Fredonia Foundations
Civic Discourse THEME Addendum

Created: September 25, 2025

Instructions: Make a copy of this document and rename it with Subject CodeCourse Number-Category-Theme-Addendum-Last Name of Contact Person (e.g., MUS100-Arts-CI-Addendum-Smith) then transfer to the appropriate Dean's office. The Dean's Administrative Assistant will log the proposal and share it with the Chair of the Gen Ed Committee.

1. Basic Information:

(a) *Subject Code and Number*: COMM 101
(b) *Title of course: Fundamentals of Communication*
(c) *Prerequisite, if any: None*
(d) *Department or Program Sponsoring the Course*: Communication
(e) *Faculty Contact Person*: Dr. Angela McGowan-Kirsch
(f) *Date Submitted:* January 21, 2026
(g) *Date (semester/year) course modification is to be effective:* Fall 2026
(h) *Is the course to be cross listed (receive credit in more than one Department)? Please list subject codecourse number* _____
(i) Current FF Category: Humanities
(j) Current FF Theme: Critical Thinking and Analysis

2. How will you integrate the principles of Civic Discourse—such as active listening, respectful dialogue, and critical engagement with diverse perspectives—into the design, structure, and assessment of your course? *(*Please emphasize the course changes that incorporate the new theme of SLOs.

In COMM 101: Fundamentals of Communication, Civic Discourse is embedded throughout the course as both a communicative practice and a set of skills essential for participation in civic life. Because COMM 101 introduces students to foundational concepts such as listening, culture, identity, conflict, and mediated communication, many existing learning activities and assignments already align with the Civic Discourse Student Learning Outcomes. The integration of the Civic Discourse theme therefore emphasizes intentional alignment and assessment rather than substantial changes to course content.

Throughout the semester, students engage in individual, small-group, and whole-class learning activities that emphasize active listening, respectful dialogue, and critical engagement with diverse perspectives. Course topics are intentionally organized to help students examine how communication shapes meaning, understanding, and public life across interpersonal, cultural, and mediated contexts. Topics include interpersonal communication, perception, verbal and nonverbal communication, culture and identity, mass communication, new media, and conflict, providing multiple entry points for analyzing communication in civic and social life.

During collaborative and discussion-based activities, students are encouraged to ask clarifying questions, consider alternative viewpoints, and reflect on how communication practices can foster

mutual understanding or intensify disagreement. Instructors provide explicit guidance on effective participation, including expectations for respectful disagreement, ethical communication, and evidence-based reasoning. These expectations are reinforced consistently across the semester so that civic discourse is treated as an ongoing communicative practice, rather than a single unit or isolated activity.

Assessment Integration
Civic Discourse skills are assessed through a combination of group-based presentations, structured dialogue activities, reflective writing, and low-stakes reading checks. Major assignments require students to research, analyze, and communicate about issues involving culture, identity, media, and conflict, while working collaboratively and engaging ethically with peers.

Rubrics for group presentations and discussions assess both content knowledge and communicative behaviors, including preparation, engagement with differing viewpoints, responsiveness to peers, and respectful participation. Reflection papers require students to critically examine communication practices and ethical responsibilities in interpersonal, cultural, or civic contexts. Weekly Reading Checks support informed participation by ensuring students engage consistently with course readings and are prepared to contribute thoughtfully to discussion and collaborative work.

Course Changes Emphasizing Civic Discourse SLOs
COMM 101 already addresses many of the skills associated with civic discourse through its emphasis on listening, culture, identity, and conflict. To strengthen alignment with the Civic Discourse theme, existing rubrics and assignment descriptions have been revised to explicitly reference Civic Discourse Student Learning Outcomes, including deliberation through reasoned inquiry and ethical engagement with disagreement. This approach maintains flexibility for instructors across sections while ensuring that student learning related to civic discourse is clearly documented and assessable.

3. The student learning outcomes for the new Civic Discourse theme are listed below. All courses in the Humanities category are required to include Civic Discourse, but courses in other categories are also welcome - encouraged! - to do so. When aligning SLOs, please be sure to explain BOTH what students will do in the class (day-to-day learning activities) AND the assignment(s) that will measure student learning.

Civic Discourse	**Directions:** **1) Describe the day-to-day learning activities that address each SLO, and** **2) Detail specifically the assignment(s) used to assess each SLO demonstrating the direct connection (or crosswalk) between the assignment and the SLO. *In each box, provide at least one specific example of how the planned assessment meets the requirements of the SLO*.**

Learning Outcomes: STUDENTS will demonstrate the discourse skills necessary to participate in civic life, including:	

1) the deliberation of ideas through reasoned inquiry that seeks new information and considers multiple viewpoints; and	**Day-to-Day Learning Activities:** In COMM 101**,** students regularly participate in discussions and collaborative activities that require them to analyze communication across interpersonal, cultural, and mediated contexts. During these discussions, students are prompted to analyze multiple perspectives, ask clarifying questions, and integrate research or historical context into their reasoning. Then, while working in small groups, students explore how differences in identity, culture, and perception influence communication and understanding. These activities emphasize active listening, questioning, and the consideration of multiple perspectives, helping students develop habits of reasoned inquiry essential for civic participation. **Assignments and Assessment:** This SLO is assessed primarily through the Cultural Identity & Communication Analysis (CI&CA) presentations, in which students work collaboratively to research and analyze how communication shapes cultural identity and social meaning. Assessment rubrics evaluate students' ability to synthesize information from credible sources, incorporate multiple perspectives, and communicate their reasoning clearly and respectfully. Weekly Reading Checks also support this SLO by assessing students' analytical engagement with course readings and their ability to identify key arguments and concepts that inform discussion and deliberation.
2) the ethical practice of advocacy, dissent, and dialogue, which invites disagreement and constructively attends points of conflict.	**Day-to-Day Learning Activities:** Students practice ethical communication, particularly respectful dialogue, through collaborative work that requires negotiation, cooperation, and respectful engagement with differing viewpoints. Course content addressing listening, relationships, and conflict provides students with conceptual tools for understanding how disagreement arises and how it can be addressed constructively. Through guided discussion and group interaction, students learn to approach conflict as a communicative process that requires ethical judgment, empathy, and responsibility. These experiences foster the skills necessary to engage in civic discourse in real-world contexts. **Assignments and Assessment:** This SLO is assessed through the Conflict Analysis: Communication in Action group presentation and Structured Civic Dialogue & Reflection activities. In the Conflict Analysis assignment, students examine communication strategies in interpersonal or mediated conflict situations, focusing on how listening, dialogue, and ethical communication shape outcomes. Structured Civic Dialogues require students to engage respectfully with contested issues and reflect on how communication practices influence the quality of dialogue. Reflection Papers further assess students' ability to ethically evaluate communication practices and articulate reasoned judgments about disagreement, responsibility, and civic engagement.

4. Share/attach an updated course syllabus as a separate document. Include all needed syllabus information, including course description, credits, FF category and theme SLOs, sample texts, course outline, and assessment information pertaining to the FF SLOs. For this submission, please DO insert the FF logo at the top of page one following directions available

through the link above. Use the same naming convention you did for this proposal form, adding the word syllabus at the end. If your syllabus does not describe the relevant assignments in detail and demonstrate alignment with the SLOs, you may attach, or the committee may request a sample assignment or other supporting materials.

Theme Addendum Signatures

5. Chair's Approval:

Name: **Roslin Smith**
Date: **12/12/25**

6. Dean's Approval:

Name: Andy Karafa/cs
Date: 12/12/2025

7. Approval by the General Education Committee:

Name:
Date:

8. Approval by the Director of General Education (on behalf of the Provost's Office):

Name:
Date: