

STANDARD POLICIES AND STATEMENTS FOR
COMMUNICATION AS CRITICAL INQUIRY (COM 110-037)
ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Instructor: Christopher O'Quinn

Office Hours: Tuesdays from 3pm – 4pm and Thursdays from 3pm – 3:30 pm

Office: Fell Hall 053

Section: 037

Email: cjoquin@ilstu.edu

Meeting time: MWF 1pm - 1:50pm

Classroom: Fell Hall 123

Preferred Contact: Email

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., Hunt, S. K., & Kaufmann, J. J. (2025). *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/products/isu-com-110-fa25>

The packet will cost \$39.95 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

Course Material Assistance. If you have concerns about being able to afford the materials for this class, there are several options for you.

- First, talk with your instructor. As early as possible, let your instructor know if the cost of the materials will be a barrier to your success in class. Your instructor will be able to point you to resources that may assist you.
- Check Milner Library. Through Milner Library you can access course materials using their course reserve service. These materials can be used for two-hour time blocks inside Milner Library. You can also [ask a librarian](#) for assistance with this process.
- Contact your academic advisor. Your [advisor](#) is knowledgeable about your academic goals and will assist you in navigating your academic experience.

- Reach out to the Financial Aid office. Make an appointment with a [financial aid counselor](#) and specifically mention you are seeking help paying for course materials. The Financial Aid office can ensure students are using all forms of available aid and will investigate options for students, such as a [Short-Term Emergency Student Loan](#).

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

ASSIGNMENTS

Speeches. Each student will present three speeches:

- a. Informative speech (5-7 minutes, no more than 7:30; at least 4 sources must be cited in the presentation and in the references)
- b. Group presentation (25-35 minutes depending on the number of members, each member must speak at least 5 minutes consecutively, at least 10 sources must be cited in the presentation and in the references)
- c. Persuasive speech (5-7 minutes, no more than 7:30; at least 6 sources)

All three speeches must be completed to pass the course. 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.

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

Speeches		
	Informative Speech	100pts
	Group Speech	100pts
	Persuasive Speech	100pts
Participation/P2P's		
	P2P's (18 ch. x 5pts)	90pts
	Participation Log (18 lect. x 5pts)	90pts
Portfolio		
	CIP	20pts
	Synthesis Speech	30pts
Other		
	Syllabus Contract	10pts
	Introduction Speech (AOB)	10pts
	Motivational/ Impromptu Speech	10pts
	Workbook (Milner) Assignments	30pts
	COM 110 Lab	10pts

Total 600pts

At least 50% of the participation grade will be based on daily speaking opportunities (participation in class) for each student. The combination of the portfolio and participation grade will not exceed 100 pts. without an additional, graded speaking opportunity. Assigned grades for speeches must comprise at least 50% of the overall grade.

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

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS POLICIES

General Attendance: You are expected to be present every day of class. 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 the loss of participation points and indirectly in the loss of explanation of concepts that you will need to apply in assignments later. In case of any unforeseen circumstances, do well to email me before class. Lateness to class will not be tolerated. 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.

Speech Days Attendance: If you are absent on a speech day that is not your own, you will **lose 10 pts.** from your own speech for every day you miss. If you are late on a speech day or misbehave (e.g., interrupt a speaker by speaking or entering the class while another student is presenting, using your phone, etc.), it will result in **-5 pts** from your own speech.

There are only three reasons for excused absences approved by Illinois State University: University-sponsored activities (such as athletics or forensics), bereavement, and communicable diseases. If you have a legitimate reason for not being in class, you must tell me as far as possible in advance through email and **provide documentation**.

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. Doing so will give you a deduction of 5 points off of your speech.

Late Work: When it comes to this class, late work will not be accepted. This policy is in place to ensure that everyone comes to class prepared and develops the time-management skills necessary for future academic and professional settings.

Assignment Due Dates: P2P are due **an hour before the start of class**. All Workbook and physical assignments must be submitted to me at the end of the class period in which they are due. Electronic assignments have due dates listed on Canvas LMS under “Assignments” tab. If you are unable to make it to class to submit your assignments, you are to inform me before class starts and state a clear and legitimate reason. Note, however, that your participation grade will be affected as P2P and Class discussions are graded separately.

Formal Assignment Format: All papers and assignments should follow APA 7th ed. Style and be typed, double-spaced, with Times New Roman 12 pt. font. All Headings should be in Bold and Center Aligned. Headings should include ONLY the following: Full Name, Date, COM 110 section, and Title/Assignment.

Phones and other Electronic: The only devices allowed in my class are your laptops and smartphones, these devices would be allowed to be use **only** during specific activities in class. At any other time, devices should be put in your bag. Please, remove your headphones and earbuds/airpods before the start of class. Failure to do that will result in you point deductions.

Email Policy: In this course, clear communication between you and me is essential. Please include “COM 110” and your section number in the subject line of every email you send. I respond to messages within 24 hours on weekdays and within 48 hours on weekends. Emails should follow professional standards, with a greeting, complete sentences, and a sign-off, just like you would in a workplace setting.

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 always demonstrate these behaviors 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 class period.

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.

COURSE POLICIES

Illinois Articulation Initiative (C2900). 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 for your group speech during the semester to practice your speech. **This is compulsory for all group members.** It is recommended that you plan a visit to the COM 110 lab at least one week before your group 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 060 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 060) 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.

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.

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 308 Fell Hall, Office Phone [\(309\) 438-5853](#), Video Phone [\(309\) 319-7682](#) or visit the website at [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](#) 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: <https://policy.illinoisstate.edu/students/2-1-27/>

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.

If you have read this syllabus till the end, email me your favorite TV Show for extra credit:) Must be done before the first day of class.