

COM 110: Communication as Critical Inquiry

Section 065 • Fall 2019

Meeting Time: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday -- 8:00 a.m. to 8:50 a.m.

Location: Fell 180

Instructor: Jim Gee

Office: ITDC 110 (see [map](#)) Note – this location may change in mid-September. Check ReggieNet for updates!

Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday, 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (other times by appointment)

Contact: jggee@ilstu.edu • 217-369-8755 (cell) • 309-438-8931 (office)

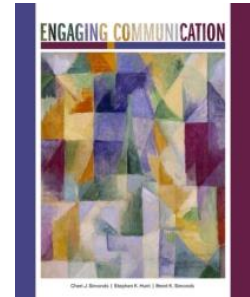
Course Materials

There are two books you need to get for this class. Both are required. We'll be using them the first week, so please make an effort to get them soon.

Main Textbook

The first is the main textbook, which is an eBook from a company called Top Hat. It is available from the campus bookstores or directly from Top Hat. It's actually much more than a textbook-- it's much more interactive. Right now, all you need to do is purchase it. I'll be sending you instructions on how to register your copy of the book with our specific section (065) before the start of class. Here are the details on this book:

Simonds, C. J., Hunt, S. K., & Simonds, B. K. (2018). *Engaging communication*. Southlake, TX: Fountainhead Press.

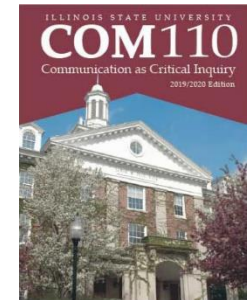


Workbook

The second is what we'll call the "spiral workbook" -- it contains supplemental worksheets and other goodies you'll need to complete the required speeches for our course. It is only available through the School of Communication online store using a credit, debit, or monetary gift card. The link is: http://Bit.ly/COM_110

Your copy of the workbook will be available to pick up in the Communication Resource Center located in the basement of Fell Hall, 1-2 business days after your online purchase. I encourage you to buy it this week so it's waiting for you're the week of class. You will need to show your ISU ID card. The pickup location and hours are:

Fell Hall Room 34
Monday— Thursday 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
Friday— 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.



Other Materials

For this course, you will also need:

- A valid ISU e-mail address (“@ilstu.edu”) which is checked daily.

- Index cards (either 3 x 5 or 4 x 6) for speaking notes.
- A two-pocket report folder with metal tabs (for your Portfolio).
- Access to a printer for some assignments. Students can print up to 75 black-and-white copies of materials for free using the University's [uPrint Services](#).
- A pen or pencil and notepaper for taking notes and in-class exercises

Overview

What' in It for You

This semester, we will explore several facets of communication, from the basic models of communication to how to make an effective, persuasive argument. This course is about much more than giving speeches— you will learn a basic set of skills that will help you in both your academic career and in the “real” world. It is called **Communication as Critical Inquiry** because you will learn the basic ways in which humans communicate (or sometimes miscommunicate) and how to think *critically* about what you see, hear, and say.

This course is highly structured and packs a great deal of learning into a short amount of time. This means that we will follow a very rigid plan of study. Students have been most successful in the course when they read ahead of time, are prepared to participate and ask questions in class, and show up. It is not possible to pass this course by relying on the text alone, nor is it possible to pass this course by showing up for class unprepared to discuss the assigned reading. Both are key ingredients in a recipe for success.

Plan of Study

The specific plan of study, outlining activities for each class period, will be appended to this syllabus on our ReggieNet course site. This will aid you, should you wish to read ahead. It may be updated from time-to-to time; you will be informed both in class and through your campus e-mail account when that happens. The most up-to-date plan of study can always be found on our course ReggieNet site, under the Syllabus link (found near the top of the left-hand menu).

Success Week

Illinois State University calls the week before the final exam period Success Week. The goal is to provide you with time to prepare for exams free of last-minute assignments. You can read more about it at <http://policy.illinoisstate.edu/academic/4-1-5.shtml>

Success in the Course

Students who succeed in this course will:

- Have exemplary attendance and attentiveness in class
- Arrive on time and be settled in by the start of class
- Work and read ahead of assignment due dates
- Prepare for and participate in class discussions
- Regularly check your ISU email for important updates and changes
- Proactively communicate with the instructor
- Engage in metacognitive (“thinking about thinking”) practices that maximize learning

Learning Goals

This course seeks to improve your ability to express yourself and to listen to others in a variety of communication settings.

- Effective oral communication is viewed as an essential life skill that every person must possess in order to function in today's society.
- The course emphasizes participation in a variety of communication processes in order to develop, reinforce, and evaluate communication skills appropriate for public, small group, and interpersonal settings.
- The course content and experiences will enable you to assume your responsibilities as speaker-listener-critic in a culturally diverse world.
- In short, this course is designed to make you competent, ethical, critical, confident, and information-literate communicators.

COM 110: Communication as Critical Inquiry is part of Illinois State University's General Education (Gen Ed) program, and it is designed to meet specific Gen Ed goals. Please review these goals, listed at the end of this document.

Illinois Articulation Initiative

The Illinois Articulation Initiative is designed to allow students to transfer course credit between institutions. The IAI requires that all COM 110 students present at least three speaking opportunities that include research and are five minutes, or longer, in duration. Additionally, these presentations and speaking opportunities (participation) must comprise 50% of the overall grade.

Policies (How the Class Works)

Classroom Technology Policy

We will, as a group, discuss how we will use technology in our classroom. I believe it is important for you, as participants in the learning process, to have a say in what our classroom technology policy will encourage and discourage. Generally, as our class will demand critical thinking and concentration, we will encourage behaviors that show courtesy to our fellow learners, avoid distractions, and allow us to concentrate on the important work at hand. We will formulate our technology policy during the first week of class, and it will be posted on our ReggieNet course site for future reference.

Severe Weather or Other Cancellations

You should assume class will be held as scheduled unless the campus is officially closed by the University administration. Notifications of campus closures will come through a variety of channels, including the main website at IllinoisState.edu. In the event of a campus closure, I will provide guidance concerning any required changes to the plan of study via email and ReggieNet. I may assign an alternative, online lesson to be completed by the next scheduled class period. Generally, if we miss a class due to campus closure, you should expect to cover the missed material before the next scheduled class period.

Attendance

This course relies heavily on classroom discussion and group work. Therefore, good attendance is paramount and will reflect a large percentage of your grade. As your instructor, I am required to take attendance at the start of class. Students with more than three unexcused absences for the semester may have their overall final grade lowered by one full letter. That's in addition to any points lost for late assignments.

Absences

I am willing to work with you if you expect to miss a day of class. Please note that, unless we make an arrangement ahead of time, you must be in class in order for assignments due that day to be counted. I may (at my discretion) assign you an alternative assignment in lieu of an in-class exercise grade.

Arrangement is defined as an agreement made in advance between you and me. Notification is not enough; for example, sending an e-mail ten minutes before class is not acceptable. In the event of an extended period of absence, we will be guided by the University's policies on the subject. In the event of a death in the family, we will be guided by the University Bereavement Policy included toward the end of this syllabus.

Late Assignments

Deadlines are important in life; they are doubly important for new college students. If you think you are going to miss a deadline, it is vital that you communicate with me at least a day before the project is due. I will not generally accept a project that is submitted after the deadline; I will certainly not accept a project submitted after the deadline WITHOUT prior arrangement. In addition, I reserve the right to require a written paper (no less than three pages in length) describing the circumstances leading to the late assignment, a critical analysis of why you missed your deadline, and a strategy for improving your ability to meet deadlines.

Assessment

How We'll Determine What You've Learned (And the Grades You've Earned)

You will be graded on how well you develop your communication, critical thinking, and research abilities over the course of the semester. This will be demonstrated through classroom exercises, speeches, exams, and other assessments.

To help chart your progress, I will use rubrics (which you'll get when an assignment is made) so you have a clear idea of the criteria I will use to evaluate your progress. The rubrics for the three major speeches are in the spiral notebook. Remember, this is not a competition; everyone brings their own level of experience and natural talent to this class. You will be evaluated on how much progress you demonstrate and not how you compare to your classmates.

Types of Assessments

- You will complete three major speeches (Informative, Group, and Persuasive) for this course. In the process of creating and presenting these speeches, you will also complete smaller assignments, which will help you prepare. Length, number of sources, and other criteria for each speech will be posted as an assignment in ReggieNet. **All three speeches must be presented in order for you to pass the class.**
- We will also have in-class exercises, such as group work or small speeches, and short writings or reflections, to help apply important concepts from class to everyday life.
- To help in your learning, you will complete questions as you read each chapter and prepare for the next class.
- In addition, we will have a series of take-home essay exams in which you will apply the content of the textbook to real world examples.
- Our final exam will be given in class, and it will cover the entire semester. You will work with your classmates to create a study guide to help you.

- You will also turn in a physical portfolio at the end of the semester representing your work in this course. Details on its content will be discussed early in the semester.

Below are the approximate number of points that will be accumulated during the semester; the exact total may vary slightly from 600 points, but the relationship (i.e., the ratios) between the categories should not change much.

Assessment	Points
Informative Speech	100
Group Presentation Speech	100
Persuasive Speech	100
In-class Exercises/Short Essays	50
Reading Questions	50
Essay Exams	125
Final Exam	50
Portfolio Project	25

Please note: At the end of each semester, I will round grades to the nearest whole percent—this means, if you have an 89.4%, it is a “B”. If you have an 89.5%, it is an “A”.

- A (89.5% or more)
- B (79.5% - 89.4%)
- C (69.5% - 79.4%)
- D (59.5% - 69.4%)
- F (59.4% or less)

Evaluation Challenge

I will make every effort to provide us with ways of objectively identifying expectations for your performance as a student and my evaluation of that performance. However, no grading system can be totally objective. If you believe you have earned a grade other than one you receive, we will use a procedure that has been successfully used in COM 110 courses at Illinois State University for many years. Details are on page 108 of the spiral workbook.

Cheating/Plagiarism

You are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*. All work is to be appropriately cited when it is borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Unauthorized and unacknowledged collaboration on any work, or the presentation of someone else’s work, is plagiarism.

Students found to inadvertently commit acts of dishonesty will receive appropriate penalties specific to the assignment in question. Students found to commit intentional acts of dishonesty will receive a failing grade in the course and will be referred for appropriate disciplinary action through the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

Special Needs

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit the website at StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu.

OUR LEARNING COMMUNITY

Much of this class centers around the delivery, or performance, of speeches. You will be well prepared before your first major speech. But we must also recognize that performance is tough. As performers, we open ourselves to criticism on the most personal of levels. You must show attentiveness, empathy, and tolerance toward your peers. In other words, be encouraging and supportive. Discourteous individuals will be asked to leave that day's class. Any major or habitual disruption of the class will result in a lowering of your grade.

We want this to be a positive learning environment. Your use of language, the content of your presentations, and your attire should reflect this. While we want a free exchange of ideas, the obscene, the vulgar, or the prurient can make people uncomfortable and become a barrier to learning. We'll discuss guidelines for presenting "edgy" content in class as we explore assignments. In other words, performances should not contain vulgar language or imagery that go beyond expected community standards. If you are unsure about this, please consult with me ahead of time—we can work together to find a way to present challenging topics in ways respectful to others. Illinois State University is committed to creating and maintaining a working, learning and living environment that is welcoming, supportive, respectful, inclusive, diverse and free from discrimination and harassment. We'll talk a lot about how to achieve that in our class.

Professional Courtesy

Professional courtesy includes respecting others' opinions, not interrupting in class, being respectful to those who are speaking, and working together in a spirit of cooperation. We (including me, your instructor) will work demonstrate these behaviors at all times in this class. With that in mind, sleeping, reading materials irrelevant to class purposes, texting, or disrupting the class will not be allowed. If I see or hear behavior I feel needs to be addressed, I will try to do so in the least embarrassing way possible.

Professional Etiquette

On presentation days, you have dual responsibilities as a performer and an audience member. When you are an audience member, you should be attentive and provide constructive, respectful feedback when the presentation is finished. Because most people are nervous when they present, you need to be supportive both verbally and nonverbally. Please do not enter or leave the room while a presentation is in progress.

Addressing Behavioral Concerns

I will work with you should any issues, like those outlined above, arise. I will schedule a meeting outside of class time to discuss these expectations and work with you to develop a behavioral modification plan. If these behaviors persist, you will be at-risk for failing the course, in keeping with the University's Student Code of Conduct.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mental Health Resources

Life at college can get very complicated. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. However, many of these issues can be effectively addressed with a little help. Student Counseling Services (SCS) can help you cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. Student Counseling Services is staffed by experienced, professional psychologists and counselors, who are attuned to the needs of college students. The services are FREE and completely confidential. Find out more at Counseling.IllinoisState.edu or by calling (309) 438-3655.

Illinois State University Bereavement Policy

Bad things happen to good people—a death in the family is one of the worst things any of us will have to deal with in life. I will do everything within reason (and more) to make sure the impact on your learning at such a time is minimized. With that in mind, the University has policies to guide us. In brief, if you have a death in the family, you will need to contact me through the Dean of Students office at (309) 438-2008 (you are welcome to communicate with me directly, too, but your first call should be to the Dean of Students), and we'll make reasonable arrangements. Details can be found at the following website: <http://policy.illinoisstate.edu/students/2-1-27.shtml>

Campus Safety and Security

Illinois State University is committed to maintaining a safe environment for the University community. Please take a few moments to make sure you are signed up for ISU Emergency Alerts at IllinoisState.edu/EmergencyAlert. Also, note the information posted in each classroom about emergency shelters and evacuation assembly areas (both are indicated on stickers inside every classroom). Additional safety information is available on the Campus Safety and Security website, Security.IllinoisState.edu.

New Student Technology Training

Students new to campus will be registered for a free ReggieNet course site called "Introduction to Technology at Illinois State." It features brief tutorials on several campus digital resources, including ReggieNet, Office 365, and much more. You can also find help accessing online resources through the [Technology Quick Start Guide](#). If you need assistance using technology at Illinois State, contact the Technology Support Center at ITHelp.IllinoisState.edu.

General Education Goals

COM 110 addresses the following General Education outcomes. Primary outcomes are indicated in plain text and secondary outcomes are indicated in italics.

- II. intellectual and practical skills, allowing students to
 - a. make informed judgments
 - c. report information effectively and responsibly
 - e. deliver purposeful presentations that inform attitudes or behaviors

- III. personal and social responsibility, allowing students to
 - a. *participate in activities that are both individually life-enriching and socially beneficial to a diverse community*

c. interact competently in a variety of cultural contexts

IV. integrative and applied learning, allowing students to

a. identify and solve problems

b. transfer learning to novel situations

c. work effectively in teams

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