

COM 121S – 008FS: Intro to Communication

Edison State Community College, FALL 2026

PIQUA CAMPUS, WEST HALL 209 | WEDNESDAY | 4:30PM – 7:15PM | 8/24/2026 – 12/12/2026

Prof. Mary R. Garrison

MS, Corporate and Organizational Communication, Northeastern University, 2009

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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 among 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

- **There is NO required textbook for these sections.**
- All other required materials and resources will be provided through Blackboard.

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 YOUR SECTION NUMBER in the SUBJECT LINE of all your emails to me!** THANK YOU!

OFFICE HOURS

I am generally available before class starts and always by appointment.

COURSE ATTENDANCE

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 this course depends on your active attendance and participation.
- Students are expected to be in class and ready to begin at the start of the class; I will begin on time. If you are habitually late, you will be charged with an unexcused absence.
- **THREE (3) unexcused absences are permitted; the fourth (4) absence will result in an Academic Alert. After the fifth (5) absence, the student will fail 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 first day back.
 - If you are absent the day of the final speech, and you only have the final speech to present, you will be assigned an "INCOMPLETE" and will present to another section the following semester. If you do not present the final speech, even if you have a passing number of points without it, you will fail the course.
- **ALL speeches must be successfully attempted to pass the course.**

BLACKBOARD & EMAIL REQUIREMENTS

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

Midterm and final grades are submitted to the College Registrar. **Grades will be computed based on a point system, NOT PERCENTAGE, with the following grade equivalents:**

FINAL GRADE

GRADE POINTS

A	900-1000+
B	800-899
C	700-799
D	600-699
F	599 and below

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

Assignment	Point Value
Discussion Board (DB)	10-50 points
Introduction Speech	50 points
Mock Interview	100 points
Informative Tribute Speech	150 points
Charity/Advocacy 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 that 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 expectation for the work and explain the grading criteria.
- **All written assignments** must be submitted through Blackboard as Microsoft Word or 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)

Students must respond within the week the topic is assigned in order 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 between 2-3 minutes. The purpose of this speech is to get you up and speaking 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. 50 points.

MOCK INTERVIEW

Each student will complete a Zoom interview. More information will be provided on the assignment rubric. 100 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. 150 points.

CHARITY/ADVOCACY SPEECH (Problem/Solution):

The purpose of this persuasive speech is to persuade your audience to accept your position and to become personally involved in a charitable organization of your choice. You will need to thoroughly research both the problem and the organization. The skills you should practice for this speech involve organization, presentation aids, and research. Your organizational pattern should be clear to you and your audience. You should 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. 200 points.

PERSUASIVE SPEECH

This speech should examine a controversial topic. Your topic must be controversial and capable of being argued from multiple perspectives. 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 five (5) legitimate sources and incorporate a visual aid during this 6-to-8-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 Microsoft Word (.docx) or PDF documents.
- **Students must complete all speech presentations to pass the course.**
- **A score of 4/5 or better on each required speech outline is necessary to present the speech.**
 - Rewrites are permitted. See assignment rubrics for more information.

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 – SECTION/ Intro to Communications

Name of assignment

DATE

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 a lot of support resources available to you, and I believe that you can succeed here. Please contact me anytime and let's talk about it; I will work with you to support your success in this course.

CHECK THE COURSE MAP IN THE 'START HERE!' FOLDER ON BLACKBOARD FOR DATES & SCHEDULED TOPICS.

COM 121S: Section 008FS | Introduction to Communication

Edison State Community College, Fall 2026 | 8.24.2026 – 12.12.2026

Prof. Mary R. Garrison | mgarrison@edisonohio.edu*Below is a summary of topics and points; this is subject to change. Please check your ESCC email and Blackboard for any changes.*

COURSE MAP				
DATE	TOPIC	WORK COMPLETED?	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS ACHIEVED
8/26	INTRODUCTION/ SYLLABUS & NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION		10	
9/2	NONVERBAL CONT'D		50	
9/9	FINISH NONVERBAL AND MANAGING ANXIETY		150	
9/16	PREP AND REHEARSE INTRO SPEECHES			
9/23	PRESENT INTRO SPEECHES		125	
9/30	PREPARE FOR INFORMATIVE TRIBUTE		10	
10/7	PREPARE INFORM TRIBUTE		50	
10/14	HOW TO DESIGN VISUAL AIDS		5	
10/21	PRESENT INFORMATIVE TRIBUTE		175	
10/28	FINISH PRESENTING INFORMATIVE & LISTENING		50	
11/4	PREPARE CHARITY ADVOCACY		10	
Subtotal:			635 points	

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COURSE MAP				
DATE	TOPIC	WORK COMPLETED?	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS ACHIEVED
11/11	PREP FOR INTERVIEW		5	
11/18	PREP FOR INTERVIEW, CONT'D & HISTORICAL SPEECHES		50	
11/25	OFFSITE/ MOCK INTERVIEWS		125	
12/2	REHEARSE CHARITY SPEECHES			
12/9	REHEARSE & PRESENT CHARITY SPEECHES		250	
Subtotal:			430 points	

Total points available: $635 + 430 = 1065$

Final grade of "A" = 900+ points.