

Communication 141X: Fundamentals of Oral Communication – Public Context
Syllabus Supplement – Fall 2009

WHY THIS COURSE? WHAT DOES IT COVER?

Communication 141X is a key course in the UAF Core Curriculum, which all students must complete, and which is designed to provide students with a shared foundation of skills and knowledge for further study. The Communication component of the Core Curriculum is designed to provide “multidimensional competency in written and oral English—including comprehension of complex materials and creation of clearly organized presentations of soundly reasoned thought in both oral and written form.” Comm 141X and Comm 131X focus on developing student’s skills in oral communication, while courses like English 111X, 211X, and 213X focus on written communication. The Core Curriculum also involves completing upper division oral-intensive and written-intensive courses to further develop these skills in advanced coursework related to one’s major or minor. By University policy, Comm 141X or 131X must be completed successfully prior to enrolling in upper division oral intensive credits.

Comm 141X focuses on two key areas. **First**, the course also focuses on developing skills for effectively organizing and presenting information in public settings. You will become competent and comfortable in the public presentation process through in-class participation and observation, and will be expected to become both adept presenters and thoughtful audience members. One may know a great deal, but without the ability to inform others clearly about what one knows, or to persuade them, that knowledge is useless. Being able to communicate well in public situations is one mark of an effective university graduate. **Second**, Comm 141X, like other courses in the Core Curriculum, focuses on developing skills for thinking critically, whether one is designing one’s own presentation or listening to the presentations of others.

The skills you will develop and the experience provided in this class are intended to help prepare you not only for further university coursework, but also for life experience beyond your education. Corporations and other organizations that recruit UAF graduates have noted that our students are often stranded in entry-level positions due to their lack of understanding about how to effectively present their ideas to others. Research shows that nationally, a lack of ability to communicate is the leading cause of career stasis across American businesses.

Again, Comm 141X is a course focused on developing **SKILLS** in developing and presenting effective informative and persuasive presentations, and in critical thinking. Like developing any other skill, one only improves by **PRACTICING** the skill, and practice, both in and outside of class, is an essential part of doing well in this course. **Do not expect this course to be easy.** The University of Alaska Fairbanks expects that you will spend at least two hours working, reading, and studying outside of class for every hour you spend in class. For a 3 hour, 3 credit class like COMM 141X, that’s six hours a week outside of class. Expect to spend at least that much time outside of class as a **minimum** requirement for doing well. It is advisable that you check the course catalogue for the final drop date for this semester if you anticipate any possibility that this course will require too much time and/or discipline at this point in your academic career.

WORDS OF ADVICE:

This course places a major emphasis on individual speaking skills. If this focus on individual speaking is a concern for you, your alternative is to enroll in Comm 131X.

And: This course requires extensive reading and class participation. If your schedule does not permit you to dedicate time and effort to the course, then please drop this course now. Other students are counting on you to be productive. If you are not, this is a good way to make enemies. Making effective public presentations is a skill that each student will be developing throughout the semester. Like any skill, learning to deliver an effective presentation takes time to achieve. Each student must be prepared to spend that time in class and outside of class.

It is advisable that you check the course catalog for the final drop date for this semester if you anticipate any possibility that this course will require too much time and/or discipline at this point in your academic career.

TEXTS:

Sprague, J., Stuart, D., & Bodary, D. (2010). *The Speaker's Handbook* (9th Ed.), Belmont, CA:Thomson Wadsworth. (With: Sherwood, K. *Speech Builder Express*).

Department of Communication (2009). *Comm 141X: Supplementary Information Packet* (6th ed.) Fairbanks, AK (Note that this is a *required text* in the course.)

ATTENDANCE:

This class is carefully designed as a hands-on workshop in public presentation. Because of its compressed time structure and the nature of its substance, attendance is simply **mandatory**. Nothing less will be acceptable. Roll will be called at the beginning of each class. If a student is not present, she or he will lose points from the total points earned during the semester. Tardiness is the equivalent of absence in terms of lost points. Come to class **ON TIME!** **The number of points deducted for each class absence depends on the schedule for the class, as follows:**

For MWF classes: 10 points deducted for each absence

For T/TH classes: 15 points deducted for each absence

For 3 hour evening or Saturday classes: 30 points deducted for each absence

Absence or tardiness on the day of any scheduled presentation will result in a deduction of up to **DOUBLE the number of points listed above. Absence on a day when one of **YOUR** presentations is scheduled can result in "0" (zero) points for the presentation.**

All students are expected to attend every class and the final exam. You are also responsible for in-class activities (which cannot be made up). There are some circumstances for which absence is unavoidable, such as illness or family emergency. Your instructor must be notified of an absence before or on the day it occurs either through a phone message or via e-mail, and receive documentation of the reason as soon as possible thereafter. There will be no accommodation for students who are absent on the day of the scheduled final exam.

OTHER KEY POLICIES:

COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES: In addition to the information in this syllabus, YOU are responsible for knowing the information on Department policies with regard to courses that is included on pages 10-12.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION PACKET: YOU are also responsible for knowing the information on the course and on assignments that is included in the Supplementary Information Packet, which is a required text for this course.

CELL PHONES & LAPTOPS: Because of the distractions they create, you will need to turn off your cell phone, preferably before you enter the classroom, and in all cases before class actually begins. Laptops are not to be used in class, except by instructor permission or as needed because of a documented disability.

STUDENT SUPPORT: Your instructor will work with the Office of Disabilities Services (203 WHIT, 474-7043) to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities. Any student requiring special accommodations for learning and/or physical disabilities or situational difficulties that may affect class performance should discuss the situation with me after class or make an appointment to discuss the issue in my office.

OUT OF CLASS ASSIGNMENTS **will be typed and proofread**. NO excuses regarding typing or computer problems will be accepted. You are no longer in high school and are required to type and proofread your work. There are many resources at UAF to assist you with this, including the Writing Center located in Gruening (8th Floor). EXCEPTION: Note cards for presentations may be neatly handwritten.

INSTRUCTOR ASSISTANCE AND THE SPEAKING CENTER:

Asking for help is an excellent idea. In so far as your Instructor can facilitate without interfering with the group dynamic that is a major purpose of this course, she or he is anxious to help students overcome potential problems and difficulties. The time to ask for help is BEFORE the day the assignment is due!

All students have access to the services of the UAF Speaking Center located in room 507 of the Gruening Building. Your instructor will provide you with more information on what the Speaking Center can provide, and the hours it will be open this semester.

POLICIES ON STUDENT PRESENTATIONS:

Never EVER walk into the classroom while a presentation is in progress. Such interruptions can be quite disruptive, particularly for persons who are not comfortable speaking in front of an audience. Be considerate of each other. Wait until the presentation is finished before entering the room. Please leave all pagers and cell phones outside of the classroom or turned off during all class time.

As a part of this course, student presentations may be videotaped. Such taping is done as a part of the evaluation of both the individual and groups. Videotapes are considered a part of the educational record and are treated with the same confidentiality as all student records. Nobody else will see except student and instructor or anybody with a valid educational reason within the department.

It is Department of Communication policy that any student failure to give the first, diagnostic presentation will result in the student being dropped immediately from the course. Student failure to give other presentations may result in the student being dropped at the discretion of the Instructor.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS WILL NOT BE READ NOR MEMORIZED! Doing so will result in a SIGNIFICANT loss of points in four of the speaking competencies (numbers 1, 6, 7, and 8).

All interaction in the classroom is to be consistent with the American Psychological Association standards for ethical behavior with regard to using inclusive language in when interacting with others is expected from each student and the instructor. These guidelines are included in the Supplementary Information Packet, Appendix V. The topic will also be covered in class. In addition, behavior consistent with the Credo for Ethical Communication of the National Communication Association, which has been adopted by the Department of Communication, and can be found in Appendix VI in the Supplementary Information Packet.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Anyone observed cheating on an examination or assignment will receive a “0” for that examination or assignment. Anyone found to have used someone else’s work without crediting that person (plagiarizing) will receive an “F” for the course and will face further actions at the discretion of the University. When in doubt, always identify your sources. See the Department of Communication Expectations and Policies, pp. 10-12, for a more complete discussion of plagiarism.

GRADING:

Total points possible (no make-up; no extra credit): 1000 points.

Grade updates are your responsibility, not that of your Instructor. Keep track of your grades throughout the semester on the tracking sheet provided below, so you will not need to ask.

Final grades in Comm 141X will be assigned using plus and minus grading, and using the following grading standards:

A+ = (93.0 to 100%)

A = (90.0 to 92.9%) Highly superior performance in every significant way

A- = (87.0 to 89.9%)

B+ = (83.0 to 86.9%)

B = (80.0 to 82.9%) Excellent; well above generally acceptable work or performance

B- = (77.0 to 79.9%)

C+ = (73.0 to 76.9%)

C = (70.0 to 72.9%) Good, solid, generally acceptable work or performance; exceeding minimum standards; where most people fall on the statistical normal distribution curve

C- = (67.0 to 69.9%)

D+ = (63.0 to 66.9%)

D = (60.0 to 62.9%) Minimally acceptable; barely meets acceptable standards

D- = (57.0 to 59.9%)

F = (below 57.0%) Fails to meet even minimum standards

Note: The assumption is that everyone in the class begins at an "AVERAGE" level of expertise. Higher grades are the result of a clear demonstration of student work and consistent improvement of speaking and group skills.

No "Incompletes" are possible for this course due to its developmental nature.

STUDENT'S ASSIGNMENT GRADE TRACKING SHEET

	POINTS POSSIBLE		CUMULATIVE POINTS
Diagnostic Presentation	No points		
Informative Presentation	100 points,	I got _____	100 points
Outline	25 points,	I got _____	125 points
Informative/Visual aid Presentation	100 points,	I got _____	225 points
Outline	25 points,	I got _____	250 points
Midterm (or cumulative quizzes)	100 points,	I got _____	350 points
Persuasive Presentation 1	150 points,	I got _____	500 points
Outline	25 points,	I got _____	525 points
Persuasive Presentation 2	200 points,	I got _____	725 points
Outline	25 points,	I got _____	750 points
Final Exam (or cumulative quizzes)	150 points,	I got _____	900 points
Class Participation & Preparedness	100 points,	I got _____	1000 points

DO NOT FORGET THAT YOU NEED TO DEDUCT FROM THE TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS YOU HAVE EARNED ANY POINTS THAT HAVE BEEN DEDUCTED FROM YOUR TOTAL BECAUSE OF ABSENCES OR TARDINESS FROM CLASS.

UNGRADED, INDIVIDUAL DIAGNOSTIC SPEAKING ASSESSMENT

This assignment is to enable your Instructor to see where each student is beginning the speaking process and what help each student may need in becoming competent at giving public presentations. Specifically, each student will select a topic of personal interest (see notes below) and be prepared to present that topic to the class in a 5-minute presentation. **Care should be taken in topic selection since the same topic will be refined for a subsequent assignment.** Plan and prepare (including practicing) your presentation very seriously.

As you have seen, speaking competencies are extremely important in terms of gaining employment, keeping that employment, and upward mobility after employment. Beyond that, speaking competencies are each citizen's most important tools for participation in a democracy. Everyone has the right to speak her or his mind, but those who can do so clearly and effectively are the persons who will move others; who will be the leaders in their places of employment, their communities, and their government. Speaking competencies are lifetime skills and should be learned as such. Persons who participate in this class only in terms of "doing assignments" or "getting this required class out of the way" should consider all the "real world" potential they forfeit without these skills.

This is a public speaking course designed to teach each student the important skills necessary for competent and effective communication. This is NOT a public forum as specified in the First Amendment, i.e., all presentations will be informative only. Audience analysis for appropriate topics and appropriate approaches to specific assignments will be determined by your classroom Instructor in advance of any presentation. Presentations that are seen as potential distractions from the primary mission of the class will not be allowed. It is the instructor's discretion to require a student to present an opposite or different point of view on any topic chosen for presentation.

Topics for the ungraded, diagnostic speaking assignment and ALL subsequent assignments will be approved by your classroom Instructor within the following guidelines:

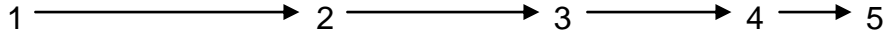
- 1) Presentations are to be informative and appropriate for your peers. Do not attempt to be persuasive; simply inform the audience ABOUT your chosen topic.
- 2) It is strongly suggested that you do not use any personal life history as topic. That is to say, the assignment is informative, not narrative.
- 3) In consideration of the many points of view that may be present in your classroom audience, no presentation may be made that teaches, advocates, or attempts in any way to persuade for a particular religious position.
- 4) No presentation will be accepted that advocates for practices or concepts contrary to University Policies (e.g., substance abuse).

NOTE AGAIN: The Instructor may disallow topics that in the Instructor's judgment would be distracting in the context of the class. It is the Department of Communication policy that any student failure to give the first, diagnostic presentation will result in the student being dropped immediately from the course. Student failure to give other presentations may result in the student being dropped at the discretion of the Instructor.

Evaluator's Blind ID# _____

PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETENCIES

(Please Note: Moving toward a rating of "superior" regards the QUALITY of parts, NOT just their presence. These are nationally normed criteria. The Department of Communication trains both faculty and TAs in the uniform use of this instrument.)



Unsatisfactory

Good

Superior

SCORES

Competency One:

Assignment Specifics

Evidence of Preparations _____
 Evidence of Practice _____
 Within Specified Time _____
 Meets Assignment Requirements _____

Competency Two:

Introduction

Attention Gaining Material _____
 Thesis/Specific Purpose _____
 Relevance Material _____
 Preview of Points _____
 Transition into Body _____

Competency Three:

Supporting Material/Body of Presentation (Visual Aid if used)

Good Information (content) _____
 Main Points Clear and Elaborated _____
 Relevance of Evidence (sourced) _____
 Smoothness of Introduction of Evidence _____

Competency Four:

Observable Organizational Pattern

Clear Organizational Structure _____
 Internal Transitions _____
 Transition from Body into Conclusion _____
 Summary of Points _____
 Definitive Final Statement _____

Competency Five:

Appropriate Language

Bias-Sensitive Language _____
 Formal Level (no "you" - slang - or unexplained specialized words) _____
 Does not draw attention to speaker or occasion _____
 No Verbal Fillers ("you know"... "like"... etc.) _____

Competency Six:

Vocal Presentation

NO READING

NO READING

NO READING

Rate _____
 Expressiveness/changes in pitch _____
 Intensity/Volume _____

Competency Seven:

Pronunciation

Grammar _____
 Articulation (Clarity; not reading or memorized rhythm) _____
 Delivery (not halting, not choppy, minimal note involvement) _____
 No Vocalic Fillers ("Uh"... "Er"... "Um") _____

Competency Eight:

Nonverbal Support of Presentation

Eye Contact with Audience (not just instructor) _____
 Good Use of Note Cards (must have, not held) _____
 No Complete Sentence on Card (except direct quotations) _____
 Lectern Use (no body parts in contact) _____
 Appearance (no hats, attention to self presentation) _____
 Appropriate use of Gesture and Facial Expression _____

Presentation Grading Scale

Presentations are graded as follows:

1. Each presentation is evaluated by the Instructor on all eight competencies.
2. A competency rating of “unsatisfactory” receives 1 point; a rating of 2 implies the beginning of “satisfactory” range; “good” earns 3 points; “excellent” earns 4 points; and only rare “superior” rates 5 points.
3. The ratings for all competencies are summed, resulting in a total score ranging from 8 to 40 points.

Rating Points	Grading Points			Letter Grade
	(100pt Presentation)	(150pt Presentation)	(200pt Presentation)	
8	60	90	120	D
9	61	92	122	
10	63	95	126	D +
11	64	96	128	
12	65	98	130	C -
13	66	99	132	
14	68	102	136	
15	69	104	138	
16	70	105	140	C
17	71	107	142	
18	73	110	146	C +
19	74	111	148	
20	75	113	150	B -
21	76	114	152	
22	78	117	156	
23	79	119	158	
24	80	120	160	B
25	81	122	162	
26	83	125	166	B +
27	84	126	168	
28	85	128	170	A -
29	86	129	172	
30	88	132	176	
31	89	134	178	
32	90	135	180	A
33	91	137	182	
34	93	140	186	A+
35	94	141	188	
36	95	143	190	
37	96	144	192	
38	98	147	196	
39	99	149	198	
40	100	150	200	

Communication Department Expectations and Policies

The University/student relationship is not one of producer and consumer. When students, parents, scholarships, and/or other funders pay fees in order for a student to attend classes, this obligates the student to a set of educational responsibilities and expectations. Education is a *process* in which critical thinking skills and analysis are concentrated upon throughout one's academic career. Following are the expectations and policies of the UAF Communication Department. These expectations and policies are endorsed by all faculty members and will be implemented in all Communication classes.

1. **Assignment deadlines: Late assignments will result in the loss of one letter grade per working day that the assignment is late.** The **only** exception to this policy is a carefully **documented** emergency or University sanctioned activity (e.g., scholastic conferences, athletics). In cases of life contingencies, arrangements must be made to submit work **before** the deadline date.

2. **Make-up exams:** Make-up exams are only given in Departmentally approved circumstances, as noted above regarding assignment deadlines. Arrangements for any make-up exams must be made **prior** to student's absence.

Note that in all instances, scheduled final exam times will be adhered to; thus it is incumbent upon the student to plan travel times accordingly.

3. **Attendance:** For those classes which require attendance, note that absence means "not present," regardless of "why" you are not present.

4. **Tardiness:** Tardiness equals absence in so far as the attendance record is concerned. Anyone not present when attendance is taken will be listed as absent.

5. **Disruptions:** Don't **ever** enter a classroom while a student presentation is being given. This is rude and unfair to those students who are on time. Such disruption can cause severe speaking apprehension for students who are already less than comfortable in front of a classroom.

6. **Reading:** Getting an education requires **careful, concentrated reading**. It is expected by this Department that students spend at least two hours in reading and/or working on a course **before every class meeting**. This Department views work outside the classroom as a minimal expectation and strongly suggests that you **should not take this class until you are ready to meet this expectation**.

7. **APA:** All assignments **must** be submitted in correct, current American Psychological Association (APA) style. If you are unfamiliar with APA style, manuals are available for study, but not check out, on Reserve Reading in the Library, in the Writing Center, and in the Communication Department Resource Area (Gruening 503). Good writing and proper written form are essential skills of any student of Communication.

8. **Grade Inflation:** The following qualitative guidelines suggest the expectations of this Department regarding grading. This grading policy is adopted from the University's general grading guidelines found in the UAF Catalog (Section on Academic Regulations).
- A -- An *honor* grade, indicates originality and independent work, a thorough mastery of the subject and the satisfactory completion of more work than is regularly required.
 - B -- Indicates outstanding ability above the average level of performance.
 - C -- Indicates a satisfactory or average level of performance.
 - D -- The lowest passing grade, indicates work of below-average quality and performance.
 - F -- Indicates failure. All "F" grades, including those earned in pass/fail courses, are included in the GPA calculations.
9. **Incomplete grades:** The letter grade "I" (Incomplete) is a temporary grade used to indicate that the student has satisfactorily completed (C or better) the **majority** of work in a course but for reasons **beyond the student's control** (such as medical emergencies), has not been able to complete the course during the regular semester. An Incomplete will only be assigned in emergencies and **only when the student is current in the class until at least the last three weeks of the semester**. Negligence or indifference are not acceptable reasons for an "I" grade.
10. **Student Code of Conduct:** All work on assignments and exams, and all participation in classes must conform to the UAF Student Code of Conduct, published in the UAF Catalog. Specifically, the Code **prohibits plagiarism**, which is presenting of the work of others as one's own, whether in writing or in oral presentations. More specifically, plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another person without a complete citation of the source of the words or ideas. Paraphrasing another person's work by rearranging their words or summarizing their ideas **also** constitutes plagiarism, unless one provides a complete citation of the source. For courses in Communication, using more than three words in sequence from another source, without citation, constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism is a very serious form of academic dishonesty, and will result in a zero grade for the assignment in which it occurs, potentially a failing grade for the course, and the possibility of disciplinary action by the University, as noted in the Student Code of Conduct.
11. **Accommodations:** Any student who has a physical or medically documented learning challenge is invited to contact your instructor early in the semester so that ways to accommodate any difficulties can be anticipated. I will work with the Office of Disability Services (203 Whiting, 474-7043) to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities.

Departmental Policies on Complaints Regarding Instruction

1. **Student complaints.** Any student who might wish to complain about instructional matters regarding a course, a professor, and/or an instructor must follow this formal procedure:
 - a. All student complaints must be discussed **first and only** with the faculty or TA with whom the student has a complaint or problem, **before** such complaints will be addressed by **any other member** of the faculty, including the Department Chair.
 - b. If a student wishes to pursue the issue as a formal complaint, that complaint must be submitted **in writing** to the faculty or TA to whom the complaint is directed **within one week** following any such aggrieved incident and/or occurrence (e.g., grade complaint, procedure complaint, teaching incident, etc.).
 - c. When the instructor receives a student's **written complaint**, s/he will **respond in writing within a reasonable time period** and is required to **schedule a meeting with the student** to discuss the stated complaint. This results in a possible resolution occurring at the level closest to its origination.
 - d. If, after meeting with the instructor to discuss the written statement, the student does not believe that the complaint has been sufficiently addressed, s/he may then request that the instructor schedule a meeting with the **student, instructor, and TA Mentor/Department Chair** (depending on whether the instructor is a TA or faculty member). The hierarchy dictates that the TA Mentor be consulted at this point if the instructor is a TA, whereas the Department Chair be consulted if the instructor is a faculty member.
 - e. Prior to this meeting, the instructor will furnish a **copy of the written complaint and instructor response** to the TA Mentor/Department Chair and schedules a meeting for the three parties. If, after this meeting, the student still does not find that the matter has been sufficiently addressed, then the Department Chair schedules a private meeting with the student. A written report of this meeting will be recorded by the Department Chair/Mentor.
 - f. **Only** after this policy has been followed does the matter proceed beyond the Department.
 - g. These Departmental policies do not contravene UAF formal policy, e.g., student grievance and appeals policies.

Student Information Sheet: (Information for instructor only; will NOT be given out)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

UAF e-mail: _____

Occupation/Career Goals: _____

Major: _____

Special Concerns or Needs (e.g., athletic trips, documented disabilities, etc.)

I, _____, acknowledge receipt of the Comm 141X syllabus, including the Communication Department Expectations and Policies, and understand what is contained within them. I also understand that there will be consequences for not adhering to the policies/information presented in these and other class handouts.

Sign/Date _____

