



**MIDWESTERN
STATE UNIVERSITY**

A Member of the Texas Tech University System

Course Syllabus: Fundamentals of Speech Communication

Fain College of Fine Arts
SPCH 1133 Section 102
Fall 2026 — MWF 11:00-11:50 a.m.

Contact Information

Instructor:

Thomas Martin

Office:

Fain Fine Arts, B107

Office hours:

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays: 8:00-9:00 a.m and 10:00-11:00 a.m.

(Other times available by appointment)

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Course Description

Study of basic concepts of speech communication as applied to public speaking. Develops skills in research, preparation, delivery, and critiques of oral speeches. Skills are demonstrated through classroom work.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

No textbook is required for this course. Bring paper and pen to class each day for notes. Also bring a few 3" x 5" index cards.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

Course Grade - Daily exercises account for 50% of the final grade. (The three lowest daily grades will be dropped when averaging the final grade.)

Midterm speech (informative) and final speech (persuasive) each count 25%.

Table 1: Assignments by percentage of final grade

Assignments	% of final grade
Daily Exercises	50%
Midterm Speech	25%
Final Speech	25%

Table 2: Total percentage points for final grade.

Grade	Percentage points
A	90 to 100%
B	80 to 89%
C	70 to 79%
D	60 to 69%
F	Less than 60%

Homework

Homework will mostly involve the preparation of the midterm and final speeches. Students may need to review class notes to be prepared for daily exercises.

Quizzes

Daily exercises may require students to remember previous material but will not be quizzes per se.

Projects Required

Two prepared speeches will be delivered in class. Each speech will be about four to five minutes in length. The first speech, delivered during Week 8, will be an informative speech. The second speech, delivered during Week 15, will be a persuasive speech. Speeches must be well-researched and well-rehearsed. Speeches will be delivered in class using only notes on 3" x 5" index cards.

Extra Credit

No extra credit work will be assigned or accepted.

Late Work

No late work will be accepted for daily exercises.

Make Up Work

Only in the case of a documented emergency will a student be allowed to deliver the midterm or final speech on a day other than the one assigned.

Important Dates

- Last day for term schedule changes: August 27
- Deadline to file for December 2026 graduation: September 21
- Last day to drop with a grade of "W": November 23 by 4:00 p.m.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. In this course, students perform daily exercises, which will account for 50% of the course grade. The three lowest daily exercise scores will be dropped when averaging the final grade. This means that any absences beyond three during the semester will result in a lower course grade. Also, please recognize that speeches require an audience, and it is just as important for students to be in class as supportive audience members as it is for them to be in class as speakers.

Recording Classes

Recording classes is generally prohibited without the professor's explicit permission. Such recordings, when permitted, are for personal use only and may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published without the professor's prior consent. Some faculty may not permit recordings of their classes. When it is feasible and appropriate, students may record classes to accommodate disabilities under the Americans With Disabilities Act, with prior approval of Disability Support Services. Such recordings may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published.

Instructor Class Policies

Laptop computers, tablets, and phones will not be allowed for note-taking in class. Please keep all electronic items off of the desk surfaces. Turn off all devices before the start of class so that there are no interruptions. (Do not

set phones to vibrate; turn them off.) If you wear a smartwatch, use it for nothing more than checking the time; if you are paying too much attention to your smartwatch, I will ask you to remove it and put it away. Headphones and air pods are also prohibited.

When class time allows for students to do research for the midterm and final speeches, I will designate time for using electronic devices. Otherwise, I shouldn't see them during class time.

It is not necessary to dress more formally for the midterm and final speeches. However, throughout the semester, students should be aware of how their dress may interfere with the communication process. Generally, brimmed caps, hoodies, or anything else that might obscure eye contact should be avoided.

Please be aware of how your behavior and attitude affect other students. Any student who is disruptive or rude will be dismissed from the class and given a zero on that day's exercise.

Although this course is labeled as a speech class, it is just as much (or more) a listening class. Your attention and support toward other students delivering speeches is necessary for everyone to have a successful semester.

No food is allowed in the classroom. Beverage containers should be well sealed. Any spills must be cleaned up by the person responsible. Do not chew gum during class: it is rude to speak with gum in your mouth, and it is equally rude to be chewing as an audience member.

Please pick up after yourself and insure that the classroom is clean and ready for the next group of students.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the

semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, [\(940\) 397-4140](tel:(940)397-4140). Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Emergency Aid Resources for Basic Needs

Unexpected life circumstances can affect anyone. If you are experiencing challenges meeting basic needs—such as housing, utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, technology, textbooks or other life necessities, resources may be available to help. Visit the [Student Emergency Support and Resources webpage](#) to learn more, and explore emergency support opportunities through MSU and how to access them. For additional information, please contact the Office of Student Affairs: Clark Student Center #108, [\(940\) 397-7500](tel:(940)397-7500), student.affairs@mstuexas.edu.

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “Run. Hide. Fight.” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule

Week	Topics & Activities	Notes
Week 1 Aug 24-28	Course intro; communication models; planning for success	
Week 2 Aug 31-Sep 4	Understanding, reducing, and managing speech anxiety	
Week 3 Sep 7-11	Building a speech; selecting topic & purpose; basics of research	No class on Monday (Labor Day)
Week 4 Sep 14-18	Analyzing your audience; considering ethics in public speaking	
Week 5 Sep 21-25	Improving listening skills	
Week 6 Sep 28-Oct 2	Researching, writing, polishing, and delivering a speech	
Week 7 Oct 5-9	Preparation and practice for informative speeches	
Week 8 Oct 12-16	MIDTERM SPEECHES (informative)	
Week 9 Oct 19-23	Selecting topics for persuasive speeches	
Week 10 Oct 26-30	Effective introductions and conclusions	
Week 11 Nov 2-6	Effective arguments	
Week 12 Nov 9-13	Building delivery skills; Q&A for final speeches	
Week 13 Nov 16-20	Preparation and practice for persuasive speeches	
Week 14 Nov 23-27	Monday: additional practice as necessary	No class Wed-Fri (Thanksgiving break)
Week 15 Nov 30-Dec 4	FINAL SPEECHES (persuasive)	
FINALS WEEK	Monday, Dec 7, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. We will meet ONLY if final speeches are not completed during the previous week.	