

# ***COMM 101: Fundamentals of Communication***

Department of Communication

Fall 2021

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**Instructor:** Name, email, office hours: [includes days and times for one hour of office hours per section taught and include a Zoom link for students who want to join remotely].

## ***Required Texts***

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Ruiz-Mesa, K., & Broeckelman-Post, M. A. (2021). *Inclusive Public Speaking: Communicating in a Diverse World*. Customized for George Mason University, 2021-2022 Edition. Southlake, TX: Fountainhead. Available via Top Hat.

All readings for this course will be through the Top Hat digital learning platform, which hosts this semester's online textbook. Each chapter of the text has questions embedded throughout the text, which will be part of your grade for this course. Additionally, all course lectures will be built into the Top Hat textbook. The textbook can be purchased directly through Top Hat (less expensive) or through the GMU Bookstore, where you will purchase a code and then log in to Top Hat to join the course textbook.

Top Hat link: <https://app.tophat.com/e/XXXXX> (our course join code is: XXXXXX)

If you are new to Top Hat and don't have an account, watch this orientation video to learn more:

<https://youtu.be/kKM34vIcCbQ>. If you have any trouble signing into Top Hat or gaining access to the course, email [support@Top Hat.com](mailto:support@TopHat.com).

We will also be using Blackboard in this class.

## ***Course Description***

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This course examines various principles underlying effective communication in the interpersonal, public speaking, and small group contexts. This course presents principles to help develop appropriate and effective communication strategies in one-to-one and small group communication settings. This course places emphasis on analyzing and assessing the communication skills necessary to create and sustain effective communication in personal and professional relationships.

## ***Mason Core Outcomes for Oral Communication***

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Oral communication competency at George Mason University is defined as the ability to use oral communication as a way of thinking and learning as well as sharing ideas with others. The Mason Core program identifies numerous learning goals in oral communication, which are addressed specifically in two Communication courses, COMM 100: Public Speaking and COMM 101: Fundamentals of Communication. Common to both courses are these four learning outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate understanding of and proficiency in constructing and delivering multiple message types.
2. Students will understand and practice effective elements of ethical verbal and nonverbal communication.
3. Students will develop analytical skills and critical listening skills.
4. Students will understand the influence of culture in communication and will know how to cope with cultural differences when presenting information to an audience.

## ***Course Learning Objectives***

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It is important that you learn to develop your communication skills and that you learn how to present your findings to others. *This is both a theory and a skills course, and our primary goal is for you to gain competence in a variety of interpersonal, public speaking, and small group communication situations.* In order to achieve our goal, we will engage in various activities, assignments, etc. By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Monitor your own verbal and nonverbal communication practices, understand the role of culture and perception in interactions, and communicate ethically and effectively in interpersonal, public speaking, and group communication interactions.
2. Identify and explain fundamental communication processes, including models of communication, language, nonverbal communication, and listening.
3. Practice effective listening in order to understand, evaluate, and respond to others' messages.
4. Understand how interpersonal relationships develop and are maintained, and analyze and manage interpersonal conflict situations.
5. Conduct research and evaluate the quality of support materials and their appropriateness for use when explaining complex ideas to non-expert audiences.
6. Prepare full-sentence outlines and deliver speeches that include appropriate organization, well-supported claims, reasoned arguments, effective delivery, presentation aids (including PowerPoint), and adaptation to a specific audience and rhetorical situation.
7. Participate effectively in a small group to accomplish a team-based problem-solving task and be able to analyze and utilize the most appropriate leadership styles, task roles, and maintenance roles for that specific small group situation.

## ***Academic Integrity***

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The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own and developed by you specifically for that assignment during the current semester; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask your instructor for clarification. Under no circumstances is it permissible to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters relating to academic work. Moreover, all work completed in this class should be original work. Using assignments from other classes or recycling speeches and outlines from previous classes is unacceptable. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct; cases of academic misconduct will be treated seriously, and will most likely result in a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Academic misconduct cases will be reported to the Mason Honor Committee (OAI). Another important aspect of academic integrity includes the free exchange of ideas, and often there will be a vigorous discussion in this class. It is fully expected that all aspects of this class will be conducted dialogically with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. For more information, visit: <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>. Instructors use Blackboard SafeAssign to check for plagiarism.

## ***Attendance and Participation Policy***

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Students are expected to be in class on time every day and should come to class prepared and ready to participate in class activities, assignments, and discussions, both in class and on Blackboard. Attendance and grades are highly correlated in any class, and most in-class assignments cannot be made up when a student is absent from class. Students are expected to attend class for the entire duration of the semester, including the last day of class and through the reading days and the designated final exam period for all their classes.

Emergencies, illnesses, the death of loved ones, participation in university sponsored activities (e.g., debate tournament or basketball game in which a student is competing as a university representative), and important religious observances sometimes make it impossible for a student to attend class. If you will be unable to attend class, please let your instructor know as soon as possible so that you can make arrangements to complete your work for that day another way. When documentation for these absences is provided (in advance, when possible), the absence will be excused and accommodations will be made to submit work on an alternative date. Please see the late work policy (below) for details about make-up work and extensions.

## ***Campus Emergencies, Closures, and Class Cancellations***

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George Mason University is dedicated to preparing staff and students in the event of an emergency. All students in this class are encouraged to register for Mason Alert, a system that allows university officials to contact the community during an emergency by sending a text message. In addition, take a minute to view the emergency procedures poster in each of your classrooms. This poster explains what to do in the event of a medical emergency, fire, tornado, violence, power outage or other crisis. Please let your instructor know if you would like to discuss these procedures or any information on emergencies. If you are not currently registered for Mason Alert please text MASON to 411911 or visit the website: <https://alert.gmu.edu>

If campus is closed for any reason (power outage, snow, etc.), do not assume that class activities are cancelled. Since this is an asynchronous online course, class activities will proceed even if there are campus closures or other campus emergencies.

## ***Campus Resources***

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There are numerous campus resources that are available to help students succeed in their classes, academic careers, and in their professions after they leave GMU, and to manage the many other challenges that we all face at some point. For more details, review the full list of resources online at <http://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus/>. A few of these include:

- Communication Center
- University Writing Center
- Learning Services
- Academic Advising and Transfer Center
- Student Health Services
- Counseling and Psychological Services
- University Career Services
- Military Services
- Student Support and Advocacy Center
- Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Multicultural Education

## ***Chain of Responsibility***

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You are the person most responsible for your learning experience throughout your time here at George Mason. Your instructor is second in that chain. It is your responsibility to communicate with your instructor about anything that you feel may inhibit your learning experience. If the results of those discussions are unsatisfactory, try again. If your instructor still does not seem to understand the concern, your next level of responsibility is to bring the issue to the attention of the Basic Course Coordinator ([bcc@gmu.edu](mailto:bcc@gmu.edu)) for the Department of Communication. Anything that still cannot be resolved will go next to the Basic Course Director. Only after these steps have been taken should you consider going to the Assistant Department Chair, Department Chair, Dean, Provost, or University President. "Jumping rank" and going directly to the Dean or Provost is a very ineffective communication strategy for a number of reasons and is very likely to hurt your chances of a favorable resolution.

## ***Disability Accommodations***

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If you have a learning or physical difference that may affect your academic work, you will need to furnish appropriate documentation to the Office of Disability Services (ODS). You can contact ODS at <http://ods.gmu.edu/>, 703.993.2474, or stop by SUB I Room 4205. If you qualify for an accommodation, the ODS staff will give you a form detailing appropriate accommodations for your instructor. In addition to providing your professors with the appropriate form, please take the initiative to discuss accommodation with them at the beginning of the semester and as needed during the term. Because of the range of learning differences, faculty members need to learn from you the most effective ways to assist you. If you have contacted the Office of Disability Services and are waiting to hear from a counselor, please tell your instructor.

## ***Diversity and Inclusion***

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George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty, and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth.

An emphasis on diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds, and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard, and respected.

The reflection of Mason's commitment to diversity and inclusion goes beyond policies and procedures to focus on behavior at the individual, group and organizational level. The implementation of this commitment to diversity and inclusion is found in all settings, including individual work units and groups, student organizations and groups, and classroom settings; it is also found with the delivery of services and activities, including, but not limited to, curriculum, teaching, events, advising, research, service, and community outreach.

Acknowledging that the attainment of diversity and inclusion are dynamic and continuous processes, and that the larger societal setting has an evolving socio-cultural understanding of diversity and inclusion, Mason seeks to continuously improve its environment. To this end, the University promotes continuous monitoring and self-assessment regarding diversity. The aim is to incorporate diversity and inclusion within the philosophies and actions of the individual, group and organization, and to make improvements as needed.

## ***Extra Credit***

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There are no extra credit opportunities in this class. Extra credit is extra work, and students who are having difficulty completing the required coursework seldom have the time to complete additional assignments. Students who perform poorly on course assignments may not be devoting adequate time and effort to their academic responsibilities. Students should notify their instructors immediately when they are having difficulty in a course.

## ***Grades***

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Your final grade will be based on the following scale:

A+	97-100 (970-1000)	B	83-86 (830-869)	D	60-69 (600-699)
A	93-96 (930-969)	B-	80-82 (800-829)	F	59 or less (599-0)
A-	90-92 (900-929)	C+	77-79 (770-799)		
B+	87-89 (870-899)	C	70-76 (700-769)		

Incomplete grades will not be given in this course except in rare cases in which students have completed the course but are prevented from submitting the final assignment due to a documented serious medical emergency or other excused absence that truly cannot be avoided. In these cases, students should contact their instructor immediately to make arrangements. If the instructor has not heard from a student by the end of the exam period, it is highly likely that the student will receive a "0" score for the exam. Instructors may defer to the Basic Course Coordinator to determine if an Incomplete is warranted.

## ***Grade Appeals***

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The time to challenge the merit of an individual assignment is during the semester and within one week after the assignment evaluation is returned. Once the semester has ended and a final semester grade is posted, it is not appropriate to then challenge the merit of individual assignment grades earned during the semester.

Students often are not aware of what conditions qualify for a grade change after the completion of a semester. The appeal request must fit into one or more of the following categories:

1. A change from a temporary to a final grade either before or after a University deadline (such as an "Incomplete" to an "A")
2. A computational or technical error (such as an issue with an auto calculation)
3. A recording error (such as a professor recording an "18" instead of an "81").

If you believe there is an error in your final semester grade, you should first approach your instructor with clear and concrete justification and evidence to support your appeal in the category or categories above. If you are not able to resolve the issue with your instructor then you may bring your appeal and justification to the Basic Course Coordinator. Once the semester has ended, the BCC will not hear appeals regarding the merit of individual assignment grades earned during the semester, as those should have been resolved with the instructor during the semester.

## ***Late Work Policy***

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Unless otherwise announced, all assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day that they are due. Late work will not be accepted unless you reach out to your instructor to let them know about extenuating circumstances and request an extension. If you have an emergency or other situation that interferes with your ability to complete assignments on time (e.g.: illness, injury, accident, funeral, power or internet outages, childcare emergency, etc.), please reach out to your instructor as soon as possible to let them know about your extenuating circumstances. In such cases, you will be given a new deadline by which make-up work must be submitted and instructions for doing so, usually within one week of the missed deadline.

## ***Parents and Primary Caregiver Accommodations***

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Our institution values diversity and inclusion, and this includes supporting students who also have parenting and family caregiver responsibilities. Parents and primary caregivers often have additional complications that sometimes make it difficult to attend class, such as family illnesses, late school openings, childcare emergencies, etc. If one of these situations will make it impossible for you to attend class, please let your instructor know about the situation as soon as possible, and these situations will be treated as documented excused absences. If you have a childcare emergency and you think you and your child can manage it, you may bring your child to class; for in-person classes, please sit near the door so you can easily step outside if your child needs special attention and is disrupting learning for other students, and return once your child's needs have been met. Students who are pregnant or parenting should consult this university resource for guidance:

<https://masonfamily.gmu.edu/student-parents/>

## ***Privacy***

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Student privacy is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and is an essential aspect of any course. Instructors cannot discuss any student's educational record with their parents, friends, or anyone except with the student or appropriate university representative. Because GMU email is the only one that can be explicitly identified as belonging to you, your instructor will only communicate with you via email using your GMU address, and your instructor will not discuss grades via email. Students must use their GMU email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See <http://mail.gmu.edu/> for more information.

## ***Religious Observances***

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We recognize that the university does not cancel class for all important religious holidays and religious observances. If a class or assignment deadline falls on one of your important religious holidays or observances, please reach out to your instructor at the beginning of the semester to request an accommodation for those holidays and observances. See the Attendance and Participation Policy (above) for more details.

## ***Sexual Misconduct and Interpersonal Violence***

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George Mason University is committed to a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and incidents of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. Faculty members are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator (703-993-8730).

## Course Requirements and Assignments

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Details about all assignments are included in this textbook, and additional resources for completing the assignments and examples of these assignments are available in Blackboard. Grades will be posted on Blackboard and will be earned by completing and submitting the following assignments by their respective deadlines.

Assignment	Points Possible
<b>Explanatory Speech</b>	
Explanatory Speech Draft	10
Explanatory Final Outline & PowerPoint	25
Explanatory Speech	125
<b>Exploring Positionalities and Relationships Assignment</b>	
P&R Team Presentation Final Outline	25
P&R Team Presentation	125
<b>Deliberative Dialogue</b>	
Collaborative Annotated Bibliography	25
Group Proposal	25
Deliberative Dialogue Final Outline	25
Presentation & Q&A	125
Reflection Paper & Group Assessment	25
<b>Content Assessment</b>	
Units in Top Hat (13 units x 25 points/unit)	325
<b>Participation</b>	
Communication Center Visit	15
Research Credit (or 2 <sup>nd</sup> Comm Center Visit)	15
Pre-Survey	15
Post-Survey	15
Participation Activities (includes workshops and other activities in Blackboard- noted as PA below)	80
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>1000</b>

## Tentative Schedule

Week	Due before 5pm Eastern on Thursday, unless noted otherwise
1 8/26	<p><b>Do in Blackboard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read syllabus</li> <li>• Watch welcome video</li> <li>• Record Introductory Speech and post in Blackboard Discussion Thread (10 PA points)</li> </ul> <p><b>Read in Top Hat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome to Inclusive Public Speaking (including Introduction to the Course)</li> <li>• Introductory Speech Assignment</li> </ul> <p><b>Units to complete in Top Hat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 1- Why Communication Matters</li> </ul>
2 9/2	<p><b>Units to complete in Top Hat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 2- Understanding Communication</li> <li>• Ch. 3- Understanding Public Speaking</li> </ul> <p><b>Read in Top Hat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanatory Speech Assignment</li> </ul> <p><b>Do in Blackboard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete pre-course survey. <b>Pre-Course survey is due by 5pm on Friday, September 3</b></li> <li>• Respond to at least five classmates' introductory speeches in Blackboard Discussion Thread (10 PA points)</li> </ul>
3 9/9	<p><b>Units to complete in Top Hat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 4- Finding and Using Evidence</li> <li>• Ch. 5- Designing Messages and Organizing Ideas</li> </ul>
4 9/16	<p><b>Units to complete in Top Hat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 6- Explaining Concepts</li> </ul> <p><b>Do in Blackboard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanatory Speech Plan (10 PA points)</li> </ul>
5 9/23	<p><b>Units to complete in Top Hat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 7- Presenting Yourself as a Speaker</li> </ul> <p><b>Read in Top Hat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving Quality Feedback</li> </ul> <p><b>Do in Blackboard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upload draft explanatory speech outline for instructor feedback</li> <li>• Outline Peer Workshop in Blackboard Discussion Board—upload a copy of your outline, and then provide feedback on two classmates' outlines (10 PA points)</li> </ul>
6 9/30	<p><b>Units to complete in Top Hat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 8- Analyzing and Adapting to a Diverse Audience</li> </ul> <p><b>Do in Blackboard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery Peer Workshop in Blackboard Discussion Board—upload a practice recording of your speech, and then provide feedback on two classmates' recordings (10 PA points)</li> </ul>
7 10/7	<p><b>Do in Blackboard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upload your Explanatory Speech Final Outline and PowerPoint</li> <li>• Upload a recording of your final <b>Explanatory Speech</b> to Blackboard</li> <li>• Watch the recording of your Explanatory Speech and complete the Explanatory Speech Self-Assessment (10 PA points)</li> <li>• Watch a recording of one of your classmate's Explanatory Speeches and complete an Explanatory Speech Peer Evaluation (10 PA points)</li> </ul>
8	<b>Units to complete in Top Hat</b>

10/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ch. 9- Building and Sustaining Relationships</li> <li>Ch. 10- Being a Critical Consumer of Messages</li> </ul> <p><b>Read in Top Hat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exploring Positionalities and Relationships (EPR) Speech Assignment</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Tasks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write an interview questionnaire that includes all of the questions that you will use to interview your partner for the EPR assignment</li> <li>Schedule a time to meet with your partner (in person or via Zoom) for at least an hour to complete your interviews</li> </ul>
9 10/21	<p><b>Units to complete in Top Hat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ch. 11- Expressing Disagreement and Managing Conflict in Relationships</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Tasks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with your partner to complete your interview</li> <li>Work with your partner to create an outline for your EPR speech and to practice your speech together several times</li> </ul> <p><b>Do in Blackboard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upload your EPR questionnaire and interview notes from when you interviewed your partner (10 PA points)</li> </ul>
10 10/28	<p><b>Do in Blackboard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice your EPR speech with your partner. This is a great time to visit the Communication Center!</li> <li>Upload Exploring Positionalities and Relationships Final Outline</li> <li>Upload <b>Exploring Positionalities and Relationships Final Presentation</b></li> </ul>
11 11/4	<p><b>Units to complete in Top Hat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ch. 12- Communicating Successfully in Teams</li> </ul> <p><b>Read in Top Hat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliberative Dialogue Capstone Assignment</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Tasks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule times that your entire group will meet together to complete the Deliberative Dialogue Assignment in the upcoming weeks</li> </ul>
12 11/11	<p><b>Units to complete in Top Hat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ch. 13- Advocating and Persuading</li> </ul> <p><b>Deliberative Dialogue Day 1:</b> Select and explore the problem that your group will address. Decide how you will collaborate with one another (e.g.: work in Blackboard discussion board, use a Google doc, etc.) as you work on this assignment together. Begin developing Collaborative Annotated Bibliography.</p>
13 11/18	<p><b>Do in Blackboard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the Collaborative Annotated Bibliography.</li> <li><b>Deliberative Dialogue Day 2:</b> Decide on a solution to the problem you will address and draft your group proposal and presentation. Work carefully through the Group Decision Making Process.</li> <li>Do the Post-Course Survey, save your submission screen as a pdf, and upload the pdf to Blackboard</li> </ul>
14 12/2	<p><b>Due in Blackboard:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit Deliberative Dialogue Group Annotated Bibliography (one per group).</li> <li>Submit Deliberative Dialogue Group Proposal (one per group)</li> <li>Submit Deliberative Dialogue Final Outline (one per group)</li> <li>Practice your Deliberative Dialogue Presentation with your teammates. This would be a great time to meet with a coach in the Communication Center!</li> <li>Upload your final <b>Deliberative Dialogue Presentation</b> (one per group)</li> </ul> <p><b>**The post-course survey, Communication Center visit, and research credit assignments are due by 5pm on Friday, December 3**</b></p>
Finals week	<p><b>Finals week:</b> Write your Deliberative Dialogue Reflection Paper and Group Assessment. This paper is due by 5pm on <b>Thursday, December 9</b> (the final exam date for all sections of this class).</p>

