

COM 121S – 402US: Intro to Communication
Edison State Community College, SUMMER 2026

WEBFLEX | 6.8.2026 – 8.1.2026

ONSITE: PIQUA CAMPUS, EAST HALL 458 | TUESDAYS 6PM – 8:45PM

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SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A hybrid introduction to theories, principles, and practice of speech communication and a survey of the study of theories of human communication.

The course will focus on developing public speaking skills and on providing students with the knowledge necessary to better identify and describe communicative events in their own lives, including how to analyze these events and how to make choices about meanings and responses in appropriate and effective ways.

Students will practice the invention, preparation, rehearsal, performance, and critiquing of academic speeches. Public speaking presentations will include interview presentations, small group presentations, ceremonial speeches, academic poster presentation, researched informative speeches, and researched persuasive speeches.

In addition, students will survey and apply theories and principles of communication, rhetoric, intrapersonal communication, self-concept and communication, perception and communication, verbal communication, nonverbal communication, listening, interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, small group communication, gender and communication, organizational communication, conflict resolution, communication and technology, and media studies.

How communication practices contribute to the construction of meaning, relationships, culture, and society will also be explored.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Define, explain, and apply the basic principles and theories of oral communication.
- Survey, explain, and apply introductory principles and theories of human communication, including interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, small group communication, mass media communication, and communication and technology.
- Present well-developed and appropriately organized informative (e.g., demonstration speeches, introductory speeches, researched speeches, etc.) and persuasive speeches (e.g., factual speeches, policy speeches, value speeches).
- Recognize the importance of and conduct audience analysis and adaptation of messages, style, and delivery to meet the needs of diverse audiences.
- Conduct research to find appropriate and credible supporting materials that meet the needs of the situation, the type of speech, and the audience.
- Gain confidence speaking in front of audiences appropriate for the mode of instructional delivery by developing skills and strategies for overcoming communication apprehension.

- Synthesize information from multiple sources to construct an argument.
- Distinguish between the purposes of informative, persuasive, and special occasion speeches.
- Use appropriate and effective verbal and nonverbal delivery to communicate messages consistent with the presentation's purpose, context, and audience.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS COURSE

- Oral Communication
- Tribute, Informative Speech
- Interview Practice
- Academic Research
- Logic
- Evaluation
- Listening
- Communication Competence
- Intrapersonal Communication
- Perception
- Self-Perception
- Communication Theory and Models
- Verbal Communication
- Nonverbal Communication
- Intercultural Communication
- Interpersonal Communication
- Self-Disclosure
- The Stages of Relationship Development
- Relationship Dialectics
- Small Group Dynamics and Roles
- Conflict Resolution
- Communication and Technology

EDISON STATE CORE VALUES

The Core Values are a set of principles which guide in creating educational programs and environments at Edison State. They include communication, ethics, critical thinking, human diversity, inquiry/respect for learning, and interpersonal skills/teamwork. The goals, objectives, and activities in this course will introduce/reinforce these Core Values whenever appropriate.

TEXTBOOK & COURSE MATERIALS

1. *NO TEXTBOOK is required.*
2. All materials and resources will be provided through Blackboard.

IMPORTANT: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to be comfortable with Blackboard, Microsoft Word or a similar word processor software application, and web-based research. **Technical assistance in creating the required content using these required applications to complete assignments WILL NOT be provided within the course.** Please familiarize yourself with technical support resources at the College BEFORE your assignment(s) are due.

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFO

You can best reach me at: mgarrison@edisonohio.edu. I try to respond to all questions and requests I receive during the week within 24 hours. If I am available over weekends, I will reply to emails but may wait until Monday to respond. **PLEASE put the COURSE NAME in the SUBJECT LINE of all your emails to me!** THANK YOU!

OFFICE HOURS

By appointment before or after in person class meetings or via Zoom.

COURSE ATTENDANCE

THIS IS AN ACCELERATED COURSE. We will be accomplishing in EIGHT (8) weeks what would normally be covered in a full semester! The successful completion of an accelerated course depends on your active participation in all assignments and discussions. Students are expected to attend all scheduled meetings of the course. The major responsibility for education belongs to the student. An assumption of responsibility is at the center of learning and accomplishment. Each student is expected to arrange a class schedule in such a way that conflicting employment or personal activities are held to a minimum.

- The successful completion of a **WEBLEX** course depends on your active attendance and participation both **ONLINE AND IN CLASS**.

ONSITE ATTENDANCE

- Students are expected to be in class and ready to begin at the scheduled beginning of the class; I will begin on time. If you are habitually late, you will be charged with an unexcused absence.
- **ONE (1) unexcused absence to the ONSITE meetings are permitted; the second (2) absence will result in the student failing the course.**

SPEECH PRESENTATION & ATTENDANCE

- **ALL speeches will be presented in person. Unless ALL students are presenting a speech online, no exceptions will be made.** If you anticipate needing to present online instead of in class, drop this section and take an online course.
- If you are absent on a day when you are scheduled to present a speech, you will present your speech the first onsite day back following your absence.
- **ALL** speeches must be successfully attempted to pass the course.
- **You may only be ONE speech behind!** If you fall more than one speech behind, you will fail the course.
- **If you are absent for the final speech,** you will be given an "INCOMPLETE" and will need to present your speech in front of another COM 121S course at the beginning of the following semester. Students needing this make-up arrangement are responsible for reaching out to me by email by the start of the second week of classes of the following semester; if the student does not complete the final speech within 100 days, the "I" becomes an "F."

BLACKBOARD & EMAIL REQUIRMENTS

- Students are required to log onto Blackboard at least twice a week, with a strong recommendation that they check in every day.
- Students are expected to complete their online assignments during the week they are assigned.
- Students who do not log on to Blackboard at least once a week are at risk of being dropped from the class; if you are experiencing an emergency that prevents you from logging in, please contact me immediately.

- **ONE (1) unexcused absence from the ONLINE course modules is permitted; the second (2) absence will result in the student failing the course.**
- Additionally, all students are responsible for checking their **Edison State Community College student email accounts** DAILY for announcements.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Students earn points by presenting speeches, completing written assignments, participating in Blackboard discussions, and other assignments as announced, with the cumulative point total, NOT A PERCENTAGE, determining the final grade. At no point are points deducted once you have earned them. The point value and evaluation criteria of each assignment will be discussed in detail when the work is assigned; please ask me if you are unsure of the point value or grading criteria of any assignment.

IMPORTANT: Students must satisfactorily complete ALL speech presentations as described in each detailed rubric to pass the course. You may NOT “skip” a speech.

A final grade is submitted to the College Registrar. Again, **grades will be computed based on a point system, NOT PERCENTAGE, with the following grade equivalents:**

FINAL GRADE

GRADE	POINTS
A	900-1000+
B	800-890
C	700-790
D	600-690
F	590 and below

The following assignments are worth the following points, unless otherwise announced:

Assignment	Point Value
Discussion Board (DB)	10-50 points
Introduction Speech	100 points
Mock Interview	150 points
Informative Tribute Speech	200 points
Persuasive Speech	250 points
Other assignments	vary

COURSE ORGANIZATION

- The course is broken down into **modules (MODs)**, carrying us from the first week of class to the last.
- Each week we will start a new MOD where a new topic or concept will be introduced for discussion, research, possible presentation, and reflection.
- You have the duration of one week to finish the work for that MOD; once that unit’s week is over, you cannot go back and finish those assignments, unless otherwise noted.
- A **Module Map** (MOD MAP) will be provided each week, summarizing the activities, assignments, and deadlines for each MOD. You will find the MOD MAPS in each individual module folder. Remember to print out these maps and refer to them often!

- **Discussion Board (DB)** assignments are key in learning the course material; be sure to read every post! Also please note that I will rarely join the conversation, but I read each post with care. My comments about your post can be found in the 'grade book.'
- Please read the **rubrics** provided for each assignment! These documents detail the expectations for the work and explain the grading criteria.
- **All written assignments** must be submitted through Blackboard as PDF attachments. Please do not email assignments.
- This course will often discuss controversial or sensitive issues. It is important that we treat everyone's opinions and arguments with respect and courtesy. I have a **"zero tolerance" policy for rude or disruptive behavior.**

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

While this list is not inclusive of all assignments, here are descriptions of the major assignments:

DISCUSSION BOARD (DB)

Each week we will have at least one discussion board topic, sometimes more. Students must respond within the week the topic is assigned in order to earn the assigned points. Grammatical and typographical mistakes will impact the total of points earned. *See DISCUSSION BOARD RUBRIC for further explanation of grading of DBs.*

INTRODUCTION SPEECH

This speech is designed to introduce the speaker to speaking, the listener to listening, and the student to the class. Choose ONE object to help focus your presentation; you must speak for between 3-5 minutes. The purpose of this speech is to get up and speak in front of a group of people. Make sure you engage your audience and follow the rubric for your speech. When you practice, work on improving your breathing and reducing your nervousness. Refer to the specific speech rubric for all requirements. 100 points.

THE MOCK INTERVIEW

Each student will complete a mock Zoom interview. More information will be provided on the assignment rubric. 150 points.

INFORMATIVE TRIBUTE SPEECH WITH ANECDOTE

For this 4-to-6-minute speech, you should speak about an individual you believe has had a positive impact on society (at local, state, or national level). Develop a clear central purpose that discusses their contribution(s) and impact on society and include a short anecdote to illustrate your position. You should cite a minimum of three (3) legitimate sources in your speech. When you practice, work on maintaining eye contact with individual audience members. Refer to the specific speech rubric for all requirements. 200 points.

PERSUASIVE SPEECH

This speech will be given a chance to persuade your audience to change their attitudes, beliefs, and/or behaviors. By this speech, you should feel more confident, have strong time management skills, and be able to maintain eye contact with individual audience members. You need to cite a minimum of four (4) legitimate sources and incorporate a visual aid during this 5-to-7-minute speech. Refer to the specific speech rubric for all requirements. 250 points.

IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT DETAILS!

All essay assignments are to be typed, spell-checked and grammar checked. Typos and grammatical errors will result in a serious deduction in the number of points awarded for any assignment. All assignments submitted through Blackboard as PDF documents.

PLEASE NOTE WELL: Students must write their full name, the course, the name of the assignment and the date in the upper left-hand corner of each assignment submitted. **You do NOT need to use this heading for Discussion Boards (DBs).** Failure to use this format will result in the assignment being returned to the student without consideration or the loss of all points.

USE THIS EXACT FORMATTING FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS (NOT DBs):

Student's First name and Last name

COM 121S – 402US/ EVENING

Name of assignment

DATE

POLICIES

TESTING YOUR FAITH ACT POLICY

Edison State Community College is committed to providing an environment respectful of students' beliefs. Students are permitted to be absent for up to 3 days each semester based on their faith, religion, or spiritual belief system with no academic penalty. Students must complete the Testing Your Faith Act Accommodations Form, <https://www.edisonohio.edu/services-support/registration-records>, located in "Forms" and provide a copy to their individual faculty within 14 days from the start of the course. The entire policy can be found in the student handbook at <https://www.edisonohio.edu/services-support/student-resources>.

HOW & WHEN TO USE AI IN THIS COURSE

- You are encouraged to use spelling and grammar check in MSWord, Pages, or GoogleDocs.
- You may use AI chatbots (such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Claude, CoPilot) **if and only if** you use it with proper citations and acknowledgment. You must disclose the use of AI in your work, describing the specific way(s) in which AI was used and citing the system(s) used, dates of use, and where relevant how they were used (such as prompts used) in your documentation. You must cite all AI outputs following MLA citation guidelines.
 - Work that does not include the required elements (citations, author's statement, etc.) will receive NO CREDIT.
 - Using AI in ways that are inappropriate violates the student code of conduct and can lead to disciplinary action.
- If you are struggling as a student and feeling too much pressure in this course, please don't resort to chatbots as a shortcut to completing assignments; I am interested in YOUR thoughts. Many students feel stressed and pressured. It is completely natural, as this is a challenging course. But there are support resources available to you, and I believe that you can succeed.

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COURSE MAP

This is subject to change. Please check your ESCC email and Blackboard for updates.

DATE	TOPIC	WORK COMPLETED?	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS ACHIEVED
6.9.2026 ON CAMPUS	MOD #1 INTRODUCTION; SYLLABUS; NONVERBAL COM; INTRO SPEECH DIRECTIONS AND RUBRIC		150	
6.16.2026 ONLINE	MOD #2 MANAGING ANXIETY; COMPLETE INTRO SPEECH OUTLINE		100	
6.23.2026 ON CAMPUS	MOD #3 PRESENT INTRO SPEECH; MOCK INTERVIEW DIRECTIONS AND RUBRIC		125	
6.30.2026 ONLINE	MOD #4 MOCK INTERVIEW PREPARATION		100	
7.7.2026 ON CAMPUS	MOD #5 HOW TO DO RESEARCH; VISUAL AID BEST PRACTICES; INFORMATIVE TRIBUTE SPEECH DIRECTIONS		100	
7.14.2026 ONLINE	MOD #6 MOCK INTERVIEW APPOINTMENTS; INFORMATIVE TRIBUTE SPEECH OUTLINE		175	
7.21.2026 ON CAMPUS	MOD #7 PRESENT INFORMATIVE TRIBUTE SPEECH; PERSUASIVE SPEECH PREPARATION		200	
7.28.2026 ON CAMPUS	MOD #8 PRESENT PERSUASIVE SPEECH		250	
Total: 1200 points				

Total points available: 1200

Final grade of "A" = 900+ points