

COMM 2040: PUBLIC SPEAKING

Spring 2026

Meeting Times: Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:30 – 4:50pm
Lecture Location: 317 Wooten Hall

Recitation Locations: 113 Wooten Hall (Section 204)
114 Wooten Hall (Section 205)

Professor: Dr. Andrew Davis
Office Location: 320E General Academic Building
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:30am – 1:30pm
(and by appointment)

Email: Andrew.Davis@unt.edu

Adjunct Assistant: Gina Laughlin
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Course Overview, Objectives & Structure

This course will teach you about the principles of public speaking, as well as how to prepare and deliver a speech to an audience, while stressing the role of public speaking in democratic decision making.

Course goals and objectives are in line with the Core Curriculum Competencies of:

Communication Skills, including effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.

Critical Thinking Skills, including creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.

Personal Responsibility, including the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

All students are enrolled in the lecture section (Section 001). Lectures will be held in 317 Wooten Hall. Throughout the semester, we will sometimes break off into smaller recitation sections. Recitations will be held at our regular class time but will meet in different classrooms in Wooten Hall (113 for Section 204 or 114 for Section 205). Check your class schedule to see your recitation section.

Texts & Materials

The required textbook for this course is *Exploring Public Speaking* by Barbara G. Tucker. It is an Open Educational Resource. You will not need to rent or buy a copy. It can be found in PDF format on Canvas.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Standards & Consequences

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Any use of artificial intelligence (AI) on assignments constitutes an act of academic dishonesty in this course. Students may not use any form of AI beyond a basic spelling and grammar check. If you have questions about this, please contact me before handing in an assignment. Any act of academic dishonesty (including use of AI) will result in an automatic zero for the assignment and may lead to further penalties. When in doubt, ask for help.

ADA Accommodations

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at [Office of Disability Access | University of North Texas](#).

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to the UNT Learning Management System (LMS) for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [Student Conduct and Community Standards | University of North Texas](#).

Survivor Advocacy

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

Course Policies

Course Communication

I will use university email for all course communication. Be sure to check it regularly.

It is your responsibility to contact me if you have any questions or need assistance with the course. The best option is to arrange a meeting at my office. You may also contact me via email or Canvas Inbox. I strongly encourage you to meet with me concerning assignments, as well as your progress in the course. I will not, however, answer questions about an assignment within the final 24 hours before the assignment is due. This is to encourage you to plan and organize efficiently so that you can submit the best work possible. Please contact me with any problems or questions *when they arise*.

Please include the course number and your name in the subject line of emails. I will not, however, answer emails after 6 pm (weekdays) or on the weekend unless there is a situation that requires immediate attention.

Please contact me if you need help with anything concerning your success in this course. There are no stupid questions and there is no shame in asking for help. The sooner you reach out, the better our chances of dealing with a problem in a productive manner.

Attendance

Your success in this course depends on regular attendance. You should attend every class unless you have a documented university-excused absence such as active military service, a religious holy day, or an official university function as stated in the Student Attendance and Authorized Absences Policy. If you cannot attend class due to an emergency, please let me know.

All students are expected to attend ALL speech preparation days and ALL speech delivery days (even when you are not presenting your own speech).

If you absolutely **MUST** miss a speech day, please communicate with me in advance. If you miss a speech delivery day when you are not scheduled to present, you will receive a 10% deduction from your speech grade. If you do not attend your scheduled speech day, you will receive a zero for the speech. If you find yourself underprepared for your speech, you are still better off presenting your speech on your scheduled day. You will know in advance which day you are scheduled to present. There are no make-up opportunities for missing your speech day. The only exception is a documented emergency, and you are expected to clearly communicate your situation with me in as timely a manner as possible.

Assignments

Although we will talk about upcoming assignments in class, it is NOT my responsibility to constantly remind you when assignments are due. Keeping track of due dates is your responsibility.

Useful Information

Cell phones should be turned off, off the table, and out of your hands during class.

The four practices that are essential to success in this class are: 1) take notes (on all readings and lectures); 2) attend class; 3) ask questions; and 4) follow directions for assignments.

While the use of computers in class is allowed, they are to be used only for class-related purposes. No web browsing. No social media or messaging. No goofing off. No exceptions. If anyone is found to be using a computer for anything other than course purposes, all computers will be banned for all students for the remainder of the semester.

I strongly encourage you to take notes by hand. This is for 3 reasons: 1) studies overwhelmingly show that students who use pen and paper understand more and retain more knowledge than students who use laptops; 2) the purpose of taking notes is not transcription, but to enhance understanding; and 3) the internet is a constant, distracting temptation that few of us are able to resist.

If you disagree with a grade, please come to office hours to discuss it. Do not attempt to challenge a grade during class. If I find your explanation convincing, I will re-grade the assignment. This means that the grade may go up or down or stay the same. Your challenge is no guarantee of a better grade. As a hint, “I think I deserve an A because I worked really hard on this” is not a convincing explanation. You must wait 24 hours after being given a grade to challenge it.

Recording of any kind is prohibited in this space (this includes audio recordings, live-streaming, photographs of course materials, etc.) unless a student has an approved accommodation from the ODA. In such cases, all students in the course will be notified whenever a recording will be taking place.

Chronic tardiness will negatively affect your grade, at my discretion.

Grading & Assignments

Grading

An “A” means that you did excellent work. You did work that reflects the very best of UNT’s proud tradition of undergraduate education. If you received an A your work was deep, clear, insightful, creative, and needed very little (if any) revision.

A “B” means that you did very good work. This work reflects a solid engagement with the material and an admirable execution of the concepts of the course. “B” work is a little less clear, perhaps not as insightful or creative, but certainly competent. Some revision on key themes would move this into the “A” realm.

A “C” is average. C work is hurriedly produced, not thought-through or rehearsed enough to be above average. This work does not fail massively in any significant respect, but it does not distinguish itself in terms of analytical clarity or presentation.

A “D” means you are producing work below average, and an “F” means work is missing, incomplete, or poor.

Assignments

Quiz 1	10%	(20 points)
Quiz 2	10%	(20 points)
Quiz 3	10%	(20 points)
Quiz 4	10%	(20 points)
Informative Speech Outline	15%	(30 points)
Informative Speech Delivery	15%	(30 points)
Persuasive Speech Outline	15%	(30 points)
Persuasive Speech Delivery	15%	(30 points)

100% = 200 points

There will be an opportunity for extra credit at the end of the semester.

Details for all assignments and their due dates will be given in class and posted to Canvas.

Course Schedule

Week 1

Tuesday 01/13	Course Introduction
Thursday 01/15	Readings—Syllabus Chapter 1: The Basics of Public Speaking

Week 2

Tuesday 01/20	Readings—Chapter 2: Audience Analysis & Listening Chapter 3: Ethics in Public Speaking
Thursday 01/22	Reading—Chapter 4: Developing Topics for Your Speech

Week 3

Tuesday 01/027	Assignment—In-class quiz on Chapters 1-4
Thursday 01/29	Assignment—In-class Speech Topic workshop

Week 4

Tuesday 02/03	Readings—Chapter 5: Researching Your Speeches Chapter 6: Organizing & Outlining Your Speech
Thursday 02/05	Reading—Chapter 7: Supporting Your Speech Ideas

Week 5

Tuesday 02/10 Readings—Chapter 8: Introductions & Conclusions
Chapter 9: Presentation Aids

Thursday 02/12 Assignment—In-class quiz on Chapters 5-9

Week 6

Tuesday 02/17 Readings—Chapter 10: Language
Chapter 11: Delivery

Thursday 02/19 Reading—Chapter 12: Informative Speaking

Week 7

Tuesday 02/24 Assignment—In-class quiz on Chapters 10-12

Thursday 02/26 Speech prep in Recitation

Week 8

Tuesday 03/03 Speech prep in Recitation

Thursday 03/05 Speech prep in Recitation

Week 9

Spring Break – no class

Week 10

Tuesday 03/17 Assignment—Informative Speeches in Recitation

Thursday 03/19 Assignment—Informative Speeches in Recitation

Week 11

Tuesday 03/24 Assignment—Informative Speeches in Recitation

Thursday 03/26 Reading—Chapter 13: Persuasive Speaking

Week 12

Tuesday 03/31 Speech prep in Recitation

Thursday 04/02 Speech prep in Recitation

Week 13

Tuesday 04/07 Speech prep in Recitation

Thursday 04/09 Assignment—Persuasive Speeches in Recitation

Week 14

Tuesday 04/14 Assignment—Persuasive Speeches in Recitation

Thursday 04/16 Assignment—Persuasive Speeches in Recitation

Week 15

Tuesday 04/21 Reading—Chapter 14: Logical Reasoning

Thursday 04/23 Reading—Chapter 15: Special Occasion Speaking

Week 16

Tuesday 04/28 Assignment—In-class quiz on Chapters 13-15

Thursday 04/30 LDOC—Course Wrap-up

Final Exam Period Tuesday 05/05 12:30-2:30pm
Special Occasion Speech for Extra Credit