

## COMMUNICATION AS CRITICAL THINKING (COM 210)

Illinois State University

*"It is better to debate a question without settling it than to settle a question without debating it"*  
-Joseph Joubert

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Instructor: Shanna Carlson

Student Assistance Hours: Mon 4-5p or  
by appt

Contact: Via Canvas Messages or a chat message through Microsoft Teams ONLY

Section: 210.002

Office: Fell 056 (in the basement)

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### REQUIRED TEXTS

Reading Packet uploaded under FILES in Canvas. You DO NOT need to purchase a book for this class! This will be utilized every week there is homework due.

### REQUIRED MATERIALS

- regular access to and a good working knowledge of a computer (*tablet or smart phone is not sufficient*) with dependable, high-speed Internet access, and a supported browser (Firefox is highly recommended)
  - [Install Office 365](#)
- the ability to navigate the different lessons of the course website; send and receive messages (within the Canvas learning management system); upload and download attachments in email and/or Canvas
- a number of software packages installed and available on the computer you will use, including the following:
  - **MS Word.** You should have student access to Office 360 as an ISU students (see help desk for assistance on this)
  - **Adobe Reader** This is a free program which allows your computer to view/read PDF files. It is standard install on departmental and personal computers; however, you can check for the most recent version on the Adobe Reader Download Page
  - **Quicktime.** Quicktime is a free program that allows you to listen to audio files or watch video files. You can download Quicktime from the Quicktime Download Page.
  - **Java.** This should also be part of the standard install on your machine and is likely also installed on your personal computer. You can check for the latest update at the Java Download Page.

**CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION:** Principles of critical thinking, argumentation, and advocacy and their expression in electronic, oral, and written contexts.

### **COMMUNICATION AS CRITICAL THINKING (COM 210) COURSE GOALS**

- 1) Students will hone their research and critical thinking skills
- 2) Students will become more critical consumers and producers of ideas and information (using analytical reasoning skills in the reception, collection, and presentation of ideas).
- 3) Students will enhance their ability to link claims together to form full arguments
- 4) Students will become more effective communicators in a democracy (demonstrating ethical communication, considering multiple perspectives on controversial issues, and managing conflict).

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

#### FORMAT

- **ALL** assignments are to have a name on the first page, *failure to supply your name on the assignment will result in a 5 point loss* (this is for ANY assignment)

**WORKLOAD EXPECTATION:** It is expected that you structure your time in a way that allows you to complete the work on time, I recommend you set aside a specific block of time (or multiple blocks of time) each day to accomplish the tasks necessary to stay on schedule. It is expected that you will need to spend between 1 and 2 hours **per day**, 3 days a week (**up to 6 hours a week**) for the 16 week duration of this course. As in any course, **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN LEARNING**. I can give you all the material and activities in the world, but you must engage with them. This is especially true for online courses.

You may face some technical difficulties along the way, but you should always have a backup plan (use another family computer or one in the library, for example) to gain access to the necessary resources to be successful in this course. If you wait until the last minute to complete a task I will unlikely be able to assist you with your issue before the due date has passed.

Main Assignments:

<b>WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS</b>	<p>Most weeks there will be a Word document with questions to answer and concepts to define. I know that it seems like busy work but doing these will prepare you for the midterm. These ARE your study guides! <i>You may not turn in these definitions after the assigned date. Do not just type the exact definition from the book, define it in your own words and synthesize the material. Copying directly from the book, any AI generator, or internet will result in a 0 for the week, even if it's only done 1 time on the assignment.</i> These will be turned in online via Canvas. You will need to download the associated word document for the week, fill out the prompts, <b>save as a pdf file</b>, and then upload to Canvas by 11:59pm central the Saturday the week the reading is assigned. You are only harming yourself if you do not take the assignment seriously. These are mostly a completion grade so it is an easy 40 points a week, but that also means it's easy to lose 40 points per week which adds up to a substantial part of your overall grade. If you leave a prompt/question blank I will take off 4pts, up to 50%, for each blank.</p>
<b>QUIZZES</b>	<p>Throughout the semester there will be 6 quizzes, each worth 20 points. The quizzes will be over material covered in class. The lowest score will be dropped <i>after all quizzes are taken. There will be a syllabus quiz worth 20pts, it WILL NOT count as one that can be dropped.</i> All quizzes will be untimed and you will be able to enter and exit out of the quiz as many times as needed, prior to submitting your final answers. This <i>means if you open a quiz and do not understand something you should reach out to me for assistance. The quizzes are designed to help you get used to the types of questions you may see on an exam. They are not meant to act as a "test" so PLEASE send me a message if you are in need of assistance with ANY question.</i></p>
<b>EXAMS</b>	<p>There will be 2 exams. Exams will assess your understanding of critical thinking and argumentation concepts and theories, as well as your application and integration abilities. Exams will be available for an entire week. However, once opened they only be available for 2 hours. They are open note/book/internet, but you will <b>NOT</b> have time to look up EVERY answer.</p>

<b>NEWS PODCAST JOURNAL</b>	<p>To encourage you to become more aware of local, national, and world events we are going to do a podcast journal. To earn full points, you will need to listen to a podcast for 14 CONSECUTIVE days and write a small journal entry each day. You will need to listen to one of the podcasts listed below (<i>you can switch between them each day, but these are the only ones I will count for credit</i>). Download the template from Canvas assignments, then in 3-5 sentences tell me about your favorite part or what you found to be most interesting from the segment. DO NOT just summarize the podcast, I want to know what you took away from the podcast and why that portion of the podcast stuck out to you. Most of these are 15- 30 minutes long (some are longer). Once you have completed the journal in word, <b>save it as a pdf and upload it to the Assignment on Canvas</b>. You can turn it in before the due date, but it will not be accepted after the due date!</p> <p><b>Accessing the podcasts</b> (contact me if you have any issues)On your computer: Just do a google search and you should quickly find the podcast online and be able to stream it easily.</p> <p>Apple devices: There is an app available for free (<a href="https://www.apple.com/itunes/podcasts/fanfaq.html">https://www.apple.com/itunes/podcasts/fanfaq.html</a>)</p> <p>Androids: Download the free app Podcast Addict OR NPR One. Then search for the podcast and subscribe or search every time.</p> <p><b>Approved Podcast Options:</b></p> <p><a href="#">BBC Global News Podcast</a> (episodes are about 30min each)</p> <p><a href="#">Up First: NPR</a> (episodes range from 12min to 60min)</p> <p><a href="#">The World</a> (These are 1hr long episodes)</p> <p><a href="#">This Morning with Gordon Deal</a> (episodes are about 30min each)</p> <p><a href="#">World News Tonight with David Muir</a> (episodes are 23min each)</p>
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**EXTRA CREDIT:** Extra credit opportunities will arise throughout the semester, and I will announce them as they become available. If you have an event or activity that you believe should count for extra credit, please talk with me about it and maybe we will make it available to the class (**I love your ideas and a lot of extra credit assignments have originated with student ideas**). These will be posted under announcements on our Canvas.

**ONGOING EXTRA CREDIT:**

**SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION RESEARCH POOL WEBPAGE:** There will be a few extra credit opportunities for research participation. The extra credit points will be added to your final grade and **WILL NOT** 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, I will award 2pts for participation in a survey (up to 10 total pts). 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, 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.

## EVALUATION

Assignment	Total Points Possible
Weekly Homework	520pts (40 points each week)/ 50% of total
Podcast Journal	140pts (10 points per day)/ 14% of total
Quizzes	100 pts (6 total, 20pts each, lowest dropped)/ 9% of total
Midterm	100pts/ 9% of total
Final	100pts/ 9% of total
Activities	100pts/9% of total
<b>Total</b>	<b>1060 pts</b>

The grading scale is a standard ten percentage point scale:

90-100% = A; 80%-89% = B; 70%-79% = C; 60-69% = D; below 60% = F

My rounding policy for the end of the semester:

IF you are sitting at a score of X.60+% AND you complete AT LEAST 2 Extra Credit Opportunities I will round you up to the next letter. The surveys only count as 1 opportunity, even if you do all 5.

\*Example: Your score is 89.7% AND you did 2 EC opportunities = Final Grade Entered: A

Your score is 89.7% AND you did 1 EC opportunity = Final Grade Entered: B

Your score is 89.55% AND you did 2 EC opportunity = Final Grade Entered: B

## **MY TEACHING PHILOSOPHY:**

**I am not here to trick you or to make you look foolish.** You WILL have A LOT of questions throughout this class, and I am here to help you. I want to help you in any way possible to learn the material presented in class and to teach you the basic skills that you will need to communicate in college and in the work force. This class is designed to improve your written and spoken ability to make a logical and complete argument.

Please do not hesitate to ask questions or ask for help. If you have any special needs that it would help for me to be aware of, please let me know.

## COURSE POLICIES:

**Email:** Students should contact me using the **Inbox** feature within our Canvas course OR through Microsoft Teams Chat. I will try my best to respond to emails within 24 hours Monday through Thursday and 48 hours Friday thru Sunday. ***I will NOT respond to emails that are sent to my ilstu account! I get too many emails on there that I easily lose or miss emails from students.*** You can also use the Inbox tab to contact ANYONE in the class.

That means if you email me on a Monday, you can expect a response from me no later than Tuesday. If you email me on Saturday, you can expect a response no later than Monday. I typically will not respond to emails after 8pm or before 10am.

**Student Assistance Hours:** To request a private discussion at any time (especially if you cannot make my student assistance hours) please send me a message with 3 possible dates/times that work for you. My office hours are drop in, so you do not have to schedule during then, unless you want to meet via Zoom. Even though this is an online course, I will be in my office in Fell Hall and you are welcome to stop by any time during Student Assistance Hours (or any time to see if I'm there).

**Private Chat:** You are welcome to send me a chat message through Microsoft Teams as well. This will be the way that you will get the quickest response from me. You have FREE access to this app with your ULID login information. You can download the app to your desktop and/or to your phone.

[Microsoft Teams](#) is quite easy to use, you can find more in-depth information online. *If you use this on your phone it is just like texting and I will probably respond to you quite quickly.*

**PROBLEMS:** All work is expected on the date it is due. **Late assignments will not be accepted.** I will work with you if you have a legitimate reason for your absence (determined by me) AND arrangements have been made with me **prior** to the due date and time. I want to help you in any way possible but will not accept less than your full effort. Like most instructors, I am more understanding if you keep me informed: If you encounter problems, please let me know right away. Life happens and I understand that, so if (when) something happens please let me know so that you can succeed in the class.

**Academic Integrity (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/or 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 (up to and including a 0 on the assignment). 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 Community Rights and Responsibilities. If you have questions regarding this please click here: [Academic Integrity](#).

Content generated by an **Artificial Intelligence** third-party service or site (**AI-generated content**) without proper attribution or authorization is another form of plagiarism. If you are unsure about whether something may be plagiarism or another form of academic dishonesty, please reach out to me to discuss it as soon as possible. Any allegation of academic dishonesty may be referred to [Student Conduct and Community Responsibilities](#), a unit of the Dean of Students Office, for possible review. If found responsible for academic dishonesty, a grade penalty can also be applied.

**GRADE APPEALS:** If you disagree with a grade you have received, you have up to **ONE WEEK** after the assignment was returned to make an argument. To do this, **YOU MUST** submit a *formal written complaint with a full argument arguing for the grade you believe you deserve*. A full argument will clearly identify what points you believe you should earn AND explain WHY you should earn them (statements such as: I was not aware, I was confused, etc, will not be accepted because I will answer all clarifying questions for any assignment.) I will inform you of my decision within 48hrs of receiving your appeal. If it is a simple mathematical error, please feel free to contact me without having to file an appeal. **I have made mistakes before so please do not hesitate to discuss your grade with me, positive changes have been made in the past.** ☺ Also note, if you make an appeal, I will NEVER lower your grade, you can only move up or stay the same.

## STUDENT RESOURCES

**Student Access and Accommodation Services.** 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](http://StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu)

Accommodation Examples: Extended Exam Times, Notetakers, Academic Aide, Modified Attendance Policies, etc

**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. SCS 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 [COUNCILING SERVICES](#) or by calling (309) 438- 3655.** If it is after hours, press 2 at the prompt to speak with a counselor immediately.

**CRISIS RESOURCES:** There is a free walk-in crisis service provided by ISU Student Counseling Services. If you find yourself in a mental crisis of any kind, please take advantage of this service. Student Counseling Services explains that [Psychological Emergency Services](#) are “Much like a visit to the emergency room of a hospital, **crisis contacts occur the day that a student makes initial contact with us, and the contact takes priority over the student’s previously scheduled activities** (e.g., class, work, meetings). A counselor would meet with you to do an assessment of the circumstances surrounding your crisis, identify and implement strategies for dealing with the crisis, and make recommendations as to how to proceed. A follow-up appointment may be scheduled. At times you may have a brief wait if the counselor is meeting with another student.”

There is also a phone number that you can contact if you are uncomfortable seeking face-to-face interactions. According to Student Counseling Services “If you have an emergency after our normal weekday business hours or on the weekend, please call the Student Counseling Services main number at (309) 438-3655. You will be given the option to press “2” to speak to a counselor immediately or dial 1-855-256-2188. The counselor will provide information, support, referrals, and, if needed, will arrange for emergency services.”



Confidential Advisors: Free, 24/7 Confidential Advisors are available through Student Counseling Services. **Confidential Advisors provide emergency and ongoing support to survivors of sexual violence.** Confidential Advisors are staff specially trained to respond to students, explain their rights and options, and liaise with necessary campus authorities as requested by the student. You may need your student ID information so have that ready when calling.

(309) 438-3655

Student Services Building Room 320

Confidential Advisors are NOT required to report sexual assault incidents to the university, unlike most university faculty and staff.

**There are also local and national resources available to you:**

- McLean County Center for Human Services (Emergency Crisis Intervention, 24/7): 309-827-5351
- [Providing Access to Health \(PATH\) Crisis Center](#)
  - 24/7 access to assistance
  - Text 2-1-1 OR text your zip code to 898211
- [Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)
  - The helpline provides 24-hour free and confidential treatment referral and information about mental and/or substance use disorders, prevention, and recovery in English and Spanish.
  - **1-800-662-HELP (4357)**
  - **TTY: 1-800-487-4889**
- [The Trevor Project](#)
  - These counselors are specially trained to understand the challenges of LGBTQ young people. You can call, chat from the internet, or text them 24/7 and it is 100% free and confidential
- [The Steve Fund](#)
  - To contact a counselor text STEVE to 741741 to access a trained Crisis Text Line counselor
  - The Steve Fund is dedicated to supporting the mental health and emotional well-being of young people of color. Right at this moment, there are young people of color who are failing academically, suffering emotionally, and/or in some cases are facing serious risk, because population-specific factors influencing mental health are too poorly understood and not acted upon.
- Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741 from anywhere **in the United States**, anytime, about any type of crisis. A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds, all from our secure online platform. The volunteer Crisis Counselor will help you move from a hot moment to a cool moment.
- [Veterans Crisis Line](#)
  - Dial 988 then Press 1
  - Chat Online
  - Text 838255

*I am also here for you!* If you desire assistance in using any of these services OR just want a familiar face, please feel free to visit my office at any time. I have an open-door policy, any time that I am working in my office my door will be open and you are MORE than welcome to visit. I am ABSOLUTELY here for you! Please be aware that I am a mandatory reporter, so if you report anything to me involves violence or abuse, I am required to report it to the university. This also means that I am a safe place to start the reporting process, I will not judge, but I will listen and provide guidance on what steps to take to seek the care you need.

**YOUR WELL-BEING:** It's hard to learn if you're hungry or couch surfing. If you are having difficulty affording groceries, accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or securing a safe and stable place to live, help may be available. I urge you to contact the [Dean of Students Office](#) to learn more.

#### **BloNo Food Pantries:**

[School Street Food Pantry](#) This is designed for College students, you WILL need your student ID (but you will not be asked to provide proof of insecurity). Please see their website for distribution information and hours of operation. They are located inside the Normal First United Methodist Church at 211 N. School St., Normal, IL (It's just north of Milner Library).

- What's available: When you enter the pantry, you may shop for nonperishable food items including breakfast items, canned vegetables and fruits, canned soups, pastas and grains, canned tuna and chicken, spaghetti sauces and peanut butter, along with many other items. We also do our best to make available a variety of refrigerated dairy foods, frozen foods, fresh produce and breads. You will often find personal care items and cleaning supplies, as well.

[Home Sweet Home Ministries Food Services](#) they have a Bread for Life Co-op and a Dining center. The website explains how each function.

[Eastview Christian Church](#): 1500 N. Airport Rd. Tues: 1-3p AND 6-7:30p Weds: 10a-12p AND 6-7:30p. Can shop every other week.

Offers: food, paper products, detergent, and personal hygiene items to anyone living in McLean County. You will need proof of McLean Country Residency so you will need your ID and a piece of mail.

#### **McLean County Housing Assistance**

[Home Sweet Home Ministries Housing Services](#): **Please note:** *This is NOT a public rental assistance program. All participants come through referrals by [PATH Homeless Services program](#).*

[Project Oz](#): Call us at 309-827-0377. We offer survival aid, help finding and keeping a job, safety planning, educational supports, legal aid, medication connections, emotional support, and we'll work to connect you to housing.

**Excused Absence for Medical or Bereavement:** You will need to contact the Dean of Student's if you need to quarantine due to catching a communicable disease OR if you need to take time away from classes due to a death (if you will be missing 3 or more consecutive days of class). Both processes are easy but must be done ASAP and cannot be retroactively submitted. For more information, please see the [Dean of Student's Absence Notification](#) page for the steps involved in each process.

**CANVAS ASSISTANCE:** If you need help with Canvas, please contact the University Computer Help Desk at 309-438-4357 or [helpdesk@ilstu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ilstu.edu). Ensure you check [Tech Alerts](#) if you are having an issue, they update when there is a campus wide technical problem.

**JULIA N. VISOR ACADEMIC CENTER:** The Julia N. Visor Academic Center, a division of University College, provides the following free services for students:

- **Tutoring:** Free tutoring in a variety of academic subject areas, including support for many of the courses in the Inner Core of the General Education program.
- **Workshops:** Study skills assistance individually and in small groups, as well as study skills workshops, for students who want to improve their ability to achieve academic success.