



EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

College of Arts and Sciences

Department of Communication and Performance

COMM 2025  
Fundamentals of Communication  
Spring 2021

## Syllabus

### Contact Information

**Instructor:** Erin Messmer

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**Phone:** (423)-439-6519

**Office:** Campus Center Building, Room 104

### Instructor Availability

Due to COVID-19, I will be working from home this semester. The best way to reach me is by email. I will be happy to meet with you virtually by appointment via Zoom. Email me if you would like to meet and we will set up a time.

### Meetings and Location

Location: Virtual, via Zoom. A link will be posted to D2L for each meeting.

Class Meeting Schedule: See schedule for dates and times of meetings.

### Online Course Information

All material will be presented and turned in using the D2L platform. You will need to use Zoom to complete synchronous class meetings and speaking assignments. You should have a Zoom account through ETSU and can access it on D2L.

All material will be available on a week-to-week basis. The course is **not** self-paced, and assignments will be due on designated dates.

### 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 Information

### Credit Hours

This course is worth 3 credit hours.

### Course Description and Purpose

An introduction to the primary areas of study in the communication discipline. Emphasis is on developing communication competence and understanding communication processes. Topics covered include public speaking, interpersonal communication, and group communication.

### Course Goals

This course aims to teach you how to do the following things:

- (1) Recognize communication as a science, a process, and the foundation for all learning;
- (2) Prepare and deliver effective oral presentations;
- (3) Learn and apply research skills;
- (4) Demonstrate verbal and nonverbal competencies;
- (5) Display and understanding, appreciation, and application of fundamental communication principles.

### Course Learning Outcome

Through course assignments and lectures, you should be able to do the following by the end of the semester:

- (1) Understand and apply communication theories to the areas of interpersonal, intrapersonal, group, and public communication;
- (2) Demonstrate verbal and nonverbal communication competencies in listening, message construction, and message presentation;
- (3) Assess different communication events/situations and identify communication behaviors appropriate to each;
- (4) Display and understanding, appreciation, and application of fundamental communication principles;
- (5) Make responsible communication choices that are mindful of human diversity (e.g. age, ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexual orientation);
- (6) Exhibit an acceptable level of competence as a communicator;
- (7) Demonstrate research competency to develop oral presentations;
- (8) Prepare and deliver effective oral presentations.

## Course Requirements

### Textbooks and Materials

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](#).

We will also be using supplemental readings and videos during the semester. All materials will be provided to you on D2L.

## Technical Requirements

You should have computer access to Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, and an Adobe PDF program to view some documents. You should have access to a webcam and microphone, as well as a video player such as Quicktime, and speakers. You will also be accessing your ETSU email and D2L regularly and will need know how to work your Zoom account.

## Course Assignments, Policies, and Expectations

### Classroom and Communication Policies

#### Email Communication

All emails should be sent from your ETSU email address, as stated in ETSU policy. Emails should be professional. They need to include a greeting, your course and section number, and a signature. Please check spelling and grammar prior to sending your message. Give me 24 hours to respond to your original email. If I have not responded after that time frame, please email me again. **I check email from 8:15 AM-4:30 PM during the work week and periodically on the weekends.** Emails sent outside of that time frame will be tended to the next business day.

#### Diversity in the Classroom

I and this class environment recognize and affirm the importance of diversity. You will be interacting with people who have different thoughts, beliefs, and backgrounds than you. It is expected that you be respectful of these differences and that you truly listen to your classmates. Discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and other identities **will not be tolerated.**

If you experience any discrimination in this class at the hands of a classmate, please let me know. I am here to listen to and support you.

#### Attendance and Participation

Attendance in this class is important. You are expected to check D2L regularly and complete your assignments on-time. You are also expected to attend our virtual class meetings to further your learning and communication/connection with me and your classmates. If you have any serious situations happening that will interfere with your attendance this semester, let me know in advance.

If you miss more than three classes, we will set up an appointment to discuss your course progress to help ensure your success in the class.

### Departmental Presentation Day Policy

You are expected to be present on Presentation Days. The absence policy for those days is as follows:

- Foreseeable absences should be arranged with me in advance. "Foreseeable" includes university-approved absences (athletic obligations) or court dates. These absences must come with proper documentation (e.g. schedule of classes to be missed signed by pertinent athletic director) and must be approved by me before the missed class.
- 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).

This includes virtual attendance. You will be assigned a day to attend a Zoom meeting and perform your speech. If you aren't able to attend that meeting due to the above unforeseen circumstances, you will need to follow the above policy.

### Group Work Policy

When working with a group for the team debate at the end of the semester, it is critical that you participate so you and the group can be successful. If you are experiencing difficulties with a member of your group (i.e. not hearing back from them, no effort in helping create the speeches/projects, etc.), **your team may choose to fire the problematic team member at least 4 full days before your assignment is due.** Telling me about difficulties later than that or after the assignment has been done is not helpful and will not result in any action being taken.

If you decide to fire a team member, the following action must be taken:

- (1) You must provide me with evidence of the team member's lack of participation (i.e. unanswered emails, text messages, group chats, etc.). Evidence should come from a series of events (i.e. missing one meeting, not responding to one message, having a circumstance that limits participation such as illness/death in the family/etc. is not sufficient enough for firing someone). You must document what events have happened leading to the group's decision to fire the team member (i.e. meetings unattended, unanswered emails and other communications, etc.) and turn that into me.
- (2) If I deem the evidence to be sufficient for firing, you will contact the team member (copy me on the email), present the evidence to them, and let them know the group has chosen to fire them.
- (3) Any fired team members will have to organize an individual debate with me. It is the fired team member's responsibility to set up this alternative debate. I will not reach out/contact them to set it up.

### Testing Policy

All tests will be taken on D2L. They will be open for the duration of the week (Monday-Sunday) and will close at 11:59 PM on the Sunday they are due. Once opened, you will have one hour to complete the test. You will have one attempt to complete the test.

### Late and Missing Submission Policy

The reality is that life is complicated, and things happen. Ideally, you should be as prepared as possible and submit your work on time. However, computers have glitches, people get sick, childcare falls through, etc. I get it...I've been there.

So, the late work policy is pretty simple. If you are turning something in late, **email me and let me know.** You have **3 days from the due date** to submit the assignment. *No questions asked, no points deducted.* Submissions after this 3-day period will only be accepted at my discretion. For example, I won't accept an outline that you are submitting two months late because you forgot to turn it in. However, I will consider providing more of an extension on an assignment if an urgent medical matter is happening and you communicate with me about it the week the assignment is due.

Keep in mind, however, **the sooner you turn in an assignment, the better.** For example, if you turn in a rough draft outline late, we will already be moving onto presenting debates. That won't be enough time for me to give you adequate feedback and you to make edits for your presentation. So, it is in your best interest to submit your work on time.

## Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism, misrepresentation, fabrication, and/or cheating are not tolerated at any academic institution. This class is no exception. Any such infraction will result in an automatic 0/F on the assignment, as well as a report to the Dean's Office. You can read more about ETSU's Academic Misconduct Policy [here](#).

## Assignments and Submission Guidelines

### Interpersonal Interview: 25 points

For this assignment, you will conduct an interview with your class advisor. Use the information from the interviewing lecture to assist you in building and asking your questions.

- 5 points- 5 self-written questions. Use your ETSU 1020 interview form to interview your advisor and ask an additional 5 questions which you create.
- 20 points- Write a 1-2 page paper discussing how your interview went and incorporating at least 2 concepts from our discussion about interviewing. Do not review what was said. Rather, review the process of the interview.

Detailed information will be given in class and posted to D2L.

### Small Group Project: 30 points

You will be assigned to a group of 4-5 people. Your group will be given a case study to analyze and create a solution for. The point breakdown of the assignment is as follows:

- 5 points- Group contract that each member has contributed to, setting the groundwork for being a good group member
- 15 points- Each group member will contribute to a discussion board thread that works through your decision-making process
- 10 points- Provide your final decision to the class via Zoom

### Informative Speech: 115 points

This speech will be 4-5 minutes long and will have a minimum of four sources cited verbally. You will inform your audience about a topic of your choosing. You will submit an outline and works cited page in APA format.

- Topic Submission- 5 points
- Rough Draft Submission- 10 points
- Speech- 70 points
- Outline- 20 points
- Works Cited Page- 10 points

### Persuasive Speech: 115 points

This speech will be 4-5 minutes long and will have a minimum of four sources cited verbally. You will pick a topic of your choosing to persuade the audience on. You will submit an outline and works cited page in APA format.

- Topic Submission- 5 points
- Rough Draft Submission- 10 points
- Speech- 70 points
- Outline- 20 points

- Works Cited Page- 10 points

### **Peer Evaluations: 20 points**

You will complete a peer evaluation of a classmate's speech using the form provided on D2L. Peer evaluations are used to assess a speech, providing feedback to the speakers. You will be assigned a classmate to complete an evaluation. You may write it while listening to their speech via Zoom using the form provided to you on D2L.

I will submit the Zoom link to each speech on the D2L Discussion Board. You will submit the completed evaluation to the Discussion Board titled "**Peer Evaluation of [Name of Partner].**" All parts of the form must be completed and thoroughly answered to receive full credit.

All peer ballots are worth 10 points each.

### **Tests: 150 points**

There will be three tests this semester. Discussions about chapters covered and question-type will occur beforehand.

- Test 1: 50 points
- Test 2: 50 points
- Final Exam: 50 points

### **Discussion Board Posts: 20 points**

There will be 4 discussion board posts this semester, each worth 5 points. You will create an original post for each, as well as engage with classmates by responding to their posts. Original posts should be at least 3-5 sentences long and you should respond to **at least** two classmate's posts with 2-3 sentence responses.

You should work on these assignments throughout the week that they are due, rather than waiting until the last minute to participate. Assignments must be completed fully, as described by the instructor, to receive full credit.

### **Speech Assessments: 20 points**

You will watch two speeches (links will be provided to you via D2L) and will complete an assessment (form provided on D2L) of each.

### **Plagiarism Module: 5**

You will study a module on citations and plagiarism and will complete a quiz to assess your knowledge of the material. You must make an 80% or higher to receive full credit for the assignment. You will have multiple attempts to complete the assignment.

### **Extra Credit**

Extra credit may or may not be offered over the course of the semester. Any extra credit opportunities will have deadlines and will add points to your final point total, not your final average.

### **Grading Policy**

Your final grade will be calculated out of 500 points. To calculate your grade, add your final points at the end of the semester and divide that number by 500. The first two numbers after the decimal

point indicate your average. If a 0.5 or higher number follows those two numbers, your average will be rounded up. Don't forget that absences may affect your final average.

A grade of FN is given when a student has zero attendance.

## 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.](#)

#### **Counseling Services**

If you find yourself feeling weary, anxious, overwhelmed, or depressed during the semester, I highly encourage you to contact the Counseling Center. They can provide you with a variety of helpful options. Call them at (423)-439-3333, or [visit their website](#).

#### **Undergraduate Student Success Specialist**

The USSS office can assist you in many of the stresses of being a student. They can direct you to many of our campus resources. Call them at (423)-439-5641, or [visit their website](#) 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](mailto: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 [ETSU syllabus attachment](#) includes important material such as permits and overrides, advisement, hours, dates and other ETSU information.

### ETSU Catalogs

[Current Undergraduate Catalog](#)

[Current Graduate Catalog](#)

### Inclement Weather Policy

In the instance of inclement weather, we [will follow university protocol](#). I will email you to let you know our class plans. You are responsible for checking your ETSU email and following through with those plans. In the case of snow days, I may upload an audio/video lecture to D2L to avoid changing our class schedule. You are responsible for listening to the content of that lecture.