

<b>Instructor:</b> Jessica Collier CMS 306M	<b>Class Time &amp; Location:</b> T/Th 11-12:30pm CMA 6.152	<b>Email:</b> Via Canvas & jrcollier @utexas.edu	<b>Office Hours:</b> Tuesdays in CMA 5.160 9:30 – 11am & by appointment
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# PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

## Course Goals

The major aims of this course are to make you a more effective and professional communicator, analytical thinker, and critical listener. Throughout the semester, you will study the theories and principles of effective communication, practice applying these principles in a variety of assignments, and critique the performances of other speakers. By the end of the semester, you should be able to plan and prepare professional meetings and presentations; deliver a well-organized speech; analyze and adapt to various audiences; and adjust to different speaking situations, purposes, and contexts.

## Required Course Materials

*Professional Communication Skills*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition (2018). Jessica L. Ford, Kristin Stimpson, and John A. Daly (Eds.). Boston, MA: Pearson. **Hold on to the access code pamphlet shrink wrapped with the text.** This will give you access to the media component, which includes a wide array of resources such as sample student speeches, interviews with UT faculty on professional communication issues, researching and outlining tools, and chapter quizzes to help familiarize you with important communication concepts.

*Recommended:* A thumb drive for PowerPoint presentations and other electronic documents.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

We will explore the various contexts of professional communication through the following assignments. Additional instructions (including the length of presentations, required visual aids, outlines to turn in, etc.) are found in your workbook, along with worksheets your instructor may ask you to turn in to accompany lessons and assignments.

Please note: assignment requirements (e.g. length of presentations, types of visual aids required, etc.) are at the instructor's discretion and may differ somewhat from the workbook. Please confirm requirements with your instructor.

## *Speech Assignments (44% of Final Grade)*

1. **Team Presentation**: For this assignment, you will acquire the skills necessary for decision making and problem solving processes; interaction with audiences; planning, organizing, and facilitating meetings; anticipating and utilizing audience feedback; and working effectively in team contexts. **NOTE: all team members will receive the same grade for the presentation.** Because team members must count upon one another for success, you are expected to contribute and participate to the best of your ability in your team project. While your participation during preparation of this assignment will not be monitored by your instructor, if allegations are raised and subsequent investigation reveals a member habitually missed meetings, arrived unprepared and/or failed to complete work, then a substantial penalty will be imposed. This assignment is worth a **total of 30 points**. On your presentation day, please tear out and bring to class the instructor evaluation sheet and the peer evaluations from your workbook.
2. **Informative Presentation**: For this assignment you will learn to organize, clarify, refine, and deliver informative messages. This assignment is worth a **total of 60 points**. On your presentation day, please tear out and bring to class the instructor evaluation sheet and the peer evaluations from your workbook.
3. **Persuasive Presentation**: For this assignment you will learn to critically construct, evaluate, and deliver persuasive arguments through various appeals and reasoning. You are required to give a persuasive *policy* speech, in which you argue for an ethical course of action. This assignment is worth a **total of 60 points**. On your presentation day, please tear out and bring to class the instructor evaluation sheet and the peer evaluation from your workbook.
4. **Impromptu Speech**: For this assignment, you will use what you have learned about audience analysis, language use, and organization to construct and deliver an impromptu speech. This assignment is worth **30 points**. On your presentation day, please tear out and bring to class the instructor evaluation sheet.

## *Written Assignments (15% of Final Grade)*

1. **Team Contract**: Before you begin your group work, you are required to develop a team contract that outlines how will you approach working together with your teammates. This is an important exercise in becoming ethical professional communicators. Your contract will address your standards for work quality, attitude, and commitment to the project. **This is worth 10 points and is due to your instructor typed and double-spaced.**

2. **Team Evaluation Essay**: You are required to watch the recording of your team presentation and provide an individual written critique based upon your observations and recollections of the assignment. Detailed instructions for how to write these responses are included in your textbook. *Each member of your team will complete this assignment individually.* **This is worth 10 points due to the additional requirements and length of this paper.** <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
3. **Ethics Unwrapped Module**: As we develop our communication skills, it is important to recognize our responsibility to be ethical communicators. You will complete an online module and discussion on Canvas that is devoted to evaluating ethical issues rationally. **This assignment is worth 20 points.** <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
4. **Sample Informative Speech Evaluation Assignment**: Before<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> you deliver your informative speech, you will view a sample speech delivered by a 306M student from a previous semester. This sample speech will be viewed on Canvas. Your evaluation of the sample speech will be **worth 10 points.** <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
5. **Informative Speech Evaluation**: After your informative presentation, you must watch your speech video uploaded onto UT Box. Using the questions on page 255 in your textbook, you will provide a written critique based upon your observations. Your instructor will provide you with the details on completing this assignment, **worth 5 points.**
6. **Persuasive Speech Evaluation**: After your persuasive speech, you must watch your speech video on UT Box. Using the questions on page 371 in your textbook, you will provide a written critique based upon your observations. Your instructor will provide you with the details on completing the assignment, **worth 5 points.**

### *Quizzes and Exams (36% of Final Grade)*

1. **Chapter Quizzes**: Your instructor will ask you to complete chapter quizzes for homework. These quizzes are an opportunity for you to keep up with your readings and to familiarize yourself with the testing format of this course. The quizzes are accessible through Canvas (you have an access code in your workbook). After you enter your access code in CMS 306M course on Canvas, select “Chapter Media and Quizzes” from the menu. Then select the folder of the chapter you wish to access. Click on the “Quiz” link. Questions are randomized, and quizzes are NOT timed. No make-ups will be granted. Quizzes are worth a total of **30 points**: There are 15 quizzes, two questions per quiz, and 1 point per question. <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
2. **Exams**: There will be two exams during the course of the semester. Refer to the course schedule for exam times and material covered. Your instructor will provide a review sheet prior to each exam. Each exam is worth **60 points.** <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

## Participation and Extra Credit (5% of Final Grade)

1. **In-Class Participation**: You are expected to participate in discussion, oral/written critiques of speeches, practice/improvisation speeches, and other activities. Your instructor may also ask you to complete additional written work, video viewings, and other related exercises outside of class. **No make-ups will be granted for participation activities.** Participation is worth a **total of 20 points**.
2. **Peer Evaluations**: All assignments will be evaluated and critiqued by the audience. You are expected to share both positive and negative feedback in the form of constructive comments. Written evaluations will be assigned on presentation days and are **due at the end of the speech day (late critiques will not be accepted)**. You must put your name on the peer evaluations to receive credit. You will find peer evaluations in your textbook/workbook that you should tear out and <sup>[1]</sup>bring with you to class on presentation days.
3. **Extra Credit**: Extra credit will be offered for your participation in departmental research projects, **up to four**<sup>[1]</sup>**points**. Participation in extra credit projects beyond the allotted maximum of four points will not be considered. Extra credit is to encourage student involvement in communication issues, not simply bolster grades. If your primary goal is to raise your grade in this course, do not rely on extra credit. Your time will be better invested in studying the material from lecture and the reading assignments. Late requests for extra credit, like late assignments, will not be considered.

**NOTE:** Research opportunities can be viewed online through the Research Participation System available on the CMS website at <https://commstudies.utexas.edu/undergraduate/extra-credit-opportunities>. You should check these postings regularly to sign up for different research opportunities. These extra-credit opportunities will occur throughout the semester and are not guaranteed at any specific time (thus, don't wait until the last minute!). They are on a first-come-first-served basis.

At the end of the semester, confirmation will be sent to your instructor to guarantee you receive your points. You can keep track of your points online through the Research Participation System. **For 306M, 1 research participation credit = 4 class points.**

## *Personal Grade Tracker*

Assignment	Maximum Points	Points Earned
Team Contract	20 points	
Team Speech	30 points	
Team Evaluation	10 points	
Ethics Unwrapped Module	20 points	
Exam One	60 points	
Informative Speech Sample Evaluation	10 points	
Informative Speech	60 points	
Informative Speech Self Evaluation	5 points	
Persuasive Policy Speech	60 points	
Persuasive Speech Self Evaluation	5 points	
Impromptu Speech	30 points	
Chapter Quizzes	30 points	
Exam 2	60 points	
Participation	20 points	
Optional Extra Credit	4 points <b>max</b>	
<b>TOTAL COURSE POINTS</b>	<b>410 points (414 with extra credit)</b>	

## Grading Scale

Final Grade	Percentage Points	Course Points	Quality of Work
A	89.5%-100%	367-410	Far exceeds all standards
B	79.5%-89.49%	326-366	Exceeds standards
C	69.5%-79.49%	285-325	Fulfilled all standards
D	59.5%-69.49%	244-284	Fulfilled most standards
F	59.49% and below	0-243	Haven't met standards yet

### A Note about Grades

The Communication Studies Department holds the same set of standards for all students in this course. Instructors are trained to help you aim for (and ideally reach) a certain level of presentation skill. Some students will develop the skills taught in this class sooner than others (just like some students are stronger in math, and others in history, so some are stronger in communication studies). The final grade in this class is cumulative, not merely reflective of a student's work during the latter portion of the semester. Just like in any other course, sometimes a student may struggle at the beginning, develop stronger skills throughout the course of the semester, and still earn an overall grade of a "D," "C," or "B." It is important to remember hard work does not always result in a student's desired grade.

**Discussion of Graded Assignments:** University procedure for a grade contestation begins with a student and the instructor. Success in this course requires thoughtful self-evaluation of your performance. A student wishing to contest a grade **must** present his or her instructor with a **typed** (either e-mail or paper), well thought out case regarding the evaluation **within one week of having received the evaluation**, but **not before 24 hours** have passed. The argument must be related to the assignment as presented, and based on how it compares with the criteria for the assignment (not how it compares with someone else's work or how it will affect a student's GPA). Once the student has submitted his or her argument to the instructor, the instructor will respond in writing within 7 days. Student and instructor then may meet face-to-face to view the speech in question, and discuss ways to improve future papers/presentations. Instructors are available for questions or if you need extra assistance outside of class. Please schedule an appointment during an instructor's office hours.

NOTE: This class will be different from other courses you have taken because there is a large experiential element. Therefore, you do a significant amount of course learning through presentation, observation, and evaluation of in-class exercises and performances. You will develop communication skills by practicing them.

## Course Policies

**Attendance:** Attendance is required. You cannot do public speaking without a public. Because of the unique nature of this class, grades and classroom attendance are closely related. Much of what you will learn will be through experimentation as well as observation. Given this, attendance as well as participation, (exercises and discussions) becomes an essential part of professional communication. You are expected to attend every class period. A **roll sheet** will be passed around each day. It is your responsibility to sign in (**being present but not signing the roll is the same as being absent**). **The following policy will be enforced in this class:**

1. If you are in a T/Th section, your first TWO unexcused absences are without penalty. If you are in a M/W/F section, your first THREE unexcused absences are without penalty. An exception to this policy is presentation and exam days. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the information that was covered from one of your classmates.
2. After your allotted excused absences, your next absence will lower your final course grade by 4 points. For example, if you have 296 points, you will be reduced to 292 points.
3. Each subsequent unexcused absence will lower your final course average by four points. Failure to attend class on a presentation day in which you are not scheduled to present will result in an automatic *5-point deduction* for each missed day from your total points at the end of the semester.

The only absences recognized as excused are those noted by the University. For a listing of University-approved absences, please visit:

<http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/academic-policies-and-procedures/attendance/>

Legitimate excuses for missing a class include such matters as an illness or serious injury, death in the family, medical emergency, auto accident, required court appearance, and marriage or divorce proceedings that directly involve you. **You must provide the instructor with documentation for such matters no later than one week after the absence.** Just so we are clear, work conflicts, being delayed by traffic, trips you had planned before/during/after signing-up for this class, being tired from previous evening activities, roommate issues, and faulty alarm clocks are **not** the type of events that fall into the category of excused absences. Use your three free absences for such events. If you have appointments or obligations that occur regularly during this class, drop the class.

**If you have an unexcused absence on an exam day or the day you are assigned to present, you will receive a zero on that exam/assignment. Failure to attend class on a presentation day in which you are not scheduled to present will result in a *5-point deduction* for each missed day from your total points at the end of the semester. For example, if you are absent on two speech days, where you are not presenting, you will lose 10 points from the 410 possible.**

Given the importance of participation in this course, should you begin to struggle at any point during the semester due to personal reasons (unforeseen events like family emergencies, a significant illness, etc.), please speak with your academic advisor. The University has many options to help students, ranging from Q-drops and reduced workloads (reducing the number of

hours you are enrolled in) to incompletes (this option is NOT available if you are failing a course) and withdrawals. The sooner you let your advisor know when something is wrong, the sooner (and better) the University can help you.

**Religious Holy Days:** A student wishing to observe a religious holy day must notify the instructor in writing at least 14 days prior to the classes scheduled on dates the student will be absent. For religious holy days that fall within the first two weeks of the semester, notice should be given on the first day of the semester. Other absences may be excused according to University policy. If you must miss a class, an examination, an assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

**The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation. The University of Texas at Austin offers support services for students with documented physical or psychological disabilities. A student with a disability should visit with her instructor after requesting reasonable accommodations through the Service for Students with Disabilities: 512.471.6259 or <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>.

## Important Notes for Class Success

Readings must be completed **on the day they are assigned** on the course schedule. Be sure to read the book and take notes while reading. In your textbook/workbook, there are blank leaflet pages for you to take notes from your readings as well as from lecture. Lectures are intended to *complement* (not duplicate) that information.

**Written Work:** (presentation preparation, self-evaluations, etc.) must be typed. Failure to type any written portion of an assignment results in a 10% point deduction off the whole point value of that assignment. Since peer evaluations are due at the end of class they may be hand written. Any assignments completed in class as part of class participation may also be hand written.

**Deadlines** will be announced by your instructor. Assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the day they are due. **Assignments turned in after class on the due date are considered late. Late assignments will be penalized. No assignments will be accepted after one week beyond the due date.** In addition, the tentative course schedule does not allow flexibility in rescheduling presentations. Don't miss class on a day you are scheduled to speak. Unexcused absences on presentation or exam days will earn a grade of zero; **no make-ups will be granted.** If you miss an in-class activity or participation points, you will earn a zero for that assignment (unless you have a university-excused absence).

**Changes** to the schedule may be made at your instructor's discretion and if circumstances require. It is your responsibility to note these changes when announced.

**Bringing Visual Aid Backups:** You will be required to design and deliver presentations using Power Point software. While every effort is made to keep the equipment in working condition, on occasion the equipment may not work properly. You are therefore encouraged to bring backup overhead slides to all of your presentations. In the event of problems, these backups will allow you to complete the assignment.

**Classroom Civility:** People and ideas must be treated with respect. Please avoid disruptive behavior that makes it difficult to accomplish our mutual objectives. \*\*\***Please remember to turn off all cell phones or other noisy devices before entering the classroom each day. Needless to say, they are highly disruptive during lectures and presentations.**\*\*\* Distracting behavior during speech days (i.e., working on laptops, or talking) may result in a reduction of points on your own speech. On presentation days, please arrive on time or early and, if you're late, please wait outside until the first presentation is completed.

## Academic Integrity

**Plagiarism** is a serious offense in this course. Using the words and ideas of others is borrowing something from those individuals. It is always necessary to identify the original source of supporting information; you must cite the source of any material, quoted or paraphrased, used in your presentation. The absence of this documentation constitutes *plagiarism* – a serious academic and professional offense. Proper documentation requires a bibliography of any outside texts you have consulted including both traditional sources and on-line sources.

Your responsibility as a speaker is to distinguish between what are *your* thoughts and ideas and what is not, and to credit those who have contributed to your presentation. Putting your name on a piece of work indicates the work is *yours* and the praise or criticism is due to *you* and no one else. Putting your name on a piece of work in which any part is not yours, is *plagiarism* – unless the borrowed thought or wording is clearly marked and the work is fully identified. Keep in mind plagiarism is a form of theft. Taking words, phrasing, or sentence structure, or any other element of another person's ideas, and using them as if they were your own, is stealing. Simply paraphrasing the work of another without acknowledging the information source is also plagiarism. Merely restating another individual's ideas in different words does not make the ideas yours. ALL presentations are to be your original work.

**Using speeches or presentations from previous semesters or other classes is still considered plagiarism. Unauthorized collaboration on presentations (with a student in your section or another student in a different section) is not allowed without prior approval from your instructor.**

If you are caught being dishonest, you will be given an "F" for the assignment and/or the course depending on the severity of the offense. To avoid getting into trouble for academic dishonesty, please visit the following websites and read-up:

[http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint\\_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php)

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/>

Please understand instructors do not tolerate plagiarism and will fail you for it, even if your plagiarism is unintentional. As a professor in our department often reminds students, “When you started at UT you signed a document that said you would uphold the UT Honor Code. Inclusive of that code is an understanding of plagiarism and what is and is not permissible. Hence, even if you cheat without full knowledge of doing so, you can still receive a failing grade.” These standards may seem subtle, so feel free to ask if you have questions or concerns.

**FERPA:** This course adheres to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. For more information please refer to the University website at:

<https://registrar.utexas.edu/students/records/ferpa>