

Communication as Critical Inquiry (COM 110)
Illinois State University – School of Communication – Spring 2026
January 12, 2026 – May 1, 2026 (Exam Week 5/4-5/8)
In-Person/On Campus Synchronous

Instructor:	Tina McGuire	Office:	Fell 402
Phone:	309-438-4634 (office)	E-mail:	tmmcgui@ilstu.edu
		Zoom Office:	293 788 7358 or tmmcgui (passcode: redbirds)
Sections:	63: T/R 8AM-9:15AM – Fell 123	Office Hours:	M 2:30PM-4PM – Fell 402
	8: T/R 9:35AM-10:50AM – Fell 123		T/R 11AM-12:15PM – Fell 402
	66: T/R 12:35PM-1:50PM – Fell 158		By Appointment
	58: T/R 2PM-3:15PM – Fell 125		

** Students are expected to read this entire document and are responsible for all information provided within. **

TEXTS (2 BOOKS ARE REQUIRED)

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

Simonds, C. J., Hooker, J. F., Hunt, S. K., & Kaufmann, J. J. (2025). *Communication as critical inquiry: Student workbook*. Stipes Publishing.

COURSE TEXTS – PURCHASING PROCEDURES

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 help you complete assignments for the course.

How to Enroll with Top Hat: To enroll correctly, click the Top Hat link in your Canvas course navigation. Look for a link labeled "Top Hat".

Clicking the Top Hat link ensures you are enrolled into the correct course or course section in Top Hat.

After clicking the link, you'll be redirected to Top Hat (make sure pop-up blockers are disabled). Create a student account or log in to an existing account using your official school email address. Important: Do not use the Top Hat mobile app to sign up or make purchases—use a desktop browser like Chrome or Firefox.

You may see a message like "Account not active or Additional Materials Required" if you attempt to enroll via the mobile app. Please complete your enrollment and purchases in a desktop browser first.

Once your account is set up and linked, you can access Top Hat using the mobile app.

If you do not click the Top Hat link: You will be shown a message in Top Hat instructing you to do so (web browser only).

You may be removed from the Top Hat course during the nightly roster sync if you enrolled directly in

Top Hat (not recommended).

If you are removed, please follow the enrollment steps above again.

Spiral Workbook Purchasing Procedures: Students will purchase the spiral 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 web address: (provided on Canvas and on the first day of class)

The packet will cost \$39.95. 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.

All purchasing procedures will be reviewed in class on the first day, if you are unsure of what to purchase, please wait until then. You will not need the workbook until the second week of class.

Course Material Assistance: If you are concerned 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 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.

OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS

Students are required to hand in most assignments electronically through Canvas and use Microsoft Word. Microsoft Word is available for all ISU students through their Outlook e-mail accounts. Other supplies needed include notecards, and any other school supplies students would like during the semester. While this course is in-person, students will have access to online materials, therefore students are required to have access to a laptop and are expected to bring their laptop to class.

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:

I. 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

II. personal and social responsibility, allowing students to

- a. participate in activities that are both individually life-enriching and socially beneficial to a diverse community
- c. interact competently in a variety of cultural contexts

III. 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've been teaching for a long time, about 20 years. Through my experience, I've seen it all, though one thing remains the same: I simply want what's best for my students. I will do my very best to support all my students as they are navigating this class and their college careers. That means I will communicate with you often, present course content in a way students can understand, grade in a manner that reflects student achievement in meeting course objectives, and I will do my very best to respect all students in my classes.

COURSE FORMAT

This class meets twice a week on campus and in person, starting on Tuesday, January 13. Students are expected to attend each class meeting. In-person class meetings are not recorded, and students cannot attend in-person class meetings remotely.

There isn't an online option for this class, meaning, a student cannot request to take the class online. This is individual student accommodation that cannot be granted within the parameters of the course. Now, if as a class we need to move online (due to a university mandate or instructor need) we will meet as a class (during regular class time) on Zoom, and the class will get a Zoom code to do so.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING POLICIES

Below are brief assignment descriptions, all assignment details can be found on Canvas, and most assignments will be gone over in detail during class.

Participation/In Class Points (Formative Assessments)

These assignments include draft checks and visual aid checks. Draft checks will be handed in to a specific Canvas assignment and will close at the end of a class meeting. Visual aid checks will be completed in class and will not require anything to be submitted to Canvas. If a student is absent from a visual aid

check, they will not be able to earn those lost points. They can complete an extra credit assignment to earn those points.

Additional points may be added to this category throughout the semester, if needed. For example, I might add an additional activity or outline check and make those worth a few points. Those extra points will be added to this category.

Attendance & Communication

Students are expected to come to every class period and are expected to stay for the entirety of the meeting. Each scheduled class meeting (except for presentation dates, which have a different policy) is worth 3 points. If a student is absent, and it is not excused, the student will not earn those 3 points. If a student is late to class, and it is not excused, the student will lose 1.5 points. If a student leaves the class meeting early (before dismissal), and it is not excused, the student will lose 1.5 points.

Student Information Form

This is a Canvas assignment this is worth 10 points. Completing the form will tell me a little bit more about you and what you'd like to gain from the class. Completing it also confirms that you've read the syllabus and understand its contents. It is due the first week of class.

Quizzes

Over the course of the semester, there will be six Canvas quizzes that will cover course policies and material from lecture and material from the textbook/Canvas. All quizzes are due by 11:59.00PM on the assigned due date. Students will get one chance to complete the quizzes; they are not timed. The quiz questions will be available for students on Canvas so students can best prepare.

When quizzes are submitted, Canvas will grade the multiple-choice questions and assign a grade. Please note THIS IS NOT THE FINAL GRADE FOR THE QUIZ. After the due date, I will go into the quizzes and grade any short answer questions and make any grade adjustments if needed.

**** There is not a written final exam for this section of COM 110; we are not meeting during exam week. ****

Formal Presentations

All three formal presentations 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 an APA reference page are required for each (samples will be provided). If you have any concerns about your ability to meet the presentation requirements of this course, please come and see me to discuss your concerns.

- *Informative Presentation* (5-7 minutes, no more than 8; at least 4 sources must be cited in the presentation and on the APA reference page; visual aid required)
- *Persuasive Presentation* (5-7 minutes, no more than 8; at least 4 sources must be cited in the presentation and on the APA reference page; visual aid required)
- *Group Presentation* (18-23 minutes, each member must speak for at least 5 minutes, at least 10 sources must be cited in the presentation and on the APA reference page; visual aid required)
 - The time requirement for the Group Presentation may be adjusted based on class/group size or scheduling issues towards the end of the semester.

To earn credit on all formal presentations (and for COM 110), students are required to complete and hand in an outline and APA reference page and present their presentation in front of an audience of

at least six people. If a student is absent on their presentation date, they will be scheduled for a make-up presentation. I will do my best to schedule make-ups during scheduled class meetings. Though, if this is not possible, make-up presentations may be scheduled during exam week. If a make-up presentation is scheduled during exam week, or on a date the class is not scheduled to meet, the speaker is required to bring an audience of at least five people. All make-up presentations may be subjected to a 25% late grade deduction.

Students are asked to upload their outline and APA reference page the night before their

presentation. This will allow me to download their final draft and read it prior to their presentation, resulting in a more complete assessment. The Canvas assignment will close 30 minutes prior to the start of class on the student's presentation date. If the student doesn't get their materials in, we will reschedule, and that will be a 25% deduction to the student's presentation grade.

Communication Goals Assignment (CGA – Formerly the CIP)

This is a short paper in which you will analyze your own communication style, strengths, and weaknesses and discuss what your goals and expectations are for your improvement in this course and this semester. The paper will also discuss a plan of action that you will use to achieve those goals. This is usually due during the second or third week of class.

Introduction Presentation (Bag Presentation)

This assignment is a quick (2 minutes or less) introduction presentation during the first or second week of class. Students will complete an outline and then present this presentation in class. Assignment details can be found on Canvas.

Personal Narrative Presentation (Final Assessment)

This assignment is a brief (3-5 minutes) reflection on the current semester at ISU. Students will complete an outline or transcript and then also record their presentation on Canvas. Assignment details can be found on Canvas. I will show the class how to record on Canvas.

Extra Credit

There will be a few extra credit opportunities available through Canvas. These will include short written assignments, School of Communication Research Board opportunities (Link to extra credit site: <https://sites.google.com/site/ilstusocstudies/>), and U College workshops or seminars. Check the extra credit module on Canvas for more information. Students should note that extra credit is not added into grades until the end of the semester and the extra credit due date cannot be extended for any reason.

A Note About the Research Board & Extra Credit

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 e-mail before ilstu.edu), **instructor's 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. Please also be aware that federal guidelines indicate that instructors offering extra credit for research participation must offer a reasonable alternative (all options are on Canvas) for students who want to earn extra credit but do not want to participate in a study.

A maximum of 5% of your final course grade (35 points) can be extra credit. At the end of the course (after 4/30), there will be no further opportunities for extra credit or to otherwise improve your grade.

Students can also attend a U College workshop or short course and earn five extra credit points. They will need to provide proof of attendance to earn extra credit. That proof of attendance can be uploaded to the extra credit assignment on Canvas or shown to Tina on or before 4/30.

Final Exam

There is **not** a written final exam for my sections of COM 110. Students will complete the Personal Narrative Presentation online. Class will not meet during exam week. Exam week will be reserved for students who have make-up presentations.

****** For all assignments, specific assignment expectations and requirements will be provided when the assignment is assigned. Information will also be provided on Canvas and during class meetings. Students shouldn't hesitate to e-mail the instructor with any questions they have about each assignment. ******

Grading Policies

Students should know and understand that when it comes to grading, as the professor of the course, I have the students' best interests at heart. When grading any assignment, I will always grade in favor of the student. With that said, there are a few things to keep in mind.

When determining a student's final grade, I will reflect on their complete body of work. That includes attendance, participation, and quality of work. Also remember that as the professor of this course, I do not have to round any grades up. In all final grade considerations, I reflect on the student's participation in class, communication with me, timeliness of handing in assignments, and overall attendance. Additionally, a student's final grade must also show that the student has met course objectives (C), gone above course objectives (B), or gone above and beyond course objectives (A). Also, I grade on a point system, and not a percentage system. The grading scale, based on points, can be found in the assessment section/list towards the end of the syllabus. Also note, the percentage Canvas shows may not be accurate based on my point system.

Students must keep in mind that as a professor, I must stay consistent with grading throughout the entire semester and with all students. Grades cannot and should not be discussed via e-mail, and students who request grade bumps or grade information via e-mail will be asked to meet with me in person. If a student needs to discuss their grade, they must come to my office hours or make an appointment to discuss grades. And note that just because a student comes to my office hours, that doesn't mean a grade will be changed or raised.

Remember at its heart, this is a public speaking class. Therefore, your final grade needs to reflect your public speaking and communication skills. If a future instructor sees that a student earned an A in COM 110, they are going to expect a perfect public speaker (If you earned a B on all three formal presentations, your overall grade will probably not be higher than a B). Public speaking is a skill that many departments on campus list as vital to a student's success not only in class but in their future professions.

Posting Presentation Grades & Feedback

Once presentations start and students have been presenting in class; I will not be able to help students who have not spoken yet. All questions and/or requests for help on presentations need to be made prior to the first day of presentations. This is so that it is fair for all students, and that the students speaking later in the presentation schedule do not have an advantage over the students speaking first.

After students present, they will see a grade on Canvas. This may not be the final grade for the presentation, as I still may have to calculate late penalties and/or attendance. Presentation grades will be official on Canvas the day after the last scheduled presentation date.

If after a student receives their feedback on a rough draft of final draft of a presentation, they feel that it isn't enough, the student can contact me for more feedback or clarification of feedback. I am more than happy to meet with students either in-person or on Zoom if they want to discuss their feedback.

Assignment Redoes & Grade Appeals

Because the course is only 16 weeks, there isn't enough time to allow for presentations and assignments to be redone. Though if a student has an issue with their grade or feels they should be able to redo an assignment, they can meet with me for consideration. The student should make an appointment with me to discuss options for redoing an assignment or discuss a concern about a grade. We will have an in-depth conversation, and the student may be able to redo an assignment within a timeframe or based on their evidence and reasoning, may earn an increased grade. Please note that not all meetings will result in an increased grade or an opportunity to redo an assignment.

For the group presentation, students will have an opportunity to appeal a final grade on that assignment if they feel their grade does not reflect their effort on the assignment. This appeal process is slightly different because it's at the end of the semester. Students should see the Canvas assignment for more details on how to appeal a grade on the group presentation. All other grade appeals (including an overall grade) must be made in-person or on Zoom during a scheduled appointment. All meetings need to take place before the start of exam week.

Outline Draft Checks & Feedback

For the informative and persuasive presentations, all students will be required to upload a rough draft in class on a specific date. Then for those presentations and the group presentation, students can upload an optional draft prior to the presentation dates. With those drafts, students will get detailed feedback about their submission. These are both Canvas assignments that are only open for a limited time and will not be reopened for any reason.

If a student needs feedback after the draft check due dates, students need to drop into office hours or make an appointment. During that time, the student can show me their draft, and I will go over it. It's best if at that time the student comes with specific questions about their feedback. I will not take these appointments after the presentations have started. Once presentations have started, I will not answer any questions about outlines or the assignment.

Late Work

Assignments handed in on Canvas (Quizzes, CGA, Student Information Form, Self-Evaluations) are open on Canvas one week beyond the due date. If a student forgets to hand in one of those assignments, they will get a reminder Canvas message from me and then will have about a week to get the assignment in. If the assignment is handed in within that week, no late penalties will be taken. Once the assignment closes, the grade for the assignment will become a zero.

If a student would like to hand in an assignment that is a zero, they are responsible for communicating with me during office hours or making an appointment. This must be an in-person (can be on Zoom) meeting to discuss options for moving forward for late work (a schedule for getting the assignment in and possible penalties). Just sending me an e-mail asking me to reopen something is not acceptable, and that request will not be honored. Any appointments/meetings concerning late work need to happen prior to the start of exam week.

For presentations, if a presentation is not presented on time, there is a 25% deduction on the presentation. If the student didn't present their presentation on time for an excused reason (see list of excused absences above and know that documentation is required), the 25% deduction will not be taken. If the student doesn't present on their rescheduled date, an additional 25% deduction will be given. The last possible date to make up a presentation is during your class's scheduled exam date/time.

If a student misses their rescheduled presentation date, a new presentation date will not automatically be assigned. Students need to meet with me in-person (during office hours or by making an appointment) to discuss options on when to reschedule or make-up a missed presentation. This process is like the regular late work policy. If the student misses their second rescheduled date, the presentation cannot be made up, and the student will not earn credit for the course.

Assignment Extension Requests

Sometimes life gets crazy, and students need short extensions on quizzes or other assignments to help get them caught up. If a student needs an extension beyond the already built in week extension, they are expected to get in touch with me. I will consider short extensions if the student is communicating with me, **prior** to due dates, and is honest about their needs. 9 times out of 10, I am more than willing to grant extensions on most assignments.

Presentations are a little different because these are scheduled in class and must be done within the time frame of when the class meets. Therefore, a student can request an extension, though they must understand that unless it's an excused request (see list of excused absences), they will most likely get a 25% deduction on their presentation. Though, still communicate with me! Do not assume that I'll just say no to everything! Remember, I appreciate it when students are communicating with me and are working with me!

Final Grade Policy

No work will be accepted after 5/7 at 11:59.00PM.

Grades will be posted to the university on the morning of 5/8, and after that grades will be final.

The last day for student meetings about grades is 4/30.

Incompletes

Course incompletes will only be granted if the student has been communicating with me throughout the entire course.

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 all speaking opportunities (this includes participation) must comprise at least 50% of the overall grade.

Another requirement for IAI is that all formal presentations be presented in class and in person. The audience must be at least 6 people, and the student speaking should speak for at least 5 minutes per presentation. **If a student does not present the three formal presentations in front of an audience, they will not earn credit for the course, and the course will not be transferred to another institution in the state of Illinois.**

Attendance Policies

Excused Absences: There are three types of absences that will be considered excused. With all three excused absences, students are required to provide documentation prior to their absence. Please review these absence types and plan ahead if needed.

1. *An official ISU absence*, this could include athletic events, band concerts, academic tournaments, and some field trips. In these cases, you will need to provide a signed letter from your advisor, instructor, or coach explaining the reason for your absences and the dates you will be absent. This can be an e-mail, though it is preferred if an actual letter was provided via an e-mail attachment. Additionally, *students must provide these letters prior to the scheduled absence*. Please plan ahead and let me know as soon as you are aware of these absences. If a student does not provide the letter prior to the absence, the absence will be unexcused.
link to ISU's Official Excused Absence Policies: policy.illinoisstate.edu/students/2-1-20.shtml
2. *Personal illness*, this would be where you are so sick, you cannot attend class. In these cases, you will have to provide a valid doctor's note, or a walk-out statement from University Health Services. If documentation cannot be provided for the day of your absence, your absence will be unexcused. Additionally, dates on doctor's notes and walk-out statements need to show consistency with dates you are absent. The dates can be two days on either side of your absence. For example, if you're absent on a Tuesday, your note can be dated Sunday or Thursday and be excused.
* In the case of a personal illness and a student cannot get documentation prior to the absence, the student needs to e-mail me ahead of time and request a personal day (students get three during the semester). Then when the student has the proper documentation, and they provide that documentation, the absence will change to excused.
3. *Registered extended absence & bereavement*, if a student needs to be absent for an extended period of time (missing 2 or more class meetings), they need to register their extended absence with the Dean of Students (Link for the Dean of Students: <https://deanofstudents.illinoisstate.edu/contact/absence/>). After the absence has been registered with the Dean of Students, all instructors will receive a notification of the absence and if the University has excused the absence or not. Students can review the full policy through this link: <http://policy.illinoisstate.edu/students/2-1-27.shtml>

In all three situations, if you follow the proper guidelines and get documentation, late work will be accepted and/or excused (in class points cannot be made up). There may be a time limit in place for some assignments, so please make sure that you are organized and are in communication with me.

Personal/Mental Health Days: During the semester, students get three personal/mental health days. These days can be used on any class meeting day, except for a student's presentation date. To use a personal/mental health day, the student needs to e-mail Tina at least **30 minutes** prior to the class meeting time. They need to state they are using a personal/mental health day, and the absence will be excused. If the student e-mails me too late, the absence will not be excused. Personal/mental health days may be scheduled out ahead of time if a student is aware of an absence ahead of time. If a student is sick and cannot attend class, they may use a personal/mental health day. Then if they go to the doctor and get a note to excuse them from the missed class meeting, that personal/mental health day can change to an excused absence.

Presentation Day Attendance: It is important that we have a complete audience for presentation days. If you are absent on a presentation date, you will get 10 points off your own presentation. If you are late

on a presentation date, you will get 5 points off your presentation. You can use a personal day on a presentation day (a day where you're NOT scheduled to speak), see the policy above. Presentation days do not fall under the regular attendance policy.

Your Presentation Day Attendance: Yes, you are required to attend class on the day you're scheduled to present your presentation, and you are not allowed to use a personal day on your presentation day. If you miss your presentation because you are not present, you will need documentation (see list of excused absences above). If you cannot provide documentation for your absence for your presentation day, your presentation will get a 25% deduction. I will communicate with you your new due date for the presentation.

If a student misses their rescheduled presentation day, it will be their responsibility to communicate with me on rescheduling their presentation for a second time. The student will then decide on a date and time and may need to bring an audience of at least five people to their make-up presentation. Students will receive another 25% deduction. If a student misses their second rescheduled presentation day, they will not be able to complete the assignment and therefore will not earn credit for the course.

Excused vs. Unexcused Tardy: Students are expected to come to class on time. When a student comes late to class, that often disrupts the lesson that has already started. Most of the time, when a student is tardy, it is considered unexcused. For the tardy to be excused, the student needs to follow the same guidance as if it were an excused absence (see list above). Students can e-mail me that they are running late, but that will not mean the tardy is excused.

If the weather is bad, allowances may be made for some students who are late and must commute to campus. Though missing the bus from Tri Towers or sleeping through an alarm will never count as an excused tardy. If you are concerned about getting to class on time, please speak with me.

Religious Holidays & Other Considerations: Please review the schedule at the end of the syllabus, and if you have a conflict with a due date or class meeting due to a religious holiday or practice, please get in touch with me. I will do my best to work with you. These arrangements need to be made prior to the holiday. If you see there are presentation days on a holiday, please do your best not to sign up for the presentation date that lands on the holiday.

General Notes About Attendance: Students should do their best not to schedule appointments, work, meetings, job interviews, or anything else during class time, because these instances may not be excused (see the above list of excused absences). When a student schedules something during class time, that tells me that they may not take the class seriously and that they do not respect the time of the instructor and the other students in class. Remember, you get three personal/mental health days. If you communicate this with me at least 30 minutes prior to class, your absence will be excused (except for your scheduled presentation date). If you're absent more days than you're present for class... you'll most likely fail the class.

As a college student and an adult, it is up to you to attend class. Only you can control your own actions and attendance. **By not attending class (for any reason, excused or unexcused), please understand that class goes on without you, and you are still responsible for all material covered and assignments completed. Remember by not attending class (for any reason, excused or unexcused) points on in-class work and points in attendance may be lost or not earned.** Students need to make decisions that are in their own best interests and what they deem important and what is a priority. This is with the understanding that a student's overall grade will be negatively affected if they are not regularly

attending class. Excessive absences could also result in the student being reported to the Redbird Care Team or even being dropped from the course.

Contacting Tina – Sending Tina E-mails/Canvas Messages & Making Appointments

If at any point in the semester, you have a question or an issue, please let me know as soon as possible. The best way to get ahold of me is through e-mail (tmmcgui@ilstu.edu). Canvas messages work well, too. Students must use their ISU issued e-mail address or Canvas messages to communicate with me. The subject line of your message must provide the following: class, section number, short description (COM 110 Section # – Informative Presentation Clarification). Having this information in the subject line of your message will ensure you get the most accurate feedback possible.

If you need to make an appointment because my office hours do not fit into your schedule, please send me an e-mail or Canvas message with at least three possible dates and times that work for you. Also indicate if you'd like an in-person meeting or a Zoom meeting. Then we'll set something up.

E-Mail and Canvas Message Attachments

Unless I direct you to do so, never e-mail me attachments or share assignments with me through e-mail. E-mail attachments and links sometimes carry computer viruses. I will not risk the health of my personal computer due to a corrupted attachment. All assignments are uploaded to Canvas, and that is the only way assignments will be accepted. Students may attach doctor's notes or proof of excused absences to e-mails or Canvas messages.

Assignment Comments on Canvas

There is an option on Canvas to send a comment to an instructor through an assignment submission. Please note that I do not see these comments until after I've graded the assignment. Therefore, if you need to get me a message about your assignment, please e-mail me or send me a Canvas message. Do not use the comment feature on Canvas. Also, do not use this feature to add attachments to your assignments, as I will not see those attachments until after I've graded the assignment. All assignments need to be properly submitted to Canvas to be graded. Just to be safe, don't use the comment feature on Canvas.

When Tina is Available

I will always be available during my office hours. Though if there is a change to my office hours, that will be announced in class and noted in the syllabus section of Canvas.

I will do my best to respond to e-mails and Canvas messages in a timely manner. Though, I ask students to be patient with me, especially after hours and over the weekend. I will not respond to e-mails or Canvas messages received after 4PM on weekdays (Mondays-Thursdays). Those e-mails or Canvas messages will be responded to the next weekday morning. Additionally, I will not respond to e-mails or Canvas messages sent over a weekend (Fridays-Sundays), holiday, or break until the next weekday morning.

Weekly Canvas Announcements & Instructor Communication

Each week (usually Friday mornings) I send out a Canvas announcement to prepare students for the upcoming week. Students are expected to read this announcement each week.

I use a combination of e-mail and Canvas messages; therefore, students are required to check both their ISU issued email and Canvas on a regular basis. Students are encouraged to set their Canvas notifications, so they're sent to their ISU issued e-mail.

Class Cancellations

If I need to cancel class, I will notify the class via a Canvas announcement. I will do my best to communicate this to students as soon as I can. If the university cancels class, you will be notified by the university, and then I will send a Canvas announcement with instructions.

Workday Expectations

There are a few scheduled workdays on the class's schedule. If on the schedule, it just says "Workday," attendance is not required and will not be taken. I will be in my Fell office at the time of class, and students can come up to my office if they have questions. If I am not in my office, I will communicate with students and I will have an alternate way to get in touch (Zoom, e-mail, etc.) The classroom will be open during class time if students want to work in the classroom. This is a great time to practice using classroom technology for the use of your visual aid.

General Time Management

I provide a lot of class time to work on assignments. I also provide quite a few workdays for students to work on assignments. Students are expected to maximize their time management skills and use the time provided to complete their work.

Cell Phones/Electronic Devices

During class, students are asked to put their phones away. Students may take notes on their laptops if they wish. Please keep your phones away. On presentation days, students in the audience should not use their phones or laptops, and students will get points off their own presentation if they are using a device during a peer's presentation. Additionally, students are not allowed to use their phone or laptop for notes during any presentation. All notes must be on notecards. If a student uses their phone or laptop during their presentation, it will reflect negatively in their presentation grade.

Please do not take pictures of the power points or the screen during class. All power points are available on Canvas. Snapping a picture during class is distracting and can also be considered as a form of plagiarism, as I have not given you permission to take a photo of me or of the content I have created.

Technology Expectations

Students are expected to know how to use their own technology. If students are unsure on how to use any technology used on campus or in my class, they will need to use critical thinking skills and learn on their own. Some resources are provided, though ultimately, it's up to the student.

Using Microsoft Word

Students are expected to use Microsoft Word and upload Microsoft Word documents of their work. PDFs will not be accepted. If a student doesn't know how to use Microsoft Word, they will need to use critical thinking skills and learn how to use it. Some resources are provided, though ultimately, it's up to the student.

MacBooks and Mac Users

If you have a MacBook, please understand that it may not be completely compatible with some of the technologies used on campus. Students should understand that if they have a MacBook, they may have to do some additional critical thinking and maybe some research on how to use a MacBook. This might include learning how to save files, connecting to classroom technology, using Canvas, and using Microsoft Word. Some resources are provided, though students may have to do a Google search or do research on their own.

iPad & Tablet Users; Using the Canvas App; Recommended Web Browser

Some students prefer to use a tablet. Please note that with a tablet, not all features of Microsoft Word or Canvas are available. Additionally, when a student uses the app for Canvas, there are some differences from the web-based version. Students need to understand these differences, as they are responsible for knowing how to use their own technology. To upload assignments, students may have to use a computer or laptop.

It is strongly recommended that when using Canvas, students use Chrome or Firefox. Canvas does not work well with Safari and students should also understand there are limitations with the Canvas app. For the best results, students should complete all work on a laptop and use the web-based version of Canvas. Most of the time when students struggle to submit work to Canvas it's because there is an issue with their web browser.

Uploading Assignments to Canvas

All assignments and quizzes are set for students to upload one attempt. Therefore, it is imperative that you review what you upload to Canvas before you click submit because **you are only allowed one attempt**. If you realize after you've uploaded your assignment that it's the wrong file, please send me an e-mail or Canvas message. As soon as I'm able, I will send instructions on what to do. Though keep in mind my availability, see policy above about communication after 4PM and on weekends and university breaks.

Provided Online/Canvas Resources

There are a lot of resources on Canvas. Students are encouraged to review all materials provided. I will go over some in class, but not all. Each presentation has its own module tab on Canvas, and students can find all presentation materials within those tabs. Materials include assignment information, checklists, video tutorials, examples, links to citation help, and so much more. These resources are vital to students if they are absent or missed a day, I assigned a presentation. Please review these materials and use them throughout the semester.

Additionally, the required eBook and student workbook provide content students need to be successful in the course. Please also refer to those resources for required content and some assignment requirements.

Presentation Sign-Ups & Topics

All presentation date sign-ups will happen in class (see schedule at the end of the syllabus). At the time of the sign-up, students will choose a date and a topic. If a student does not have a topic, they will not be allowed to sign up. If a student is absent on the presentation sign-up date, a presentation date will be assigned to them.

After students sign up for presentation dates and topics, the list will be posted to Canvas. Additionally, I will go into each individual student's assignment and adjust the due date, so the date they signed up for will be visible on Canvas and on their personal syllabus page. In addition, students will receive a presentation reminder e-mail the day before their presentation to remind them of the assignment. Any other reminder the student needs for their presentation (or any assignment in class), it is up to the student to set it up on their own.

All topics must be approved by the instructor. If you are absent on the day we sign up for dates and topics, you will need to e-mail Tina with at least three options of topics. Then Tina will choose which of those topics will work best for the assignment. If you do not get me a topic, you risk not being able to

present your presentation. Students will not be allowed to present a presentation if their topic has not been approved.

There are a few topics that will not be allowed, and those will be reviewed when each presentation is assigned. As the instructor of the course, I have veto power on any topic. If I feel that a topic is inappropriate for the university setting or could potentially be offensive to any member of the audience, the student will not be allowed to present on that topic. I also must keep in mind that topics must fit the parameters of the assignment. If the topic proposed by the student does not meet an assignment requirement, the student will not be allowed to speak on that topic.

Students are not allowed to change their topic after they've signed up.

Presentation Expectations & Audience Etiquette

With the exception of the Personal Narrative, all presentations will be presented in-person in class. Students are expected to stand up for all presentations (including the personal narrative). I need to see what I call, "the full delivery." This means, the student is using gestures while speaking, they are using (and looking at) notecards. This means that you'll have to practice a bit prior to your presentation to make sure everything looks (and sounds) good. Points will be deducted from the student's delivery score if they are unable to follow the instructions above. If you are concerned about this, please contact me.

Audience members are expected to come to class on time on presentation days. On presentation days, please do not enter the classroom until you hear applause to signal an end to a presentation. During presentations, audience members must also put all their technology away. Audience members should be paying complete attention to the speaker and not working on anything else during presentations. Doing so may result in points taken from their own presentation. Please be a respectful audience member.

Visual Aids & Classroom Technology

Three of the presentations (informative, persuasive, and group) require that students create a visual aid. Most of the time, students choose to use a Power Point or Google Slides presentation. This is fine, though the student is expected to know how to use the technology to present their visual aid. Students are also expected to bring their visual aid to class, this can be done by saving it to a flash drive or using one of many cloud storage systems available for students at ISU. Though, students need to practice opening their visual aid on the classroom computer before their presentation (there are in-class checks set aside for this). Students may also plug their personal computer into the classroom technology system. Please note that students need to know how to use their own technology to do this.

Recording Presentations

Students are allowed to record their own presentations for their use afterwards. Some students want to have a recording on hand to help them with their self-evaluation form. It is not required that students record their own presentations, but it is allowed. This recording can also come in handy if a student would like to review for a possible grade appeal. Keep in mind that grade changes on presentation delivery cannot happen without evidence. A recording could be evidence. The student needs to set up their own recording. This can easily be done by asking a classmate to record the presentation on their phone.

Academic Research

COM 110 requires students to complete academic research for all their presentations and presentations. Academic research is research completed using Milner Library's databases and other resources provided by the university. Sometimes this type of research is referred to as scholarly because it goes above and

beyond what many students completed in high school. Academic and scholarly research is not using the internet for a quick search; it's research that may take some time and reflection to find the best (nonbiased) sources and information. All sources students use in their presentations and presentations must be orally cited completely and correctly and students must provide an APA formatted reference page for all presentations and presentations. Presentations and presentations handed in without oral citations and/or an APA formatted reference page may be considered plagiarism, and students will risk earning a zero for that assignment.

All sources students use in their presentation must be within 10 years. If a student needs to use a source that is more than 10 years old, they need to get that source approved. Those sources need to be approved before the first day of presentations.

Academic Integrity (Cheating & Plagiarism)

You are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and any additional syllabus language. All work is to be appropriately cited when it is borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Unauthorized and/or unacknowledged collaboration on any work, or the presentation of someone else's work, is plagiarism.

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

All assignments are subject to a verbal review. This means that if I suspect the assignment was plagiarized or created using ChatGPT or AI, I will require a meeting with the student. At the meeting, I will review with the student how they researched their presentation, and I will ask for information about their planning process. If after that meeting it is clear the student was dishonest with their work, they will be reported to the Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution Office. Additionally, the student will receive a failing grade on the assignment and that could also mean failing the course.

Communication Lab (Fell 060/064)

Students are encouraged to visit the communication lab at least once during the semester to practice your presentation. It is also recommended that you plan a visit to the communication lab at least one week before your presentation so you have enough time to synthesize the feedback received from the attendant and incorporate it into your presentation. Ultimately, the communication lab can be a useful tool in improving the quality of your presentation and public speaking skills. To schedule a time in the communication lab, call 438-4566 or come to Fell 060 and schedule an appointment 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 complete outline to the appointment. You must also schedule an appointment at least 24 hours before the date you are scheduled to deliver your presentation in class, or you will not be able to use the communication lab. If you need to change or cancel your appointment, you will need to call the Communication Lab at 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 communication lab again.

Student Accommodations

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, (309) 438-5853 or visit the website at StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu.

Mental Health Resources

Life at college can be 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.

Course Syllabus & Schedule

While I am an extremely organized person and have a very intense syllabus (thank you for reading through this very extensive syllabus), sometimes changes need to be made. Therefore, the content of this syllabus and the course schedule could change during the semester. Students will be notified of any changes, and all changes will also be reflected on the class's Canvas site.

Students need to remember that the syllabus is in effect for the entire semester. All policies and information apply within the entire semester. A policy will not change mid-semester, unless a dire need is evident, and in that case the class will be informed.

Sometimes what happens is that a student gets a bit too comfortable in class (especially at the end of the semester) and will assume that I will take an assignment after a due date, or I will allow for a resubmission. This may not be the case. All policies apply to all students for the entire semester. I will stay strict on this, as this will show that I am consistent with all students. As a student, you may feel that that's not fair, I respect those feelings, though I hope you understand that I manage over 150 students during a semester, and I need a system (like course policies) to stay organized.

Behavior Expectations

I expect all students to act as mature college students. This includes respecting the time of the instructor and the other students in the room. We are a diverse class with diverse viewpoints and backgrounds. It is possible you may not agree with a peer's presentation topic; it is possible you may not get along with others in the class. Understanding another's ideas and background can help us become better communicators and people.

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.

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.

In general, I ask students to be respectful to everyone in the class. That includes students, the instructor, and any class guests. We are all adults, and I expect students to act accordingly.

COM 110 - Evaluation – Spring 2026*** Subject to Change ***

Assignment	Points Valued	Due	Your Score
Written Assignments – On Canvas (85 points)			
Student Information Form	10	1/15	
Communication Goals Assignment	45	1/27	
Informative Presentation Self Evaluation	15	2/24	
Persuasive Presentation Self Evaluation	15	3/31	
Quizzes – On Canvas (160 points)			
Syllabus Quiz	20	1/20	
Quiz #1	30	2/3	
Quiz #2	30	2/26	
Mid-Term Quiz	20	3/5	
Quiz #3	30	4/2	
Quiz #4	30	4/30	
Presentations – Outlines on Canvas/Presentations In-Person (360 points)			
Introduction Presentation	25	1/15	
Informative Presentation	100	2/17, 2/19, 2/24	
Persuasive Presentation	100	3/24, 3/26, 3/31	
Group Presentation	100	4/21, 4/23	
Personal Narrative (Recorded)	35	5/7	
Participation/Other (95* points)			
Group Peer Evaluation Form	10	4/23	
Attendance & Communication	55	4/28	
<i>Participation/In Class Points</i>	30*		
Extra Credit	Up to 35	4/30	
Totals			
Class Total	700*	Tabulated on 5/8	

* This total could change (+/-) based on in class activities. Canvas will update accordingly.

Grading Scale by Points: 700-628 (A); 627-555 (B); 554-482 (C); 481-409 (D); 408-below (F)

** The Canvas percentage may not match the point value above, please refer to the point value above, not the Canvas percentage.

*** Students are asked to upload all presentation outlines and APA reference pages to Canvas **the night before their scheduled speech date**. The assignment will close on Canvas 30 minutes before the start of class on their scheduled speech date.

Optional Completed Draft Outline Check Due Dates (Submitted via Canvas):

- Informative Presentation – Thursday, February 12 by 3:00.00PM
- Persuasive Presentation – Friday, March 20 by 2:00.00PM
- Group Presentation – Thursday, April 16 by 3:00.00PM

COM 110 - Tentative Schedule for Spring 2026 - *Subject to Change*

Week	Date	Day	Material Covered	Assignments Due (to Canvas)
1	1/13	T	Course Overview	
	1/15	R	Introduction Presentations Assign Informative Presentation	Student Information Form
2	1/20	T	Chapters 1, 2, & 7	Syllabus Quiz
	1/22	R	Informative Presentation Topic Sign Up Chapters 3 & 4	
3	1/27	T	Research Review; Audience Traits Chapter 6	CGA
	1/29	R	Chapters 8, 9, & 10	
4	2/3	T	Chapters 12 & 13	Quiz #1
	2/5	R	Workday	<i>Informative Draft Check</i>
5	2/10	T	Outline Review Chapter 11	<i>Visual Aid Check</i>
	2/12	R	Workday	
6	2/17	T	Informative Presentations	
	2/19	R	Informative Presentations	
7	2/24	T	Informative Presentations	Informative Self Eval
	2/26	R	Assign Persuasive Presentation Chapter 16	Quiz #2
8	3/3	T	Persuasive Presentation Topic Sign Up Chapter 17	
	3/5	R	Workday	Mid-Term Quiz
9 – Spring Break	3/10	T	Class Does Not Meet	
	3/12	R	Class Does Not Meet	
10	3/17	T	Argument Model Review Outline & Oral Citations Review	<i>Visual Aid Check</i>
	3/19	R	Workday	<i>Persuasive Draft Check</i>
11	3/24	T	Persuasive Presentations	
	3/26	R	Persuasive Presentations	
12	3/31	T	Persuasive Presentations	Persuasive Self Eval
	4/2	R	Assign Group Presentation Chapter 14	Quiz #3
13	4/7	T	Chapter 15	
	4/9	R	Workday	
14	4/14	T	Final Assignments Review	
	4/16	R	Workday	
15	4/21	T	Group Presentations (1, 2)	
	4/23	R	Group Presentations (3, 4)	Group Peer Eval
16	4/28	T	Chapter 18	
	4/30	R	Workday	Quiz #4 Extra Credit
17 (Exam Week)	* Personal Narrative Due (Canvas Assignment & Recording): 5/7 * Class will not meet during Finals Week – No Written Final Exam			

Dates designated for make-up presentations: 1/27, 3/17, 4/14, 4/28 (all make-up presentation dates will be communicated with students)