

## Introduction to Speech Communication Syllabus Spring 2026

**Professor:** Dr. Denise Menchaca

**Office:** Salado Hall 322C **Phone:** 210-486-5262

### **Student Hours:**

My student hours are reserved for students with questions about the course or that pertain to mentoring. [Click here for my student hours.](#)

**Email:** dmenchaca24@alamo.edu

Please email me via Canvas. Canvas will prefill the course information in the subject line which is extremely helpful to me. I usually answer student emails in 1-2 business days (24 to 48 hours), Monday through Friday and during typical business hours (9 AM to 5 PM). I **DO NOT** answer emails Friday 5 PM thru Monday, 9 AM. I also **DO NOT** respond to messages sent via Pronto.

### **Course Description:**

This course focuses on theories and practice of communication in interpersonal, small group, and public speech. Students learn about communication theory, improve skills in communication with others, and make formal oral presentations. This course fulfills the “Additional Communication” component area option of the core and addresses the following required objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility.

### **Textbook & Learning Materials Website: Open Educational Resources (OER)**

*This course uses Open Educational Resources (OER) which are free and protected by a Creative Commons copyright. All course materials for this course are available to students throughout the semester. Those materials are accessible via the various hyperlinks in the course calendar which will take you to a website created by your professor. [Click here for the course calendar](#)*

*All learning materials for the course are found on a website that is linked on the [course Canvas homepage](#). You can also go directly to that website by clicking here: [SPCH 1311 Additional Course Website](#).*

*This website has all of the lecture videos and other digital materials needed to successfully complete this course. In your web browser, please bookmark this website as you will return to it daily throughout the semester.*

### **Required Materials:**

- Something to write with and something to write on, specifically note paper and a pen or pencil. Bring these to every class.
- A Gmail account. We use Google Docs and other Google apps in this class.
- Access to a computer or tablet with reliable internet connection, and **a flash or cloud drive**—there are 2 open computer labs on campus--in the library (first and second floor) and on the second floor of the Brazos Student Union.
- **Access to Canvas, to include downloading the FREE Canvas app.** This course uses 2 websites: Canvas and a Google Site. All lecture videos and handouts and supportive materials for the course can be located here: <https://sites.google.com/site/spcm1311/>. This website is also linked within the Canvas site.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Apply the principles of human communication including: perception, verbal communication, nonverbal communication, listening, and audience analysis.
- Demonstrate how to establish and maintain relationships through the use of interpersonal communication.
- Apply small group communication skills including: problem solving, group roles, leadership styles, and cohesiveness.
- Develop, research, organize, and deliver formal public speeches.
- Recognize how to communicate within diverse or multicultural environments.

### **AI Use Policy**

AI tools are part of today's communication landscape. This policy ensures their use supports learning while upholding academic integrity. AI is only allowed on assignments labeled "AI Use Permitted." When allowed, AI should support learning—not replace it. You are responsible for understanding your work and may be asked to explain it. If you have questions, ask before submitting if unsure about AI use or citation requirements.

### **Citation & Documentation**

If AI is used:

- Acknowledge in text (e.g., "AI assistance was used to brainstorm ideas for this section.")
- Include a Works Cited entry in MLA format:  
*AI Tool Name. "Conversation with [Your Name]." [Platform], [Date of interaction], [URL if applicable].*  
*Example: ChatGPT. "Conversation with Jane Smith." OpenAI, 15 Oct. 2024, <https://chat.openai.com>.*
- Provide process documentation (e.g., screenshots or transcripts) when requested.

### **Prohibited Uses**

- Any assignment not marked "AI Use Permitted."
- Writing entire essays or assignments, discussion posts, or responses.
- Quizzes, exams, or assessments.
- Generating fake citations.
- Tasks requiring your independent critical thinking.

### **Academic Integrity**

- Failure to disclose AI use = academic dishonesty.
- Misusing AI on restricted work = policy violation.
- Representing AI content as entirely your own = misconduct.

### **My expectations of students:**

1. **Regarding Willful Obtuseness:** As a college student, I expect you to be prepared and be ready to go for each of our class meetings to maximize your learning. The materials for this course--the syllabus, the course calendar, the readings, lecture videos, and resource materials--are all available 24/7 via Canvas and the additional course website linked on the Canvas homepage and above.
2. **Smartphone & Digital Distractions:** We live in a world of many things competing for our attention. Research overwhelmingly reveals that as wonderful as our small electronic devices can be, they do

seem to be pretty addictive distractions. And, quite frankly, it is almost impossible to learn and retain anything if we can't focus. So for this reason and for so many others, please silence your cell phone and place it in your book bag during all class meetings unless otherwise instructed.

3. **Earbuds, Air Pods, and Headphone Distractions:** See #2 above only replace “smartphones” with “earbuds, etc.” Please remove these devices and place them in your book bag during our class meeting.
4. **Course Calendar & Class Preparedness:** Check the class preparation calendar daily so you know how to prepare for class and when assignments are due. It is linked on the Canvas homepage for our course. And you can also [click here for the COURSE CALENDAR.](#)
5. **Active Learning:** You will be actively engaged daily in one form or another of experience-creating, hands-on learning. This is a “*doing*” class with lots of interaction and discussion. Our face-to-face class meetings function as a communication lab where we experiment with communication concepts.
6. **Late Work:** Most work will be accepted late with a deduction of **10% per day** except for the following assignments that are completed in class. I expect students to complete these assignments in class on the day they are due:
  - a. Topic Development Reports
  - b. Informative Speech Presentation
  - c. Team Project Report Out
  - d. Communication Labs
7. **Use Your Brain. Please don't cheat.** You'll fail the assignment, and you'll fail the course if you do it again. See above for policy regarding AI generated content.
8. **Attendance is expected.** I record attendance for most classes. I track attendance in Canvas. In order to get attendance credit for a class meeting, you have to be in attendance for at least 60 minutes of a 75 minute class. More than 15 minutes late to a class will count as an absence for that day. You get 3 grace absences. If you miss more than 3 classes (which equates to one and a half week's worth of classes), *I reserve the right to drop your final grade by one letter for each additional absence after 3 beginning with your 4th absence.* 6 or more absences will earn you an F for the course. I sometimes drop students with 6 or more absences.

If, however, you have a serious situation that keeps you from attending classes for a period of time beyond the 3 grace absences, then reach out to discuss further with me. In some cases, I am willing to grant extensions and mitigate the number of absences that count toward the attendance requirement. Those of you who have planned family vacations, use your grace absences to attend such fun things. For those with work obligations that require you to miss class, use your grace absences for this also. For those who have experienced a death in the family during the semester, your grace absences would apply to this also. For losses of this nature, please contact me to discuss further.

9. Your **@student.alamo.edu email** is the official form of communication for this course. Check it regularly. I will also use **CANVAS ANNOUNCEMENTS** to give you regular updates regarding class. If you can't check Canvas, then check your Alamo email account since the announcement will push into that account.
10. **Course Drops:** If you want to drop the course (earning a grade of W), you must initiate the process with your advisor via ACES. I will only drop students for nonattendance (6 or more absences).
11. **Covid-19 & other contagious illnesses:** If you are positive for Covid-19, please stay home and get well, and this is true for any contagious illness. Email to let me know you are ill. You are able to use your grace absences to miss class to get better. Because this is a face to face class, I will not Zoom the

class for students who are out sick. Until you test negative for Covid, but are feeling better enough to be in classes, then please be thoughtful and wear a mask in class.

12. **Mutual respect makes things so much better** . We live in a diverse world. And that means we all have varying backgrounds and experiences. Those experiences do help to shape our personal perspectives. Because of this, we all need to have patience and approach one another with respect and kindness. I ask that you also exercise emotional maturity. If you are not sure what that is, please ask.

For your reference, click here for the [NLC STUDENT HANDBOOK](#).

13. **I'm wishing you a fun and educational semester.** ☺

<u>Course Assignments**</u>	Percentage
<p><b>Attendance &amp; In-Class Participation</b>--From day one, we engage in collaborative learning. In order for the class to be a successful learning community, attendance and participation are expected and required.</p>	<b>5%</b>
<p><b>Tests</b>--There are two tests. The tests are objective in nature and will rely on traditional question formats, primarily true / false and multiple choice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Test #1 (10%)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Test #2 (10%)</li> </ul>	<b>20%</b>
<p><b>Informative Speech Project</b>--This is a substantial individual project requiring each student to move through the speech development process. All steps of the process are graded. All steps must be completed and passed before moving on to the next step in the process.</p> <p>The steps involve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Research Report Out (5%)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Preparation Outline (10%)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Speech Presentation (20%)</li> </ul>	<b>35%</b>
<p><b>Team Project</b> --This project requires teams to design and create a social third place with an emphasis on community building.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 1 major project (10%)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Team Project Planning Tools (5%)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Post-Mortem (5%)</li> </ul>	<b>20%</b>
<p><b>Communication Labs</b>--Students will engage in a variety of class activities for various points/percentages. <u>Students <i>must</i> be present in class to earn these points.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Intro Ice Breaker</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Team Work, Solving Team Conflict &amp; AI</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Speech Study</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Team Problem Solving</li> </ul>	<b>20%</b>
	<b>100%</b>

**\*\*All assignment grades are recorded in Canvas.**

**Grading Scale:** | A= 90-100% B=80-89% C=70-79% D=60-69% F=0-59% W=A grade of "W" (Withdraw)