

## Steinmetz Syllabus COMMUNICATION AS CRITICAL INQUIRY (COM 110)

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**Instructor:** Nick Steinmetz  
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**Classroom:** Fell Hall 125

**Office Hours:** Thursday  
**12:30-2:00**  
**Section:** 059  
**Meeting time:** T/Th 2:00-3:15

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### TEXTS

Simonds, C. J., Hunt, S. K., & Simonds, B. K. (2018). *Engaging communication*. (Top Hat ebook version). Fountainhead Press.

Simonds, C. J., & Hooker, J. F. (2023). *Communication as critical inquiry: Student workbook*. Stipes Publishing.

### COURSE MATERIALS

**COM 110 Top Hat eBook.** You are required to have an eBook for COM 110, which you will access through the interactive platform Top Hat. This platform will allow you to engage with the textbook and complete assignments for the course. You will receive an invitation from Top Hat to register your book with your section of the course. You may purchase eBook access directly from Top Hat or at the bookstores.

**Workbook Purchasing Procedures.** Students will purchase the student workbook (Com 110 Communication as Critical Inquiry) from the publisher, Stipes, who will then mail the workbook directly to you. Please order at the following address:

<https://buy.stipes.com/collections/communication/products/isu-com-110-24sp>

The workbook will cost \$39.50 plus tax and shipping. When you order, be sure to include the **billing address** for the credit card you are using and also the **shipping address** for where you want the workbook sent. If you have any issues with this process, please contact the publisher directly at [orders@stipes.com](mailto:orders@stipes.com)

### COMMUNICATING WITH ME

EMAILING. Please contact me with any and all questions via my Illinois State e-mail address, [nsteinm@ilstu.edu](mailto:nsteinm@ilstu.edu). Emails should contain an appropriate subject line (EX: Question on informative Speech), a greeting, a specific and spellchecked/grammatically correct message, and a closing with your first and last name. Finally, all emails must be sent through an ISU email address.

OFFICE HOURS. I will hold specific office hours but can also make myself available to meet any weekday at a time that is mutually convenient. Please email me to schedule a meeting to ask questions on any assignment and/or just to talk. Additionally, I am available anytime to contact via email. I aim to respond to all emails within 36 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekends.

### **COMMUNICATION AS CRITICAL INQUIRY (COM 110) COURSE GOALS**

Communication as Critical Inquiry (COM 110) seeks to improve students' abilities to express themselves 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 to function in today's society. The course emphasizes participation in a variety of communication processes to develop, reinforce, and evaluate communication skills appropriate for public, small group, and interpersonal settings. The course content and experiences will enable students to assume their responsibilities as speaker-listener-critic in a culturally diverse world. In short, the course is designed to make students competent, ethical, critical, confident, and information literate communicators.

*COM 110 addresses the following General Education outcomes:*

- 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 them to
  - a. participate in activities that are both individually life-enriching and socially beneficial to a diverse community (civic knowledge and engagement)
  - b. demonstrate ethical decision making
  - c. demonstrate the ability to think reflectively
  
- IV. integrative and applied learning, allowing students to
  - a. identify and solve problems
  - b. transfer learning to novel situations
  - c. work effectively in teams

### **Teaching Philosophy**

I am not here to trick you or to make you look foolish. My job as an instructor is to help you in any way possible to learn the material presented in class and to teach you the basic research skills necessary for those studying communication. My approach to teaching is inspired by Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. This means that I view students as partners in an educational journey as opposed to subordinates. I strive to create an equitable educational environment that serves as a safe space for every person involved. This means avoiding any instance of racism, misogyny, homophobia, ableism or other forms of identity based

discrimination. As your instructor, it is my job to make sure you feel comfortable in my class. Please do not hesitate to ask questions, or ask for help, in or out of class. (Unless there is a privacy issue at stake, in-class is often best, since your classmates may have the same questions or concerns that you do, and then you are helping them, too.)

### **ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

- You are expected to be in class every day. There will be frequent in-class participation points that you will not be able to make up, so skipping class will affect your grade directly in loss of attendance and participation points and indirectly in the loss of explanation of concepts that you will need to apply in assignments later. If you are absent on a speech day that is not your own, you will have 10% deducted from your own speech. If you interrupt another student's speech by walking in late while they are presenting, you will lose an automatic 10% off your speech grade.
- There are three reasons for excused absences approved by Illinois State: University-sponsored activities (such as athletics or forensics), bereavement (see policy below), and communicable diseases. If you have a legitimate reason for not being in class, you must tell me as far as possible in advance by email. If you are involved in university activities that will cause you to miss class such as athletics or the forensics team, I need a schedule of classes that you will miss and a note from your coach or sponsor verifying that you are on the team.
- If you talk to me in advance about missing or have an emergency that you let me know about with proper documentation as soon as possible, I will make sure that you are able to turn in assignments for full credit. However, if you don't attend or haven't completed your Quizzes you are not able to participate in class. My job is to prepare students for work after college, and part of that is holding them accountable for attendance because there is no employer that will keep workers that miss work on a consistent basis.
- Tardiness will not be tolerated. If you are late three times, it will count as an absence. If you feel you have a legitimate reason that will keep you from being on time, please discuss it with me during the first week of class.

### **ELECTRONICS POLICY**

During class time, students will be allowed to use a laptop or phone to access TopHat and quiz answers. This is the only permitted use of phones or laptops in this course. Anytime the class is working on any material or activity besides Speech related research, laptops should be shut and phones put away. The use of laptops or phones for non-class material will result in loss of participation points for that day for every offense. After three offenses, you will no longer be allowed a laptop or phone in the class and will be required to print and bring physical copies of the quiz answers to class. Any use of cell phones or laptops while your classmates are giving

speeches or presenting information of any kind will result in an immediate 10% deduction off your speech grade.

## ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

**Formal Assignment Format.** All papers and assignments should be typed, double spaced, with Times New Roman 12 pt. font. Extra spacing between paragraphs should be removed. Headers should be left aligned and should include ONLY the following: Name, Date, Class, and Title/Assignment. The header should be singled spaced and should not be more than four lines.

**Late Work.** All work is expected on the date it is due. I will work with you if you have a legitimate reason or if arrangements have been made with me prior to the class meeting. I want to help you in any way possible, but I will not accept less than your best effort. Like most instructors, I am more understanding if you keep me informed, so let me know right away if you encounter any problems.

**Cheating/Plagiarism.** Students 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 speech topics and/or the presentation of someone else's work warrants 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 Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution Office.

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Speeches.** Each student will present three speeches. **Each speech will be worth 100 points.**

- a. Informative speech (5-7 minutes, no more than 8:00; at least 4 sources must be cited in the presentation and in the references)
- b. Persuasive speech (5-7 minutes, no more than 8:00; at least 6 sources)
- c. Group presentation (15-20 minutes depending on the number of members, each member must speak at least 5 minutes, at least 10 sources must be cited in the presentation and in the references)

**All three speeches must be completed to pass the course. YOU WILL FAIL IF YOU MISS A SPEECH.** Each presentation will be evaluated on content and delivery. Specific details will be clearly outlined in class. Typed outlines and references are required for each (a sample will be

provided). If you have any concerns about your ability to meet the requirements of this course, please come and see me to discuss your concerns.

**Communication Improvement Profile (CIP).** This is a short paper (2-4 pages double spaced) in which you will analyze your own communication style, strengths and weaknesses. You will also discuss what your goals and expectations are for your improvement in this course and include a plan of action that you will use to achieve those goals. I expect formal, college level writing and reasoning in this paper. This is worth **40 points**.

**Final Synthesis Speech.** In this speech (3-4 minutes), you will reflect on your progress over this semester in COM 110. Identify at least three skills you think you improved on, and three skills you can continue to improve on. Your speeches will serve as the evidence of the claims you are making and you are to reference them in your speech. This is worth **40 points**.

**Chapter Quizzes.** After reading through the assigned chapter, students complete quizzes on canvas that assess your understanding of the chapter. These quizzes allow me to pinpoint the class's overall understanding of the material. Quizzes will be due an hour before class time. 2 worst quiz scores are dropped. Chapter Quizzes are worth **160 points** of your total grade.

**Participation.** Because Communication as Critical Inquiry is a skills-based, developmental course, participation is essential. Participation is a function of having read the material, offering insights that extend the thinking of the class and instructor, contributing relevant examples, and demonstrating respect for the contributions of classmates. Participation will be assessed by evaluating participation during class discussions, assignments, and activities. **100 Points** of your total grade are allotted to participation and attendance.

**Participation (Daily Speaking Opportunities).** Because Communication as Critical Inquiry is a skills-based, developmental course, participation is essential. It is important that you get these daily speaking opportunities to increase your confidence with your classroom audience. Participation is a function of attendance, demonstration of having read the material, asking questions that extend the thinking of the class and instructor, contributing relevant examples, and demonstrating respect for the contributions of classmates.

## EVALUATION

Assignment	Point Value	Page Number
Syllabus Contract	10 pts.	3
Introduction Speech	20 pts.	N/A
Informative Speech	100 pts.	10-37
Group Speech	100 pts.	38-60

Persuasive Speech	100 pts.	61-81
CIP Paper	40 pts.	83-86
Synthesis Speech	40 pts.	88-90
Speech Lab Visit	30 pts.	N/A
Chapter Quizzes	160 pts.	Canvas/Textbook
Participation	100 pts.	N/A
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>700 POINTS</b>	

The grading scale is a standard ten percentage point scale:

90-100% = A; 80%-89.9% = B; 70%-79.9% = C; 60-69.9% = D; below 60% = F

## COURSE POLICIES

**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 at least 50% of the overall grade.

**Com 110 Lab.** You are encouraged to visit the Com 110 lab at least once during the semester to practice your speech. It is also recommended that you plan a visit to the Com 110 lab at least one week before your speech so you have enough time to synthesize the feedback received from the attendant and incorporate it into your speech. Ultimately, the Com 110 lab can be a useful tool in improving the quality of your speech and public speaking skills. To schedule time in the Com 110 lab, call (309) 438-4566 or come to Fell 032 and schedule an appointment in person. **You can only make an appointment during Com 110 lab open hours over the phone or in person.** If you wish to video-record your presentation, please tell the attendant when booking your appointment. Remember to book your appointment early, as there are a great number of students trying to make appointments. You must bring a completed outline to the appointment. **You must also schedule an appointment at least 24 hours before the date you are scheduled to deliver your speech in class, or you will not be able to use the Com 110 lab. If you need to change or cancel your appointment, you will need to call the Com 110 lab at (309) 438-4566 or stop by in person (Fell Hall 032) 24 hours in advance. If you fail to cancel your appointment 24 hours in advance you will not be allowed to use the Com 110 lab again.**

**Cheating/Plagiarism.** Students 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 speech topics and/or the presentation of someone else's work warrants plagiarism.

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**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](http://StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu).

**Mental Health Resources.** Life at college can get very complicated. According to recent research, nearly 40% of college students are at-risk for developing generalized anxiety disorder and are less likely to seek help for it compared to other mental health issues. Students also sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience depression, and 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) helps students 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](http://Counseling.IllinoisState.edu) or by calling (309) 438-3655.

**Illinois State University Bereavement Policy.** If a student experiences a death of an immediate family member or relative as defined below, the student will be excused from class for funeral leave, subsequent bereavement, and/or travel considerations. The student will provide appropriate documentation and arrange to complete missed classroom work as soon as possible according to the process outlined below.

Upon notification of the absence and proper documentation, each faculty member shall excuse the student from class according to this policy and provide an opportunity to complete missed exams, quizzes, and other required work. Ultimately, the student is responsible for all material covered in class and must work with each individual professor as soon as they return to complete any required work. Details can be found at the following website:  
<http://policy.illinoisstate.edu/students/2-1-27.shtml>

## **BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS POLICIES**

**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. I expect you to 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 tolerated and will result in the student being considered absent for that particular class period.

**Hate Speech.** In order to foster a safe and comfortable learning environment, I ask that you refrain from using racist, sexist, homophobic, or other negative language intended to exclude members of our campus community and/or classroom. I expect all communications in this class to remain respectful and considerate of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, and staff. Violations of this expectation will most likely result in an open constructive class discussion or a one-on-one discussion with me outside of class. If you are reading this, email me your favorite album to earn extra credit; must be done before the first day of class.

**Presentation Etiquette.** On presentation days, you have dual responsibilities as a speaker and an audience member. When you are presenting, you will dress appropriately. When you are an audience member, you will be attentive and ask challenging but constructive questions when the presentation is finished. Because most people are nervous when they present, you will be supportive both verbally and nonverbally. You will never enter or leave the room while a presentation is in progress.

**Behavioral Expectation Policy.** Should any student violate the expectations of appropriate classroom behavior (as mentioned in the professional courtesy and presentation etiquette policies above), the instructor will schedule a meeting to discuss these expectations and develop a behavioral modification plan. If these behaviors persist, you will be at-risk for failing the course.

#### **SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION RESEARCH POOL WEBPAGE**

Additionally, there will be a few extra credit opportunities for research participation. The extra credit points will be added to your final grade and may not necessarily appear in the gradebook immediately upon your completion of the opportunity. There are no guarantees for extra credit, and it is each student's responsibility to be aware of and take advantage of such opportunities. You may receive extra credit for participating in any of the studies in the School of Communication's Research Pool. The Research Pool is updated as research studies are opened/closed, and it is your responsibility to access the Pool and be aware of available opportunities. The Research Pool can be accessed via:

<https://sites.google.com/site/ilstusocstudies/>

In general, each 30 minutes of participation in an extra credit study will earn you .5 Research Credits. Each project listed on the Research Pool site will indicate the specific number of Research Credits associated with the project. I will get evidence of participation and the time of participation from the researcher(s) who administer the research studies at the conclusion of the semester; however, it is *your* responsibility to make sure that the researchers have the necessary evidence of your participation at the time of the study. Before participating in a study, **please be sure to have your name, ULID** (i.e., the part of your email before @ilstu.edu), **instructor**



**name, and course and section number ready**, as you will need to provide these to receive credit. Research Credit can only be applied to one course for each study, unless specified otherwise in the Research Pool. A maximum of 5% of your final course grade can be earned from extra credit opportunities via the Research Pool. After the final exam there will be no further opportunities for extra credit or to otherwise improve your grade.

Please also be aware that federal guidelines indicate that instructors offering extra credit for research participation must offer a reasonable alternative (such as a research paper) for students who want to earn extra credit but do not want to participate in a study.

**Native Land acknowledgement:** Illinois State University was built on the land of multiple native nations. These lands were the traditional birthright of Indigenous people who were forcibly removed and have faced centuries of struggle for survival and identity in the wake of dispossession and displacement. We would like to acknowledge that our campus sits on the lands that were once home to the Illini, Peoria and the Myaamia, and later due to colonial encroachment and displacement to the Fox, Potawatomi, Sauk, Shawnee, Winnebago, Ioway, Mascouten, Piankashaw, Wea, and Kickapoo Nations. We also express honor to those Indigenous people who we may have excluded in this acknowledgement due to erasure and historical inaccuracy.