Effective Leadership Communication, CMHT 3450.001
Fall 2026, T/TH 2:20 pm - 3:40 pm, GAB 114

Instructor Contact Information

Ms. Ashley Williams Durbin
Chilton 330J
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Office Hours

Tuesday/Thursday, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Chilton Hall 330J. If these times do not work, let's schedule a time that works for both of us. I'm open to meeting via Zoom.

Required Textbook

Genard, G. (2022). *Speak for Leadership. How to Engage, Persuade, and Inspire any Audience*. Cedar & Maitland Press. *ISBN: 978-1-7365556-0-6*

UNT Catalog Course Description

Principles of effective leadership communication will be explored as students develop, deliver, and evaluate professional presentations. (3 hours credit).

Course Overview

This course is designed to help improve public speaking/oral presentations through theory, observation, study of best practices, and, most importantly, practice. We will cover various concepts and models of communication, how to adapt a speech for different occasions and audiences, how to effectively support your ideas, how to select and organize materials in preparation for a speech, and how to utilize multimedia tools in presentations. This course is relevant in academic, business, and social settings and facilitates the development of your leadership skills through effective communication with others and active listening.

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the communication process from the positions of receiver and sender in business contexts.
- Develop active listening skills to effectively respond to verbal and non-verbal cues of key stakeholders.
- Apply communication strategies to effectively manage anxiety before a business

presentation.
- Evaluate how communication influences both individuals and organizations.
- Design and deliver effective oral presentations grounded in communication theory and industry best practices.

Instructor Commitment and Expectations

My teaching philosophy is one based upon mutual respect. I set high expectations, and I believe that every student can meet that standard. I am committed to your success, will provide engaging classroom experiences, and offer clear instructions to guide your learning. On the flip side, I expect that you attend each class period, stay organized, turn in assignments on time, arrive promptly, engage in the learning process, behave professionally, and submit quality work. The sky is the limit when we are all on the same page.

Grading & Assignments

Specific guidelines, rubrics, and due dates for each of the assignments will be posted in Canvas throughout the semester. The final semester grade will be determined as noted here:

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89.9%

C = 70-79.9%

D = 60-69.9%

F = 59.9% or below

Learn, Lead, Connect Activities (50 pts)

This class takes a learn-it-today, apply-it-tomorrow approach, making it a highly interactive and practical experience. We will achieve this goal through a variety of teaching methods including, but not limited to, role play, impromptu speeches, flipped classrooms, group work, executive speech critique, Ted Talks, and other experiential exercises. There are no make-ups for these in-class assignments. However, we will complete enough points for you to drop an assignment.

Exam (50 pts)

There is one exam for this class, a midterm. The exam is divided purposefully between our textbook, assigned readings, and class lectures.

Presentations (300 pts)

You will orally deliver three formal presentations throughout the semester: The Pep Talk, The Product Demo, and the Pitch. Presentations will require thorough research, an outline, and quality references.

Attendance Expectations

Attendance is taken on a regular basis and will influence your final grade as most of your work will occur during our regularly scheduled class time.

Late Work Policy

Because of the interactive nature of our class there are no make-ups for Learn, Lead, Connect activities as previously mentioned. However, we will have enough points available for you to drop at least one of these assignments. Case and simulation papers turned in late will receive a 10% point deduction for each day late (after the deadline).

ODA Accommodation

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 you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. 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. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss their accommodations with faculty. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Access website at disability.unt.edu. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Emergency Notification and Procedures

Eagle Alert notifies you with critical information in an event of emergency. Know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas. Determine how you will contact family if phones are temporarily unavailable. Identify where you will go if you need to evacuate suddenly. In the event of a university closure, I will communicate with you through Canvas.

Academic Integrity

A range of disciplinary actions may result from any finding of academic dishonesty depending upon the severity of the misconduct. At a minimum for this class, any finding of academic misconduct on exams, writing assignments, use of AI, or any other graded assignment will result in a “0.” See CMHT Syllabus Addendum for more details.

Tentative Course Calendar

Dates	Topic	Readings/Assignment
Aug. 18	Course Introduction	Course Introduction
Aug.20	Developing Leadership Presence	Genard, (Chapters 1)
Aug. 25	Performing for an Audience	Genard, (Chapters 2 & 3)
Aug. 27	Mitigating Anxiety	Genard, (Chapters 4 & 5)
Sept. 1	Understanding Body Language & Voice Dynamics	Genard, (Chapters 6 & 7)
Sept. 3	Types of Speeches (In Class Work Day)	**LLC: Flipped Classroom**
Sept. 8	Types of Speeches (Delivery Day)	**LLC: Flipped Classroom**
Sept. 10	Crafting and Delivering Your Message	
Sept. 15	The Pep Talk	**Individual Presentation**
Sept. 17	The Pep Talk	**Individual Presentation**
Sept. 22	Engaging an Audience	Genard, (Chapter 8)
Sept. 24	Telling a Story	Genard, (Chapter 9)
Sept. 29	Speaking for Leadership	Genard, (Chapter 10)
Oct. 1	Catch Up/Review	
Oct. 6	**Midterm Exam**	**Midterm Exam**
Oct. 8	Disney Executive Speakers	LLC: Executive Speech Critique Genard, (Chapter 11)
Oct. 13	Giving Constructive Feedback	
Oct. 15	Receiving Constructive Feedback	

Oct. 20	Leading Productive Meetings	**LLC Linked In Learning**
Oct. 22	Leading Productive Meetings	
Oct. 27	The Product Demo	**Indvidual Presentation**
Oct. 29	The Product Demo	**Individual Presentation**
Nov. 3	Resolving Conflict	
Nov. 5	Resolving Conflict	
Nov. 10	De-escalating during Crisis	
Nov. 12	Delivering on a Virtual Stage	Genard, (Chapter 12)
Nov. 17	Bringing it all Together (Virtual Workday)	
Nov. 19	The Pitch	**Group Presentation**
Dec. 1	The Pitch	**Group Presentation**
Dec. 3	The Pitch	**Group Presentation**

Dates and topics subject to change.