

Fundamentals of Public Speaking

COMM 1315

Texas A&M University – San Antonio

Fall 2025

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Office hours: M-TH 12:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m. (and by appt.)

Course Description

Introduction to Public Speaking details the history, theory and practice of public speaking with an emphasis placed upon the organization and delivery of informative and persuasive speeches. Further emphasis is given to the reduction of anxieties associated with public speaking. This course meets the standards for the Component Area Option category of course under the core curriculum.

Required Course Materials

Lucas, S. (2025). *The art of public speaking: 2023 release*. McGraw-Hill, LLC.
with Connect Access

Course Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate awareness of self-perception through recognizing diverse perspectives and understanding ethical implications of communication.
2. Cultivate active listening skills.
3. Design intentional messages by practicing audience analysis.
4. Research, develop, and deliver extemporaneous informative and persuasive speeches with effective verbal and nonverbal messages.
5. Develop critical thinking skills through practicing effective group communication.

Grades

Self-Introduction Speech	15%	A = 89.45 - 100
Informative Speech	20%	B = 79.45 - 89.44
Persuasive Speech	20%	C = 69.45 - 79.44
Exams	15%	D = 59.45 - 69.44
Learn Smarts	10%	F = 59.44 and below
In-class Activity/Discussion	10%	
Attendance	10%	

Grades

We will be using Blackboard as our source for recording grades. You are expected to keep up with your own grades. I will not give grades out over the phone or through email. You should know your standing in the course at any time during the semester.

It is the responsibility of the student to drop the course at any time (last day to drop a course is November 14, 2025). I will **NOT** drop you from the course unless you request me to do so by email.

Assignments

You will be expected to develop and deliver 3 oral presentations. Each presentation will have its own requirements. We will be discussing these requirements before each presentation.

Exams

You will be given 4 exams. All exams are multiple choice, true/false, or matching in nature. There are typically 50-60 questions per exam. Each exam will be taken on Connect. The last exam is the final exam and will be cumulative.

Learn Smarts

Each chapter will be given a Learn Smart assignment that is completed on McGraw-Hill's Connect Access. These are student specific and given in "quiz-like" format but are not a quiz, rather a study guide to follow with chapter readings. Each assignment is a "0" or "100" grade. If you complete the assignment on-time you will receive a "100". If you do not complete, partially complete, or are late to submit the Learn Smart, you will receive a "0". These assignments cannot be made up after the due date.

In-class Activities & Discussion

In-class activities are just that. . . in class. Due to the nature of this assignment, these cannot be made up if you miss class (even if it is excused). Grades are reflected as a "0" or "100"; if you participate and are present in class you will receive a "100". Discussions are on Blackboard and can be made up (please see below for details on make-up assignments). These are graded according to assignment instructions.

Make-Up Assignments and Examinations

If you miss a test or presentation, it must be for one of the following types of reasons: death in the family, severe documentable personal illness, etc. If you have an unexcused absence on a day you are scheduled to make a presentation or take a test, you cannot make up that presentation or test. Additionally, because of time constraints, the instructor may elect not to grant make-up assignments for any reason. In order to make-up an examination or presentation, you must submit verifiable documentation to your instructor. If your request is approved, you may take a make-up test or give a presentation on the appointed day. All make-up exams or presentations must be given, for qualified person(s), within 2 days of the absence. Learn Smarts, in-class activities/discussions, and attendance cannot be made up for any reason. You will not receive participation points for the day of absence and will receive a "0" for missed Learn Smarts.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory for every class period. I will be taking attendance every day we meet. You can miss up to 3 days (for any reason) without penalty. After 3 days, 5 points will be taken off your final attendance grade at the end of the semester. Excused absences are only recognized when 3 days have been missed and must be documented. In order to have an absence excused, you must present documentation showing a death, severe personal illness, ect.

Students are also expected to show up ON-TIME for class. For every 3 tardies it will count as an absence and will take away from the 3 days allowed to miss. Tardies are defined as 5+ minutes late for class. Having excessive tardies or absences can lower your final grade a letter grade.

Student Conduct

Appropriate conduct is essential to the effective functioning of the University. University policy defines unacceptable conduct, both academic and non-academic misconduct, and penalties for such behavior in The Student Handbook and The Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, you are expected to participate in a kind and productive way in this course. Any student who is seen as being disruptive or not paying attention in class will be given one warning; after which 10 points will be deducted from the attendance final grade with each subsequent disruption.

Cell phones are expected to be in silent mode during class and will only be used for note taking or in-class activities assigned by the instructor. Any student whose phone rings/dings in class will be confiscated until the end of the class period. If the same student has this issue again, 10 points will be deducted from the FINAL GRADE. No one should be calling or texting you during class. If you have an emergency and need to answer a call or text during class, please communicate that with me prior to class starting.

Additionally, ***I expect full academic integrity with every assignment:***

- I have a ZERO tolerance policy on cheating and/or plagiarism of ANY kind, including the use of AI or Chat GPT to complete your work.
- Academic integrity is a fundamental principle in higher education. The use of AI without proper attribution or ethical considerations constitutes academic dishonesty, which is a violation of the TAMUSA Academic Integrity Policy. Using AI to complete your assignments is not permitted and may be subject to failing the assignment, this course, and/or disciplinary proceedings.
- I utilize TurnItIn software for our submitted assignments, so any student found plagiarizing, cheating, or utilizing AI is subject to failing the assignment, course, and/or other disciplinary actions. This is non-negotiable.
- The best way to avoid plagiarism is to *properly* cite the sources you utilized with the appropriate citation method (using APA format) every time, and to include a References or Works Cited page. Remember, you must also put the information you gathered from your sources into your own words- *you CANNOT copy and paste from a source*

directly into your paper and claim it as your own. We will discuss this thoroughly in class, including proper citation methods, and what constitutes plagiarism.

- AI or Chat GPT may ONLY be used with instructor permission on certain in-class activities. Using AI or Chat GPT for anything else can lead to an automatic zero and is subject to other disciplinary actions as is deemed by university policy. I WILL KNOW if you have not used your own words!

TAMUSA Academic Integrity Policy

Students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty for which a student is subject to penalty includes cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, multiple submissions, misrepresentation of academic records, facilitating academic dishonesty, unfair advantage, violating known safety requirements and ethical misconduct. This includes holding other students to the same standards and reporting any incidents of alleged violation of the honesty policy to the instructor involved or, if necessary, to the appropriate academic department head. All students are responsible for being familiar with the Academic Dishonesty Policy, which may be found in the [Texas A&M University-San Antonio Student Handbook](#).

University policy prescribes serious consequences for acts of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, a grade of 'F' on that one paper or assignment, a failing grade in the course, or possible expulsion from the University. Considering the potential consequences of academic misconduct, it is obviously in students' best interests to avoid even the appearance of such behavior. If a student is ever unclear whether a specific act might constitute academic misconduct, please contact the instructor for an assessment of the situation. All student term papers, and other written assignments are subject to analysis by anti-plagiarism software. The instructor will report ALL instances of real or perceived violations of Academic Integrity.

Instructor Integrity Policy:

At TAMUSA, students and faculty value academic achievement, lifelong learning, diversity, and personal/social responsibility. We embrace our values out of commitment to families, peers, neighbors, and ourselves. Integrity, one of our core values, is characterized by honesty and fairness, and is essential for an open exchange of ideas, and to the collaboration necessary for learning.

In upholding integrity, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on assignments, plagiarism, and collusion through unauthorized collaboration are not part of integrity. Penalties for not following university and instructor policies on integrity in this course is as follows:

1. Any student caught cheating will be given a "0" for the test or assignment for the first offense. On second attempt by same student, a grade of "F" will be given for the course.
2. Any student caught plagiarizing will receive an "F" in the course immediately. No exceptions.

Extra Credit

I DO NOT GIVE EXTRA CREDIT. TAKE CARE OF YOUR GRADES FROM START TO FINISH AND YOU WILL NOT NEED EXTRA CREDIT. NO EXCEPTIONS!

Course Syllabus*

*schedule subject to change	Tuesday	Thursday
Aug. 26 & 28	Introduction	Ch. 1 Communication Model Activity
Sept. 2 & 4	Ch. 2 & CA PRCA Activity	Ch. 3
Sept. 9 & 11	Ch. 4	Ch. 5 & 6
Sept. 16 & 18	Ch. 13	Ch. 10
Sept. 23 & 25	Object Speech	Object Speech
Sept. 30 & Oct. 2	Ch. 7 & 8	Paper Chase /Citing Activity
Oct. 7 & 9	Ch. 9	Ch. 11
Oct. 14 & 16	Ch. 14	Ch. 15
Oct. 21 & 23	Impromptu Activity	Informative Speech
Oct. 28 & Oct. 30	Informative Speech	Informative Speech
Nov. 4 & 6	Informative Speech	Ch. 16
Nov. 11 & 13	Ch. 17	Persuasive Speech
Nov. 18 & 20	Persuasive Speech	Persuasive Speech
Nov. 25 & 27	Work on Speeches	Work on Speeches
Dec. 2 & 4	Persuasive Speech	Persuasive Speech
Dec. 9	Final Exam (on Connect)	

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us <https://www.tamusa.edu/DisabilitySupport-Services/index.html> or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the Tools section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information on SCC services visit <http://tamusa.edu/studentcounseling>

Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331.

Additionally, the TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including support for in-the-moment distress, an anonymous peer-to-peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.

Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com>

More information about Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/about-us/emergency-management/>

Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. NonEmergency (210) 784-1900.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are

disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended by the published Census Date (the first week of class). Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend prior to the published Census Date (the first week of class) will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center" to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics>.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a CARE referral (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/StudentRights-and-Responsibilities/file-a-report.html>) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources.

Office Hours: All faculty with teaching assignments should include regularly scheduled office hours on each syllabus in addition to "by appointment." Please review your appointment letter for the number of weekly office hours you are expected to set. Regularly scheduled office hours should also be posted outside your office door (where applicable).

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots' Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military.va@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided with an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual on our campus and within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees are to be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the University's Civil Rights Officer at 210-784-2061 or titleix@tamusa.edu.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking based on sex, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related sex-based misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide such reasonable modifications to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with temporary medical condition that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K). Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Young Jaguars: can support parenting students with daycare who meet this criteria: Must be enrolled in classes at TAMUSA in the current semester. Must be Pell eligible or a single parent. They serve children ages 3 to 12-years-old. Children must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. youngjaguars@tamusa.edu (210) 784-2636

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university students' rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/documents/Student-Handbook-2022-23.pdf>) or visit the resources available in the OSRR website (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academicintegrity.html>).

Insert ONE of the AI policy options listed below in your syllabi – Select the one you believe is most appropriate for your course. Option 1 - No Use of Generative AI Permitted [Insert Course Number] assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing of any portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and/or using artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT. Use of any AI-generated content in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.

Important Dates: Fall 2025 Regular 16-Week Session

August 25 First day of class

September 1

September 10

November 14 Labor Day Holiday – No classes Census Date Last day to drop with an automatic “W”

November 25 Last day to withdraw from the University

November 26 Study Day – No classes

November 27-29 Thanksgiving Holiday – No classes

December 4 Last day of classes

December 5 Study Day – No classes

December 6-12 Final exams

December 16 Commencement

The complete academic calendar is available online: <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academiccalendar/index.html>