



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
SAN ANTONIO

COMM 1315 900: Fundamentals of Public Speaking

Spring 2026

Hybrid Monday 5:30-7:15 pm Classroom Hall 305

Instructor: Joshua A. Dunn, Ph.D.
Office: CAB 347
Office Hours: [By appointment](#)
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Course Description:

This course teaches students to apply the principles of communication theory in the presentational speaking context with an emphasis on audience/communication analysis, adapting to diverse audiences, and self-awareness. This course meets the standards for the Component Area Option category under the core curriculum.

Textbooks and Instructional Material:

Required:

Gehrke, P. & Foley, M. (2023). *Contemporary Public Speaking* (1st ed.). New York City, NY: W. W. Norton & Company. ISBN: 9781324043355

Supplemental:

Promotional resources, handouts, and other readings will be provided online via Blackboard.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course, every student should be able to:

1. Demonstrate self-perception through recognizing diverse perspectives and understanding the 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.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADES:

Assignment	Due Date	Points	% of Total Grade
In-Class Activities	Throughout	100	25%
Quizzes	Throughout	120	30%
Reflection Paper	Feb 16	20	5%
Persuasive Group Speech	Speech	80	20%
	Evaluation	20	5%
Informational Video Speech	May 12	80	20%
	Total	420	105%

Letter Grade	Points	Range
A	360-400	90% to 100%
B	320-359	80% to 89%
C	280-319	70% to 79%
D	240-279	60% to 69%
F	0-239	0% to 59%

All written assignments should be submitted digitally via Blackboard. Emailed copies of assignments are not considered submitted, unless accompanied by an explanation of technical difficulties (see *Technical Issues with Blackboard* below).

In-Class Assignments

Throughout the semester, students will participate in up to 12 In-Class Activities (ICAs). Each student is required to participate in 10 ICA; meaning you will not be penalized for missing up to 2 ICA. Please note that you can only earn up to 100 points from ICA and completing additional ICA will not increase your grade. ICA cannot be made up (except for excused absences).

Quizzes

Students will complete 10 at-home, open-book quizzes throughout the semester. The first 9 quizzes are worth 10 points each and focus on 2 topics each. The 10th quiz is worth 30 points and is cumulative.

Reflection Paper

Students will complete a 2-page paper reflecting on your standpoint, anxiety with public speaking, and your ethical approach to communication.

Informational Video Speech

Students will select a topic and create a 4-5-minute Informational Speech video. Students can select almost any topic to conduct the speech over, so long as the topic is school/workplace appropriate. In this video, the student must be “embodied” as defined by the textbook.

Persuasive Group Speech

Students will develop and conduct a speech encouraging audience members to donate to a non-profit organization (NPO). Students will need to conduct research on their non-profits to inform their audience on the mission and function of the NPO and its effectiveness at completing these goals.

Groups will be selected in classes 4 weeks before the speech.

(a) Speech

Students will conduct a 10-11-minute speech that persuades their peers to donate to a non-profit organization of their choice. Each member of the group must participate and speak up during the speech.

(b) Evaluation

Students will provide self- and peer-assessments evaluating the contribution of each member of the group to the overall project.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES & 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/Disability-Support-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 and their instructors 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 tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2').

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. 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 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.

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/Student-Rights-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.

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 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 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, gender expression, or pregnancy/parenting status. 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 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, 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 misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamus.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@tamus.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.

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 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, 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/academic-integrity.html>).

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.

COURSE POLICIES:

Communications: I will post class updates, extra credit opportunities, and/or additional materials as announcements on Blackboard and/or to your university email. Check Blackboard and read your email regularly (at least 2-3 times per week) because you are responsible for this information, just as you are responsible for information in class.

When you email me: (1) re-read the syllabus or assignment sheet first, (2) put the course title and section number in the subject line, (3) allow 24 hours (not including weekends) for me to respond to your email. Please remember that email is a form of professional communication, so use proper spelling, grammar, and

formatting in all your correspondence with me (and all other university officials).

Classroom Civility: We want to build a classroom climate that is comfortable for everyone. In a communication class, it is especially important that we (1) display respect for all members of the classroom, including the instructor and students; (2) pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and discussions; (3) avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, checking email/social media, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.); and (4) avoid racist, sexist, homophobic, or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom. This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, they represent the minimal standards that help make the classroom a productive learning environment for all concerned.

Technical Issues with Blackboard: If I am informed by the university if Blackboard has gone offline when an assignment is due, then I will notify you of the new due date. Barring this, you are responsible for turning in your classwork on time. If you are having issues posting or submitting, first troubleshoot: 1) check your internet connection, 2) try restarting/changing your browser (do not use Safari), then 3) use a different computer. If this doesn't fix your problem, screenshot your issue and email it to me with the assignment (this will only be allowed once per issue), then seek ITS for more help.

Late Assignments: Assignments will be accepted late but will receive a grade penalty based on the following:

Assignment submission date (including weekends)	Maximum grade (% of total possible points)
0:15 – 23:59 hours late	90%
24:00 – 47:59 hours late	80%
48:00 hours (or more) late	No credit

Students who miss an assignment deadline due to an excused absence should contact the instructor within 24 hours of missing the assignment to make arrangements for an adjusted deadline. Students will be given an extension of no less than 24 hours but no more than 1 week based on the situation.

Challenging a Grade: I am always willing to discuss your grades with you, but I will not do so during class time. To challenge a grade, you must make an appointment to meet me *after 24 hours of receiving the assignment and within one week* of the assignment being returned to you. When we meet, you must present your concerns in writing and attach the graded assignment. Please note that a challenge may result in grades being raised or lowered.

Note on Final Grade: Students (particularly graduating seniors) who “need” this course to graduate or “need” a particular grade in this course should work especially hard to ensure that they receive a passing grade. There will be no opportunities for students to re-take exams or re-complete assignments in order to raise their grade. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that he or she receives a passing final grade (or whatever grade they desire) by working diligently and responsibly throughout the semester.

Syllabus as Contract: This document is not only to inform you of general course information, assignments, point values and policies, but additionally serves a contract between the instructor and you the student. You, the student, agree to all of the above by remaining in the course. The instructor agrees not to change assignments, point values, or policies, UNLESS it is determined that a change is necessary for the course to function AND student are notified of the change via email with the updated syllabus being posted to Blackboard.

HOWEVER, the course schedule may be changed at any time. The instructor will notify students of a change via email with the updated schedule (as a separate document) being posted to Blackboard.

Tentative Course Schedule*

Week	Date	Topic	Assignments
Week 1	M 1/26	Introductions & Course Overview	
	Hybrid	Ch 1 Your Standpoint & Strengths Ch 2 Confidence & Anxiety	Quiz 1
Week 2	M 2/2	In-Class Activity 1 Practice Speech	
	Hybrid	Ch 3 Ethics & Credibility Ch 4 Listening & Responding	Quiz 2
Week 3	M 2/9	In-Class Activity 2 Practice Speech	
	Hybrid	Ch 5 Audiences & Publics Ch 6 Topic & Purpose	Quiz 3
Week 4	M 2/16	In-Class Activity 3 Practice Speech	Reflection Paper
	Hybrid	Ch 7 Evidence & Reasoning Ch 8 Research & Citation	Quiz 4
Week 5	M 2/23	In-Class Activity 4 Research & Citation Activity	
	Hybrid	Ch 9 Organization & Outline Ch 10 Emotion & Narrative	Quiz 5
Week 6	M 3/2	In-Class Activity 5 Practice Speech	
	Hybrid	Ch 11 Language & Style Ch 12 Vocal & Physical Delivery	Quiz 6
Week 7	M 3/9	Spring Break – No Class	
	Hybrid	Spring Break – No Hybrid	
Week 8	M 3/16	In-Class Activity 6 Group Assignments & NPO Selection	
	Hybrid	Ch 16 Persuading and Motivating Ch 18 Group Meetings & Presentations	Quiz 7
Week 9	M 3/23	In-Class Activity 7 Research & Outlining	
	Hybrid	Ch 13 Presentation Aids & Slides Ch 17 Connecting & Celebrating	Quiz 8
Week 10	M 3/30	In-Class Activity 8 Visual Aids	
	Hybrid	Remote Work Day	
Week 11	M 4/6	Group Presentations	
	Hybrid	Ch 14 Online & Mediated Presentations Ch 15 Informing & Educating	Quiz 9
Week 12	M 4/13	In-Class Activity 9 Topic Selection & Research	
	Hybrid	Remote Work Day	
Week 13	M 4/20	In-Class Activity 10 Speech Outlining	
	Hybrid	Remote Work Day	
Week 14	M 4/27	In-Class Activity 11 Visual Aids & Media Editing	
	Hybrid	Remote Work Day	
Week 15	M 5/4	In-Class Activity 12 Video Previews / Q&A session	
	Hybrid	Study Day – No Hybrid	
Week 16	Sat 5/12	No Final Exam	
	Hybrid	Informational Speech Video Due	Quiz 10 (Cumulative)

