Foundations of Communication

Course Description: This course examines a breadth of topics fundamental to the study of communication and works to improve students’ communication skills in three primary contexts: interpersonal relationships, group/teamwork, and presentational speaking.

Learning Objectives:
1) **Apply principles of effective oral, written, and visual** communication to interpersonal, small group, and audience-centered communication contexts;
2) **Work with a group to gain experience in collaboration** and meeting shared goals;
3) **Engage in organized research processes for the purpose of evaluating and synthesizing information** to support ideas; and
4) **Deliver presentations using oral, written, and visual evidence** that supports specific purposes and includes messages tailored to specific audiences.

The content will address the following Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board categories:

- **Critical Thinking:**
  - Generate and communicate ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information.
- **Communication Skills:**
  - Develop, interpret, and express ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
- **Teamwork:**
  - Integrate different viewpoints as a member of a team.
  - Work with others to support and accomplish a shared goal.
- **Personal Responsibility:**
  - Evaluate choices and actions, and relate consequences to decision making.

Required Materials:

Computer with Internet access and word processing software


REVEL: online supplementary material provided by the textbook publisher.

<table>
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<th>Major Course Requirements:</th>
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<td>Group Project</td>
<td>200 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Reflection</td>
<td>200 points</td>
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<td>Individual Persuasive Assignment</td>
<td>200 points</td>
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### Interpersonal Reflection—200 points
You will be asked to show your ability to apply course concepts and theories to face-to-face conversations in which you were a participant to help you make more sense of those events, to help you understand why you and others communicate in certain ways, and to help you be proactive in future interactions. This assignment will require submission of 3 preliminary summaries and a final reflection of at least 5 full pages, double-spaced, exclusive of an APA reference page. You will be required to find and cite a minimum of 4 sources (1 may be the textbook + 3 journal articles) for this assignment.

### Collaborative Informative Presentation—200 points
Students will work in groups to develop a 20-minute presentation related to a topic from large lecture. This assignment supports the university’s mission of preparing graduates for lifelong learning and responsible citizenship in a global community. This assignment will require the groups to produce outlines, research documents, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, visual aids, and a presentation. Project pieces may include various due dates. This assignment grade will be carried across the FYS and large lecture classes. Projects will be presented at the FYS end-of-semester research event.

### Individual Persuasive Presentation—200 points
You will be asked to develop a 4-6 minute persuasive presentation based on a set of criteria to be explained by the instructor (this will also integrate material from your large lecture). This assignment will require you to construct an outline, a research journal and research synthesis chart, and a presentation using a slide-based visual aid. You will also give and receive peer feedback on this presentation.

### Tests—200 points
There will be an online test at the end of every unit. These will be considered open-book, open-note, but limitations will be set in Blackboard to minimize time spent searching for answers and/or collaboration.

### Participation—200 points
Throughout each unit you will be asked to complete supplemental activities designed to help you engage with your classmates and gain a deeper understanding of course material.

### Final Grading Scale: This scale is based on a point system and not a percentage; therefore, grades will not be rounded up. If a student earns 799 points they receive a “C” in the course not a “B”. All grades are final unless a miscalculation has occurred. Grades will be regularly updated on Blackboard throughout the session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1000-900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>899-800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>799-700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>699-600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>599 and below</td>
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Students will be held to a high standard of performance in all sections. To receive an "A" in this course, your work must be significantly better than that which passes for acceptable work. Do not assume that you can do simply what is assigned to receive a high grade in this course. Doing "what is assigned" gets you only a "C." An "A" requires considerably more work. This course is academically rigorous and time-consuming, and it will
require a lot of you to do well. You must do all the work that is required of you according to the instructions provided in order to be successful in this class.

The instructor will not hold grade negotiation conversations with students. Often students state that they “need” a particular grade in a class in order to maintain scholarships, financial aid, membership on teams or in organizations, etc., and ask for extra points to raise their grades. This is unfair to the other students in the course who have earned their grades without being offered extra points, and it also detracts from the integrity of the grading scale in the course. An A holds little to no value when it is given to students who did not submit A quality work. It hurts your future job prospects when employers see As on your transcript, expect you to deliver A work using related skills, and you can’t do it because you didn’t actually earn those As (for further information, see Grade Appeals.)

Classroom Behavioral Expectations:

Each student is expected to show their classmates and instructor the utmost respect at all times. Students will be treated with the highest levels of courtesy and respect and that behavior should be reciprocated. There will be zero tolerance for classroom disruption, which is a hindrance to your peers and the instructors as we engage in the learning process. Some examples of such behaviors that you should refrain from are:

- Activities that distract students and the instructor from normal classroom procedures, such as talking, disruptive eating, texting, sleeping, etc.;
- packing up to leave before class is over;
- working, emailing, Facebooking, messaging, and other forms of computer use – your instructor may ask you to close your computer or stop the inappropriate use;
- leaving cell phones and other devices on or answering them during class, arrangements can be made if there is an emergency, this includes texting, and your phone may be confiscated until the end of the class period if you are using it;
- racist, sexist, homophobic, or otherwise offensive comments or behaviors to classmates and/or university employees;
- discussing, suggesting, or promoting behaviors that violate college policy in assignments or classroom discussion;
- wearing hats or sunglasses or chewing gum/candy while giving a speech;
- talking during lecture or while a classmate is giving a speech.

Communication:

The majority of the course materials will be accessed via Blackboard, so it is ESSENTIAL that you regularly log in and check the course page for any announcements, course changes, course materials, etc. Additionally, you MUST check your TAMUCC email account AT LEAST once per day. Essential course information will be sent via email, and it is your responsibility for reading those messages to keep yourself updated. You are expected to communicate primarily via email with questions/concerns about the course. You may generally expect an email response within 48 hours. Failure to check Blackboard and/or TAMUCC email is not an excuse for missing class, assignments, and/or lacking class information.
For any technology related issues, please contact the IT help desk at (361) 825-2825. Your instructor, although knowledgeable about course-related technology, is unable to assist you with account lockouts, expired passwords, incompatible equipment and/or software, etc. Please contact the IT help desk FIRST with these issues, and notify your instructor if you are unable to access course materials after contacting IT.

Regardless of whether you agree with a grade or whether you are frustrated by the difficulty of an exam or any other issue, you must behave professionally at all times, per University policy.

- When emailing, please use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Do not use forms of spelling that are commonly accepted when texting with your friends.
- When emailing, introduce yourself as a student and provide your name.
- When emailing OR in person, you will demonstrate basic common courtesy and adhere to accepted norms of politeness.

Attendance and Late Work:

Regular attendance is essential for your success in this class. Through in-class activities and demonstrations you will learn to apply course material to your assignments and to enhance your communication skills. If you are not in class you will miss these opportunities. Any missed speeches or in-class activities CANNOT be made up, regardless of reason for missing.

Please arrive on time for COMM 1311. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class. If you arrive more than 30 minutes after the start of class, you will be counted absent for that class period.

You are allotted 3 absences (there are no “excused” or unexcused” absences) during the semester without penalty, meaning you can use these days for illnesses, mental health days, family emergencies, etc. It is highly suggested that you plan to use your 3 absences wisely (i.e. save them for a trip you have planned, keep them as backup days in case you should become ill). ANY class that is missed counts as an absence (e.g., traveling, job interviews, conference attendance, etc.), unless excused by TAMUCC policies. Classes missed during the first week of class WILL count against your 3 allotted absences. You are responsible for arriving on campus by the first day and time of your classes.

If you miss more than 3 days of class, you will be assessed a 10 point penalty for each absence over the 3. In other words, if you miss 5 classes, you will lose 20 points off your final point total. You are responsible for contacting a classmate to obtain any missed materials or class notes that resulted from your absence. Also check Blackboard and your TAMUCC email for announcements and/or postings.

There are NO makeup opportunities for missed speeches. Missing a speech (whether due to an absence or a late arrival resulting in missing your speech time) will result in a zero. This includes impromptu speeches. Written assignments (e.g., outlines, worksheets, etc.) may be accepted late at the discretion of the instructor.

Certain absences may be excused based on the following criteria:

- Serious illness or injury resulting in an emergency visit to a physician or hospital that is accompanied by a valid, signed doctor’s note or other official medical document, and results in the student’s physical inability to attend class.

- The death of a family member or friend, which has been reported to the Dean of Students, and is appropriately documented as an official absence.

In order for your instructor to excuse you based on the aforementioned criteria, you must notify the instructor of your personal situation well in advance. For a serious medical situation that leaves you unable to satisfactorily
attend class or complete coursework, you must notify the instructor as soon as physically possible. If you wait until the end of the semester to notify the instructor of a problem that arose earlier in the semester, no accommodations can be retroactively made to help you work through that situation.

Minute medical issues will not be considered excused absences. Colds, sinus infections, coughs, sore throats, etc. are not legitimate reasons for missing class. Your instructors go on about their daily lives while dealing with these issues and the rest of the general population goes to their jobs while dealing with these issues, therefore we expect you can come to class and complete your work while dealing with these issues.

Assignments can be found on the course schedule. It is your responsibility to know what is expected from you each day of class. We do not serve as human planners for you – that is, you must check Blackboard and the course schedule to know what is going on. We are under no obligation to remind you what you need to do to prepare for class.

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All work must be completed and turned in at the end of class on the date it is due. Turning in an assignment on time means no later than the end of class the day it is due. *All formal written work is to be submitted to Blackboard BEFORE class begins on the due date.* If you are going to be absent the day an assignment is due, you must have made previous arrangements with the instructor to turn it in early (or have notified the instructor of an absence that meets the previously mentioned emergency criteria and is accompanied by official documentation). ABSOLUTELY NO assignments will be accepted via email unless you are directed by the instructor to turn something in this way.

*Note: Computer/printer/software malfunction is not a valid excuse for late or missing assignments. The college provides computers that are available for your use and are compatible with most assignments you are given.

Academic Integrity:

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in penalties ranging from a zero on that assignment up to and including a report filed with the Dean of Students.

Academic Advising:

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Dropping a Class:

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. (???) is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.
Grade Appeals:

Students who feel they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website (http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

For grade concerns in this class, students must discuss the issue with the instructor no less than 24 hours after a grade is issued, but no more than up to the date the next major assignment is due. Grade concerns should include specific questions about feedback given, questions about opportunities for improvement on future assignments, and/or evidence that the numeric value of the grade was added up incorrectly. Grade concerns should NOT include whining about how “hard” the grading in the course is, how a student’s grade differs from another’s, or complaints that information on how to complete the assignment wasn’t given. You will be given detailed assignment specifications for each major assignment that include a grade breakdown in the form of a rubric and/or evaluation form. Failure to read and follow these instructions does not constitute an excuse to complain about a grade. You must read everything that is provided for you in this class in order to understand exactly what you are being asked to do for each assignment. Failure to read information is a sure way to do poorly in the class.

Disabilities Accommodations:

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 that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Right of Revision:

This syllabus and the information contained within it are subject to change without notice. The instructor always reserves the right to modify the course at any time.
Schedule of Classes

R 8/25 Course Intro, Comm Process/Models/Competence Chapter 1
T 8/30 Comm & Tech, Principles Chapter 1
R 9/1 Self Awareness Chapter 2
T 9/6 Verbal Chapter 3
R 9/8 Nonverbal Chapter 4
T 9/13 Listening Chapter 5
R 9/15 Diversity Chapter 6, Unit Test 1
T 9/20 Interpersonal, Assign Reflect Chapter 7
R 9/22 Interpersonal Chapter 8
T 9/27 Interpersonal Chapter 8, Unit Test 2
R 9/29 Group, Assign Project Chapter 9
T 10/4 Group Chapter 9
R 10/6 Research, Writing/APA
T 10/11 Workday
R 10/13 Group Chapter 10
T 10/18 Informative Speaking Chapter 14
R 10/20 Workday
T 10/25 Group Presentations
R 10/27 Group Presentations Unit Test 3
T 11/1 Intro to PS, Assign Speech Chapter 11
R 11/3 Topic Selection & AA Chapter 11
T 11/8 Organization, Outlining Chapter 12
R 11/10 Delivery, Visual Aids Chapter 13
T 11/15 Persuasion Chapter 15
R 11/17 Persuasion Chapter 15, Unit Test 4
T 11/22 NO CLASS
R 11/24 NO CLASS
T 11/29 Workday
R 12/1 Persuasive Speeches
T 12/6 Persuasive Speeches
TBA Final Exam Submit Reflection