COMM 2381: Oral Communication

Uniform Syllabus

# About This Course

Communication creates and sustains connections between people. Meaningful connections build families, friendships, communities, nations and worlds. Your ability to communicate with clarity and conviction is your greatest source of power and fulfillment in personal, professional and community life. In this course, we’ll explore the power of communication in various contexts and practice skills that will make you better able to speak and listen in ways that will foster greater connection with the people and communities you care about.

# What You’ll Learn

By taking this course, you will increase your communication competence as you

* Create messages for personal and public contexts, using effective verbal and nonverbal communication and utilizing technology appropriately in each setting.
* Examine your personal communication style, habits and assumptions to enhance your effectiveness across a variety of contexts.
* Evaluate the influence of relationships on the development, delivery and reception of messages in personal and public contexts.
* Apply rhetorical convention and technique ethically and appropriately to create effective presentations.
* Articulate your ideas to diverse audiences with clarity, precision and cultural sensitivity.
* Gather, evaluate and utilize data from multiple credible sources to create cogent and compelling arguments.
* Develop listening skills to facilitate your understanding and critical evaluation of messages.
* Apply the principles of working in groups effectively.

# What You’ll Need

The most important thing you should bring to the classroom every day is a willingness to listen to your classmates and to share your ideas and experiences with us. After that, access to the course textbook is a must. You can rent it either in hard copy or electronically from our bookstore or your favorite purveyor.

Our course textbook is Understanding Human Communication 15th edition by Adler, Rodman and DuPre. Oxford Press 2024.

* To purchase a paper copy of textbook you can go to the **OUP page**:

<https://global.oup.com/ushe/product/understanding-human-communication-9780190925697?q=adler&cc=us&lang=en>

* **For the ebook you can go to**:  [www.redshelf.com,](http://www.redshelf.com/) Here’s the link once you create an account and login:

<https://www.redshelf.com/book/1504129/understanding-human-communication-1504129-9780190925703-ronald-b-adler-george-rodman-athena-du-pre>

* You can also get a copy from the  University of Memphis **bookstore**:

<https://www.bkstr.com/memphisstore/home>

**ISBN for the printed text:  978-0-19-092569-7**

**ISBN for the ebook:  978-0-19-092570-3**

# What We’ll Be Doing: Course Assignments

### Major Speaking Assignments 60%

* Introduction = 15% - ASYNCHRONOUS ZOOM RECORDING
  + Presentation 10 %
  + Peer Evaluation 5%
* Informative Presentation 20% - ASYNCHRONOUS ZOOM RECORDING
  + Presentation 10% points
  + Formal Outline 5% points
  + Peer Evaluations 2.5% points
  + Self-Evaluation 2.5% points
* Persuasive Panel Presentation 25% - SYNCHRONOUS ZOOM RECORDING WITH YOUR GROUP
  + Individual Presentation 15%
  + Formal Outline 5%
  + Peer Evaluations 2.5% points
  + Group Evaluation 2.5% points

### Exercises and Other Assignments 10%

### Quizzes and Exams 30%

* Weekly Reading Quizzes 10%
* Midterm Exam 10%
* Final Exam 10%

# How Things Will Be Assessed

### Course Grading

All assignments and your final grade will be based on a percentage of points earned.

90-100% = A

80-89%= B

70-79% = C

60-69% = D

59% and under = F

Make up work

Presentations must be delivered on the day they are due, unless you contact me prior to your absence with a valid reason for missing class that day. All work associated with speeches, including outlines must be submitted on the day it is due.

For written work and quizzes there is a one-week grace period. If you miss a deadline, you have a week to turn in the assignment with a 10% penalty. After the week is up, I will not accept or grade your submission.

I will not accept a bundle of late work at the end of the semester.

## Reading Penalty

I will deduct a minimum of ten points from the grade of any major presentation if you read it instead of talking to us. There is a difference between being dependent on notes out of nervousness and reading due to lack of preparation, and I will adjust the deduction accordingly.

# In This Classroom We Will Stive

### To Be Present

* Your presence in class is vital to the success of everyone involved. Your presence as an engaged audience member is at least as important as your presence when you are speaking. If you are more than 20 minutes late you will be counted absent for that day. If you are engaged in other work, napping or otherwise disconnected you’ll be counted absent for that day.
* Eliminating distractions is an important element in successful communication. I expect you to use self-discipline when it comes to your technology use in class. There will be times when I ask you to use your devices to participate in class, and times when that will be inappropriate. Please respect our time together and be present during class. I can’t compete with your devices for your attention, and it’s rude to expect me to.

### To Stay Healthy

* If you have COVID symptoms, a severe cough, or are running a fever please do not attend class. Go to the Health Center, get tested and follow current quarantine guidelines if you test positive. I’ll work with you to be sure you keep up with course work.
* If you are too ill to attend class, please use common sense to avoid infecting your classmates.
* In case of a serious illness or hospitalization, please be in touch with me as soon as you are able to. I’ll work with you to complete your coursework.

### To Show Respect

* Research shows that winning people over to your ideas is largely a matter of listening respectfully, showing genuine curiosity about their point of view, and offering your ideas as different ways to think about an issue. In this classroom we will strive to discuss issues that are worthy of your attention with academic rigor and respect for differing points of view.
* We will not engage in arguments that are evidence free or based on falsehoods. We will not question the humanity or human rights of others, or allow name calling or insults. There are many ways, as Ruth Bader Ginsberg put it “to disagree without being disagreeable”. Part of becoming an educated person is learning to speak your mind with integrity, which requires thought and self-discipline.
* If you ever feel slighted, overlooked or disrespected in this classroom, please address it with me so that we can make things right. Communication can’t happen when people are shut down.

### To Be Inclusive

* I make every effort to be sure my course materials are accessible to all students, to make examples and course texts representative of all students, and to incorporate Universal Design for Learning into our course website. If you have needs that are not being met, please let me know.

The University of Memphis values diversity, and, therefore, students with disabilities are welcome in this course.  If there are aspects of instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement, please speak with me privately and contact Disability Resources for Students (DRS) to submit an official request for course accommodations.  DRS works with students with a variety of conditions, including physical, mental, cognitive, and temporary conditions.  To start the process, contact DRS by calling 901-678-2880, emailing [drs@memphis.edu](mailto:drs@memphis.edu), or visiting 110 Wilder Tower.

* I will honor the religious observances of students of all faiths, and do my best to be aware of them. If you need an accommodation for a religious observance, please let me know.

### To Be Honest

* Plagiarism is not a new issue, but one that has grown as technology has given people more opportunities to copy the work of others and claim it as original. It’s wrong, and we’ll discuss why as we learn more about research and source citation. I will be using plagiarism detectors, and will address infractions as immediately as possible. Penalties begin with losing a letter grade for unintentional plagiarism and escalate to failing the course for multiple infractions. All significant cases of plagiarism will be reported to Student Services.

You can review the University plagiarism policy here: <https://www.memphis.edu/osa/students/academic-misconduct.php>

### To Resolve Conflict

* If conflict arise between a student and instructor involving conduct, grade disputes or other issues, the first step is for the two parties to discuss the matter. If the issue remains unresolved, it should be referred to Lori Stallings, Course Coordinator for COMM 2381, for mediation.If the matter remains unresolved, it will be referred to our Department Chair, Dr. Wendy Atkins-Sayre.

### To Be Considerate

* On days when your classmates are presenting, please don’t enter the room while they are speaking. If you’re late, wait until you hear the applause that will signal that they have finished and then knock to be admitted. Interruptions can be a significant problem for some speakers, so be thoughtful of the needs of others.
* If you are going to be more than thirty minutes late to class, I’d prefer that you not attend that day. Coming in for the last twenty minutes of class in disruptive and disrespectful.
* I have an extreme aversion to watching or hearing people chew (Misophonia. It’s a real thing.) Please don’t plan on eating in class, and avoid chewing gum. You can have a beverage if you wish.
* Your nonverbal signals are constantly on display to me and anyone else who is speaking. Make an effort to show that you are present and engaged with your posture, eye contact and facial expression. It’s vital to everyone’s success in a speaking situation. Apathy is contagious. Try not to be a source or spreader of apathy in our classroom.

# In the Department of Communication and Film

### We Welcome You to our Major or Minor

Employers are looking for graduates who can "think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems" (Hart Research Associates, 2013). And these are exactly the skills we teach our students—not only in Oral Communication but also in our major and minor.

The Department of Communication & Film at the UofM offers the undergraduate major in Communication with two concentrations—Communication Studies and Film & Video Production.

* Communication Studies offers students a broad education spanning interpersonal, public, and mediated communication practices, preparing students for a range of careers.
* Film & Video Production offers students the skills and knowledge necessary for employment in the film and video production industry or as an independent filmmaker. Film & Video alumni work in television stations, film and video production companies, and other organizations in Memphis, the Mid-South, and across the country.
* Recent Communication Studies alumni work in account management, corporate communications, development and fundraising, human resources, marketing and events planning, non-profit management, and social media, among other fields.

We also offer a minor in Communication, requiring a total of 18 credits in COMM (2381 counts toward the minor), at least 9 of which must be upper-division.

Learn more about majoring or minoring in Communication at memphis.edu/communication

# At The University of Memphis

## We Have Resources to Help You Succeed.

Please consult the Student Resources Guide in our Canvas Course Shell.

### McWherter Library

Our library offers numerous resources to help you, including help with research and finding resources. A copy of the course text is on reserve at the front desk if you need access. You can check out a laptop there if you need one for turning in coursework or taking quizzes.

### Center for Writing and Communication

This Center offers assistance in speech development, outlining and practice for all students enrolled in COMM 2381. It is located on the ground floor of the main campus library. An appointment to meet with a tutor can be made at <http://www.memphis.edu/cwc/about/how_to.php>

### **Community and Campus Resources**

**The University of Memphis offers a wide variety of emergency services that range from mental health to food, shelter and financial assistance. See this guide for further information:**

<https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/emergencyfunds.php>

### Stress Management

The Relaxation Zone services are FREE to enrolled UofM students. No appointment is necessary; Drop by anytime. The Relaxation Zone located in **Brister Hall 302 is open Monday - Friday between 9:00 am - 4:00 pm** for the Fall and Spring and 10:00 am - 3:00 pm in the Summer.

### Tiger Pantry

The Tiger Pantry is a choice pantry open to current University of Memphis students. The pantry generally carries non-perishable food items, basic toiletries, and basic household items. To access the pantry or to learn more visit Office of the Dean of Students' Student Outreach and Support services in **University Center, Room 359 from Mondays through Fridays between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm.**