep in mind that I also cannot discuss your grades or anything about your progress in class with your parent, spouse, etc. unless you provide a signed release form giving a specific individual permission (such forms are available from your advisor; I need to be provided with a copy, please). Basically, you are adults, and your grades are your responsibility.

## **3. Additional Grading Policies**

a. To meet the course objectives and provide the best opportunity for learning, all assignments must be fully completed and submitted when due. **Any student who fails the graded informative speeches and team presentation (3 major presentations total) normally WILL FAIL THE COURSE** regardless of grades on other coursework; usually incomplete grades are NOT given, except in rare cases of **legitimate, verifiable emergency** at the end of a semester (see university policy, which normally requires a student to complete at least 70% of the course to be eligible for an incomplete grade).

b. Overall, grades are earned in this course for acceptable work at a university level (see below for general criteria). Grade points will be earned for each assignment or graded activity; at the end of the semester a cumulative point scale will be used to determine specific course grades (as noted above).

c. In no case will any grade be given for mere completion of a major assignment or your personal effort in completing the assignment—it is assumed that all of you work hard at the coursework. Instead, **quality in meeting the assignment objectives is the criterion for grade assessment, not effort.**

d. Following university guidelines, **the normal score for a competent (satisfactory) performance generally ranges between B- to B (approx. 80%-86%)**; competency is determined by how well you basically meet a set of standards as they apply to your individual performance; these criteria will be applied as objectively as possible, based on my experience and training. To be seen as competent means you at least meet all the minimal requirements of the assignment. Meeting such minimums is expected to pass the course and is not the equivalent of an A or higher B grade. **Students who want to earn higher grades will need to satisfy higher expectations** (I am ready to help you do so).

e. Course assignments are carefully constructed so as to assess student comprehension of course concepts and to meet course objectives; every attempt is made to be fair in the assessment of student performance; students are always welcome to contact the instructor to discuss the grading criteria for a presentation, paper, etc.

f. Assessment is based on individual performance (criterion-referenced grading, using rubrics wherever possible), on a cumulative point scale; **grades are NOT curved** (norm-referenced grading), as that would put you in competition with other students. Rubrics for specific assignments will be available either on-line or handed out in class.

g. Major assignments will earn numeric scores, using the following general criteria (each assignment will further explain the individual standards used to grade the assignment; rubrics will be posted in advance):

A+/A-=*Superior or Excellent work* that not only fully meets but also goes beyond minimum requirements, showing innovation, creativity, research, analysis, and polish (e.g., 5 pts. on a 5-pt. scale, 9.5 to 10 pts. on a 10-pt. scale)

A-/B+=*Good work* that fully meets and/or exceeds all requirements with a strong understanding of objectives and material (e.g., 4.5 pts. on a 5-pt. scale; 8.5 to 9 pts. on a 10-pt. scale)

B/B-=*Competent, satisfactory work* that satisfactorily meets the minimum requirements but is not outstanding (e.g. 4 pts. on a 5 pts. scale; 8 to 8.5 pts. on a 10-pt. scale)

C+/C/C-=*Fair, not fully satisfactory work* that is mostly okay, but missing some aspect of the requirements, and/or does not fully satisfy the requirements in some way (e.g., 3.5 pts. on a 5-pt. scale; 7 to 7.5 pts. on a 10-pt. scale)

D\*/D/D-=*Unsatisfactory work* that misses most requirements for an assignment or otherwise does not fully satisfy the requirements (e.g., 3 pts. on a 5-pt. scale; 6 to 6.5 pts. on a 10-pt. scale).

F= *Unacceptable, failing work* that meets almost no requirements; little or no effort evident or work not submitted (thus receiving zero points); 2.5 or below pts. on a 5-pt. scale; 5.5 pts. or below on a 10-pt. scale)

**h. FINAL GRADES WILL NOT BE RAISED (OR ROUNDED UP) AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER FOR ANY REASON, even if you are just a few points away from the next level. Also, be sure you do not confuse points with percentages. Based on 1000 points, each one percent (1%) equals 10 pts. For example, an 86% (or B) score is not “1 pt. from a B+” (87%) but 10 pts. Keep in mind that the time to improve scores in the course is while the course is in progress.**

i. Students who do not follow the instructions for each assignment likely will be penalized by losing points; **if you do not understand a particular assignment, ask! (Ideally before the due date). I will do my best to help you understand.** To help you, rough drafts also will be required for the speech outlines and the team presentation, depending on our course progress.

**j. All formal outlines and papers MUST BE TYPED, double-spaced using a 12 pt. or equivalent font, in black ink, and submitted via a doc or docx attachment or a pdf file, usually on e-Learning** (I likely will use Turnitin.com on eLearning for some or all written assignments). No other submission process will be accepted without obtaining permission in advance.

**MAC users need to convert pages. to a pdf file, as I am unable to open and read documents in the pages or keys format.** No cover sheet is necessary. Please follow the MLA format for papers and citations as shown in in the MLA Handbook, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, which you can find at bookstores and libraries. Or click on this link for more MLA information <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

**k. Please do NOT submit work to me by e-mail (unless told to do so); any e-mail submission will not be graded. For written papers submitted to e-learning, do NOT cut & paste into the assignment box but upload your assignments (so I can more easily read and respond to it; plus, the formatting will stay the same)**

l. All speeches will be recorded via Teams, if possible, and will be available on the Teams link for the class. You also are encouraged to record your individual speech on your phone with the help of a classmate (so you can review it afterwards for any self-assessment activity).

### **OTHER COURSE POLICIES**

#### **1. Attendance**

a. To achieve the goals of this class you need to interact with each other. Doing so is the best way to gain the skills as described in the learning objectives. **Thus, daily attendance and being focused while in class is required; excessive absences will be detrimental to your final score.**

b. More specifically, each 75-minute class period consists of a mixture of actions (lecture, if necessary, class discussion, application activities, teamwork, student presentations, etc.). Your thoughtful, attentive, and active participation is essential (and will be factored into your final score as noted above). To be thoughtful requires that you engage with the course materials prior to coming to the face-to-face class sessions, as well as staying engaged throughout the course period. If you sleep, engage in non-class-related activities (e.g. texting or doing assignments for other courses), or interfere with your classmates' ability to learn in any way, you may be counted absent for that day, and may receive an absence penalty.

c. Roll will be taken daily (possibly with a sign in sheet or through a seating chart). You must make sure I note that you are present if you are late (see policy on tardies, below).

d. Given that things sometime occur during a semester, **normally each student will be permitted two (2) "free absences" in the semester**, where no penalty and no questions will be asked, as long as the free absence does **NOT** occur on a Mandatory Attendance Day (when presentations occur).

e. **Each absence past the two allowed generally will subtract 10 points (1%) from your final semester grade, except on speaking days, where attendance is mandatory. Generally, any absence on a Mandatory Attendance Day will result in a loss of 50 pts. per absence (5% of the final grade).** Even if you are not presenting, you are required to attend on days when we present speeches, so you can be an audience for your peers (and provide peer evaluations). Generally, given the importance of being present for your classmates' speeches, the only exception to this policy is a legitimate excused absence, as noted below.

f. **Basically, you are responsible for your attendance.** If you have six or more absences (the equivalent of three weeks of class) it is recommended that you meet with me before continuing in the class. Absences past eight (4 weeks of class) likely will lead to a significant lowering of your final grade, including possible course failure.

g. Due to the on-going issues related to COVID, the flu, RSV, and other illnesses, medical or other emergencies might occur to you or to someone close to you at any point in the semester. **In case such an emergency happens, please do NOT worry about this course. Just do your best to contact me as soon as possible**, so we can work out how best to proceed with the course (which may be to drop it). If I have such an emergency, I will do my best to get information to you all as quickly as possible. **If you suspect you have been exposed to, or actually have COVID, the flu, or some other serious or infectious disease, please contact your health provider and the university immediately. Do NOT come to class (and remember to let me know why you are absent).**

h. **If you are ill with a major disease such as COVID, the flu, or RSV, and you are well enough, you may be permitted to attend remotely, if it is available.** Either you or someone on your behalf must contact me **before** the class session. Such attendance will require active participation (more than one or two sentences on chat)—just logging in is insufficient and will result in being counted absent. Once you are cleared to attend in person you should do so (do NOT make it a habit of attending remotely, as it will be detrimental to your final score). **Attending remotely for any other reason than personal illness is NOT acceptable without prior permission from the instructor—you need to be present in class. This is NOT a hybrid or online course, and you will not obtain full participation points by being remote (and if you log in remotely without contacting me first, you will be counted as absent, with no credit).**

i. If a medical condition causes you to miss class for more than a couple of weeks, you must keep me informed and ideally meet with me (at least virtually). You will need to submit medical authorization and then keep up with the school work asynchronously (or, with permission, remote synchronous as noted above). If you have a long-term medical condition that would lead to extensive absences, it will be in your best interest to contact the Accessibility Resource Center to obtain official accommodations, as noted

below. Given the nature of the course, it may be better for you to withdraw from the course, taking it when your health or time permits.

j. Occasionally there is weather or other situations that might close the campus for a specific period of time. If that occurs, you will be notified by the administration (and I will send out an announcement, too). Look for the class to be held remotely and/or class activities to be put onto e-Learning (to be completed asynchronously). I also might be out of town (such as attending a conference), or be sick, or otherwise unavailable at some point in the semester. I will post assignments to e-Learning during that time or you will have a substitute instructor, or I might conduct the class remotely.

k. It is up to you when you are absent to determine what you missed and if necessary, as for any makeup work. This should be done before or at the day you return to class.

## **2. Excused Absences**

a. Generally, the only absences that are automatically considered to be excused are university-excused absences. **University-excused absences** are handled differently from other absences. These absences include the following: **verified personal illness requiring a physician's assistance or hospitalization; special curriculum requirements (e.g., field trips); participation in official university activities (such as athletics); observances of religious holy day; or military duty (as noted in the Catalog).** For serious illnesses you or someone acting on your behalf also should contact the Dean of Students so they can notify faculty.

There also is a bereavement policy for deaths, which is handled through the Dean of Students. Basically if such a death occurs, you should contact them but also let me know. You will be excused for up to three days (and possibly longer, if warranted). The Dean of Students will require verification of the death. See <https://policy.utdallas.edu/utdsp5016>

b. Any other significant emergency event (e.g., a medical emergency in your family, jury duty, or similar) will be taken on a case-by-case basis. When not clear, determination whether an absence is an excused absence is at my discretion.

c. All other reasons for an absence, such as elective surgery or non-emergency doctor visits, vacations, club meetings, tutoring sessions, meetings with your advisor or other professors, car trouble, job requirements or duties, etc. usually are NOT considered "excused absences" (still, it is best if you let me know in advance of any such absences, if you can, to prevent potential problems). **Please do your best to schedule all non-emergency events and meetings for times other than this class period. If it is impossible to do so (for example, a specialist medical appointment that cannot be changed), staying in touch with me (ideally in advance), can help you avoid point loss and/or absence penalties.**

d. **If you believe an absence is an excused absence, you, or someone acting on your behalf, must contact me by email within 48 hours of the absence, and then bring verification of the absence upon return to class.** For school-sponsored events and religious holidays, it is better if you contact me **in advance** of the absence, so we can have makeup plans in place. Note that "in advance" usually does NOT mean the day of the absence!

e. **If advance notice is not or cannot be provided, I may need acceptable written documentation to excuse the absence, which must be presented to me upon your return to class.** Documentation for any excused absence normally will NOT be accepted after the day you return, except in emergency circumstances. Failure to provide acceptable documentation within the specified time period likely will result in an unexcused absence.

f. Acceptable documentation will be worked out with the instructor on a case-by-case basis (it typically includes things like a message from the Dean of Students noting that you are ill or have a death in the family; a physician's return to school/work form, hospital discharge paperwork, a field trip memo

specifically addressed to me from the sponsoring agent, military deployment papers with specific dates, or similar written verification from an authority, preferably with that authority's contact information and the specific dates of your absence). No other items be accepted unless agreed upon in advance.

g. **Note that an excused absence does NOT absolve you from completing the coursework for the days missed.** If an individual presentation is missed due to an approved excused absence, you must be prepared to complete that presentation as soon as you return to class or at the end of the semester (the exact procedure will be worked out by you and the instructor). Team projects generally are not included because of when they occur—if you have a legitimate excused absence that affects your attendance on the day your team presents, you likely will wind up with an incomplete grade in the course. With advance notice, we can work around that eventuality.

h. Remember, you have two “freebie” absences with no questions asked—you do NOT need to supply any documentation for missing those days as long as they aren't on a speaking day. It is only when you miss more than two days and/or you miss a Mandatory Attendance day, that you will need documentation to waive the absence penalties.

### **3. Policy on Tardies/Early Departures**

a. Punctuality is important. You should be on time for class, as it will start promptly. This is especially important on speaking days, as coming in late can disrupt a presentation by a classmate. **If tardy for any reason, please let me know of your presence at the end of the class period, so that you won't be marked absent with possible points lost.** This is more important at the start of the semester when I don't know everyone than later. Keep in mind that any absence recorded because you were tardy—even if it is just a few minutes—likely will remain if I don't see you were there and you did not tell me you were present.

b. While sometimes being late is unavoidable, persistent tardiness is disrespectful to both your instructor and your peers. You should let me know if there is a good reason for persistent tardiness (e.g., a class on the other side of campus). Significant tardies (more than 10 min. late to class) likely will result in a half absence (with a possible 5 pts. penalty), and the potential loss of points. Being late past 30 min. likely will result in a full absence (with a possible 10 pts. penalty). If you know you will be significantly late, please let me know as soon as you can—in some cases advance notice can prevent the loss of points (however, persistent significant tardies definitely will cause you to lose points, regardless of the reason).

c. **If you find you are tardy on a speaking day, and we've already started speeches, please wait outside the classroom until you hear applause, to minimize the disruption that occurs whenever anyone comes in late.**

d. The class usually meets for the full 75 minutes (although there may be some exceptions to this during the semester). Students are expected to remain in class for the entire period; points may be deducted from the final score at my discretion for early departures that I do not authorize.

e. **If an early departure is unavoidable, please let me know in advance so we can work together to minimize any potential class disruption and possible loss of points.** Without such notification, leaving prior to the end of the class likely will result in a half to full absence, which could lead to a penalty. **Leaving class immediately after attendance has been taken without advance notice will result in a full absence for that day.** However, if you come to class and realize you are too sick to stay, that is a different matter. Please try to let me know before you walk out, if you can (the same is true of logging in online, but then not staying to participate, if you are granted permission to be virtual).

### **4. Policy on Make-up or Late Assignments**

a. With only 15 weeks in a semester, and several presentations to do, getting work completed on time is important to meet the state-mandated core objective of Personal Responsibility skills. Because of this, plus the need to stay compliant with the other sections, usually **NO late oral presentations will be accepted.**

**b. The only exception to this policy for the oral presentations is a verifiable personal illness or emergency on the day you are set to present. In that case, someone needs to immediately contact me, so we can work out a solution.** I might be able to squeeze you end at the end of the speeches, **but please don't assume that will be the case, or that it won't be penalized if you are unable to obtain verification (in that case, you may have to wait to present on the last day of the semester, when I schedule speech redos for non-satisfactory presentations).**

c. If you miss an oral presentation for any other reason during the presentation window for the assignment, it likely will result in a zero for the assignment (and a 50 pt. attendance penalty). You must still complete the presentation assignment satisfactorily to avoid possible course failure. It may be ungraded, but if I do decide to grade it, the presentation likely will be docked between 10%-50% of the total points.

d. Don't let this policy scare you--keep in mind that all the major presentations will occur over time. The dates for those are the least likely to be changed during the semester, to aid your planning. Sign up times will be provided for in-class presentations, so you ideally can avoid a day when you know you must be gone for a good reason (keeping in mind that it still may cause you to lose points, unless it is a verifiable excused absence).

e. Normally there is no makeup permitted for missed participation activities done during class. However, you may request an alternative assignment, to be determined by the instructor. You must contact me for such makeup work, which must be submitted to the instructor within 48 hours after the class to count as part of the participation grade for the semester. Such alternative assignments may require more work to meet the objectives of the activity.

f. Other major assignments (the written outlines and papers) usually will have at least a one-week window to complete and submit, usually to e-Learning. **At that time the assignment is likely to close, and late penalties (at least 5% for each class day) will be applied.** If you know that you are likely to be late in submitting this work, please contact me—we may be able work something out to minimize or avoid point loss, depending.

**g. Any technical difficulties at your end with eLearning are NOT an excuse for late work – submit assignments early to avoid any last-minute technical problems** (if you have such difficulties, you need to contact me immediately so we can try to resolve it before the deadline). Although generally late work is either penalized or not accepted, you always can work ahead and turn in an assignment early (with the exception of your assigned speech performance days).

h. Given its nature and the due dates, the Team Project is NOT included in this policy--you MUST speak with your team on the assigned day or risk course failure (see earlier policies on attendance and excused absences).

**i. Any major speech that earns less than 60% will require a redo of the speech (failed speeches must be redone to a satisfactory level). Speech re-dos will be scheduled near the end of the semester, or during finals week, and may be presented to a different audience.** Re-done speeches must earn at least 70% and will either be averaged with the original score or replace it. Any permitted makeup speeches may be scheduled at the same time.

##### **5. Policy on Server Unavailability or Other Technical Difficulties:**

The university is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty at our end which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, I will extend the time windows and provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. **However, as noted earlier, difficulties at your**

**end that are not server or UTD based, but are due to the student's equipment or actions, are NOT an excuse for late work** (such problems will be taken on a case-by-case basis). To enhance a positive outcome, students should immediately report any technical problems to the instructor and also contact the UTD eLearning Help Desk.

**In addition, remember that UTD passwords may expire during the course and you will receive three warnings before they do—pay attention to these warnings!** If you have other difficulties in submitting coursework, you need to contact the appropriate person noted above and copy me so we can try to resolve it before the deadline.

## **6. Policy on Class Recordings**

Unless the AccessAbility Resource Center (ARC) has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Any permitted recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved ARC accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

I also may be recording our face-to-face class sessions through Teams, as noted earlier, especially on speaking days. Any recordings will be available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. All such recordings are private, available only to those enrolled in the course (and will be deleted after the semester is complete). You may be required to view the speeches completed in class for an assignment. For privacy reasons, do NOT take screenshots of any of those recordings you listen to or attempt to share them with any other person or online platform. Failure to comply is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

You may also be asked to use your own personal phone to record your own speeches (not any of your classmates). That is so you can review your performance for self-assessment purposes.

## **COURSE CITIZENSHIP**

### **1. The Comet Creed & Student Conduct Code**

The Comet Creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same: "As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do." You are expected to live up to this pledge in this course.

In addition, the University of Texas System (Regents' Rule 50101) and UT Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. Specific procedures are defined and described in the Student Code of Conduct, UTDSP5003 (<https://policy.utdallas.edu/utdsp5003>). Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of Community Standards and Conduct, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SSB 4.400, 972-883-6330) and online at <https://conduct.utdallas.edu>.

## 2. Civil Communication Requirement

a. Communicating with civility is a requirement for this course. According to Lane, et al. in *Communication in a Civil Society*, "civil communication allows you to speak your mind in a way that is respectful, [it] demonstrates restraint, . . . and is responsible" (p. 3). We will practice civil communication throughout the semester. In class, at work, and in life as a whole, a positive attitude will help you reach your goals while a negative attitude will likely impede your progress towards success. In this class, I will do my best to be respectful to you and expect the same from you, not just to me, but to your classmates.

b. Keep in mind that this course can be difficult and may be perceived as threatening for a variety of reasons. For example, we may discuss topics that challenge our perspectives and/or listen to speeches about controversial topics at some point. You also must present to others, and you may have anxiety about that. As a face-to-face class we'll get to know each other through in-class interactions. Thus, students may also comment about emotional issues during class discussions and disclose sensitive, personal information (which should remain confidential to the class).

c. While the First Amendment is protected in this class, hate speech is not. While debate is acceptable, negative personal comments about individuals or teams are not acceptable. Attacks against people, their beliefs, values, culture, race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or political affiliation will not be tolerated.

d. Because of the need to be civil, and the need to present **evidence-based speeches (as well as avoid plagiarism), you likely will be restricted in terms of topic choices.** I will provide a list of acceptable speech topics for each speech.

e. Similarly, peer criticism that is not constructive about a student's performance will not be tolerated. Because we are working on our communication skills in the course, and that can be a difficult learning process, please take extra effort in class to be supportive. That does not mean that we can't provide specific ways someone can improve, but it does mean that you give the kind of feedback that you would want for yourself. If an emotional or controversial topic comes up and someone has a stance that you do not agree with, please do not be combative. Part of the goal of this class (and in higher education more broadly) is to learn how to civilly engage in a dialogue. If I perceive that a student's communication is prejudicial, disrespectful, or "over-the-top" in any way I will stop a discussion and/or critique (we may then discuss why those types of comments are consider problematic).

f. Further, any student who engages in other non-civil behavior that disrupts the teaching-learning process and/or speech presentations (e.g., ignoring the classroom electronic policy; reading non-course related materials; whispering and talking to others while others are presenting; or otherwise engaging in behaviors not related to discussion, etc.) may have points deducted from their grade or even be asked to leave the class. In any on-line interactions, you also are expected to maintain civil behavior (see the section on Netiquette on the e-learning site). Finally, all written work submitted for this class should aim for inclusive language. This is not a move to political correctness or "wokeness," but an attempt to provide a welcoming community to all persons.

## 3. Electronic Policy

a. As part of this civility policy, **electronic devices can only be used in the course with express permission of the instructor and for a specific pedagogical reason** (e.g., looking up research sources on-line or working on the team project, using a Google doc for speech preparation, or other such reason).

**More specifically, all cell phones, smart phones, laptops and other electronic devices must be out of sight and turned off during class, unless one (or more) of the following conditions is met:**

- 1. I've given specific, limited permission to use such devices for a class project or similar pedagogical use. There will be several times when this will occur in the semester.**
- 2. You have cleared it with me in advance to meet verified ARC requirements.**
- 3. Or when you know you will have an emergency call or text during class time. In that case, you need to tell me in advance, set your phone to pulse, and when you get the call or**

***text leave the room with minimal disruption. If you don't tell me in advance, you are likely to receive a penalty (it is very distracting to see someone frequently checking his/her phone).***

b. Unless you meet the above conditions, you are NOT permitted to use electronic devices for any reason during class--the "ease of taking notes" or "I want to check the e-book" usually are NOT acceptable excuses (you would need to convince me). Indeed, recent research suggests that students better retain course material through handwritten notes, not typed ones. Other studies note the negative impact of multi-tasking on our attention, both on yourself and others in class (some recent studies note that grades tend to go down in classrooms where there is open use of such technology). In-class discussion and peer-to-peer interactions also are hampered when phones, laptops, or other electronic devices are easily available to you. Finally, based on their input, it seems many students find it distracting when others around them are using technology for non-pedagogical reasons. It also tends to reduce overall comprehension of course information. Therefore, let's work together to minimize distractions and ensure a profitable class period.

c. **If I see electronic devices being used without advance permission, individual students may have points deducted from their final grade (assume at least 5 pts. per observed incidence, depending on when or how often it occurs). Such students may or may not be warned in advance (the whole class may be warned vs. an individual warning, so as to not single you out). However, in lieu of such a warning, you can consider this notification as your warning.** Persistent use without permission may lead to you being asked to leave the class. Do not think I won't see you using your phone, tablet, or laptop inappropriately, whether I point out your use or not. Any penalties assigned to you for using electronic devices without permission generally are non-negotiable.

d. If the students overall have almost no (or few) violations of this policy at the end, any penalties may be waived. This will not be the case if there are numerous violations from a student (esp. if I've called it to your attention during or after class, yet you still violate this policy).

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:** See <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

### **1. Academic Integrity**

Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in their scholastic work. As your instructor, I hope to create a community where you will feel included, but that requires trust between us. I expect you to commit to creating such trust, abiding by the Comet Code; meanwhile, I will abide by the University policies and regulations regarding academic honesty.

b. This course assumes that work submitted for a grade by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups as directed by class assignment instructions. Thus, **students are expected to do original, independent work; dishonesty of any kind is NOT tolerated and CAN LEAD TO COURSE FAILURE** (or even dismissal from the university). Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to the submission of material that fails to truthfully represent the sources of one's work, whether on tests, papers, presentations, projects, or any scholarly activity. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion, fabrication, using generative AI (such as ChatGPT, etc.—see Generative AI policy below), falsifying academic records, violating copyright, and/or any misrepresentation designed to gain unfair advantage.

c. More specifically, **cheating** is defined as using or attempting to use, giving or attempting to give, obtaining or attempting to obtain, products or prepared materials that a student is expected to do alone and **not** in collaboration with others (such as the use of unauthorized notes during an exam, or fraudulently obtaining an exam or paper), or the use of any other dishonest means of attempting to fulfill the assignments for a course (such as having someone else take an exam for you, or illicitly obtaining exam questions in advance, etc.).

d. More specifically, **plagiarism** is defined as the use of someone else's ideas without giving credit, copying of papers, and/or insufficient documentation of sources; it includes, but is not limited to, turning in someone else's paper as your own (or helping someone else do so), submitting a paper for this class you wrote for another class (self-plagiarism), copying information from the Internet or other source without sufficient attribution, and/or incorrectly citing the sources you used in a paper.

e. More specifically, **collusion** is intentionally aiding or attempting to aid another in an act of scholastic dishonesty, including but not limited to, providing a paper or project to another student; completing work for another student to submit as his/her own (or having another do such work for you); providing (or obtaining) an inappropriate level of assistance; purchasing a paper from another person or corporation; working together when told to work alone; communicating answers to a classmate during an examination; removing tests or answer sheets from a test site, and allowing a classmate to copy answers or homework.

f. More specifically, **fabrication** is falsifying some or all of the information in an assignment, including but not limited to the following: omitting an ending bibliography or end notes page, listing sources at the end without citing them in the body of the text, or making up references in whole or part.

g. Additionally, the Student Code of Conduct includes behaviors conducted via any digital platform. Students may not use any digital platform to seek or provide unauthorized assistance for any assignment done for academic credit. Students also may not use any digital platform to impersonate or represent any person other than themselves. Please check with me regarding any authorized generative AI assistance (such as brainstorming or exploration of course topics or editing your work). You must get my permission to use any AI composition software to assist in your assignments and **clearly cite such use—you need to be transparent about any AI use, citing it as you would any source**. No more than 10% of any assignment should be generated with AI. Any use of generative AI tools outside of these limited parameters constitutes plagiarism and will be treated as such. More specifically, **you may NOT use AI to write your speeches or papers for you, generate preparation outlines, or complete homework assignments**. If you are unsure if the use of AI is acceptable while working on assignments in this course, please ask the instructor.

h. Overall, **cheating and plagiarism are serious matters, because basically you are stealing from the others who have done original work, using their ideas contrary to their intentions as you try to pass it off as your own work**. Think about it--would you go to a physician whom you knew cheated her/his way through medical school? Tempting as it may be, please don't cheat in this class.

i. **To discourage potential plagiarism, written work (outlines, papers, & reports) for this class likely will be submitted through Turn-it-in.com via eLearning**. It is antiplagiarism software that, while not perfect, also may be able to detect A.I. content.

j. The bottom line— Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes (even your own), and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism. If you do not cite sources in every assignment where sources are required, with in-text and end-of-text citations, or if include direct quotes without quotation marks, use your previous coursework or someone else's work without permission, or make any other violation noted above, your work likely will be referred to UTD's Office of Community Standards and Conduct for investigation.

For more information, visit the following:

- UTD's Standards for Academic Integrity <https://conduct.utdallas.edu/integrity/>
- UTD's Examples of Academic Dishonesty <https://conduct.utdallas.edu/dishonesty/>
- UTD Student Code of Conduct. <https://policy.utdallas.edu/utdsp5003>

## **2. Equal Treatment & Accessibility**

a. A principle of equal treatment of all students will be a fundamental guide in responding to requests for special consideration. Thus, no student will be given an opportunity to improve a grade that is not made available to all members of the class. This policy applies to requests for special treatment both before and after the course is completed. Examples of unacceptable opportunities for an individual include "extra

credit” work not provided to all students, retaking a test, redoing an assignment, or asking for an extension of time on an assignment or exam when such opportunities are unavailable to others in the class (or as part of an ARC accommodation). This does not preclude me from offering such a chance to all students.

b. The AccessAbility Resource Center (ARC).

1) Students with documented disabilities may need extra accommodation. UT Dallas is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for such students in all University courses and programs. Any student with a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability, which affects their academic performance, is eligible for services. If you need classroom accommodations, please contact the AccessAbility Resource Center at: SSB 3.200 (3rd Floor in SSB). Check with their website for the necessary procedures to obtain such accommodation for this semester: <http://www.utdallas.edu/studentaccess/>

2) ARC provides registered students with an accommodation letter to send to faculty members. The letter verifies that the student is qualified to receive certain accommodation. This letter should be presented to the instructor of each course at the beginning of the semester (send it via an e-mail attachment to me). The approved accommodation should be discussed at that time. It is the student’s responsibility to notify their professor of their needs. It is possible that you may not be able to present me with such a letter at the start of the semester, but you should let me know that you have contacted the office. Unfortunately, I am constrained in providing necessary accommodation that is not offered to all students without some evidence that you are going through ARC.

3) I will do my best to make the recommended accommodations for students with such letters, within the constraints of the classroom, the course format, and the goals of the class. This includes using captions or transcripts for videos (where possible) and putting any notes on e-Learning (for all students). Special arrangements made to accommodate students do NOT absolve such students from completing the requirements of the course in a timely manner. As with any student, if you fall into this category, and find that the course material is proving difficult for you, or creating absence problems, please contact me for help (as soon as possible).

### **3. Sharing Confidential Information (Title IX)**

Students considering sharing personal information in email, in person, or within assignments or exams should be aware that faculty members and teaching/research assistants **are required by UT Dallas policy to report information about sexual misconduct to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator**. Per university policy, faculty have been informed that any student revealing such information must be identified to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Students who wish to have confidential discussions of incidents related to sexual harassment or sexual misconduct should contact the Student Counseling Center (972-883-2527 or after hours 972-UTD-TALK or 972-883-8255), a health care provider in the Student Health Center (972-883-2747), the clergyperson (or other legally recognized religious advisor) of their choice, or an off-campus resource (i.e., rape crisis center, doctor, psychologist). Students who are sexually assaulted, harassed, or victims of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, or stalking, are encouraged to directly report these incidents to the UT Dallas Police Department at 972-883-2222 or to the Title IX Coordinator at 972-883-2218. Additional information and resources may be found at <http://www.utdallas.edu/oiec/title-ix/resources>.

**NOTE:** If you have read this far, as confirmation please send to my campus email any one image from any *Star Wars* film, with the subject heading Syllabus Easter Egg. Just one image please, and be sure you follow these instructions. Those who do so by the end of the first month (January 31), will receive 5 pts. extra credit.

### **4. Other Resources to Support Students**

a. The Office of Student Success operates the Student Success Center (SSC, <http://www.utdallas.edu/studentssuccess>), which offers assistance to students in the areas of writing, mathematics, communication, multiple science fields, reading, study skills, and other academic disciplines. These services are available through individual and small group appointments, workshops, short courses, and a variety of online and instructional technologies. All students enrolled at UT Dallas are eligible for these services. The two most relevant for this course are the following:

1. The **Writing Center** offers a collaborative learning environment for one-to-one and small group assistance with general and advanced writing assignments and overall writing skills. Scheduling an appointment is strongly recommended but walk-in appointments are possible if a tutor is available.

2. **The Communication Lab (CommLab) offers one-on-one and group consultations where you will gain practical feedback for improving oral and group presentations. It is very successful in helping students prepare, and if time permits, I will have someone from the CommLab speak to us. I also might require that you visit them for one of the presentations (even if I don't, you should take advantage of what they offer)**

**NOTE: VISITING THE COMM LAB ON YOUR OWN IS A WAY TO EARN SOME EXTRA CREDIT! Contact me to find out how to do so.**

b. In addition, **Success Coaches** are available for individual student appointments to discuss study skills, time management, note taking, test taking and preparation, and other success strategies. The Student Success Center's main office is located in the McDermott Library Building and can be contacted by calling 972-883-6707 or by sending an email to [ssc@utdallas.edu](mailto:ssc@utdallas.edu).

c. It can be challenging to do your best when you are worried about meeting basic needs like safe shelter, sleep, and nutrition. If financial or food insecurity is an obstacle to learning for you I urge you to contact the Dean of Student's office or **the Comet Cupboard**, located in MC 1.604, in the basement of the McDermott Library, <https://cometcupboard.utdallas.edu/>

Also **The Basic Needs Resource Center** (BNRC), <https://basicneeds.utdallas.edu/> provides a number of resources for all students, including **Temoc's Closet** <https://basicneeds.utdallas.edu/temocs-closet/> (provides free professional and other clothing items for students). **The Resource Hub** provides a list of these and other services provided for UTD students, as well as noting relevant community resources (<https://basicneeds.utdallas.edu/resource-hub/>)

d. College life can be stressful and it is easy to feel overwhelmed, anxious, or depressed. If you find yourself struggling with your mental or physical health this semester, please feel free to approach me. I will do my best to be helpful and accommodating, within reason. Still, I am not a professional and there is no shame in getting other help. Such help can be found at the **Student Counseling Center**, <https://counseling.utdallas.edu/>

### **MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS**

1. Despite my attempts to be comprehensive, it is impossible to cover every aspect of this course in the syllabus; additional important information will be provided to you as the class progresses. I also reserve the right to add or delete assignments and modify the syllabus and the calendar. Any major changes to the syllabus or calendar will be announced as early as possible.

2. Although I hope the course will be both useful and enjoyable, it is not necessarily an easy one. **Indeed, students are often surprised at the difficulty of both general education and college-level communication courses. It is common to think of this class as a "blow-off" course, but it is not. You are learning and practicing new skills and applying new concepts that ideally will carry over to the rest of your life. Because of this, the course sometimes is seen as difficult. It is rigorous in**

**workload and instructor expectations. It also demands your time outside of the classroom. Give the course extra time, and do not get behind on your assignments! Expect to engage in reading, writing, and talking to be successful. If you are seeking an easy course, this is not for you.**

3. If you are having problems with the coursework, want to improve your performance, have questions about the content, are having difficulty obtaining required course materials, are experiencing personal or family issues, or just want to talk, please contact me by e-mail to set up an appointment--I'll be more than happy to help as long as you contact me before small problems turn into big ones. I encourage you to seek me out to help you with the coursework, or to direct you toward additional campus resources, such as the writing lab, or a study skills course, etc. Before you ask a question, however, please check to see if it is not answered already in the text, the lecture notes, the syllabus, or on e-Learning.

**4. Remember, the earlier we deal with any problem, the better the possible outcomes--don't wait until the last week of the semester!** At that point everyone is swamped, and it is nearly impossible to succeed, especially if you haven't been participating in the class or turning your work in on time. As Mr. Spock said in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, there are always possibilities (if you don't wait too long).

**5. I request that you set up appointments, even for set office hours, so you are guaranteed a time.** To set appointments outside the office hours, please talk to me or send an e-mail so we can arrange a meeting (keep in mind I commute to campus and also have other courses throughout the week). There may also be other considerations this semester that prevent me from coming to campus on a particular day—in that case, we may be able to resolve any concern or problem via e-mail.

6. As computers tend to fail when we need them the most, you should save your work to multiple devices (i.e., USB device, back up to the hard drive of your home computer, saving to a cloud service, etc.). Keep in mind that **computer failure is NOT a legitimate excuse for your work being late. Always have a "plan B"!**

7. Pay attention to your grade in My Grades on e-Learning so you are not taken by surprise at the end of the semester. In addition, you will be able to catch any grading errors (those do sometimes occur) and we can fix them. Normally grades will NOT be changed once they are submitted to the Registrar (the only exception is instructor error in computing the scores).

**8. Limited extra credit opportunities may be available outside of class;** such opportunities may include but are not limited to answering a Discussion prompt on-line; attending a campus speech (or listening to a speech on TV or YouTube); participating in the CommLab to get help in developing or practicing a speech; meeting with me during the semester; or other similar activity (such as finding the Easter Egg that is posted elsewhere in this document). To get the points may require completing a short written assignment. Further instructions for such opportunities will be forthcoming. Such opportunities may also be assigned as makeups for missed work for those with excused absences. **Please keep in mind that any extra credit will be worth NO MORE than 2% of the final grade total (generally 20 pts.).** No extra credit will be offered or accepted after the last day of class.

9. With the exception of the final Individual Team Assessment (which will be due the last week of class), and possibly any speech redos, **course work generally will NOT be accepted after class ends on May 8th** (any exceptions must be worked out in advance). Nor will any new work opportunities be provided (including any extra credit) after the last class date. **The course is over at that point, and you will have had plenty of time to do the work before that date and also chances to improve your grade during the semester.** In addition, there is limited time for me to finish grading your coursework, compute final grades and enter those grades by the deadline set by the university.

10. During that final week, please do not come to me claiming that you need a certain grade for your scholarship, or that you didn't know you were doing poorly, or your friend's professor accepted late work, etc., as those arguments will not be persuasive (especially if you have missed numerous assignments, did not check into e-Learning regularly, and/or did not try to contact me earlier in the semester to improve your performance). The time to improve your grade is earlier in the semester. Basically, **pleas for special**

**consideration that occur during the last week of class and finals week are liable to be counterproductive and thus will not be considered** (such requests also demonstrate that you have not satisfactorily comprehended the course material, since they tend to violate the norms for successful communication).

11. If you find you are having consistent difficulties attending to the class (e.g., outside job requirements, another class, family or chronic health issues, etc.), you should contact me early in the semester to discuss possible alternatives (so as to prevent you getting too far behind). **If outside commitments prevent you from giving this course at least the minimum time it deserves, it is likely that the best alternative is for you to drop the course and try it some other time.** If you decide this course is not for you, then YOU must be the one to drop the course before the stated final drop date for a W. **If you do not drop, but stop coming to class, you will receive an administrative F grade.**

12. Continuance in the course will be interpreted as acceptance of the conditions and requirements outlined in this syllabus and agree with its policies. If you are not willing to abide by these conditions and requirements, then this is not the appropriate course for you at this time.

## SEMESTER CALENDAR

This calendar is a **TENTATIVE** listing of the possible course topics & major assignments for each week in Spring 2026. **Small assignments and their due dates are NOT included (with some exceptions); instead you need to check the Weekly Module Overviews on e-Learning for specific readings, assignments, and due dates.** The instructor reserves the right to alter this calendar if necessary. All changes will be announced in advance, if possible.

<b>Week #</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Tentative Readings with Some Assignments</b>
<u>Week #1</u>	Introduction to COMM 1315 (syllabus, structure, etc.) Overview of e-Learning The Process of Communication Audience-centered speaking model	Read chapters 1 & 2  <b>Student Information Form due by 1/31</b>
<u>Week #2</u>	Speaking with Confidence Introduction to Public Speaking and Presenting Your First Speech	Continue reading chapters 1 & 2  <b>Introduction Presentations 1/27 or 1/28</b> Personal Goal Paper assigned Second Speech assigned
<u>Week #3</u>	Audience Analysis	Chapter 4  <b>Personal Goal Paper due by 2/1</b>
<u>Week #4</u>	Listening to Speeches; Critiquing Speeches	chapter 3  <b>Second Speech presentations due from 2/10 to 2/12</b> <b>MANDATORY ATTENDANCE REQUIRED!</b> <b>[NOTE: This may be a virtual speech, in which case it will be uploaded to e- learning no later than 2/15]</b>
<u>Week #5</u>	Informative Speaking Developing Your Speech--Selecting topics; purpose & central ideas	Chapter 5; also Chapter 15 is recommended Assign Informative Speech; select topic
<u>Week #6</u>	Gathering & Supporting Your Speech "Library Day" Using Presentation Aids	Chapters 6-9 (may be carried over to the next week) <b>Annotated Bibliography Due by 3/1</b>
<u>Week #7</u>	Organizing & Outlining Your Speech Intros & Conclusions	Chapters 10-12 <b>Working/Draft Informative Outline Due by 3/8 (tentative)</b>
<u>Week #8</u>  <b>MIDTERM</b>	Using Language (verbal strategies; style) Delivering Your Speech (non-verbal communication)	Chapters 13 & 14  <b>Midterm Grades due 1314</b>
<b>SPRING BREAK March 16-22</b>	<b>HOLIDAY</b>	Continue to work on your Informative Speeches
<u>Week #9</u>	Presenting Informative Speeches with Peer Evaluations	<b>BEGIN INFORMATIVE SPEECHES PRESENTATIONS</b> <b>MANDATORY ATTENDANCE REQUIRED!</b>

<u>Week #10</u>	Presenting Informative Speeches with Peer Evaluation  Discuss Ceremonial or Special Occasion speaking	<b>CON'T INFORMATIVE SPEECHES MANDATORY ATTENDANCE REQUIRED!</b>  Chapter 18 <b>Speech Self-Appraisal assigned; due by 4/5</b>  Teams may be assigned for the Team Project this week or next.
<u>Week #11</u>	Finish Ceremonial Speaking Small Group Speaking Persuasive Speaking  <b>Last day to drop with approval is 4/8</b>	Begin Chapters 16, 17 & 19 if time permits Work on Team projects  <b>If time permits, we'll do short Ceremonial speeches (a toast or similar) on 4/7 -4/8-- these might be virtual, uploaded online by 4/12 [IF IN CLASS, ATTENDANCE WILL BE MANDATORY]</b>
<u>Week #12</u> 11/10-11/16	Continue Persuasive Speaking Principles; Strategies; Avoiding Fallacies, etc.	chapters 16 & 17, con't. Work on Team projects  <b>Rough draft Working Outline for Persuasive Team Project due by 4/19</b>
<u>Week #13</u>	Continue Persuasive speaking	Continue with chapters 16-17; work on Team Projects  <b>Final Preparation Outline for Persuasive Team Project due by 4/26</b>
<u>Week #14</u>	Finish Work on Team Projects Begin Persuasive Team Projects	<b>MANDATORY ATTENDANCE REQUIRED FOR TEAM PROJECT PRESENTATIONS, STARTING 4/29 or 4/30</b>
<u>Week #15</u> 5/5-5/9	<b>LAST WEEK OF CLASS—THE SEMESTER ENDS 5/8</b>  Finish Team Project Presentations Possible Speech Redos  Course Summary & Reflection (course takeaways)	<b>MANDATORY ATTENDANCE REQUIRED FOR TEAM PROJECT PRESENTATIONS</b>  <b>If necessary, any speech redos will be on 5/6 pr 5/7 (or completed during finals week)</b>  <b>Individual Team Assessments are due no later than 11:59 p.m. on 5/8</b>  <b>Course Reflections due by 5/8 (may be completed in class on the last day)</b>  <b>Complete Course Evaluations, if haven't before</b> <b>Any Extra Credit due no later than 5/8</b>

**NOTE: NO FINALS ARE SCHEDULED FOR THIS COURSE.**