

Fundamentals of Public Speaking

COMM 1315

Texas A&M University – San Antonio

Fall 2026 Online

Instructor: Kelly Fouts

Email: kfouts@tamusa.edu

Phone: (210) 784-2465

Office: CAB 318-B

Office hours: by appointment

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. & Stob, P. (2026). *The art of public speaking: 2025 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

Object Speech	15%	A = 89.45 - 100
Informative Speech	20%	B = 79.45 - 89.44
Persuasive Speech	25%	C = 69.45 - 79.44
Exams	15%	D = 59.45 - 69.44
Learn Smarts	15%	F = 59.44 and below
Discussion	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 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 Nov. 13, 2026). 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. You can find requirements and information for each presentation on Blackboard. The following will be minimum requirements for videotaping your speeches:

VIDEOTAPING YOUR SPEECHES: REQUIREMENTS

When you videotape your speeches and upload them to Blackboard by submitting your YouTube URL, your video must meet the following requirements:

- 1) Videotape yourself doing your speech in front of a live audience (min. 3 adults). Each missing adult audience member will deduct 3 points from your speech grade. Having a live audience is a course requirement. There will not be any exceptions to this. Public speaking requires an audience, which is why it is a requirement. If you do not meet the live 3-adult minimum requirement, your speech will not be graded and will result in an automatic "0". You will not be allowed to resubmit with an audience. Having an audience on FaceTime or Zoom will still count as a live audience.
- 2) Do a video close-up of your AUDIENCE at the beginning of your video, and then turn the video to you for a straight, FULL frontal view of only you.
- 3) Make sure your PowerPoint presentation is visible to your audience while you are presenting, if one is required.
- 4) When videotaping your speech, make sure to tape a FULL-length body shot (from head to toe) of you so I can see your body movements and gestures. No close-ups! Your speech must be videotaped in one take, and no editing or modifying of your video is allowed.
- 5) Make sure to pay close attention to the "presentational dress" websites listed in the modules. Presentational dress is required and does NOT include: shorts, flip-flops, tanks, spaghetti straps, holes in jeans, graphic tees, hoodies, sweatshirts/jackets, caps, etc.
- 6) **Upload your speech video to YouTube and set it to "Public" so I can view it. Submit the URL to your video in Blackboard under the correct submission tab by midnight on the due date. DO NOT upload mp3, .mov, or QuickTime videos. ALL speeches must be sent via a YouTube URL. I will not grade speeches sent any other way.**

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.

Discussion

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, you will receive a "100". Discussions are on Blackboard and cannot be made up (please see below for details on make-up assignments). These are graded according to assignment instructions.

Make-Up Assignments and Examinations

Because this is an online course, you are expected to keep up with all assignments and submit them on time. Late work will not be accepted. All modules are open with plenty of time and opportunity for you to submit assignments on time. If you know you are going to be busy, please plan your assignments accordingly. Don't put off submissions. I will only allow for late speech submissions if you provide verifiable documentation as to why you missed the submission deadline. There is no guarantee that you will be granted a make-up for the speech submission. Learn Smarts, discussions, and exams will receive a "0" for any missings.

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 Schedule

Please see Blackboard for assignment due dates.

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

University Email Policy and Course Communications: All correspondence between professors and students must occur via university email accounts. You must have your Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at helpdesk@tamusa.edu or at 210-784-HELP (4357). If you don't hear back within 48 hours, contact them again. They have many requests during the first part of the semester, so you may need to follow up with them.

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 at the [website](#) or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. All students are encouraged to discuss their academic accommodation with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center: All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. 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. Online tutoring is also available for after hours and weekend assistance.

While tutoring hours may change based on tutor schedules and availability, the current tutoring hours for MATH in the ALC are as follows:

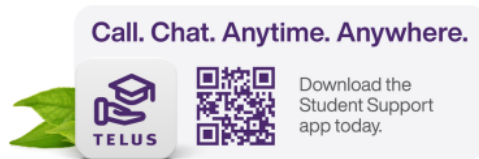
Appointments available MATH Walk in Tutoring – No appointment needed

	Appointments available	Walk in Tutoring – No appointment needed
MONDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
TUESDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
WEDNESDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
THURSDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
FRIDAY	8 am – 5 pm	11 am – 4 pm

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, visit our website, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

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. *Crisis support is available 24/7/365 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 or through the TELUS student support App.*

The TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including 24/7/365 support for in the moment distress, crisis support, 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 system. 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 on emergency response may be found at: [Emergency Operations Plan](#) and the [Emergency Action Plan](#). Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (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.

Jaguar Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center (WLDCC): The WLDCC provides support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Writing 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. The WLDCC offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. Students can schedule appointments with the WLDCC in JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center" to make your appointment. Students wanting to work in realtime with a tutor can schedule an "Online Appointment." Students wishing to receive asynchronous, written feedback from a tutor can schedule an "eTutoring" appointment. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our [website](#). The WLDCC can also be reached by emailing wldcc@tamusa.edu.

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 report](#) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources. A food pantry is available on campus; click [here](#) for hours and contact information.

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 wide variety 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 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 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 accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with a 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 if students meet this criteria: (1) must be enrolled in classes at Texas A&M-San Antonio in the current semester, (2) must be Pell eligible or a single parent, (3) child(ren) must be aged 3 to 12-years-old, and (4) child(ren) must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. Hours of operation is Monday-Thursday 3:30pm-9:00pm. For more information, please contact Young Jaguars at youngjaguars@tamusa.edu or call (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, 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 student 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, 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](#) or visit the resources available in the [OSRR website](#)

Important Fall 2026 Dates:

Dates	Event
August 20	Tuition & Fee Payments deadline
August 24	First day of class
September 7	Labor Day Holiday – No Classes / University Closed
September 9	Census Date – Students not paid in full or enrolled in a payment plan by 4:59 pm may be dropped for non-payment

October 5 – October 16	Midterm grading period
November 13	Last day to drop with an automatic “W”
November 25	Study Day – No classes
November 26-November 28	Thanksgiving Holiday – No Classes / University Closed
November 30	Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the University
December 4	Last day of classes
December 5 – December 11	Final exams
December 15	Commencement

The complete [academic calendar](#) is available online

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.

Option 2 – Use of Generative AI Permitted Under Some Circumstances or With Explicit Permission

There are situations and contexts within this course where you may be asked to use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to explore how they can be used. Outside of those circumstances, you should not use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any student work (assignments, activities, discussion responses, etc.) that is part of your evaluation in this course. Any student work submitted using AI tools should clearly indicate with attribution what work is the student’s work and what part is generated by the AI. In such cases, no more than 25% of the student work should be generated by AI. If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, students should reach out to their instructor for clarification before submitting work for grading. Use of AI-generated content without the instructor’s permission and/or proper attribution in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio’s standards of academic integrity.

Option 3 – Broader Use of Generative AI Permitted Within Guidelines

Use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, is permitted in this course for students who wish to use them. To adhere to our scholarly values, students must cite any AI-generated material that informed their work (this includes in-text citations and/or use of quotations, and in your reference list). Using an AI tool to generate content without proper attribution qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio’s standards of academic integrity.

Option 4 – Customized Policy Generative AI Policy

Faculty may create a customized policy that is unique for a specific course with consultation from the department chair. Faculty are encouraged to view *Texas A&M University’s Generative AI Syllabus Statement Considerations* when preparing a customized AI policy.

NOTE: Guidance for how to cite AI-generators, like ChatGPT, can be found here <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

