

Syllabus for CMST 1061: Fundamentals of Communication Fall 2015

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Office Hours: T-Th 9:00am–11:00am, or by appointment

Required Texts:

Butcher, Joni. *The 5 Pathways of Communication*. Kendall Hunt, 2014.

Considering a Major or Minor in Communication Studies?

Congratulations on considering one of the most versatile and desirable majors LSU has to offer. Whether you are considering switching to Communication Studies, or adding a second major to round out your Engineering skills, you've made a wise decision.

A degree in Communication Studies will provide you with practical skills that are useful for a wide range of career choices. We don't narrowly train students for one specific job. Instead we help *you* develop critical and creative ways to organize arguments, build relationships, and solve communication-based problems—skills business leaders and professionals recognize as most important in fields such as *business, government, social and public services, marketing, and the arts*.

A **major** in Communication Studies requires 36 hours including 12 hours of core classes and 12 hours in the 3000 or 4000 level. A **minor** requires 15 hours with one core class and 6 hours at the 3000 level or above. More information is available at: www.lsu.edu/cmst or by emailing Kent Filbel at: kfilli@lsu.edu

Course Grading Scale:

F-**	0-529	B-	800-829
F**	530-569	B	830-869
F+**	570-599	B+	870-899
D-	600-629	A-	900-929
D	630-669	A	930-969
D+	670-699	A+	970-1,000
C-	700-729	Total points available:	1,000
C	730-769	Beginning Points:	0*
C+	770-799	Ending Points:	

*All students begin the course with an F- and accrue points throughout the semester by showing increasing mastery of course material.

**Any grade between 0 and 599 will be recorded as "F".

Grading Philosophy:

Because all students begin the course with an F-, it is up to each individual student to determine what grade they will earn. Higher grades require consistent effort throughout the course of the semester, while lower grades can easily be attained by mediocre work throughout the semester or concentrated work towards the end of the semester. For example, students who earn maximum points over the course of the semester tend to conscientiously complete each assignment early, check their work with their instructors, take detailed notes on lectures and readings, and dedicate 2 hours of study time per credit hour of course work (6 hours per week for a 3 credit hour course).

As your instructor, I am happy to work with each and every one of you to devise a plan that will help you earn maximum points, but I do not offer bumps, curves, or extra credit. Because of the linear nature of time, points cannot be made up later. This allows you to easily calculate your projected final grade by simply dividing the number of points you have earned by the number of points that are no longer available in the course. This simple calculation will be used to determine your mid-semester grade, so, if you have earned 290 points and 500 points are no longer available than your grade is an F+ (58%). This means that you can still earn a C+ in the course by simply earning every remaining point for the semester!

General Education Statement:

CMST 1061 is a General Education Humanities Course designed to familiarize students with the fundamental concepts of communication. As a General Education Humanities Course, CMST 1061 will enable students to demonstrate an understanding of historical, cultural, and philosophical complexity that supports sophisticated discourse.

In this course, we will explore how we, as human beings, create socially significant messages which help us shape our identity, persuade others to take action, and shed light on the value systems of our culture. We will learn how individuals create and use messages to generate common meaning with others, to facilitate cooperative action, to perform social and cultural roles, and to reinforce or alter prevailing attitudes in our society.

Moodle, Email, and Questions about Grades:

I use Moodle to manage assignments and important announcements, and expect you to check the course Moodle page daily. You are responsible for all emails and announcements made through Moodle, whether you receive them or not. Therefore, any problems with email forwarding or Moodle login are your responsibility.

Please allow 24 hours for email replays during the work week, and 48 hours for email replays during the weekend. I generally do not respond individually to matters that are addressed on the syllabus, on Moodle, or in class-wide emails. This means that I generally do not answer emails about assignments, due dates, or attendance.

You must notify me via email of any grading error within two (2) weeks of the grade being posted on Moodle, otherwise the grade in question may remain as it appears. If you have a question about a grade, please make an appointment to see me during office hours as specific grades cannot be discussed via email. You have one (1) week from the date a grade is assigned to discuss any grade received during the semester.

Attendance:

Any more than three unexcused absences from class will negatively affect your final grade, as you will miss information and in-class activities vital to the successful completion of your coursework. From PS-22:

Class attendance is the responsibility of the student. The student is expected to attend all classes. A student who finds it necessary to miss class assumes responsibility for making

up examinations, obtaining lecture notes, and otherwise compensating for what may have been missed. The course instructor will determine the validity of a student's reason(s) for absences and will assist those students who have valid reasons. Valid reasons for absences include:

1. Illness
 2. Serious family emergency
 3. Special curricular requirements such as judging trips or field trips
 4. Court-imposed legal obligations such as subpoenas or jury duty
 5. Military obligations
 6. Serious weather conditions
 7. Religious observances.
 8. Participation in varsity athletic competitions or university musical events
- The student is responsible for providing reasonable advance notification and appropriate documentation of the reason for the absence.

The roll will be called at the beginning of every class period and absences will be noted.

Tardiness:

Classes start promptly as scheduled. If you arrive after the roll has been called, you will be marked absent for the day. It is your responsibility to arrive in class on time, despite the devious machinations of traffic, weather, and alarm clocks.

Participation:

You are expected to participate in the activities of the class. You may be dismissed from the class or marked absent if you fail to read assigned material, if you fail to bring printed assignments with you to class, or if you are disruptively using technology (this includes texting, wearing headphones, and surfing the web).

Recordings and Observations:

Classes may occasionally be recorded or reviewed. If you have any concerns about this please see me at the beginning of the semester.

Plagiarism:

Please see the Student Code of Conduct (an excerpt of which appears below)

“6. Plagiarism is defined as the lack of citation or the unacknowledged inclusion of someone else's words, structure, ideas, or data. When a Student submits work as his/her own that includes the words, structure, ideas, or data of others, the source of this information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate, and specific references, and, if verbatim statements are included, through quotation marks as well. Failure to identify any source (including interviews, surveys, etc.), published in any medium (including on the internet) or unpublished, from which words, structure, ideas, or data have been taken, constitutes plagiarism; Plagiarism also includes:

- 6a. Falsifying or fabricating any information or citation in any academic exercise, work, speech, thesis, dissertation, test, or examination.
- 6b. Submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructors” (from the Student Code of Conduct section 8.1.6).

The Americans with Disabilities Act and Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a Coordinator in the Office of Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letter, please meet with me at some time during the first two weeks of class to discuss the provisions of those accommodations.

Points	Assignment
25 points	Final Paper: Outline
25 points	Final Paper: Peer Review
30 points	Research Participation Requirement
50 points	Final Paper: Rough Draft
50 points	Group Project 1: Addressing a Problem
50 points	Group Project 2: Impromptu Battle
50 points	Group Project 3: Compliance Gaining
50 points	Group Project 4: Short Film
50 points	Group Project 5: Analysis or Parody
120 points	In-Class Writes (12 @ 10 points each)
150 points	Final Paper: Finished Draft
150 points	Mid-Semester Examination
200 points	Final Examination
1,000 points	Total Points for Semester

Brief Assignment Descriptions:

Each assignment will be more fully explained in class and through assignment sheets posted on Moodle. Assignment sheets and grading rubrics supersede the brief descriptions contained in the syllabus. Though class discussions occasionally lead to changes in assignment instructions, it is the student's responsibility to produce written confirmation of such changes in the event of a grade appeal.

Group Projects:

These five assignments, worth a total of 250 points (25% of your final grade), focus on analyzing problems, proposing solutions, and evaluating courses of action.

Each group project will require you to work together with a team of your peers to complete an assignment based on one of the five pathways of communication. The goal of these assignments is to familiarize you with the different pathways of communication, while at the same time offering you real-world exposure to the usefulness of communication studies.

Though group work often gets a bad reputation, it is a common mode of work for professionals in a wide range of fields, so learning to work effectively in groups is not only a vital life skill, but also one of the greatest assets a degree in Communication Studies has to offer. Whether you are managing a meeting, or collaborating on a performance, Communication is paramount to the success of any group. Furthermore, the nature of group work allows you to show cumulative mastery over the strategies and skills taught throughout the course.

Final Paper:

This assignment, broken down into four steps worth a total of 250 points (25% of your final grade), focuses on demonstrating the use of sophisticated discourse to discuss and analyze a topic of historical, cultural, and philosophical complexity.

Though the steps in the writing process are considered elementary, many advanced students find it difficult to return to the basic tools of organizing, composing, revising, and polishing written work. Whether you are a Freshman writing your first college paper, or a senior writing your your last paper, these steps require the same amount of attention to detail and dedication of time. Therefore I will grade each step of your final paper critically, and expect you to uphold the highest standards of rhetorical composition, regardless of your rank.

However, I also understand that communication apprehension is also present in the practice of writing, so my office hours are open to anyone wishing to improve their work. Students who take advantage of office hours early in the semester often find their grades steadily improve over the course of the semester as they earn more and more points. While students who assume they mastered written communication long ago often find that they have forgotten some of those elementary tools necessary for the best practice of communication.

Exams:

The University requires mid-semester and final exams. These exams, worth a total of 350 points (35% of your final grade), will cover content from lectures and material covered in the textbook for this class. These exams will focus on definition, recognition, explanation, and demonstration of concepts discussed throughout the course. The day and time of the final exam are set by the University Registrar and cannot be changed, except through that office. The schedule for Fall 2015 final exams is currently posted on their website, and is available through the following link: <http://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/registraroffice/academics/final-exams/>

In-Class Writes:

These 12 assignments, worth 120 points (12% of your final grade), will focus on definition and description of key concepts discussed in your textbook. The main purpose of these assignments is to foster and focus in-class discussion.

In lieu of quizzes, you will be given a prompt in class and asked to compose a few hand written paragraphs responding to that prompt. The general content of your response should be based on the terminology used in the textbook, the concepts defined by the textbook, and examples drawn either from your own experience or from a hypothetical experience.

Grading criteria for these assignments may include readability, including legibility, spelling, and grammar; comprehension, including the correct use of terminology from assigned readings, the correct definition of terminology and concepts from the textbook, and the fitness of examples; creativity, including the use of humor, inventiveness, and analogy.

These assignments may be given at any time during the class, and they may be given on any day the class meets. These assignments cannot be made up. Be aware that you will be called on to share your In-Class Writes with other students, so you may wish to avoid disclosing some personal information.

Research Participation Requirement: (3% of your final grade)

The material you will learn in this course is the product of research. The goal of the research learning requirement is to help you to gain knowledge about the process by which scholars attempt to understand human behavior. All students taking CMST 1061, 2010, 1150, and 2060 must complete a research learning requirement. For each course in which a student is enrolled, he or she must complete 2 research credits. You can fulfill your requirement by:

- 1. Participating in research studies conducted in the Department of Communication Studies.** All studies that last between 0 and 30 minutes will count as one credit. Any study that lasts between 31 and 60 minutes will count as two credits. Each study will specify the number of credits a student can earn for completion. There will be several survey and experimental studies conducted throughout the semester. These studies are held on campus at various times and in various locations or are administered through online survey software. All available studies are approved by the Institutional Review Board at LSU.
- 2. Participating in an organized departmental function such as debate or public speaking competition.** Only departmental sanctioned events will count toward a student's research learning requirement; thus, no credit will be given for a student attending an outside speaker or performance.
- 3. Serving as a research assistant for a faculty member in the Department of Communication Studies.** The number of units and requirements for those units will be set by the researcher and either accepted or rejected by the student.

The research learning requirement is worth 3% of your total grade; you will receive your 3% if you accumulate 2 research credits during the given semester. Please note that all research learning credits must be completed and allocated by Tuesday December 1 at 11:59 PM (the Tuesday prior to the start of the concentrated study period).

ALL available options to earn credit are posted on an electronic bulletin board located at <https://lsuhumanresearch.sona-systems.com/Default.aspx?ReturnUrl=/>. When you go to this website, you will first have to request an account. Once you have secured an account, you will be able to log in and see the options available to you for your various CMST courses.

Please note that **various ways to fulfill your research learning requirement will appear on this bulletin board throughout the semester.** You are encouraged to check the system on a regular basis for current credit options that fit your interests as well as your schedule.

It is very important that when you sign-up for a credit option that you attend that option or cancel your sign up. **Failure to show up twice during one semester will result in your access to the system being restricted and you being unable to complete your research learning requirement.** Valid excuses for failing to cancel a sign up and missing a credit option are the same as those found in LSU Policy Statement 31.

Detailed instructions on how to request an account and to navigate the system are posted on the homepage of the Department of Communication Studies, <http://www.lsu.edu/cmst>. Click on RESOURCES and RESEARCH PARTICIPATION SYSTEM. Scroll down to find the document titled "RPS – Instructions for Students."

You are encouraged to create an account **during the first week of classes** so that any problems that arise can be remedied before it is too late. If you have questions about this requirement or the online system that keeps track of credits, please email researchadmin@lsu.edu.