



EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

College of Arts and Sciences

Department of Communication and Performance

COMM-2025
Fundamentals of Communication
Sections L10 and L12
Fall 2021

Syllabus

Contact Information

Instructor: LAUGHTON MESSMER

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Phone: 423 439-6528

Office: CAMPUS CENTER RM 107

Instructor Availability

Office hours: 12:30-1:30 MWF, 4:30 7:30 R (in Campus Center RM 208A on R)

Course Information

Credit Hours

3

Department of Communication and Performance Mission Statement

The Department of Communication and Performance advances the understanding of communication by focusing on the ways people communicate with each other personally and professionally, embracing the complexity of human diversity, and examining the ways in which identity and meaning are created through the stories we tell and are told.

Course Description and Purpose

I know what you are thinking from the title of the course, “Awww nuts, I am going to have to do a heap of speeches for this class and nothing else fun for the entire semester.” How wrong you are! This is an oral communication course, not just a speech class.

Oral communication is vital to our varied society and the ever-increasing “global village.” Because of this, it is necessary for competent oral communication for our personal, public and professional lives. Here is where this course comes into play. Comm 2025 is set up to aid in

your understanding, appreciation, and application of fundamental principles of oral communication by increasing both your communication knowledge and skills in a problem-solving team, public speaking and interpersonal communication. This course is taught using lecture, class discussion, group exercises and individual written and oral presentations and evaluations and lots of laps around ETSU (just kidding about that last one!). Won't it be great to have more wicked awesome communication skills?

Course Goals

- Recognize communication as a social science, as a process, and the foundation for all learning
- Prepare and deliver effective oral presentations
- Learn and apply research skills
- Demonstrate verbal and nonverbal communication competencies
- Display an understanding, appreciation, and application of fundamental communication principles.
- Exhibit sound listening skills.

Course Objectives

- Understand and apply communication theories to the following areas:
 - o Intrapersonal communication
 - o Interpersonal communication
 - o Group communication
 - o Public communication
- Demonstrate verbal and nonverbal communication competencies in:
 - o Listening
 - o Message construction
 - o Message presentation
- Assess different communication events/situations and identify communication behaviors appropriate to each.

- Display an understanding, appreciation, and application of fundamental oral communication principles.
- Make responsible communication choices that are mindful of human diversity (e.g. age, ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexual orientation)
- Exhibit an acceptable level of competence as a communicator.
- Demonstrate research competency to develop oral presentations.
- Prepare and deliver effective oral presentations
 - o Per PAF on Organization, Body, and Language & Delivery

Major Topics

Communication theories, interpersonal communication and small group concepts as well as public speaking fundamentals.

Course Requirements

Textbooks and Readings

The textbook for this class is **FREE!** It is an Open Educational Resource (OER), called “Communication in the Real World- An Introduction to Communication Studies.” It can be accessed at [this link](#).

Course Policies and Expectations

Classroom and Communication Policies

Email Communication

The ETSU email policy requires all faculty communication with students regarding EYTSU business be conducted via the official ETSU email account. Please use your ETSU email account for any email communication.

Attendance and Participation

It is vital to attend every class! You have three absences (excused or unexcused) total to work with. After that participation points will be deducted from your grade. Two points will be taken off of your attendance grade for each absence after your freebies mentioned in the sentences above. Also, come to class on time! Walking in the middle does not count! You can't start dinner in the middle! You can't start an eye exam on the fourth line! You can't eat a tootsie pop from the tootsie out can you! I think not! Check your student handbook on ETSU attendance policy. **!!!!!!!!!!!! I will sporadically have an attendance sheet for you to sign. I may also take attendance verbally.**

Cell phones and other electronic devices: In order to minimize class disruption please turn **OFF** all cell phones, PDAs, ipods, etc. Not vibrate but **OFF**. Please put all electronic devices

away as well. Do not place them on your desk. Emergency personnel are the only students allowed to have cell phones on vibrate. My phone will be off and out of sight as well. Five points will be taken off your participation point grade for every electronic device disruption.

Community-mindedness: Again, check your handy dandy student handbook on this topic. Community-mindedness will insure a healthy atmosphere for us to debate on important, contemporary issues that affect our daily lives. Remember who your audience is and respect them.

Assignments and Submission Guidelines

Keep up with all of the assigned readings and complete all speeches, papers, assignments, and tests. Keep in mind that all class activities are due in the D2L dropbox on the day of the particular assignment. Please use the D2L site to turn in your assignments so I can avoid the plague of “broken” printers that abound.

Testing Policy

We will have two quizzes that will be conducted on D2L throughout the semester.

Late and Missing Submission Policy

Foreseeable absences should be arranged with me in advance. You will only be allowed to make up a missed presentation if the absence was unforeseeable, unpreventable, urgent in nature, necessitated missing class, and for which documentation proving its occurrence can be provided by a professional relevant to the emergency (e.g., emergency room physician).

Grading Policy

Here is how your grade is configured so we will have no confusion.

Grading System:

Assignments:

Unit One Quiz # 1	/50 pts.
Unit One Quiz #2	/50 pts.
Introduction Speech	/10 pts.
Informative Speech	/100 pts.
Informative Speech Outline	/25 pts.
Informative Speech Self Eval.	/10 pts.
Persuasive Speech	/100 pts.
Persuasive Speech Outline	/25 pts.
Persuasive Speech Self Eval.	/10 pts.
Interpersonal Paper	/100 pts.
Small Group Paper	/100 pts.
Participation	/20 pts.
(Misc. assignments, impromptu speeches, attendance, etc.)	

Total 600 pts.

Grading Scale:

Letter	Range	Points
A	=	558 or above.
A -	=	540 - 557 pts.
B +	=	528 - 539 pts.
B	=	498 - 527 pts.
B -	=	480 - 497 pts.
C +	=	468 - 479 pts.
C	=	438 - 467 pts.
C -	=	420 - 437 pts.
D +	=	419 - 408 pts.
D	=	407- 360 pts.
F	=	359 or below.

Specific Grade Breakdown:

A 93-100	A- 90-92	
B+ 88-89	B 83-87	B- 80-82
C+ 78-79	C 73-77	C- 70-72
D+ 68-69	D 60-67	F 59 and below

Course Schedule

I, Laughton Messmer, may change the course schedule as well as syllabus requirements to fit the flow of the course. The schedule is in the same D2L folder as the syllabus.

Student Services and Technical Resources

Student Services

The [ETSU Services webpage](#) includes a comprehensive list of services available to all ETSU students.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of ETSU to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal law, state law and the University's commitment to equal educational access. Any student with a disability who needs accommodations, for example arrangement for examinations or seating placement, should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. Faculty accommodation forms are provided to students through Disability Services in the D.P. Culp Center, Room 326, telephone 423-439-8346.

[Visit the Disability Services webpage for more information.](#)

Technical Resources

Help Desk

The Information Technology Services (ITS) Help Desk is the best resource for most technical problems. Find answers to common questions on the [Help Desk website](#), call, email, or stop in to see them on the first floor of the Sherrod Library. Phone: 423-439-4648 Email: itshelp@etsu.edu

Desire2Learn (D2L) Online Help

Many answers to D2L related questions can be found on the [D2L Help Student Home](#). If you are still having trouble finding what you need, contact the Help Desk.

Microsoft Office Software

Microsoft Office productivity applications, including Word, PowerPoint, Excel, OneNote, and more, are available free for students through the University's Office 365 campus agreement. For instructions on how to obtain the software, see the [Office 365 page of the ITS Help Desk website](#).

Turnitin Plagiarism Detection

Turnitin is a plagiarism detection service available to students and faculty at ETSU. This tool compares student written work against a comprehensive database of other work as well as various internet sources. Faculty may employ this service for some or all written assignments, in order to help students learn to cite sources accurately and to ensure academic integrity. Learn more on the [Turnitin home page](#).

ETSU Technical Resources

Many other technical resources can be found on the [Online Help webpage](#).

University Information

Syllabus Attachment

The [University Syllabus Attachment Link](#) includes important material such as permits and overrides, advisement, hours, dates and other ETSU information.

ETSU Catalogs

[Current Undergraduate Catalog](#)

Counseling Services and Student Resources

School can be incredibly stressful, especially when there are things happening in your personal life that add to that stress. If at any point in the semester you find yourself feeling weary, anxious, overwhelmed, or depressed, I highly encourage you to contact the Counseling Center. They are a wonderful resource, and can provide you with any help that you may need. Reach them at the following link, or by calling (423)-439-3333. The following link provides you with information about many student resources: [Student Resources](#)

If you need help navigating the stresses of being a student, please contact the Undergraduate Student Success Specialist at the following link: [Undergraduate Student Success Specialist](#)

Syllabus Contract

I will be requiring a signed syllabus contract from every student enrolled in this course. By reading and signing the contract you are telling me that you understand and will abide by the syllabus requirements. The contract will be downloaded from D2L and signed during the first week of the semester.

Class concerns

If you have concerns about this course or the instructor, you should take the following steps.

1. Discuss the matter *first* with the course instructor.

Talk with your course instructor about your concern. If your concern is unsatisfactorily addressed with your instructor, you can then take your concern to Step 2 below.

2. Discuss the matter with the Department Chair.

After you have attempted to work with your instructor on the matter, if a satisfactory resolution is not found, you can then contact Dr. Amber Kinser, Chair of the Department of Communication and Performance kinsera@etsu.edu. Be prepared to discuss what steps you have taken with the instructor. Except in confidential matters, the Chair will confer with the faculty member and review the course policies as stated in the syllabus to determine an appropriate response. If your concern is unsatisfactorily addressed with the Department Chair, you may then take your concern to next step, which the chair can identify for you.

Mask Policy (for face to face classes)

Please wear a mask or other appropriate Face Covering to class. Wearing a mask that covers your nose and mouth communicates the care and respect you have for yourself, the care and respect you have for those you live with, and the care and respect you have for other members of this classroom community. The best evidence we have, from public health professionals, is that wearing masks is one of the best ways to protect against the spread of COVID-19 and other airborne illnesses. Students with medical conditions that inhibit their ability to wear masks should register through disability services by contact Disability Services by telephone at 423-439-8346 or by email at littleme@etsu.edu to request an accommodation. A link to the policy may be found [here](#)

Major Assignments

Here is a list of the major assignments for the semester as well as grading rubrics used for evaluation.

Interpersonal Communication Analysis Paper

This paper is a study of how you interpret and apply the concepts of interpersonal communication we have discussed in Fundamentals of Communication. To aid in the process of your analysis and application of these concepts, you will watch a movie that depicts these concepts in a bold manner. Although we usually view film for entertainment, it is important to think more critically about what we see and how we can identify with the relationships viewed.

In order to meet the expectations for this assignment, please read the following criteria for the paper:

1. Please do not tell the story of the film!!! The paper should critique the story and identify **THREE KEY INTERPERSONAL CONCEPTS**, which are explained and then illustrated from events in the movie. Papers that do not identify and apply three key concepts will receive no more than a "C." Examples of three key interpersonal concepts include, the stages of a relationship, self-disclosure, intimacy, conflict, etc.
2. The paper should be 3-5 pages in length. It should be well organized, developed and written suitable for a university-level essay. Be sure to edit the paper for spelling and grammatical errors.
3. The paper should be typed with 1-inch margins on all four sides, double-spaced, with 10-12 point font. Do not start the first page in the middle. That does not count as a page silly!!
4. If you incorporate quotations or refer to other's ideas in the paper, be sure to use bibliographic citations in either MLA or APA format.
5. Use the critique sheet to guide your writing of this paper.
6. The paper is due at the beginning of class on _____ in the D2L dropbox. It is worth 100 points.
7. Have fun with this!!!!!!!!!!!!

Critique Sheet for Interpersonal Communication Analysis Paper

Student Name: _____ Grade ____/100

A. Organization and Development – 30 points: Points earned: _____

1. Does the paper have a clear introduction with a thesis and a preview of the main points?
2. Does the paper have a conclusion that summarizes the main points and provide closure?
3. Is the thesis thoroughly developed through explanation and illustration in the body of the paper?
4. Do the paragraphs have clear topic sentences?

B. Content – 50 points: Points earned: _____

1. Does the paper focus on the assignment?
2. Does the paper provide relevant, clear connections between the concepts and the film with specific examples?
3. Are there three key concepts?
4. Are the concepts explained, defined and applied?
5. Does the paper prove a grasp of interpersonal concepts through effective analysis of the film?

C. Mechanics & Style – 20 points: Points earned: _____

1. Is the paper mechanically sound?
2. Are the margins correct?
3. Citations used?
4. Edited for grammar and typing errors?
5. Written in complete sentences and clear expression that is easy to read?

Worksheet for Work Team Project

Names of group members:

- What problem(s) do you need to solve in this scenario?
- What complexities may arise in this scenario? Why is a solution hard to offer?
- What are your group’s recommendations to the administration to solve this problem?
- What is the rationale for your recommendations?

5. How did you come to this decision?

(Use the back if necessary)

Work Team Project and Assignments

The class will meet in groups that I will pick.

A. This project consists of solving a problem and completing a worksheet.

I will provide you with the problem to be solved. The worksheet will help guide you through the project and organize your work. It is vital to work through all the complexities of the scenario! Do not solve this on a shallow level, but really dive into it and talk it through with your team. The more you put into this assignment, the more information you have to use for your paper, and the smoother that process will be. To get participation points for this assignment, make sure I get one worksheet from each group. Remember to keep attendance when your group meets.

B. After this project is completed, each member of the group is to write a paper on the process that your group experienced to come to a solution. The paper should:

1. Give a description and analysis of your experience in the group. Describe what happened and how you related with one another. Tie your descriptions and examples into at least **THREE KEY CONCEPTS** from your readings and lecture on small group communication. Examples of key concepts are roles, norms, leaders, problem-solving approach, etc. Papers that do not identify and apply three key concepts will receive no more than a "C."
2. The paper should be 2-4 pages in length. It should be well organized, developed, and written suitable for a university-level essay. Be sure to edit the paper for spelling and grammatical errors.
3. The paper should be typed with 1-inch margins on all four sides, double-spaced, with 10-12 point font. Do not start the first page in the middle. That does not count as a page silly!!
4. If you incorporate quotations or refer to other's ideas in the paper, be sure to use bibliographic citations in either MLA or APA format.
5. Use the critique sheet to guide your writing of this paper.

The paper is due _____ in the D2L dropbox. It is worth 100 points.
Have a fantastic time with this little paper-poo!!!!!!

Critique Sheet for Small Group Communication Analysis Paper

Student Name: _____ Grade ____/100

I. Organization and Development – 30 points: Points earned: _____

- A. Does the paper have a clear introduction with a thesis and a preview of the main points?
- B. Does the paper have a conclusion that summarizes the main points and provide closure?
- C. Is the thesis thoroughly developed through explanation and illustration in the body of the paper?
- D. Do the paragraphs have clear topic sentences?

II. Content – 50 points: Points earned: _____

- A. Does the paper focus on the assignment?
- B. Does the paper provide relevant, clear connections of the groups' dynamics and interactions with specific examples?
- C. Are three key concepts utilized?
- D. Are the concepts explained, defined and applied?
- E. Does the paper prove a grasp of small group concepts through effective analysis of the group interaction?

III. Mechanics & Style – 20 points: Points earned: _____

- A. Is the paper mechanically sound?
- B. Are the margins correct?
- C. Citations used?
- D. Edited for grammar and typing errors?
- E. Written in complete sentences and clear expression that is easy to read?

Informative Speech Assignment Fundamentals of Communication 2025

This assignment consists of delivering a speech about an informative issue such as, describing a process, person, idea, object, event or problem in an interesting and concise manner to keep your audience's attention.

Requirements:

Time Limit: 4-6 minutes. If you do not fall within this time limit you will receive a grade deduction. Practice, practice, practice, to make sure you get 4-6 minutes.

One Visual Aid: This may be a poster, overhead, map, object, video clip, etc. Make sure they are big enough so everyone can see them and make sure they pertain directly to your presentation.

Three Sources: These should be cited verbally in your speech and listed in the bibliography of your outline. Make sure they are from credible sources and make sure you use at least one written source. Check your notes and book on examples of evidence to draw from sources.

Introduction, Body, and Conclusion: Make sure your presentation clearly demonstrates this organization and make sure you have transitions between them. KEEP IT CLEAR!!!!

Outline: You must turn in a typed outline on the day you give your speech in the D2L dropbox. It is your ticket to the podium and you will not be allowed to give your speech without one. Handwritten ones will not be accepted. The outline is worth 25 points and will be graded separately from the speech.

Self-evaluation: After your presentation you will type a one page critique of how you thought you did. Include positive and elements that you need to work on for your next presentation. This is due two class periods after you speak and is worth ten participation points. Don't forget to put it in the D2L dropbox.

Attendance: It is vital to attend every class period during speech time. If you miss, even if you do not speak, I will count you absent twice. It is unfair for a student to speak to ten people where another has to speak to 25. This is a shared assignment and I will not tolerate absence. Also, if you do not attend the day you are assigned to speak you will not be allowed a make-up.

The informative speech is worth 100 points and you will be graded on the criteria provided on your critique sheet.

Persuasive Speech Assignment Fundamentals of Communication 2025

This assignment consists of delivering a speech about a persuasive issue of a fact, value or policy in an interesting and concise manner to keep your audience's attention and perhaps rethink how they feel about the topic.

Requirements:

Time Limit: 5-7 minutes. If you do not fall within this time limit you will receive a grade deduction. Practice, practice, practice, to make sure you get 5-7 minutes.

Five Sources: These should be cited verbally in your speech and listed in the bibliography of your outline. Make sure they are from credible sources and make sure you use at least two written sources. Check your notes and book on examples of evidence to draw from sources.

Introduction, Body, and Conclusion: Make sure your presentation clearly demonstrates this organization and make sure you have transitions between them. KEEP IT CLEAR!!!!

Outline: You must turn in a typed outline on the day you give your speech in the D2L dropbox. It is your ticket to the podium and you will not be allowed to give your speech without one. Handwritten ones will not be accepted. The outline is worth 25 points and will be graded separately from the speech.

Self-evaluation: After your presentation you will type a one page critique of how you thought you did. Include positive and elements that you need to work on. This is due two class periods after you speak and is worth ten participation points. Don't forget to put it in the D2L dropbox.

Attendance: It is vital to attend every class period during speech time. If you miss, even if you do not speak, I will count you absent twice. It is unfair for a student to speak to ten people where another has to speak to 25. This is a shared assignment and I will not tolerate absence. Also, if you do not attend the day you are assigned to speak you will not be allowed a make-up.

The persuasive speech is worth 100 points and you will be graded on the criteria provided on your critique sheet.

Presentation Assessment Form

PAF 19.1

Speaker: _____ Speech: _____ Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

ORGANIZATION & CONTENT

EXPECTATIONS

Effective Introduction Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Gained attention, clearly stated thesis, stated relevance, and previewed main points

Main Points Logically Organized Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Clear organizational pattern – Followed previewed order

Main Points Elaborated Clearly Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Ideas well developed – Subpoints support main ideas – Examples and explanations used as necessary – Balance of time to main points

Clearly Focused Ideas Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Stayed on topic – Avoided rambling and unnecessary repetition – Clearly either informative or persuasive

Clear movement between ideas Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Transition and/or signposts used appropriately

Main Points Supported by Credible Research Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Effectively Integrated Research – Appropriate and credible research used – All main points supported by research

Used Required Number of Sources Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___

Evidence Cited Correctly Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Orally cited sources' author, source, and date

Effective Conclusion Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Restated thesis – Reviewed main points – Effectively closed

LANGUAGE & DELIVERY

Appropriate Language Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Used professional and inclusive language appropriate to topic and audience

Vocal Mechanics Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Spoke audibly and clearly at an appropriate rate – Sufficient vocal variety – Avoided disfluencies (e.g., "uh")

Non-Verbal Delivery Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Maintained eye contact – Effectively used gestures to enhance information

Professional Presence Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Bodily movement enhanced information – Not overly reliant on notes – Demonstrated interest and sincerity

Visual Aids (if applicable) Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Appropriate and professional visual aids – Visual aids used effectively

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Time: _____

Final Grade: ___ / ___

Presentation Assessment Form

PAF 19.1

Speaker: _____ Speech: _____ Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

ORGANIZATION & CONTENT

EXPECTATIONS

Effective Introduction Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Gained attention, clearly stated thesis, stated relevance, and previewed main points

Main Points Logically Organized Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Clear organizational pattern – Followed previewed order

Main Points Elaborated Clearly Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Ideas well developed – Subpoints support main ideas – Examples and explanations used as necessary – Balance of time to main points

Clearly Focused Ideas Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Stayed on topic – Avoided rambling and unnecessary repetition – Clearly either informative or persuasive

Clear movement between ideas Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Transition and/or signposts used appropriately

Main Points Supported by Credible Research Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Effectively Integrated Research – Appropriate and credible research used – All main points supported by research

Used Required Number of Sources Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___

Evidence Cited Correctly Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Orally cited sources' author, source, and date

Effective Conclusion Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Restated thesis – Reviewed main points – Effectively closed

LANGUAGE & DELIVERY

Appropriate Language Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Used professional and inclusive language appropriate to topic and audience

Vocal Mechanics Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Spoke audibly and clearly at an appropriate rate – Sufficient vocal variety – Avoided disfluencies (e.g., "uh")

Non-Verbal Delivery Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Maintained eye contact – Effectively used gestures to enhance information

Professional Presence Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Bodily movement enhanced information – Not overly reliant on notes – Demonstrated interest and sincerity

Visual Aids (if applicable) Exceeded Met Nearly met Poorly met Not Met ___ / ___
Appropriate and professional visual aids – Visual aids used effectively

ETSU Communication Studies, 2019

Time: _____

Final Grade: ___ / ___

