

## **COMM 1315-015: Fundamentals of Public Speaking**

### **Spring 2026 Course Syllabus**

Texas A&M University–San Antonio

Department of Sociology and Communication

#### **Instructor Information**

Instructor: Dr. Kandice N. Diaz Office Location: CAB, 318D Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m., or by appointment Email: kdiaz035@tamusa.edu

#### **Course Meeting Information:**

Monday/Wednesday from 12:30 pm-1:45 pm in Central Academic, 219

#### **Course Description**

Introduction to Public Speaking explores the history, theory, and practice of public speaking with an emphasis on organizing and delivering informative and persuasive speeches. Attention is also given to reducing public speaking anxiety. This course meets the Component Area Option category of the Core Curriculum.

#### **Student Learning Outcomes**

##### **By the end of this course, students will be able to:**

- Demonstrate awareness of self-perception and diverse perspectives.
- Cultivate active listening skills.
- Design intentional messages using audience analysis.
- Research, develop, and deliver informative and persuasive speeches using effective verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills through effective group communication.

#### **Required Textbook**

Lucas, S., & Stob, P. (2023). The Art of Public Speaking. McGraw-Hill. (Provided digitally through Blackboard)

#### **Recommended Materials**

- Computer with internet access and Microsoft Office
- Access to Blackboard and McGraw Hill Connect
- Canva or Adobe Express account
- Note-taking method

- Backup storage (Cloud or USB)

### **Course Modality and Expectations**

This course meets in person twice each week. Course materials will be posted on Blackboard or McGraw Hill Connect. Students are expected to:

- Check Blackboard and student email weekly
- Enable Blackboard notifications
- Complete assigned readings before class
- Attend all course meetings on time and ready to participate

Most readings come from the textbook; supplemental readings will be posted as needed.

### **Attendance Policy**

#### **Attendance is essential to course success. Key expectations:**

- Attendance will be taken within the first 10 minutes of class.
- Students must be present and participating to be counted present.
- Absences cannot be made up, including missed in-class assignments.
- Absences are not permitted on speech delivery days, except documented emergencies.
- Missing four (4) class meetings or roughly two weeks of class may result in grade reduction of at least 10% in addition to zeros for missed work.

#### **Examples of Emergency Absences (Documentation Required)**

- Concussions
- Crime victimization
- Death in family
- Hospitalization
- Natural disaster or housing emergency
- Life-threatening situations
- Serious illness

#### **Situations That Are Not Considered Emergencies**

- Routine doctor appointments
- Weddings or family events
- Job interviews

- Relationship conflicts
- Minor injuries or allergies

For absences related to critical situations and/or medical or family emergencies, you must speak to your instructor and possibly contact the Office of the Dean of Students to explore options related to filing a Class Absence Notification Request  
(<https://www.tamusa.edu/dean-of-students/class-absence-notification-request.html>)

### **Assignment Submission**

- Assignments must be submitted through Blackboard unless otherwise stated.
- Most written assignments must be submitted as PDF files unless the assignment specifies otherwise.
- Assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. on the due date provided in the course schedule.
- Speech presentations must be delivered in class on the assigned date.

### **Late Work Policy**

Late work is not accepted unless there are documented extenuating circumstances, which must be discussed with the instructor before the assignment due date.

#### **If granted an extension on the assignment:**

- Student will have 48 hours after approval to submit.
- Failure to submit by the new deadline results in a zero.

If ongoing issues arise with assignment completion, students should speak with the instructor as soon as possible.

### **Communication Policy**

- Email the instructor at kdiaz035@tamusa.edu using your TAMUSA student email.
- Emails will normally receive a response within 24 business hours (Mon–Fri).
- Include your full name and course section (e.g., COMM 1315■009).
- Communicate professionally and clearly.
- Do not send emails through Blackboard Messages.
- Do not email your professor with questions that can be easily answered by reading the syllabus or course schedule.

### **Classroom Etiquette and Civility**

Your instructor is committed to creating and maintaining 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. 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.

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.

### **Technology Policy**

- Laptops are permitted only for course-related use like note-taking, assignment completion, etc.
- Cell phones must remain silent. Emergency use must occur outside the classroom.
- Assistive technology is permitted with accommodation documentation from the Center for Students with Disabilities.

### **Academic Integrity**

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.

### **Grading and Assignments**

All grades will be posted and updated on Blackboard as the instructor grades each assignment. It is your responsibility to stay on top of your grades and assignment due dates. Grades cannot be discussed through email.

## **Grade Breakdown**

- Informative Speech with Visual Aid — 150 points
- Persuasive Speech with Visual Aid — 150 points
- Informative Outline with References — 75 points
- Persuasive Outline with References — 100 points
- Infographic & Rhetorical Situation Analysis — 175 points
- Quizzes — 100 points
- Discussion Boards — 50 points
- Topic Proposals — 50 points
- Peer Reviews — 50 points
- In-Class Activities — 100 points

Total Possible Points: 1000

## **Grading Scale**

**A = 900–1000**

**B = 800–899**

**C = 700–799**

**D = 600–699**

**F = 0–599**

## **Major Assignments Overview**

### **Introductory Speech:**

- 2–3 minute speech introducing yourself to the class through a meaningful personal topic. This speech requires a visual aid related to your speech topic.

### **Outlines**

- Preparation (full sentence) outlines are required for major speeches, examples will be provided on Blackboard.
- Bibliography must be attached.
- All speeches require credible, APA-formatted sources.

### **Informative Speech**

- 5–7 minutes informing your audience about a preapproved topic of your choice which must cover a historical aspect
- Minimum 3 credible references
- Visual aid required
- Preparation outline required
- Topic approval required

#### **Persuasive Group Speech**

- Group speech persuading your audience to support a specific cause
- 3-4 members per group
- Organized according to Monroe's Motivated Sequence
- 9–12 minutes total
- Preparation outline required
- Minimum 5 credible references required
- Topic approval required

#### **Infographic and Rhetorical Write-Up**

- Create an infographic and detailed explanation analyzing audience and design choices.

#### **Quizzes and In-Class Activities**

- Quizzes are based on the assigned readings and material covered in class.
- In-class activities cannot be made up for any reason and make up part of the attendance grade.

### **Student Support and University Policies**

#### **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, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit (<https://www.tamusa.edu/disability-support-services/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 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](mailto:tutoring@tamusa.edu), calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

Academic Learning Center (<https://www.tamusa.edu/academic-learning-center>)

## **Counseling and Mental Health**

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 Student Counseling Center (<https://www.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 at (<https://www.tamusa.edu/about-us/emergency-management/>)

Download the Safe Zone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

## **Financial Aid and Attendance Verification**

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 e-portfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through Jag Wire 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 Writing Center (<https://www.tamusa.edu/academics>)

### **Basic Needs Support**

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 doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources.

### **Military Affairs**

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

### **Religious Observance**

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 coursework 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.

### **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.

### **Title IX & Harassment and Discrimination Policies**

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@tamus.edu](mailto:titleix@tamus.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@tamus.edu](mailto: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 and 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 conditions 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 these criteria: Must be enrolled in classes at TAMUSA in the current semester. Must be Pell eligible or a single parent. They serve children aged 3 to 12 years old. Children must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. E-mail: youngjaguars@tamusa.edu or call (210) 784-2636.

## **Student 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 of 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 on the OSRR website (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academic-integrity.html>)

If you require this syllabus in an alternative format, please contact the instructor or Disability Support Services.

This syllabus is subject to change at any time, you will be notified of any changes and provided with an updated version.

## **Spring 2026 Course Schedule**

This is a tentative course schedule. You will be notified of any changes and receive an updated version if revisions occur. In-class activities do not appear on this calendar as you must be present to complete and get credit for these assignments.

### **Week 1 — January 20–23, 2026**

Topics: • Course Overview • Speaking in Public  
• Giving Your First Speech Readings: • Chapter 1 • Chapter 4 Assignments: • No work due this week

### **Week 2 — January 26–30, 2026**

Topic: • Ethics and Public Speaking Reading: • Chapter 2 Assignments: • Quiz #1 (Syllabus Quiz)

### **Week 3 — February 2–6, 2026**

Topic: • Introduce Yourself to the Class Assignments: • Introductory Speeches Delivered in person during scheduled class time

### **Week 4 — February 9–13, 2026**

Topics: • Choosing Topics and Purposes • Analyzing the Audience Readings: • Chapters 5 and 6 Assignments: • Quiz #2 and Discussion Board #1

### **Week 5 — February 16–20, 2026**

Topics: • Organizing the Body of the Speech • Introductions and Conclusions Readings: • Chapters 9 and 10 Assignments: • No work due this week

### **Week 6 — February 23–27, 2026**

Topics: • Speaking to Inform • Research and Citation Readings: • Chapter 15 • Chapter 8 from Contemporary Public Speaking by Gehrke and Foley Assignments: • Quiz #3, Discussion Board #2, Topic Proposal for Informative Speech

### **Week 7 — March 2–6, 2026**

Topics: • Outlining the Speech • Delivering the Speech • Using Visual Aids Readings: • Chapters 11, 13, and 14 Assignments: • Quiz #4 • Peer Reviews

### **Week 8 — March 9–13, 2026**

Schedule Note: • Spring Break — No Classes Assignments: • No work due this week

### **Week 9 — March 16–20, 2026**

Topic: • Informative Speech Delivery Assignments: • Informative Speech (delivered in class) • Informative Speech Outline • Visual Aid Submission

**Week 10 — March 23–27, 2026**

Topic: • Informative Speech Delivery (continued) Assignments: • Informative Speech (delivered in class) • Informative Speech Outline • Visual Aid Submission

**Week 11 — March 30 – April 3, 2026**

Topics: • Introduction to Persuasive Speaking • Methods of Persuasion Readings: • Chapters 16 and 17 Assignments: • Discussion Board #3 and Topic Proposal for Persuasive Speech

**Week 12 — April 6–10, 2026**

Topic: • Working in Groups Reading: • Chapter 18 from Contemporary Public Speaking by Gehrke and Foley Assignments: • Quiz #5

**Week 13 — April 13–17, 2026**

Topic: • Persuasive Speech Delivery Assignments: • Persuasive Group Speeches (delivered in class) • Persuasive Speech Outline • Visual Aid Submission

**Week 14 — April 20–24, 2026**

Topic: • Persuasive Speech Delivery (continued) Assignments: • Persuasive Group Speeches (delivered in class) • Persuasive Speech Outline • Visual Aid Submission

**Week 15 — April 27 – May 1, 2026**

Topics: • Final Project Overview • Infographic Project Discussion Assignments: • Work on Infographic Final Project • Work on Rhetorical Situation Analysis

**Week 16 — May 4, 2026**

Topic: • Last Day of Class — Monday, May 4, 2026 Assignments: • Infographic Final Project Due • Rhetorical Situation Write-Up Due