Syllabus

COM 121: Introduction to Communication

Online Sixteen-Week Term | Fall Semester 2026

Instructor Information

Professor William Loudermilk

M.A. Communication Studies, Regent University, 2005 | M.A. English, Wright State University, 1997

Office: Room 213

Office Hours: Mondays, 2:00–4:00 p.m. in the Library; Wednesdays, 12:00–2:00 p.m. in the Library; Sundays, 9:00–11:00 p.m. online; other times by appointment.

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Course Information

Course: COM 121 — Introduction to Communication

Credit Hours: 3

Section: COM 121 803

Format: Online Asynchronous

Term: Sixteen-Week Fall Semester, 2026

Orientation: Monday, August 24, 2026

Week 1 Opens: Tuesday, August 25, 2026 — 8:00 a.m.

Final Deadline: Saturday, December 12, 2026 — 11:59 p.m.

> ⚠️ **Attendance Notice:** Students who do not submit the Opening Letter by Thursday, August 27 at 11:59 p.m. will be removed from the course for non-attendance. Submitting the Opening Letter confirms your enrollment and intent to participate.

Course Description

COM 121 is an introduction to the theories, principles, and practices of human communication. The course combines public speaking skill development with a survey of human communication theories. Students will analyze communication events in their own lives, develop and present a series of speeches, and apply communication frameworks to interpersonal, professional, and public contexts.

Presentations in this course include:

- Self-Introduction Speech
- Significant Place Speech
- Persuasive Speech
- Mock Interview
- Relational Dialectics Final

The course also surveys:

- Communication models, theories, and principles
- The self, perception, and self-concept
- Verbal and nonverbal communication
- Listening and audience analysis
- Public speaking: structure, outlining, and delivery
- Research skills and credibility
- Interpersonal communication and relational development

- Conflict resolution and difficult conversations
- Relational Dialectics Theory

Course Goals

Students will:

- Define, explain, and apply the basic principles and theories of oral communication (Bloom's Level 3)
- Survey, explain, and apply introductory human communication theories, including interpersonal, intercultural, and media communication (Level 3)
- Present well-developed and organized informative and persuasive speeches (Level 5)
- Recognize and conduct audience analysis to adapt messages, style, and delivery for diverse audiences (Level 3)
- Conduct research to find credible supporting materials tailored to audience and context (Level 3)
- Gain confidence in public speaking and develop strategies to overcome communication apprehension (Level 3)
- Synthesize information from multiple sources to construct coherent arguments (Level 5)
- Distinguish among the purposes of different speech types (Level 4)
- Use effective verbal and nonverbal delivery methods to communicate consistent messages (Level 3)

Important Values this Class Emphasizes:

This course reinforces the following Edison State Community College core values:

Communication • Ethics • Critical Thinking • Community • Inquiry / Respect for Learning • Teamwork

Textbooks

All textbooks are optional for the fall term. Multiple copies are available on reserve in the Edison State Library at no cost.

Optional Textbooks:

- The Norton Field Guide to Speech — W.W. Norton — Primary reference for speech preparation and types of speeches
- Fundamentals of Communication — LOUIS: The Louisiana Library Network (free, open-access) — available at https://louis.pressbooks.pub/fundamentalsofcomm/
- An Introduction to Communication — Lynn H. Turner & Richard West (Cambridge University Press) — Listed as an additional reference

📖 **Course materials** — lecture decks, handouts, assignment sheets, and readings — are provided directly in Blackboard. No textbook purchase is required to succeed in this course. For my sections, most students can get by using the free, open-access Fundamentals of Communication text alone.

Weekly Schedule

This course runs on a Tuesday–Monday weekly schedule across sixteen weeks. Each week opens at 8:00 a.m. Tuesday and closes at 11:59 p.m. the following Monday. Each topic spans two weeks. Week 16 is a shorter week ending Saturday, December 12.

Week	Dates	Topic
Orientation	Monday, August 24	Access course shell, read syllabus, review Video Production Standards
1	Tue Aug 25 — Mon Aug 31	Introduction to Communication & Models
2	Tue Sep 1 — Mon Sep 7	Introduction to Communication & Models (continued)
3	Tue Sep 8 — Mon Sep 14	The Self & Perception
4	Tue Sep 15 — Mon Sep 21	The Self & Perception (continued)

Week	Dates	Topic
5	Tue Sep 22 — Mon Sep 28	Public Speaking, Speech Form & Outlining + Verbal & Nonverbal Communication
6	Tue Sep 29 — Mon Oct 5	Public Speaking, Speech Form & Outlining + Verbal & Nonverbal Communication (continued)
7	Tue Oct 6 — Mon Oct 12	Listening
8	Tue Oct 13 — Mon Oct 19	Listening (continued)
9	Tue Oct 20 — Mon Oct 26	Research Skills & Citation
10	Tue Oct 27 — Mon Nov 2	Research Skills & Citation (continued)
11	Tue Nov 3 — Mon Nov 9	Interpersonal Communication
12	Tue Nov 10 — Mon Nov 16	Interpersonal Communication (continued)
13	Tue Nov 17 — Mon Nov 23	Conflict & Difficult Conversations
14	Tue Nov 24 — Mon Nov 30	Conflict & Difficult Conversations (continued)
15 ⚑	Tue Dec 1 — Mon Dec 7	Relational Dialectics | Course Wrap-Up
16 ⚑	Tue Dec 8 — Sat Dec 12	Relational Dialectics | Course Wrap-Up (continued) | All work due Sat, Dec 12 at 11:59 p.m.

⚑ Week 16 is a shorter week. All coursework must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on Saturday, December 12, 2026.

NOTE: The instructor will clarify and adjust the schedule as needed via the Blackboard course folders and the Blackboard assignment calendar. Feel free to ask any clarifications about due dates. This flexibility applies to weekly and daily coursework (response activities, discussion posts, and similar routine work) — not to the major speaking assignments or the term's hard deadlines, which follow the No Late Work policy below. If you ever need extra time on weekly or daily work due to obligations outside of course, email me your alternate plan, and I will approve it. Just be careful not to fall too far behind!

Assignments & Point Values

All assignments are listed below by week. Specific due dates are posted within each weekly Blackboard folder. Each speaking assignment has four components: (1) Outline → Dropbox, (2) Performance → graded by instructor, (3) Discussion Board post with video + self-evaluation + peer feedback, and (4) Reflection Quiz, worth the same point value as the Performance component. Because this course spans sixteen weeks, the components of each speaking assignment and lecture-response set are divided across the two weeks devoted to that topic.

Assignment	Points	Due
WEEK 1 — Introduction to Communication & Models		
Opening Letter	50	Thu Aug 27 — 11:59 p.m. (nonattendance deadline)
I Prompt Video — Discussion Board post	50	Sun Aug 30
WEEK 2 — Introduction to Communication & Models (continued)		
I Prompt Video — Peer Responses	(see above)	Mon Sep 7
Response Activity — Week 1 Lecture	20	End of Week 2 (Mon Sep 7)
WEEK 3 — The Self & Perception		

Assignment	Points	Due
Self-Introduction Speech — Outline → Dropbox	25	Week 3
Self-Introduction Speech — Performance	50	Week 3
WEEK 4 — The Self & Perception (continued)		
Self-Introduction Speech — Discussion Board (video + self-eval + 3 peer comments)	25	Week 4
Self-Introduction Speech — Reflection Quiz	50	Week 4
Response Activity — Week 2 Lecture	20	End of Week 4
WEEK 5 — Public Speaking & Outlining + Verbal & Nonverbal Communication		
Terminology Project	75	Week 5 — Dropbox
Response Activity — Public Speaking Lecture	20	End of Week 5
WEEK 6 — Public Speaking & Outlining + Verbal & Nonverbal Communication (continued)		
Response Activity — Verbal & Nonverbal Lecture	20	End of Week 6
WEEK 7 — Listening		
Significant Place Speech — Outline → Dropbox	50	Week 7
Significant Place Speech — Performance	125	Week 7
WEEK 8 — Listening (continued)		
Significant Place Speech — Discussion Board (video + self-eval + 3 peer comments)	25	Week 8
Significant Place Speech — Reflection Quiz	125	Week 8
Response Activity — Week 4 Lecture	20	End of Week 8
WEEK 9 — Research Skills & Citation		
Midterm — Key Terms Reflection (video + written notes → Dropbox)	100	Week 9
WEEK 10 — Research Skills & Citation (continued)		
Response Activity — Week 5 Lecture	20	End of Week 10
WEEK 11 — Interpersonal Communication		
Persuasive Speech — Outline → Dropbox	75	Week 11
Persuasive Speech — Performance	200	Week 11
WEEK 12 — Interpersonal Communication (continued)		
Persuasive Speech — Discussion Board (video + self-eval + 3 peer comments)	25	Week 12
Persuasive Speech — Reflection Quiz	200	Week 12
Response Activity — Week 6 Lecture	20	End of Week 12
WEEK 13 — Conflict & Difficult Conversations		

Assignment	Points	Due
Mock Interview — Outline → Dropbox	25	Week 13
Mock Interview — Performance	50	Week 13
Response Activity — Week 7 Conflict Lecture	20	End of Week 13
WEEK 14 — Conflict & Difficult Conversations (continued)		
Mock Interview — Discussion Board (video + self-eval + 3 peer comments)	25	Week 14
Mock Interview — Reflection Quiz	50	Week 14
Response Activity — Relational Dialectics Lecture (read this week)	20	End of Week 14
WEEK 15 — Relational Dialectics | Final Weeks		
Relational Dialectics Final — Outline → Dropbox	25	Week 15
Relational Dialectics Final — Performance	50	Week 15
WEEK 16 ⚑ — Relational Dialectics | Course Wrap-Up (short week)		
Relational Dialectics Final — Discussion Board (video + self-eval + 3 peer comments)	25	By Sat Dec 12 — 11:59 p.m.
Relational Dialectics Final — Reflection Quiz	50	By Sat Dec 12 — 11:59 p.m.
Final Reflection Letter → Dropbox	100	By Sat Dec 12 — 11:59 p.m.
Response Activity — Week 8 Lecture	20	By Sat Dec 12 — 11:59 p.m.
TOTAL	**1,850**	

📌 **Reflection Quizzes:** A Reflection Quiz is included with each speaking assignment, worth the same point value as that speech's Performance. Those points factor directly into your presentation grade. Reflection Quiz responses that seem inaccurate may be reduced at the instructor's discretion; in some cases, particularly strong or well-supported reflections may be adjusted upward.

Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage
A	90–100%
B	80–89%
C	70–79%
D	60–69%
F	Below 60%

Speech Completion Requirement

All five major speaking assignments must be completed to earn a B or an A in this course. Students who do not complete all five speeches are not eligible for a grade above C regardless of their overall point total.

The five required speeches are:

- Self-Introduction Speech

- Significant Place Speech
- Persuasive Speech
- Mock Interview
- Relational Dialectics Final

Each speaking assignment has four components: Outline (Dropbox), Performance (instructor-graded), Discussion Board post with video, self-evaluation, and peer feedback comments, and Reflection Quiz (worth the same points as the Performance component). All components must be submitted for the speech to count as complete.

Course Policies

Participation

Weekly participation is mandatory. Students who do not participate in a given week may receive a 50-point deduction for that week.

Communication

Communicate through your Edison State email. Include your name, course title (COM 121), section number, and assignment name in all messages. Emails and calls are typically answered within 24 hours — resend if you have not received a response. Text is acceptable for brief questions. Virtual meetings are available via Teams or Zoom by appointment.

Late Work

Late work may not be accepted. Two hard deadlines apply:

- All work from Weeks 1–8 must be completed by Monday, November 2 at 11:59 p.m.
- All work from Weeks 9–16 must be completed by the final deadline: Saturday, December 12 at 11:59 p.m.

After each hard deadline, work from the corresponding weeks cannot be submitted or revised.

Revision Policy

Assignments earning below a B (excluding the final speech and Final Reflection Letter) may be revised once by agreement with the instructor. Contact the instructor within one week of receiving your grade to request a revision. Revisions must go beyond simply addressing instructor comments — they must demonstrate a genuine effort to meet the full grading criteria. Revisions will not be graded before the agreed-upon deadline.

Grading Timeline

Major assignments may take 7–10 business days to grade. Late submissions may take longer. Feedback will be provided in Blackboard.

Academic Integrity — Citations & Sources

Edison State Community College expects students to submit original work. Outside sources must be cited in MLA format. Turnitin and other plagiarism-detection tools will be used. If your originality score exceeds 20%, revisions may be required. Any assignment that is plagiarized — whether intentional or unintentional — or lacks appropriate citations will receive a failing grade. Intentional submission of someone else's work as your own will result in automatic failure for the course.

Artificial Intelligence Policy

You must disclose any use of AI writing tools. You must remain the primary author of your work. AI-assisted work above 20–30% may require revision. Work that is 100% AI-generated must be redone. Any use of AI must be disclosed by attaching the following statement to the bottom of the assignment:

> **"The author generated this text in part with [insert name/URL of AI platform]. Upon generating draft language, the author reviewed, edited, and revised the language to their own liking and takes ultimate responsibility for the content of this submission."**

Any final submission exhibiting the use of AI without disclosure will be treated as academic dishonesty. The goal of this course is to develop your communication skills — AI cannot do that for you.

Video Submissions

All speech videos must remain accessible in Blackboard through the end of the term. Do not delete or make your videos private after submission. Videos that cannot be viewed will receive a zero.

Format Requirements

All written coursework must be word-processed and submitted as a Word document or PDF. Handwritten work will not be accepted.

Discussion Board Standards

Discussion Board posts must reflect thoughtful, substantive engagement with the content and with your classmates' work. Peer feedback comments should be specific, constructive, and respectful. Brief or generic comments such as "Great job!" will not receive full credit.

Syllabus Changes

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus, course structure, assignments, or policies. All changes will be communicated via Blackboard or direct communication.

Important Dates

Date	Event
Monday, August 24	CLASSES BEGIN — Fall Semester | Course orientation window opens
Tuesday, August 25	Week 1 Opens — 8:00 a.m.
Thursday, August 27	Opening Letter Due — 11:59 p.m. | Non-attendance deadline
Monday, September 7	Labor Day — No classes; buildings closed | Asynchronous course unaffected; support services unavailable
Monday, September 7	Refund Deadline — Fall Semester
Tuesday, September 8	Payment Due — 1st Installment of Deferred Payment
Tuesday, September 8	First Pell Lock — First Loan Disbursement Date
Thursday, October 8	Payment Due — 2nd Installment of Deferred Payment
Monday, November 2	Hard Deadline — All Week 1–8 work due by 11:59 p.m. | Last Day to Withdraw — Fall Semester
Tuesday, November 3	Second Pell Lock
Sunday, November 8	Payment Due — 3rd Installment of Deferred Payment
Wednesday, November 11	Veterans Day — No classes; buildings closed | Asynchronous course unaffected; support services unavailable
Thu–Sun, November 26–29	Thanksgiving — No classes; buildings closed | Support services unavailable
Tuesday, December 8	Payment Due — Final Installment of Deferred Payment | Week 16 Opens (short week)
Saturday, December 12	FINAL DEADLINE — All work due by 11:59 p.m. | Classes End — Fall Semester

Student Support Services

Edison State Community College offers a full range of support services. Do not hesitate to use them.

Advising Services

Career pathway advisors assist with academic planning. Log into MyESCC or call (937) 778-7850.

Mental Health Services

Student Wellness Center, Room 060.

Library Services

(937) 778-7950 | library@edisonohio.edu

Tutoring Services

(937) 778-7959 | tutoringcenter@edisonohio.edu

Technical Support

For Blackboard assignment issues, contact the instructor first.

For login or technology issues during business hours (9–5 Mon–Thu, 9–4 Fri): Email: support@edisonohio.edu | Call: (937) 778-8600

After hours: Visit edisonohio.freshservice.com/support/home or call (937) 778-7957

Password reset: Log onto office.com with your Edison email and follow the 'forgot password' prompts.

Student Resource Center & Charger Station Food Pantries

Room 060, Piqua campus | ResourceCenter@edisonohio.edu

Bookstore — eCampus

Edison State's official bookstore for course materials and merchandise. edisonohio.edu/services-support/student-resources/bookstore-information

Title IX / Non-Discrimination

Edison State maintains a learning environment free from bullying, discrimination, and harassment. See Title IX information in the Student Handbook.

Testing Your Faith Act

Students may be absent up to three days per semester for faith-based observances without academic penalty. Students must complete the Testing Your Faith Act Accommodations Form and provide a copy to the instructor within 14 days from the start of the course.

Policy: https://www.edisonohio.edu/sites/default/files/2025-06/Student_Handbook.pdf

Form: https://www.edisonohio.edu/sites/default/files/2024-05/Testing_Your_Faith_Absence_Notification.pdf

If you have questions about any policy, contact Professor Loudermilk with questions.