



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

SYLLABUS: COMM 2131 BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL SPEAKING AUTUMN 2025 ONLINE

Instructor

Instructor: Tonya Forsythe

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Office hours: Journalism Building room 319 or Zoom by appointment

Course description

From the catalog: Train students in public speaking and developing interpersonal skills for business and the professions.

This course is designed to develop confidence in business communication. This class will focus on business communication including written and oral communication. The course includes instruction on preparation, organizing, rehearsing, and delivering quality presentations. Tips and techniques for incorporating different types of visuals and using a variety of delivery methods will be shared. Interviewing techniques will also be discussed.

Course learning outcomes

By the end of this course, students should successfully be able to:

- Improve interpersonal communication and interviewing skills.
- Better understand communication in the organization, in public and in small groups.
- Learn to work in self-managed teams and perform functions traditionally assigned to supervisors or managers.
- Become aware of real-world illustrations through the text and small group exercises emphasizing diversified careers in business and other professions.
- Develop skills that will be useful in a changing work environment enabling students to participate in various forms of public speaking in different settings.
- Understanding problem solving in work-related situations in organizations of all types, resulting in improved efficiency and better communication in the workplace.

Mode of delivery

This course will be presented fully online in an asynchronous format. There will be no set meeting times or live components.

Course materials

Required

The textbook for this course must be purchased from the bookstore or online. Additional reading material will be provided as links in Carmen.

Brooks, Alison Wood, *Talk: The Science of Conversation and the Art of Being Ourselves*, New York, NY: Crown Publishing Group, 2025.

Grades

Assignment or category	Points and Percent
Discussions (8)	320/32%
Prep Topics Assignment	40/4%
Speech outlines (3)	60/6%
Draft e-mail with signature	50/5%
Coffee & Reflection (2)	120/12%
AI Job Interview Prep	100/10%
Guest Speaker Introduction	50/5%
Informative Speech	100/10%
Proposal Speech	160/16%
Total	1,000 Points and 100%

See course schedule, below, for due dates

Assignment guide

Discussions

There will be 8 individual discussions throughout the semester. Five discussions will give you an opportunity to converse with your classmates regarding communication topics. They are listed on the schedule as discussions and a prompt for each discussion will be provided. Discussions will include three written requirements. An initial post of 100-300 words will be due by 11:59pm on the **Wednesday** of the week a discussion is due. Two posts of 50-150 words

responding to the initial posts of two other students will be due by 11:59 on the **Friday** of the week that discussion is due. Discussion posts should demonstrate 1. Understanding of the concept(s) in the material provided 2. Independent thought regarding the concepts and material 3. Thoughtful response to the work of at least 2 other students in the class. The other three discussions will be peer feedback on speeches. You will upload your speech to the discussion forum. Replies of 50-100 words commenting on each of the four speeches will be due by 11:59 on the **Friday** of the week that discussion is due. **No late discussion post will be accepted. No exceptions.**

Speech outlines

A full-sentence preparation outline as described in the lectures and modules is to be turned in for the guest speaker introduction, informative, and proposal speeches. A specific purpose statement is required. Outlines must be in outline or script format per rubric instructions. A reference page in APA format must be included. Upload the outline to the corresponding dropbox on Carmen by the due date.

Speeches

A live audience is not required for your speeches. However, if you have family members or roommates who live with you and are willing to serve as an audience, I encourage you to have them help you record your speech and serve as an audience. Speeches need to be recorded and compressed and are due by 11:59pm on the due date. To record your speech, please use a cell phone, tablet or laptop held by one of your audience members OR propped on a sturdy surface if you do not have an audience. After recording your speech, compress the video by using a free app of your choice found on the app store. I use the simple app named “compress” at the VGA setting. Upload the compressed video to the corresponding dropbox on Carmen by the due date. If you have trouble uploading directly to Carmen, you may upload your speech video to OneDrive or YouTube and share the link in the assignment dropbox. A detailed description of each speech is located below.

Informative Speech

In this speech, you present information about a business or professional topic with the goal of providing knowledge and understanding of the topic to your audience. A The speech must be organized in chronological, spatial, or topical order. The speech requires the use of a visual which can be tactile, a handout, a video (of 30 seconds or less), or a PowerPoint (Google slides are accepted as well). The speech must include 2 sources and be organized with 2 or 3 main points. The speech must fall within 3-4 minutes. You will participate in a discussion reviewing four peer speeches as part of this assignment.

Guest Speaker Introduction

The purpose of this speech is to effectively introduce a guest speaker for an event your company is hosting. The primary focus of the speech is to get the audience invested to pay attention to the upcoming speech. Time limit is 60 to 90 seconds. A fictitious speaking event will be created by you and you will also title the speech that the speaker is going to deliver. You

get to select any living person of your choice to introduce. You can pick anyone who you would like to hear speak: famous author, sports figure, politician, business person, influencer, etc. Speech should contain 4 key elements: 1. grab the audience's attention; 2. mention the speaker's credibility; 3. preview the topic; and 4. make them feel welcome.

Proposal Speech

You will give a persuasive proposal speech in appropriate depth and detail on a business or professional topic. Speech should contain 3 main points about your topic. Your speech should be organized in Monroe's Motivated Sequence organizational pattern. The attention step will be in the introduction and the action step will be in the conclusion. The body of the speech will have three main points: need, satisfaction, and visualization. You should preview your main points in the introduction and summarize them in your conclusion. A visual of 4-10 PowerPoint or Google slides is required. Time limit is 5-6 minutes. This speech will be delivered live in the classroom.

Draft e-mail with signature

You will write an email based on the rubric and prompt to ask for an interview for your Coffee and Reflection assignments throughout the semester. You will also create a professional signature graphic for the close of your email.

Job Interview

You will use AI to complete a job interview prep. Please see the assignment description in Carmen.

Coffee and Reflection

Networking is an important part of the job search and learning process. Networking environments will be explored to show indicators of employability for the student using research from Thomas Clark's article, *Networking: A key to career communication and management consulting success*. Students will apply networking principles and occupational psychology attributes to this assignment.

In this assignment you will complete two information seeking interviews throughout the semester with professionals of your choice who are in a field you are interested in pursuing post-graduation. You will contact the professional and set up a 20-minute to 1-hour casual conversation with them that may or may not include coffee! The goal of this assignment is for you to network and make connections while gathering information about potential careers in your field. You will then write a reflection based on your experience for each of the networking events. Criteria for the reflections can be found in the assignment description and rubric in Carmen.

Due dates and late penalties

All submitted assignments are due on the due date listed on the syllabus and within Carmen. Assignments submitted within 24 hours past the due date will have a 10% late penalty of the final assignment grade. Assignments submitted 48 hours past the due date will have a 20% late penalty of the final assignment grade. Assignments submitted between 3-7 days late will receive a 50% late penalty of the final assignment grade. Assignments submitted 8 or more days late will be evaluated but will receive a zero grade.

Grading scale

A	93-100% (925-1000)	B-	80-82% (795-824)	D+	67-69% (665-694)
A-	90-92% (895-924)	C+	77-79% (765-794)	D	60-66% (600-664)
B+	87-89% (865-894)	C	73-76% (725-764)	E	Below 60% (599 and below)
B	83-86% (825-864)	C-	70-72% (695-724)		

Attendance, participation, and discussions

Credit hour and work expectation

This is a 3-credit-hour course. According to Ohio State policy, students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct instruction (instructor content and Carmen activities, for example) in addition to 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example) to receive a grade of (C) average. [ASC Honors](#) provides an excellent guide to scheduling and study expectations.

Student participation requirements

Because this is a distance-education course, your attendance is based on your online activity and participation. The following is a summary of everyone's expected participation:

- Logging in:**
 Be sure you are logging in to the course in Carmen each week, including weeks with holidays or weeks with minimal online course activity. I suggest logging in at least three times per week to make sure you are keeping up with announcements and course content. (During most weeks you will probably log in many times.) If you have a situation that might cause you to miss an entire week of class, discuss it with me *as soon as possible*. Video and audio lectures will be posted on Monday.
- Participating in discussion forums:**
 As participation, you can expect to post at least once by Wednesday and respond at least once by Friday as part of our substantive class discussion. This requires that you

will check in twice per week, however, additional participation will give you a richer experience within the course.

Faculty feedback and response time

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. (Remember that you can call **614-688-HELP** at any time if you have a technical problem.)

Grading and feedback

For speeches, you can generally expect feedback within **7-14 days**.

E-mail

I will reply to e-mails within **24 hours on school days**.

Discussion board

I will check and reply to messages in the discussion boards every **24 hours on school days**.

Communications

I will post class updates and/or additional materials as announcements on Carmen and/or to your OSU email. Please check Carmen and read your email regularly (at least 2-3 times per week) because you are responsible for this information, just as you are responsible for information in class.

Challenging a Grade

I am always willing to discuss your grades with you, but I will not do so during class time. To challenge a grade, you must meet me during office hours or make an appointment **within one week** of the assignment being returned to you. When we meet, you must present your concerns in writing and attach the graded speech, paper, or exam. Please note that a challenge may result in grades being raised or lowered

Extra Credit

There will be no extra credit offered in this course.

Discussion and communication guidelines

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Writing style:** While there is no need to participate in class discussions as if you were writing a research paper, you should remember to write using good grammar, spelling,

and punctuation. Informality (including an occasional emoticon) is fine for non-academic topics.

- **Tone and civility:** Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Remember that sarcasm doesn't always come across online.
- **Citing your sources:** When we have academic discussions, please cite your sources to back up what you say. (For the textbook or other course materials, list at least the title and page numbers. For online sources, include a link.)
- **Backing up your work:** Consider composing your academic posts in a word processor, where you can save your work, and then copying into the Carmen discussion.

Encouraging an optimal learning experience

Previous distance learning courses have provided insights from students on how to improve the learning experience and optimize outcomes. Here are a few tips from previous students to encourage your success in this online course:

- Students kept up with the schedule and assignment due dates.
- Students made sure they had access to a reliable internet connection.
- Students had access to at least one reliable device and a backup plan in case of a technological issue.
- Students have made plans to back up work. OSU provides free access to data storage through [BuckeyeBox](#) and [Microsoft One Drive](#).
- Students reported that completing assigned readings before viewing lectures (or attending synchronous lectures) helped them to be prepared to follow along with lectures and participate in discussions.
- Students scheduled time to complete activities at a steady pace during the week. Keeping a schedule prevented a last-minute rush and kept the workload manageable.
- Students approached the material by thinking about the connections between readings, lectures, and assignments.
- Students followed the instructor's preference for camera and microphone settings during online synchronous meetings.

Course technology

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at <https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours>, and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

- **Carmen:**

- Carmen, Ohio State's Learning Management System, will be used to host materials and activities throughout this course. To access Carmen, visit Carmen.osu.edu. Log in to Carmen using your name.# and password. If you have not setup a name.# and password, visit my.osu.edu.
- Help guides on the use of Carmen can be found at <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmen>
- **This online course requires use of Carmen (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor.**

- **Carmen accessibility**

- **Self-Service and Chat support:** <http://ocio.osu.edu/selfservice>
- **Phone:** 614-688-HELP (4357)
- **Email:** 8help@osu.edu
- **TDD:** 614-688-8743

Baseline technical skills necessary for online courses

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen

Necessary equipment

- Computer: current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7+) with high-speed internet connection

Necessary software

- Word processor with the ability to save files under .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf. Most popular word processing software programs including Microsoft Word and Mac Pages have these abilities.

OSU students have access to Microsoft Office products free of charge. To install, please visit https://osuitsm.service-now.com/selfservice/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=kb04733

Other course policies

Student Academic Services

Arts and Sciences Advising and Academic Services' website provides support for student academic success. Information on advising issues such as tutoring, transfer credits, academic

standing, and contact information for Arts and Sciences advisors can be obtained through this website: <http://advising.osu.edu/welcome.shtml>

Student Services

The Student Service Center assists with financial aid matters, tuition and fee payments. Please see their site at: <http://ssc.osu.edu>. As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292--5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Writing Center

All students, especially those who have difficulty writing, are encouraged to visit the *OSU Writing Center*. Their web address is <https://cstw.osu.edu/writing-center> and their phone number is 688-5865. The Writing Center offers two kinds of tutorials: 1) Scheduled, 50-minute tutorials in 4120A Smith Lab and 2) Drop-in, 20-minute tutorials at our satellite centers (First floor Thompson Library and 114 Smith-Steeb Residence Hall).

Copyright Disclaimer

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Diversity

The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu

Religious Accommodations

It is Ohio State's policy to reasonably accommodate the sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of all students. The policy permits a student to be absent for up to three days each academic semester for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief. Students planning to use religious beliefs or practices accommodations for course requirements must inform the instructor in writing no later than 14 days after the semester begins. The instructor is then responsible for scheduling an alternative time and date for the course requirement, which may be before or after the original time and date of the course requirement. These alternative accommodations will remain confidential. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all course assignments are completed.

Students with concerns or complaints under the policy are strongly encouraged, but not required, to first discuss those concerns with their instructor and/or the chair of the department. Students may also report their concerns or file a complaint with the Office of Institutional Equity via the [online reporting form](#), email at equity@osu.edu, or phone at 614-247-5838.

Creating an Environment Free from Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct

The Ohio State University is committed to building and maintaining a community to reflect diversity and to improve opportunities for all. All Buckeyes have the right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Ohio State does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom), race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities, academic programs, admission, and employment. Members of the university community also have the right to be free from all forms of sexual misconduct: sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation.

To report harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or retaliation and/or seek confidential and non-confidential resources and supportive measures, contact the Office of Institutional Equity: 1. Online reporting form at equity.osu.edu, 2. Call 614-247-5838 or TTY 614-688-8605, 3. Or Email equity@osu.edu

The university is committed to stopping sexual misconduct, preventing its recurrence, eliminating any hostile environment, and remedying its discriminatory effects. All university employees have reporting responsibilities to the Office of Institutional Equity to ensure the university can take appropriate action:

- All university employees, except those exempted by legal privilege of confidentiality or expressly identified as a confidential reporter, have an obligation to report incidents of sexual assault immediately.
- The following employees have an obligation to report all other forms of sexual misconduct as soon as practicable but at most within five workdays of becoming aware of such information: 1. Any human resource professional (HRP); 2. Anyone who supervises faculty, staff, students, or volunteers; 3. Chair/director; and 4. Faculty member.

Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.

If you are or someone you know is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614--292--5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766.

If you are thinking of harming yourself or need a safe, non-judgmental place to talk, or if you are worried about someone else and need advice about what to do, 24-hour emergency help is also available through the Suicide Prevention Hotline (Columbus: 614-221-5445)

COVID-19 and Illness Policies

University COVID policies

Please refer to current policies regarding COVID on the university website.

Student illness or absence

If *you* are too ill to participate in this course due to COVID-19 or another illness, please contact the instructor as soon as you are able. All materials will be made available on Carmen, including lecture recordings and slides. Alternate assignments or extensions may be arranged.

Instructor illness or absence

If the *instructor* is too ill to teach the course for a period of time, the designated backup for this course will step in. You will be notified via email from the School of Communication.

Academic integrity policy

Policies for this online course

- **Written assignments:** Your written assignments, including discussion posts, should be your own original work. In formal assignments, you should follow **APA** style to cite the ideas and words of your research sources. You are encouraged to ask a trusted person to proofread your assignments before you turn them in--but no one else should revise or rewrite your work.
- **Reusing past work:** In general, you are prohibited in university courses from turning in work from a past class to your current class, even if you modify it. If you want to build on past research or revisit a topic you've explored in previous courses, please discuss the situation with me.

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>

Accessibility accommodations for students with disabilities

Requesting accommodations

Students with disabilities (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) that have been certified by the Office of Student Life Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Student Life Disability Services is located in 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue; telephone 614- 292-3307, slds@osu.edu; slds.osu.edu.

Disclaimer

The information provided in this syllabus constitutes a list of basic class policies. I reserve the right to modify this information when deemed necessary for any reason. You will be notified in class, via email, and/or on Carmen if and when any changes occur.

Online course schedule Autumn 2025

Week		Readings and Lectures	Discussion and Assignment Due Dates
1	August 26-29, 2025	Reading: Introduction and Chapter 1 from TALK Lecture 1: Welcome and Overview Lecture 2: Communication, Culture, and Work	Café Discussion post due Wednesday 8/27/25 at 11:59 p.m. Café Discussion replies Friday 8/29/25 at 11:59 p.m.
2	September 1-5, 2025	Reading: Chapter 2: T is for Topics from TALK Reading: additional reading links on Carmen Lecture 3: Conducting an Informational Interview Lecture 4: Informative Speeches Viewing: additional video links on Carmen	Prep Topics due Saturday 9/6/25 at 11:59 p.m. Draft e-mail with signature due Saturday 9/6/25 at 11:59 p.m.
3	September 8-12, 2025	Lecture 6: Verbal Support in Presentations	Multitasking Discussion post due Wednesday 9/10/25 at 11:59 p.m. Multitasking Discussion replies Friday 9/12/25 at 11:59 p.m. Informative Speech Outline due Friday 9/12/25 at 11:59 p.m.
4	September 15-19, 2025	Reading: Chapter 3: A is for Asking from TALK Lecture 7: Speech Delivery	Never-Ending Follow-up Discussion post due Wednesday 9/17/25 at 11:59 p.m. Never-Ending Follow-up Discussion replies due Friday 9/19/25 at 11:59 p.m.
5	September 22-26, 2025	Informative Speeches	Informative Speech due Friday 9/26/25 at 11:59 p.m.
6	September 29-October 3, 2025	Reading: additional reading links on Carmen Lecture 8: Verbal and Nonverbal Communication	Coffee & Reflection #1 due Friday 10/3/25 at 11:59 p.m.
7	October 6-10, 2025	Reading: Chapter 4: L is for Levity from TALK Reading: additional reading links on Carmen Lecture 9: Employment Interviews	Give a Compliment Discussion post due Wednesday 10/8/25 at 11:59 p.m. Give a Compliment Discussion replies Friday 10/10/25 at 11:59 p.m. Informative Speech Peer Review Discussion due Friday 10/10/25 at 11:59 p.m.
8	October 13-17, 2025	Reading: additional reading links on Carmen Viewing: Organizing a Guest Speaker Introduction	
9	October 20-24, 2025	Reading: Chapters 5 and 5.5: K is for Kindness and A Quick Pause from TALK Lecture 12: Listening and Interpersonal Skills	Validation Challenge Discussion post due Wednesday 10/22/25 at 11:59 p.m. Validation Challenge Discussion replies due Friday 10/24/25 at 11:59 p.m. Guest Speaker Introduction Speech Script due Friday 10/24/25 at 11:59 p.m.

10	October 27-31, 2025	Lecture 10: Visual Support in Presentations and PowerPoint Design Lecture 11: Persuasion, Organizing Your Proposal Speech, and Proposal Speech Explanation Reading: Chapter 6: Many Minds from TALK	AI Job Interview Prep due Friday 10/31/25 at 11:59 p.m.
11	November 3-7, 2025	Reading: Chapter 7: Difficult Moments from TALK and Chapter 8: Apologies and Epilogue from TALK	Guest Speaker Introduction Speech due Friday 11/7/25 at 11:59 p.m. Proposal Speech Outline due Friday 11/7/25 at 11:59 p.m.
12	November 10-14, 2025		Guest Speaker Peer Review Discussion due Saturday 11/15/25 at 11:59 p.m. Coffee & Reflection #2 due Saturday 11/15/25 at 11:59 p.m.
13	November 17-21, 2025	Proposal Speeches	Proposal Speech due Friday 11/21/25 at 11:59 p.m.
14	November 24-28, 2025	THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO CLASS	Today is your day to use as you wish. Rest. Catch up on assignments in other classes. It is up to you!
		THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO CLASS	Reflect and be thankful for something in your life.
15	December 1-5, 2025		Networking Discussion post Wednesday 12/3/25 at 11:59 p.m. Networking Discussion replies Friday 12/5/25 at 11:59 p.m.
16	December 8-12, 2025		Nothing due. Good luck with the end of Autumn Semester!!!!