



Walters State Community College Course Syllabus

Course Information

Course Number and Name: COMM 2025 Fundamentals of Communication

Section ID: 81129.202380

Semester and Year: Fall 2023

Credit Hours: 3

Start Date: August 21, 2023

End Date: December 08, 2023

Course Format: CON - Conventional Methodology

Catalog Course Description: An introductory speech-communication course which focuses on the skills development in the areas of interpersonal, small group, and public communication. Special emphasis is given to public speaking. F, S. (T)

General Education Course Designation: General Education Course

Meeting Details: MW; 12:45PM - 02:10PM; LIB 102

Course Drop Deadline: October 27, 2023

Instructor Information

Name: Matthew Lawson

Role: Associate Professor of Communication and Mass Communication

Office Location: HUM 148D

Office Hours: TBA

Office Phone: 423-318-2332

Email: Matthew.Lawson@ws.edu

Supervisor Name: Marci Nimick

Supervisor Phone: 423-798-7986

Secretary Name: Debbie Wilson

Secretary Phone: 423-585-6947

Required Textbook(s) and Materials



Essential Communication

ISBN: 9780197544310

Authors: Ronald Brian Adler, George R. Rodman, Athena DuPré

Publisher: Oxford University Press, USA

Publication Date: 2021-01-01

Edition: 3rd

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- Competencies
 1. The student should be able to select an appropriate topic and write a thesis statement for the speech to inform.
 2. The student should be able to select an appropriate topic and write a thesis statement for the persuasive/argumentation speech.
 3. The student should be able to complete original research on approved speech topics.
 4. The student should be able to complete an outline for a speech to inform.
 5. The student should be able to complete an outline for a persuasive/argumentation speech.
 6. The student should be able to present a documented speech to inform in an extemporaneous style using sketch notes and visual aids.
 7. The student should be able to present a documented persuasive/argumentation speech in an extemporaneous style using sketch notes.
 8. The student should be able to participate effectively in group/class discussions on selected topics.
 9. The student should be able to use critical listening skills when receiving persuasive messages by applying appropriate critical listening criteria to the message.
 10. The student should be able to use supportive listening skills in interpersonal communication.
 11. The student should be able to use automated indexes and/or other electronic research media to research speech topics.
 12. The student should be able to complete a written analysis of communication patterns in family, social, or business situations.
 13. The student should be able to complete a written analysis of a contemporary speech.

14. The student should be able to complete a written analysis of his/her own communication activities and skills.

Instructional Approach and Methods

Much class time will be devoted to communication exercises and public speaking activities. Class time will also be used for lecture/discussion on course topics covered in the text and class handouts. Class discussion and student participation in class activities will be stressed. ELearn will be used throughout the course.

1. Students will be evaluated based on their performance on objective tests.
2. Students will be evaluated based on their performance in delivering oral presentations.
 - panel discussion
 - speech to inform/visual aids
 - speech to persuade/critical issue
3. Students will be evaluated based on written assignments and folder assignments. All written/folder assignments must be typed in Word document format.
4. Students will be evaluated based on their class participation.
5. Students will be evaluated based on their attendance.

Assessment, Evaluation and Testing Procedures

1. Exams will be drawn from the readings, class notes, and videos, and will be primarily multiple-choice. All exams will be given online via eLearn unless circumstances require a physical exam.
2. All exams must be taken on the day scheduled. If a student misses an exam due to illness the student should contact the instructor immediately upon his/her return to campus to schedule a makeup exam.
3. No makeup exams will be given except in cases of documented personal illness or emergencies.
4. Makeup exams must be completed within one week.
5. Criteria for Oral Presentations (specific criteria checklist given in class)

1. The speech thesis must be clear and clearly stated. The speech must be well organized with an introduction, preview, transitions, and summary.
2. The speech must be presented with effective vocal qualities including volume, emphasis, and clear articulation.
3. The student must use good eye contact with the audience and explain points directly to the audience in his/her own words using sketch notes on index cards.
4. The student must exhibit neat and professional dress.
5. The speech must be the student's own work and presented in the student's own words.
6. The research done for the speech should be based on current information available from books, magazines, journals, the internet, and interviews of knowledgeable individuals.
7. The speech must use neat, clearly visible, and appropriate visual aids to clarify points. (Visual aids are required for the informative speech.)
8. The student must present research with the speech, including an outline and bibliography.
9. The speech must be given when due.
10. The speech must be interesting or enjoyable as it explores the topic sufficiently in the time allotted (informative speech), or it must effectively argue one side of an issue or present a problem and offer solutions (persuasive/argumentation speech).
11. The speech must not be offensive to particular individuals in content, language, or manner.

Grading Scale

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	59 or below

Students failing to complete all assignments, tests, and speeches may receive an F for the course. Students must satisfactorily complete the final/persuasive speech in order to receive a passing grade in the course

Assignments

- Panel Discussion --Student prepares and presents a 4-5 minute research-based discussion on a broad Communication topic as a part of a student panel.
- Speech to Inform/Visual Aids---Student prepares and presents a 4-5 minute research-based Informative Speech using supporting visual aids such as PowerPoint.
- Speech to Persuade/Critical Issue--Student prepares and presents a 5-6 minute research-based Speech to Persuade/Critical Issue on a current issue.
- Student completes written Communication Folder assignments, including Communication Goal, Self-Concept Analysis, Empathic Listening Essay, Family Communication Analysis, Persuasive Message/Advertisement Analysis, and Political Speech Analysis.

Class Participation

1. Students are expected to attend all designated classes. A major focus of COMM 2025 is the development of communication skills. Class attendance and participation in class activities are absolutely essential to the student's ultimate success in the course. Failure to attend class and participate effectively in class exercises may result in a failing grade for the course. Attendance, student reading, and out-of-class activities ("homework") are all important.
2. Communication exercises and group discussions conducted in class cannot be made up outside of class.
3. Although class activities missed because of absence cannot be made up, a limited amount of make-up work will be available for excused absences (illness or family emergency). No makeups will be allowed for unexcused absences. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor regarding missed work.
4. Behaviors related to attendance and participation – such as frequent absences or tardiness, distracting or inappropriate class conduct, or the failure to complete assignments and speeches on time – may significantly lower the student's grade.

Course and Class Policies/Procedures

The instructor has primary responsibility for control over classroom behavior and maintenance of academic integrity and can order the temporary removal or exclusion from the classroom of any student engaged in disruptive conduct or conduct in violation of the general rules and regulations of

the institution. Extended or permanent exclusion from the classroom or further disciplinary action can be effected only through appropriate procedures of the institution.

Classroom Behavior Policy:

Students are expected to be positively engaged in class lectures, group discussions and student speeches. Students should show respect to the instructor and to other students. Any behavior which may distract from the learning process should be avoided. The behaviors listed below may affect the student's final course grade:

1. Arriving for class late.
2. Leaving class early.
3. Leaving during class for restroom or water breaks.
4. Eating or drinking during class.
5. Sleeping during class.
6. Attending to a cell phone or laptop computer.
7. Private conversations with classmates.
8. Blurting out comments.

Students exhibiting these behaviors will be given a Classroom Misconduct Report and asked to meet with the instructor.

Cellular phones and digital devices:

Cellular phones, headphones, and all digital devices **MUST** be turned off during class. If these disrupt the class the owner will be asked to leave. Laptop computers and tablets may be used only with the permission of the instructor.

(See Catalog/Student Handbook)

Online/Web-Enhanced Course Supplementary Information

This class is taught in a conventional format in person.

Additional Course Requirements/Details/Information

Attendance Process and Policy:

Attendance will be noted in this class. Attendance is worth 10% of the overall course grade and is expected and will be recorded.

E-mail Response Time:

The instructor will check and reply to eLearn e-mail as quickly as possible. Please allow up to 24-48 hours.

Procedure for Submission of Work:

All work for this class, unless otherwise noted, will be submitted digitally online via eLearn or some other digital method. Students will not be notified if work is not submitted. It is the student's responsibility to submit their work in a timely manner.

Testing Procedures:

All exams will be given online via eLearn unless circumstances require a physical exam.

Grading and Work Return Procedures and Evaluation Process:

Speeches will be worth 40% of the overall course grade and will be graded based upon a review of the performance and aspects of the speeches. Students will receive in a timely manner a digital critique sheet listing improvement areas, strengths, and the grade of their speech. This critique sheet will be delivered via eLearn e-mail unless otherwise noted.

Exams will be worth 40% of the overall course grade and will be graded digitally via eLearn unless circumstances require a physical exam. Students will receive their grade instantly after the completion of their exam online.

The Speech Folder is worth 10% of the overall course grade and will be graded based upon a review of the digital speech folder provided to the instructor via eLearn. After grading is completed students will receive in a timely manner a digital graded copy of their speech folder via eLearn.

Attendance and Participation is worth 10% of the overall course.

Alternate Teaching Plan:

In case of inclement weather or any other event requiring the cancellation of classes, please refer to eLearn for any instructions or assignments related to the class.

CLASS GRADE COMPUTATION SHEET:

Graded Item	Possible	% of Grade	Earned Score
Test 1	100 points	10%	
Panel Discussion	100 points	10%	
Test 2	100 points	10%	
Informative Speech with Visual Aid	100 points	10%	
Test 3	100 points	10%	
Student Folder	100 points	10%	
Persuasive/Critical Issue Speech	100 points	20%	
Exam 4	100 points	10%	
Class Attendance and Participation	100 points	10%	
		100%	

See instructor for opportunities for **extra credit**

90% = A

80% = B

70% = C

60% = D

NOTE – This Syllabus is subject to change.

Academic Honesty

Faculty expect all students to refrain from acts of academic misconduct including but not limited to:

1. Plagiarism - refers to using another person's ideas or writing without giving proper credit to the original source. Indulging in this type of conduct will subject the student to disciplinary sanctions, which may be imposed through the regular institutional procedures of Walters State Community College as outlined in the Student Handbook. Plagiarism will result in a grade of "0" for the paper/exam/presentation. Student Conduct and Disciplinary Sanctions contained in the college Catalog/Student Handbook apply (see policy 04:18:02 Disciplinary Sanctions). Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to the following:

- a. Using cut/paste tool from original document with no references given.
 - b. Copying another student's work and submitting it as one's own.
 - c. Forging or otherwise altering signatures.
 - d. Giving or falsifying academic documents or materials.
2. Cheating - construed as attempting to deceive or mislead which includes, but is not limited to the following:
- a. Utilizing old tests, projects, notes or written papers.
 - b. Providing unauthorized information to a fellow student about exam content.
 - c. Receiving unauthorized aid from any source with quizzes, examinations, or other assignments.
 - d. Seeking information in an unacceptable manner during/preceding an exam or other assigned work (cheat sheet, verbal exchange, looking at another person's paper or electronic device, utilizing headphones, using textbook when the test/quiz is not an open book test/quiz, using textbook test bank etc.).
 - e. Consulting with a classmate or others when taking a computerized test.
 - f. Disregarding other specific policies and procedures outlined for a particular class.
 - g. Utilizing unapproved technology/electronic equipment during testing (i.e.: mobile devices such as cell phones, smart devices, or tablets, etc.).
 - h. Using the same Internet Protocol network address (IP address) as another student for testing without approval from the course faculty.
3. The use of any generative artificial intelligence (AI) tool, such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Bard, or any other pre-trained language model (commonly referred to as "chatbot"), must be cited for any assignment where it has been used and may not be used unless specifically allowed by your instructor. Please see your instructor or the course policies within the syllabus if you have questions.

Student Resources

TUTORING SERVICES

Students in need of tutoring assistance are encouraged to contact the Office of Student Tutoring located as follows:

- Morristown Campus - Student Services Building Room L107 - (423) 585-6920
- Niswonger Campus - GRNV 226 - (423) 798-7982
- Sevierville Campus - MMH Room 210 - (865) 286-2787

- Claiborne Campus - Room 123A - (423) 851-4761

Specific tutoring assistance in mathematics and writing is available in-person and online as follows:

- Morristown Campus - English Learning Lab - HUM 120 - (423) 585-6970

[Walters State English Learning Lab \(opens in new window\)](https://www.waltersstate.edu/academics/humanities/writing-lab)
[ws.edu/academics/humanities/writing-lab](https://www.waltersstate.edu/academics/humanities/writing-lab)

- Morristown Campus - Mathematics Lab - MBSS 222 - (423) 585-6872

[Walters State Mathematics Learning Lab \(opens in new window\)](https://www.waltersstate.edu/academics/mathematics/learning-lab)
[ws.edu/academics/mathematics/learning-lab](https://www.waltersstate.edu/academics/mathematics/learning-lab)

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

Students who need assistance with computing and technology issues should contact the IET Helpdesk by phone at Morristown: (423) 318-2742; Niswonger: (423) 798-8186; or Sevierville: (865) 286-2789 or on-line access.

[Walters State Helpdesk \(opens in new window\)](https://www.waltersstate.edu/helpdesk)
[helpdesk.ws.edu](https://www.waltersstate.edu/helpdesk)

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES SUPPORT SERVICES

Students with disabilities must register with Student Support Services each semester in the Student Services Building, Room U134 (phone (423) 585-6892) if they need any special facilities, services, or consideration.

[Walters State Student Support Services \(opens in new window\)](https://www.waltersstate.edu/student-services/disability/)
[ws.edu/student-services/disability/](https://www.waltersstate.edu/student-services/disability/)

SUICIDE PREVENTION STATEMENT

Walters State is committed to and cares about all students. Support services are available for any person at Walters State who is experiencing feelings of being overwhelmed, hopelessness, depression, thinking about dying by suicide, or is otherwise in need of assistance. For immediate help, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by calling or texting 9-8-8 or the Trevor Lifeline at 1-866-488-7386. Veterans may also contact the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (press 1) or Text 838255.

Walters State has a relationship in place with the following community agencies to provide services (may include crisis referral services, prevention screenings, etc.):

- Cherokee Health Systems 423-586-5032

- Frontier Health 423-467-3600

College Policies

STUDENTS HANDBOOK AS OFFICIAL GOVERNING DOCUMENT

This class is governed by the policies and procedures stated in the current Walters State Community College Student Handbook. All students attending Walters State Community College, regardless of the time, location, or format of the class, must abide by the rules and regulations outlined in the current Walters State Catalog/Student Handbook and the current Walters State Timetable of Classes.

[Walters State Catalog \(opens in new window\)](http://catalog.ws.edu/)
catalog.ws.edu/

[Walters State Timetable of Classes \(opens in new window\)](http://ws.edu/admissions/registration/)
ws.edu/admissions/registration/

PURPOSE, LIMITATIONS AND MODIFICATION OF SYLLABUS

This syllabus sets forth the expectations for the course content, work, and grading as well as expectations for student performance and conduct. The syllabus does not constitute a contract between the student and the instructor or the College. The information contained here is subject to change at any time. The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus at any time with written notification to the students. Though changes are possible, it is expected that the course will be conducted as described in this syllabus for the semester/year specified in the Course Information section of the syllabus. This syllabus is only valid for the semester/year specified and course requirements are not guaranteed for future semesters.

COURSE GROUND RULES

- Students must attend the first day of on-ground class or contact the instructor prior to the first class. Failure to do this may result in being dropped from the class. Excessive absences may substantially lower the course grade.
- Regular class attendance is a student's obligation for any course regardless of format. (See the Walters State Catalog/Student Handbook). If a student misses class, it is his or her responsibility to contact the instructor regarding missed assignments and/or activities and to be prepared for the next class assignment.
- Students enrolled in web courses must follow the course attendance policy defined for online attendance during the first week of class and throughout the term. Failure to do this may result in being dropped from the class during week one OR may result in the accrual of absences which may negatively impact the student's grade in the course.

- Students who have not paid fees on time and/or are not correctly registered for this class and whose names do not appear on official class rolls generated by the Walters State student information system (MyWS) will not be allowed to remain in class or receive credit for this course.
- Electronic devices must not disrupt the instructional process or college-sponsored academic activity. Use of electronic devices is prohibited unless use of the device is relevant to the activity and use is sanctioned by the faculty member in charge. Electronic devices that are not relevant to the activity or sanctioned by the faculty member in charge should be set so that they will not produce an audible sound during classroom instruction or other college-sponsored academic activity.

FINANCIAL AID

Students receiving any type of financial aid or scholarship should contact the Financial Aid Office before making any changes to their schedule. Schedule changes without prior approval may result in loss of award for the current term and future terms.

All forms of student Financial Aid may be jeopardized or lost due to the lack of Satisfactory Academic Progress in one or multiple courses. Lack of Satisfactory Academic Progress may negatively impact a student's degree/certificate completion pace and further jeopardize Financial Aid eligibility.

CANCELLATION OF CLASSES AND ACADEMIC CONTINUITY

For information related to the cancellation of classes due to inclement weather or other events, please check the Senators Emergency Text system or the college's Web site at:

[Walters State Homepage \(opens in new window\)](#)

ws.edu/home/

[Walters State Facebook page \(opens in new window\)](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/WaltersState/>

[Walters State Twitter page \(opens in new window\)](#)

<https://twitter.com/waltersstate>

or call the college's student information line, 1-800-225-4770, option 1; the Sevier County Campus, (865) 774-5800, option 7; the Niswonger Campus (423) 798-7940, option 7; or the Claiborne County Campus, 423-636-6200, option 7. Also, please monitor local TV and radio stations for further announcements.

When an event or disaster interrupts the scheduled operations of the college and the ability to proceed with the academic course activities as planned, the college and your instructor may alter the course plan outlined in the syllabus. Should an event occur, students should refer to their course e-

Learn pages and/or class materials previously delivered to receive guidance from their instructor. Students should continue to monitor the official college channels of communication listed in the above paragraph. If you would like to sign up for the Senators Emergency Text system, please go to the following Web site:

[Senator Emergency Text System \(opens in new window\)](#)
[ws.edu/set/](#)

Dual Enrollment students attending on a high school campus should refer to the high school inclement weather cancellations.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Brightspace (commonly known as eLearn or D2L) is the college's Learning Management System (LMS).

Brightspace is committed to accessibility by "deliver[ing] a learning experience that meets the needs of all people, regardless of age or ability." [Brightspace Accessibility Standard \(opens in new window\)](#)

Brightspace is also committed to guarding student data and privacy. [Brightspace Privacy Policy \(opens in new window\)](#)

Dropping the Course

If a student wants to drop the course by the date aforementioned at the top of the syllabus, this has to be initiated by the student.

The instructor **cannot drop the student from the course.**

Please contact the instructor with any questions regarding dropping the course.