



# TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SAN ANTONIO

## COMM 1315-010: Fundamentals of Public Speaking Department of Sociology and Communication Spring 2025 Course Syllabus

**Instructor:** Dr. Kandice Diaz

**Office Location:** TBA

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, or by appointment.

**E-Mail:** [kdiaz035@tamusa.edu](mailto:kdiaz035@tamusa.edu)

### Weekly Meeting Information:

Mondays & Wednesdays	12:30 pm to 1:45 pm	Classroom Hall 201
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### 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.

### Student Learning Outcomes:

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to:

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.

### Textbook Information:

There is no required textbook for this course. All readings will be provided to students electronically through Blackboard.

### **Required Materials:**

Students will need the following:

- A laptop with internet access and Microsoft Office applications (i.e. Word, PowerPoint).
- Working knowledge of Blackboard.
- A free Canva or Adobe Express account.
- Note-taking method (i.e. notebook and pen/pencil).
- A way to save and backup your work (i.e. Google Drive, iCloud, USB, etc.)

### **Course Policies and Procedures:**

This is a face-to-face course where we meet twice a week on campus, but there is also an online component. All course related materials are available on Blackboard. You are expected to check Blackboard and your student email address weekly to receive important course content and information.

The Blackboard course is updated every Monday by 7 am with reminders (“to-do lists”) regarding assignments, readings, and other related course content. All readings will be kept in a separate folder arranged by date. You are expected to complete these readings prior to attending class on Mondays in preparation for class discussion and instruction.

**Attendance Policy: Attendance is mandatory.** Absences cannot be made up, this includes any in-class activities that are completed for credit. Part of maintaining regular attendance means arriving to class on time and prepared for course engagement. If you are more than 10 mins late to class, you will not be admitted to class, you will be counted absent for the day, and you will not receive credit for any in-class assignments/activities. Attendance will be taken by your instructor every class meeting within the first 10 minutes of class. If you are not present, you will be counted absent.

If you know in advance that you are going to miss class, it is your responsibility to report your absence to your instructor so that you do not miss any important information. **Please note that if you miss class on a day that you are scheduled to deliver a speech, you need to arrange a makeup date by speaking with your instructor within 2 days of your absence, otherwise you will receive a zero for a missed assignment.**

**Missing class for 2 or more weeks will result in your instructor reducing your final grade by a minimum of 10% in addition to receiving zeros for all missed assignments.**

**Assignment Submission:**

All assignments must be submitted through Blackboard on the specified due date, unless otherwise stipulated. Assignments are not accepted through email unless the student has discussed the need for this with the instructor. All assignments must be submitted in PDF format unless a particular project or assignment requires the use of a different program and/or format.

All assignments are due on the assigned due date (see the Course Schedule) by 11:59 pm through Blackboard UNLESS your instructor provides different instructions.

All assignments should adhere to the assignment guidelines as expressed on the instruction sheets provided to you by your instructor. Instruction sheets will be available on Blackboard in accordance with the Course Schedule.

Assignments that cannot be submitted through Blackboard include in-class activities and the delivery of speeches, which MUST BE completed in class on the due date.

**Late Work Policy:**

Late work is not accepted UNLESS you have extenuating circumstances, as determined in conference with your instructor. If you are facing extenuating circumstances that result in your failure to submit an assignment on the specified due date, you must contact your instructor within 48 hours of the assignment due date to discuss your options, if any. If you are granted an extension on any assignment, you have 48 hours to turn in the missing assignment. Failure to turn in the missing assignment after 48 hours will result in a zero, no exceptions.

If you are facing ongoing issues completing work in a timely manner and/or attending class on a daily basis, it is your responsibility to discuss your circumstances with your instructor to determine if there are any options.

**Extra Credit**

Extra credit is a possibility. Should such possibilities arise, your professor will inform you of such opportunities over the course of the semester.

**Communication Policy:**

Email your instructor directly at ***kdiaz035@tamusa.edu*** using your TAMUSA student email address. Emails will be answered within 24 hours of being received, Monday-Friday. If you email your instructor over the weekend, you may not receive a reply until the following Monday. Please make sure to read through the course syllabus before emailing your instructor with questions related to the information presented in the syllabus and course schedule.

Make sure to include your name and class period information (i.e. COMM 1315-009) in all emails sent to your instructor or you may not receive a response. Please express yourself as clearly as possible and address your instructor in a professional manner in all emails you plan on sending to your instructor or you may not receive a response.

**Etiquette and Civility:** Your instructor is committed to creating and fostering a welcoming and inclusive learning environment in which students are encouraged to speak up, sharing their thoughts, opinions, insights, and/or experiences. This can only be accomplished through mutual respect and understanding. In order to build a sense of community in our classroom, it is important to share your thoughts, ideas, opinions, insights, and/or experiences in a respectful manner and be open and understanding of differing viewpoints. Therefore, should any student engage in any type of violent, harassing, and/or discriminatory speech or behavior, the student will immediately be asked to leave the class and will be reported to the university and may be subject to the Student Code of Conduct, as outlined in the [Student Handbook](#).

**GAI Policy:** Fundamentals of Public Speaking (COMM 1315) 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.

**Technology Policy:** The use of laptops and cell phones during class is restricted to note taking, assignment preparation, and/or assignment completion. If you are caught off task on your laptop or cell phone during class, you will be asked to put the device away for the day. If such behavior continues, you will lose laptop and/or cell phone privileges indefinitely.

Cell phones are to remain silent in your backpack or purse. If you absolutely need to make or take a phone call during class time, please ONLY do so during emergencies in

the hallway.

The use of assistive technology is allowed in accordance with accommodations for students provided to the instructor by the Center for Students with Disabilities.

### **Academic Integrity Statement:**

Students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Academic misconduct 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 Misconduct Policy, which may be found in the Texas A&M University-San Antonio Student Handbook.

University policy prescribes serious consequences for acts of academic misconduct including, but not limited to, a grade of „F“ on the particular paper or assignment or a failing grade in the course. Also, a referral may be issued to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities where the sanctions can vary up to 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 you are ever unclear whether a specific act might constitute academic misconduct, please contact your instructor for an assessment of the situation.

### **Assignment and Grading Information:**

All grades will be posted to Blackboard and will be updated as assignments are graded by the instructor. These grades are representative of all assignments. All assignments submitted by the specified due date will receive a grade based on the rubrics posted on Blackboard for each assignment. Assignments that are not completed and submitted by the due date will be posted as a zero (please see the Late Work Policy section for more information). Receiving a zero has the potential to drastically bring down your grade, so make sure to complete and submit all assignments according to the due date.

### **Grade Breakdown by Assignment:**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Introductory Speech	30	
Informative Speech	100	
IS Outline & References	50	
Persuasive Speech	100	
PS Outline & References	50	
Group Project	100	
Group Project Discussion & Preparation	50	
Impromptu Speech	30	
Quizzes (5 @ 20 points each)	100	
Discussion Board Posts (5 @ 10 points each)	50	
Peer Reviews (2 @ 15 points each)	30	
Attendance & Participation (In-Class Activities)	50	
Topic Proposals (2 @ 20 points each)	40	
Total Possible Points	780	

**TAMUSA Grading Scale:**

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
Below 60	F

**Description of Assignments**

**Introductory Speech:** You will be paired with one of your classmates in order to conduct an interview of your classmate. I will provide you with a sheet containing basic interview questions and it will be your job to fill them in. You will then compose an introductory speech based on your classmates' responses and present it to the class. The speech will be approximately 3 minutes long. This speech is designed to get you used to making speeches in class and well as to perfect your listening and note taking skills. Don't worry too much about your grade on this speech, I understand that this is your first speech, and I will take this fact into consideration in grading this speech.

**Group discussions:** We will hold group discussions reviewing what has been covered throughout the week. These discussions will serve as the basis for your quizzes. The questions and/or issues raised during these discussions may appear on your quizzes, so it would be wise for you to **take detailed notes every class meeting as well as every group discussion.**

**Outlines:** Outlines are necessary in order to help you organize your thoughts, and they will be required for each speech you make. Several models for outlining will be provided on Blackboard.

**References:** For each of your speeches, you will be required to turn in a reference list in APA format comprised of credible resources. This will be discussed further in class. Your references should consist of a variety of sources to include books, interviews, journals, documentaries, etc.

**ALL YOUR SOURCES MUST BE BOTH CURRENT AND CREDIBLE.**

**Research:** You must conduct research for each of your speeches. For this aspect of speech preparation, we will visit the library so that you are introduced to the various ways in which to conduct research. However, the research that you conduct for your speeches will be conducted on your own time.

**Topic Proposals:** While you will be choosing the topic for your speeches, you must clear the topic with your instructor to make sure it is worthy of research and discussion. For each speech, you will write a short proposal convincing your instructor that the topic choice is a feasible one to explore and present on.

**Informative Speech:** For this speech, you will be required to present the class with some new, interesting information. An outline, references, and a visual aid will be required. You must conduct research for this speech. You will provide me with a preliminary outline a week before your presentation date and a final outline on the day of your presentation. A minimum of three credible references is required in APA citation format to be typed and turned in on the day of your speech. The type of visual aid used is up to you, but it must directly relate to the topic of your speech. The time allotted for this speech is exactly 4 to 6 minutes. You must also clear your topic with me exactly one week before your scheduled presentation date.

**Persuasive Speech:** The purpose of a persuasive speech is to *PERSUADE* your audience! Keep this in mind when you prepare this speech. In order to persuade your

audience, you must pick a topic that is both interesting and dear to your heart, something that you feel strongly about. Your topic can be a controversial one as long as your topic is WELL INFORMED! This means you must thoroughly research your topic and provide me with a reference list with at least seven references on the day of your presentation in APA format. Again, a preliminary outline will be due a week before your scheduled presentation date, and a final outline on the day of your presentation. A visual aid is also required for this speech, and it must relate to your topic. Again, please clear your topic with me at least a week before your scheduled presentation date. The time allotted for this speech is exactly 5 to 7 minutes.

**Group Project (Speech Evaluation):** Your group will choose a well-known speech given by a prominent public figure and apply the “Fundamentals of Public Speaking” principles you have learned over the course of the semester to the evaluation of your chosen speech. You will write a short report, record your group members summarizing your findings, and upload it to Blackboard.

**Speech information: *You are not allowed to read your speech!*** In order to avoid reading your speech, you have the option of using index cards. Number your cards so that if they get out of order, they can be easily reorganized. Write large enough so that you are able to see what you wrote on them and they are actually helpful for you. You must maintain eye contact with your audience in order to engage with them, and reading your speech verbatim distracts your audience, causing you to lose their attention.

***To avoid reading your speeches, you must practice!*** Practice in front of your family and friends and have them time you to make sure you stay within the time limits for each speech.

Remember: Practice makes perfect, and I will be able to tell how prepared you are. If you are not prepared, it will reflect in your grade! If you are having trouble coming up with speech topics on your own, please come see me!

**Peer Reviews:** These will consist of providing feedback to your classmates on their speech outlines. I will provide you with peer review sheets on which to record your constructive criticism.

**Quizzes:** If you come to class, you should be able to get full credit for all the quizzes. I will ask you to answer questions pertaining to the course material and readings. As long as you attend class regularly, take notes, and complete the readings, you should



easily be able to pass the quizzes. You will complete these on Blackboard.

**Discussion Board Posts:** Each discussion board prompt will ask you to apply what you have learned in class as an extension of our daily topic discussions and/or readings. To get full credit, you must follow the instructions for each post you write: (1) complete your own original post; (2) respond to at least two classmates in a well-thought out reply.

**In Class Activities:** These exercises will take place in class, but may require outside work. You must be present to get full credit for these exercises as they are designed to help with speech preparation and/or to illustrate lessons from the readings. These exercises are not always announced.

### **University Policies and Student Services**

#### **Disability Support Services:**

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, please contact Disability Support Services in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210, or at (210) 784-1335 or visit <https://www.tamusa.edu/index.html> or email us at [dss@tamusa.edu](mailto: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 and their instructors as soon as possible.

#### **Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center:**

The Jaguar Writing Center provides writing support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Students can make individual or group appointments with a writing tutor. The Writing Center is located in Central Academic Building, Suite 208. The Writing Center can be reached by emailing [writingcenter@tamusa.edu](mailto:writingcenter@tamusa.edu) or calling 210-784-1222. Students

can also make appointments with the Writing Center under the Student Services tab in JagWire.

### **Student Counseling Center**

As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily functioning. If you or someone you know is experiencing life stressors, emotional difficulties, or mental health concerns at Texas A&M University – San Antonio, please contact the Student Counseling Center (SCC) located in Modular C, Room 166 (Rear entrance) or call 210-784-1331 between the hours of 8:00AM and 5:00PM.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free, confidential (as the law allows), and are not part of a student's academic or university record. SCC provides brief individual, couples, and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information, please visit [www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling](http://www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling)

In a crisis situation, please walk-in to the Student Counseling Center (SCC) any time between the hours of 8:00AM and 5:00PM to be seen by a licensed clinician. After hours, please contact UPD at 911 or text "HOME" to 741-741 24/7/365 to connect with a trained crisis counselor. The National Suicide Prevention hotline also offers a 24/7/365 hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

### **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 and/or phone call with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Preparedness and the Emergency Response Guide can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/upd/index.html>.

### **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 the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend 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.

### **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 contact the Dean of Students ([DOS@tamusa.edu](mailto:DOS@tamusa.edu)) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to provide any resources they may possess.

### **Military Affairs**

Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate, in advance if possible, and special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployment, drill requirements, disability accommodations). You are also encouraged to visit the Patriots' Casa in-person room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at [military@tamusa.edu](mailto:military@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 an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or 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.

### **Respect for Diversity**

We understand that our students represent diverse backgrounds and perspectives. When we are equity-minded, we are aware of differences and inequalities and are willing to discuss them so we can act to resolve them. The University is committed to building cultural competencies, or the attitudes, skills, and knowledge that enable individuals and organizations to acknowledge cultural differences and incorporate

these differences in working with people from diverse cultures. Respecting and accepting people different than you is vital to your success in the class, on campus, and as a future professional in the global community. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- Share their unique experiences, values, and beliefs.
- Be open to the views of others.
- Honor the uniqueness of their colleagues.
- Value each other's opinions and communicate respectfully.
- Keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature.

Use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and across the A&M-San Antonio community.

### **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, equality of 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, diversity, pluralism and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should 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, gender identity, or gender expression. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to helping create 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, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio has staff members trained to support survivors 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 university. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and other healthcare providers 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 or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331, Modular C.

### **Students' Rights and Responsibilities**

The purpose of the following statement is to enumerate the essential provisions for the student freedom and responsibility to learn at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. All students are required to follow all policies and regulations as set forth by The Texas A&M University System. This includes the [A&M-San Antonio Student Code of Conduct](#).

#### *Students' Rights*

- A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no university rule or procedure that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
- 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, genetic information or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
- 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.
- Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

#### *Students' Responsibilities*

- A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty and the administration.
- 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, University Catalog and students must comply with them and the laws of the land.
- A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire university community.
- A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide an environment for learning.
- A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notification.
- 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.

\*This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. If any changes to the content are made, students will be notified ahead of time and provided with an amended copy.

\*Please note that the COURSE SCHEDULE will be posted on Blackboard during the first week of class.