

COM101 | Introduction to Communications

Course Text

No need to track down a textbook; the readings are built right into this course.

Course Description

In an era where effective communication drives social change, this course empowers students to become confident advocates for issues they care about most. Students explore public speaking as a tool for civic engagement and positive change, developing personal, informative, and persuasive advocacy presentations that transform their passions and knowledge into effective public communication. Building on these foundational skills, the course emphasizes audience-centered approaches, evidence-based argument development, and ethical communication practices. Students will progress from sharing personal experiences to researching and presenting complex information to crafting persuasive appeals for local change. Throughout this journey, they will master techniques for managing speaking anxiety, structuring compelling narratives, using visual aids effectively, and adapting their message to diverse audiences. By course completion, students will have developed a comprehensive toolkit of communication skills that enables them to engage meaningfully in democratic processes, influence policy discussions, and inspire action within their communities--turning them into effective agents of positive change in both local and broader civic contexts.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Transform personal experience into effective advocacy through structured presentation
2. Analyze audiences to create relevant, engaging presentations for specific contexts
3. Develop clear, well-supported arguments using credible research and evidence
4. Craft and deliver speeches that inform, explain, and advocate for change
5. Apply ethical communication principles in research, writing, and presentation
6. Adapt complex information for different audiences and purposes
7. Use structured organization and effective delivery techniques to enhance message impact
8. Apply rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos) strategically to enhance persuasive communication
9. Design and integrate visual aids effectively to enhance audience understanding and engagement
10. Demonstrate reflective analysis of personal learning and growth in civic communication skills

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Academic Integrity Statement

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an honest, truthful and responsible manner. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and academic misconduct. Failure to comply with the Academic Integrity Policy can result in a failure and/or zero on the attempted assignment/examination, a removal from the course, disqualification to enroll in future courses, and/or revocation of an academic transcript.

Course Completion Policy

In order for a course to be considered complete, **all required coursework must be attempted, submitted, and graded.** Required coursework consists of graded assignments. Any Academic Integrity Policy violations may prevent a course from being considered complete.

Assessment Types

StraighterLine courses may include any combination of the assessment types described below. Review the descriptions to learn about each type, then review the Course Evaluation Criteria to understand how your learning will be measured in this course.

Benchmarks

Benchmarks test your mastery of course concepts. You have 3 attempts, and your highest score counts.

Note: Cumulative Benchmarks (final exams) only allow 1 attempt.

Capstones

Capstones are project-based assessments that help you apply concepts to real-world scenarios. You have 2 attempts, and your highest score counts.

Checkpoints

Checkpoints are quick knowledge checks on important course concepts. All are open-book, and most have 1-3 attempts.

Course Evaluation Criteria

Your score provides a percentage score and letter grade for each course. A passing percentage is 70% or higher.

There are a total of 1000 points in the course:

Assessment	Points	Learning Outcomes
Checkpoint 1: Public Speaking as Civic Engagement	3	1, 2, 4
Checkpoint 2: Advocacy Communication	3	1,2, 4
Capstone 1: The "My Advocacy" Speech	225	1, 2, 4, 7, 19

Assessment	Points	Learning Outcomes
Checkpoint 3: informative Communication	3	2, 3, 4, 6
Capstone 2: The Informative Speech	270	2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9
Checkpoint 4: Persuasive Communication	3	2, 3, 5, 6, 8
Capstone 3: The Persuasive Speech	270	2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9
Checkpoint 5: Reflective Communication	3	2, 5, 7, 10
Capstone 4: Reflective Analysis Speech	220	2, 5, 7, 10
Total	1000	

Course Roadmap

This roadmap provides an overview of the checkpoints and lessons covered in this course.

Checkpoint 1: Public Speaking as Civic Engagement

- Civic Engagement and Speech Communication
- Foundations of Advocacy Communication
- Preparing for Public Speaking
- Video Spotlight: What is Civic Engagement?

Checkpoint 2: Advocacy Communication

- Understanding Personal Advocacy
- Crafting Your Personal Advocacy Message
- Effective Delivery and Recording Techniques for Advocacy Communication

Checkpoint 3: Informative Communication

- Understanding Informative Speaking
- Developing Your Informative Speech
- Creating Visual Aids and Delivering Your Informative Speech
- Video Spotlight: Informative vs. Persuasive Communication
- Video Spotlight: Presentations and the Three Ts

Checkpoint 4: Persuasive Communication

- Applying Rhetorical Strategies to Your Persuasive Speech
- Developing and Supporting Persuasive Arguments
- Delivering Your Persuasive Speech
- Video Spotlight: Rhetorical Skills

Checkpoint 5: Reflective Communication

- Understanding Reflective Analysis for Your Speech
- Structuring Your Reflective Speech

- Delivering Your Reflective Speech
- Video Spotlight: Reflective Learning

Related Courses

ENG101

English Composition I

[View Course →](#)

MAT101

College Algebra

[View Course →](#)

BIO101

Introduction to Biology

[View Course →](#)