WACO, TEXAS

COURSE SYLLABUS

AND

INSTRUCTOR PLAN

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

SPCH 1321.004

DR. TRAVIS COX

NOTE: This is a 16-week course.

TL;DR

- Instructor – Travis Cox
- Instructor email – tcox@mclennan.edu
- There are no textbooks or other materials to purchase for this course.
- Assignments:
    - Skill Check 1
        - Due in Brightspace Sunday, 9/14 (10 points)
    - Project 1 – Simulated interviews with a partner
        - Due in class Wednesday, 9/24, Monday, 9/29, or Wednesday, 10/1 (100 points)
    - Skill Check 2
        - Due in Brightspace Sunday, 10/5 (10 points)
    - Skill Check 3
        - Due in Brightspace Sunday, 10/19 (10 points)
    - Project 2 – Instructional speech on how to perform a skill or process
        - Due in class Wednesday, 10/22 or Monday, 10/27 (100 points)
    - Skill Check 4
        - Due in Brightspace Sunday, 11/9 (10 points)
    - Project 3 – Facilitated group meeting (group project)
        - Due in class Wednesday, 11/12 or Monday, 11/17 (100 points)
    - Skill Check 5
        - Due in Brightspace Sunday, 11/30 (10 points)
    - Project 4 – Persuasive podcast
        - Due in Brightspace Monday, 12/8 (100 points)
- Assignment notes:
    - Skill checks will be in the form of online forum posts in which you will be recording videos of yourself practicing various speaking skills and reflecting on your performance.
    - Projects 1 and 3 require you to work with other students in class.

Course Description:

Study and application of communication within the business and professional context. Special emphasis will be given to communication competencies in presentations, dyads, teams, and technologically mediated formats.

Prerequisites and/or Corequisites:

There are no official course prerequisites. The student should, however, be able to speak, listen, and write in English, employing at least a high school level vocabulary and correct grammar. Writing, reading, and speaking skills are necessary for completing assignments. To improve inadequate skills for the level of this course, the student may take advantage of the college's reading and developmental English courses.

Instructor Information:

Instructor Name: **Travis Cox**
MCC E-mail: **tcox@mclennan.edu**
Office Location: **Faculty Office Building (FO) 114**
Office Phone Number: 254-299-8919
Student Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday from 12:30–3:00 pm, other times by appointment

- If these **office hours** do not work with your schedule, I am also available at many other times throughout the week and scheduling an appointment is the best way to find an alternative time to communicate with me outside the classroom and these scheduled hours.
- **Email** is a great option if you have a question or would like to schedule a meeting. If you email me, **please use your MCC student Gmail address** (this assures that I will receive the email and can confirm that it is really you that is emailing me) and include your name, course number, and section number. I will try to respond as quickly as possible, but in some cases (particularly if you email me during the weekend) please give me up to 24 hours to respond to your messages. Additionally, please refrain from last-minute, late-night messages and plan accordingly.
- If you would prefer to talk via **Zoom**, to make scheduling a time to meet with me easier, please click on the following link and select a time that works for you: https://calendly.com/face-to-face-time/face-to-face-time. After selecting a time, you will receive a confirmation email with Zoom instructions for our meeting. If none of the available times work for you, please let me know and we can work something out!

Required Text & Materials:

A PDF of *Business Communication for Success* is available on Brightspace in the "Instructor Plan and Course Documents" folder. This textbook is free and will be used as needed in this course.

MCC Bookstore Website: **http://www.mclennan.edu/bookstore/**

Methods of Teaching and Learning:

Lecture, oral presentations, group projects, written work, in-class activities, online discussion posts, and other types of work.

Course Objectives and/or Competencies:

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board requires that all courses in the Foundational Component area of Communication teach these four Core Objectives:

- Critical Thinking Skills (CT): "to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information."
- Communication Skills (COM): "to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication."
- Teamwork (TW): "to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal."
- Personal Responsibility (PR): "to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making."

Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate communication competence and critical thinking through an understanding of the foundational communication models. (CT, COM)
- Demonstrate essential public speaking skills in professional presentations. (COM)
- Demonstrate written and oral competencies as it relates to employment (including job searches, interviews, interpersonal interaction, conflict management, leadership, and performance appraisals.) (COM, TW, PR)
- Apply essential dyadic and small group processes as they relate to the workplace. (TW, PR)
- Utilize various technologies as they relate to competent communication. (CT, COM)
- Demonstrate effective cross-cultural communication. (CT, COM, TW, PR)
- While specific assignments will vary with each instructor, the following assignments, having an organizational focus, are required for all students taking Speech 1321: Informative presentation, Persuasive presentation, Employment interview, Team presentation, PowerPoint designed media aid presentation.

Course Notes and Instructor Recommendations

- This Instructor Plan, assignment information, and other documents are available on Brightspace. Check back frequently to ensure you are up to date on course content.
- **I am here to help!** If you need clarification or would like me to look at project materials, please do not hesitate to ask. It is up to you to take the initiative and ask for help. Ultimately, **your course grade will be much higher if you ask for clarification on project details you are unsure about rather than hoping you understand instructions.**

Assignments

Project 1: Simulated Interview

For this project, you will be **paired with a partner and will conduct 2 simulated interviews**. Each student will participate in one interview as the interviewer and one interview as the interviewee. Prior to conducting these interviews in class, each student will locate a job description for a job/internship they are individually interested in, prepare appropriate interview documents, and develop a schedule of questions for interviewing their partner for their selected position.

Project 2: Training Presentation

For this project, you will work individually to **develop a live presentation that will train the class how to perform a specific skill or process of your choice**. As part of this presentation, you will use both outside support and visual aids to enhance the effectiveness of your instructional material. For this project you will also be submitting a full-sentence preparation outline for your presentation.

Project 3: Group Facilitation of a Meeting

For this project, you will **work with a group to identify a problem that can be presented to and addressed by the class during a problem-solving meeting**. During this meeting your group will provide the audience with relevant information about the problem, facilitate discussion with the class to generate potential solutions for the selected problem, and finally aid the class in reaching consensus on the best solution. For this project your group will also be preparing a meeting agenda that outlines the structure of your meeting.

Project 4: Persuasive Podcasting

For this project, you will **develop, record, and edit a podcast episode** designed to persuade your audience to either adopt the “best” way to manage a business communication problem of your choice or support a nonprofit organization of your choice. Your podcast episode and reflection paper will be submitted remotely to Brightspace.

Skill Checks

To practice and reflect on the various skills you will be learning this term, periodically throughout the term there will be skill check assignments. These skill check assignments will be in the form of forum posts on Brightspace in which you will be recording videos demonstrating various skills and reflecting on your work.

*Note: More details about each of these assignments, including specific guidelines and grading rubrics, will be discussed in class and available to view on Brightspace.

Course Grading Information:

Each assignment in this course will receive a score out of the following possible points.

- Project 1 100
- Project 2 100
- Project 3 100
- Project 4 100
- Skill Checks 50 (5x10)

Your grade for the course will be based on your cumulative score out of a possible total of 450 points.

- A 405 and above
- B 360 – 404
- C 315 – 359
- D 270 – 314
- F below 270

Grading Notes:

- **Completion of each of the 4 major projects is necessary** to receive a passing grade in the course. If you fail to complete one of these projects, your will receive an F as your overall grade regardless of total points in the course.
- Since this is largely a performance-based course, **your grade on projects will heavily weigh delivery components** (voice conversationality, eye contact, etc.). Make sure you take the time to sufficiently practice your delivery. Additionally, since there are no exams in this course, **assignment grades are designed to evaluate and reflect both your performance of the required communication skills associated with the project as well as your understanding of the course concepts that relate to each project**. As a result, attention to technical project details and course concepts in your development of these projects is as important as demonstrating/performing effective communication skills.
- While you are not graded for your attendance/participation in class (other than your daily presence being recorded for MCC attendance verification purposes), being absent from class will often lead to missing information that is critical to your overall success on course projects. Again, **assignment evaluation will hold you accountable for being familiar with the content covered in class**.
- **Extra credit** is never offered on an individual basis. **If you need to achieve a specific grade in this class, I highly suggest you talk with me early in the term** to discuss what you will need to do rather than asking for more points later in the term.

Course Policies

Attendance, Late Work, and Make Up Work Policies

Attendance is **mandatory** and will be taken based on your presence in class and completion of required assignments.

- If a student is not in attendance in accordance with the policies/guidelines of the class as outlined in the course syllabus as of the course census date, faculty are required to drop students from their class roster prior to certifying the respective class roster. A student's financial aid will be re-evaluated accordingly, and the student will only receive funding for those courses attended as of the course census date.
- Before the 60% point of the semester, **a student who is absent for 25% (8) or more of a face-to-face or blended course or who misses 25% or more of assigned work for an online course will be withdrawn from the course with a grade of W**. A student may also request to be withdrawn with a grade of W before the 60% point of the semester. After the 60% point of the semester, the student may request to be withdrawn if the student is passing or be assigned the final grade earned at the end of the semester after grades have been updated to reflect missing work.
- If you are absent from class and your reason for being absent is recognized by MCC as **excused**, please let me know ahead of time and email satisfactory documentation to me within 2 days of the absence. It is your responsibility to make up any course material missed.
- Regarding **late work**, it is your responsibility to make sure that your work is completed on time. Submit assignment documents early to ensure that if you experience technical issues they can be addressed before assignment deadlines. If you are not going to be able to complete a project by the scheduled due date, it is your responsibility to contact me **before the due date**. I am often willing to give students extra time for full credit, but only if they take the initiative and actively communicate with me in advance. If I do not hear from you before the due date, you will either receive a 10% penalty to your grade on the project upon completion or I will not accept your project for credit depending on the severity of project incompleteness and lack of communication.

(https://www.mclennan.edu/highlander-guide/policies.html)
Click on the link above for the college policies on attendance and absences.

Decorum

As an adult and college student, you are expected to present/conduct yourself appropriately. You are expected to demonstrate consistent maturity, respect, and positivity in your communication with myself and other students. As this is a shared communicative context, it is imperative that all exchanges be appropriate, civil, and constructive, and that the educational environment be tolerant and supportive. Additionally, since this is a speech course, not only will you be presenting your work in front of the class, but there will be a variety of opportunities for you to be an audience member for other members of the class. As a result, I expect you to be in class on days when you are not presenting to be an audience member for other students, and I expect you to be a respectful, attentive, and active audience member.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is always expected. As such, plagiarism and cheating of any kind (including the uncited use of AI) will not be tolerated. If you are caught in the act of cheating or turn in an assignment that is plagiarized in **ANY** way, you will receive an "F" for the assignment and be prosecuted according to the full extent of MCC guidelines. Click the following link for information about academic integrity, dishonesty, and cheating. **(www.mclennan.edu/academic-integrity)**

Grading Philosophy

Grades are earned by you and assessed by me based both on 1) the caliber of scholarship that is demonstrated/submitted and 2) the extent to which it meets/exceeds established criteria. Therefore, while desire, motivation, and effort are all highly prized attributes often necessary for academic advancement, it is only the measurable manifestation of these qualities that I can and will evaluate. Remember, **this is a performance-based speech course, and you are graded on your performance.**

Early Assignment Feedback

If you would like feedback on your work, I would be happy to answer questions and give early feedback. Please allow adequate time for material to be reviewed so that substantive comments can be provided, and you have time to make and practice adjustments. **Seeking early feedback is the best way to make sure we are on the same page and increase your overall speech grade.**

Grade Questions

Grades and feedback will typically be posted on Brightspace within a couple days of submission (if more time is needed to grade projects, you will be notified in advance). Legitimate, substantive, and timely grade questions may be discussed privately and after at least one full day has passed since the respective graded material and feedback is returned to you. Be prepared to share with me your thoughtful, specific grade questions in a calm and respectful manner. **An inquisitive versus accusative attitude/approach will be of great benefit to you.**

Useful Links

- McLennan Community College Library: http://www.mclennan.edu/library/
- Student Support Services: http://www.mclennan.edu/student-support-services/
- Technology Support Desk: http://www.mclennan.edu/tech-support/

Course Schedule

Week 1

- Monday, 8/25 - Course Introduction
- Wednesday, 8/27 - Understanding Yourself

Week 2

- *Monday, 9/1 - No Class: Labor Day holiday*
- Wednesday, 9/3 - Understanding Organizations

Week 3

- Monday, 9/8 - Sending Verbal and Nonverbal Messages
- Wednesday, 9/10 - Using Technology
- **Sunday, 9/14 - Skill Check 1 (due to Brightspace by 11:59 pm)**

Week 4

- Monday, 9/15 - Listening
- Wednesday, 9/17 - Interviewing

Week 5

- Monday, 9/22 - Being Interviewed
- **Wednesday, 9/24 - Project 1**

Week 6

- **Monday, 9/29 - Project 1**
- **Wednesday, 10/1 - Project 1**
- **Sunday, 10/5 - Skill Check 2 (due to Brightspace by 11:59 pm)**

Week 7

- Monday, 10/6 - Understanding Your Audience
- Wednesday, 10/8 - Presentation Organization

Week 8

- Monday, 10/13 - Finding & Using Support
- Wednesday, 10/15 - Delivery
- **Sunday, 10/19 - Skill Check 3 (due to Brightspace by 11:59 pm)**

Week 9

- Monday, 10/20 – Visual Aids
- **Wednesday, 10/22 - Project 2**

Week 10

- **Monday, 10/27 - Project 2**
- Wednesday, 10/29 - Collaborating in Teams

Week 11

- Monday, 11/3 - Facilitating Team Meetings
- Wednesday, 11/5 – Conflict Management
- **Sunday, 11/9 - Skill Check 4 (due to Brightspace by 11:59 pm)**

Week 12

- Monday, 11/10 - Group Workday
- **Wednesday, 11/12 - Project 3**

Week 13

- **Monday, 11/17 - Project 3**
- Wednesday, 11/19 - Persuasion

Week 14

- Monday, 11/24 - Monroe's Motivated Sequence
- *Wednesday, 11/26 - No Class: Thanksgiving Break*
- **Sunday, 11/30 - Skill Check 5 (due by 11:59 pm on Brightspace)**

Week 15

- Monday, 12/1 - Project 4 time
- Wednesday, 12/3 - Project 4 early submission deadline

Week 16

- **Monday, 12/8 - Project 4 (due by 11:59 pm on Brightspace)**

Schedule Notes:

- Days that are marked in **bold** indicate that a graded assignment or major course project are due that day. While you will not necessarily have a project due on all of these specific days, it is your responsibility to be in class when project delivery orders and group members are determined so that you know when to be ready to submit/present your project.
- Any changes/modifications to this schedule will be announced in class and posted on Brightspace.

06/24/2025

MCLENNAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ACADEMIC RESOURCES/POLICIES

Accommodations/ADA Statement:

Any student who is a qualified individual with a disability may request reasonable accommodations to assist with providing equal access to educational opportunities. Students should contact Accommodations (Disability Services) as soon as possible to begin the steps for requesting accommodations. Once that process is completed, appropriate verification will be provided to the student and instructor. Please note that instructors are not required to provide classroom accommodations to students until appropriate verification has been provided by Accommodations (Disability Services). For additional information, please visit www.mclennan.edu/disability

Students with questions or who require assistance with disabilities involving physical, classroom, or testing accommodations should contact:

disabilities@mclennan.edu (254)299-8122
Room 319, Student Services

Title IX:

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a Federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities that receive Federal funds. We care about your safety and value an environment where students and instructors can successfully teach and learn together. If you or someone you know experiences unwelcomed behavior, we are here to help. Individuals who would like to report a Title IX incident are encouraged to immediately contact the Title IX Coordinator at titleix@mclennan.edu or by calling, Dr. Claudette Jackson, (Accommodations/Title IX) at (254) 299-8465.

Additionally, Title IX provides rights and protections for pregnant and newly parenting students which can include educational accommodations such as excused absences

and the opportunity to make up assignments and tests. Lactation spaces are also available on campus. Please email titleix@mclennan.edu for more information.

MCC employees are mandatory reporters and must report incidents immediately to the Title IX Coordinator. Faculty and Staff may email titleix@mclennan.edu to submit a report.

Individuals may also contact the MCC Police Department at (254) 299-8911 or the MCC Student Counseling Center at (254) 299-8210. The MCC Student Counseling Center is a confidential resource for students. Any student may report sexual harassment anonymously by visiting https://www.lighthouse-services.com

Visit McLennan's Title IX webpage at https://www.mclennan.edu/titleix/ to learn more about Title IX protections, reporting, and resources.

Student Support/Resources:

MCC provides a variety of services to support student success in the classroom and in your academic pursuits to include counseling, tutors, technology help desk, advising, financial aid, etc. A listing of these and the many other services available to our students is available at http://www.mclennan.edu/campus-resource-guide/

Paulanne's Pantry (MCC's food pantry) provides free food by appointment to students, faculty and staff. To schedule an appointment, go to https://calendly.com/paulannespantry-mcc/15min.

Academic Support and Tutoring is here to help students with all their course-related needs. Specializing in one-on-one tutoring, developing study skills, and effectively writing essays. Academic Support and Tutoring can be found in the Library and main floor of the Learning Commons. This service is available to students in person or through Zoom. You can contact the Academic Support and Tutoring team via Zoom or email (ast@mclennan.edu) by going to our website (https://www.mclennan.edu/academic-support-and-tutoring/)

Success Coaching Services is here for you.

We know life can be overwhelming sometimes—and that challenges outside the classroom can impact your success inside it. That's why our Success Coaches provide personalized support to help you navigate it all.

Success Coaching is available to every MCC student, no matter where you're starting from. Whether you're looking for direction, need quick advice, or just want someone to talk to, our coaches are here to listen, celebrate your strengths, and help you move forward with confidence. At Success Coaching Services, your voice is heard, your goals matter, and your future is our focus.

To learn more or schedule an appointment, visit www.mclennan.edu/successcoaching, call 254-299-8226, or email success@mclennan.edu.

College personnel also recognize that food, housing, and transportation are essential for student success. If you are having trouble securing these resources and other essential resources, we encourage you to contact the CREW - Campus Resources Education Web by calling 254-299-8561 or emailing crew@mclennan.edu.

Success Coaching Services, the CREW, and Paulanne's Pantry are located on the second floor of the Student Services building in Success Coaching Services, suite 249.

The Student Counseling Center offers confidential mental health counseling to currently enrolled students at no charge. Counselors are trained to help students with problems related to personal, social, and emotional concerns. Sessions focus on short-term goals in order to facilitate students college success and adjustment. This service is available to students in person or through Zoom.

Make an appointment to meet with a counselor by visiting the center in the Wellness & Fitness building, room 101, calling 254-299-8210, or emailing counseling@mclennan.edu.

MCC Foundation Emergency Grant Fund:

Unanticipated expenses, such as car repairs, medical bills, housing, or job loss can affect us all. Should an unexpected expense arise, the MCC Foundation has an emergency grant fund that may be able to assist you. Please go to https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/scholarships-and-resources/emergencygrant.html to find out more about the emergency grant. The application can be found at https://www.mclennan.edu/foundation/scholarships-and-resources/emergencygrant.html

MCC Academic Integrity Statement:

Please view our Academic Integrity statement for more information about academic integrity, dishonesty, and cheating. The unauthorized use of artificial intelligence (AI) for classwork can be a violation of the College's General Conduct Policy. Whether AI is authorized in a course and the parameters in which AI can be used in a course will be outlined by each instructor.

Minimum System Requirements to Utilize MCC's D2L|Brightspace:
For online and blended/hybrid courses, students must have access to a reliable computer and internet. For more information on the minimum system requirements needed to reliably access your courses in MCC's D2L|Brightspace learning management system go to: https://www.mclennan.edu/center-for-teaching-and-learning/Faculty-and-StaffCommons/requirements.html

Minimum Technical Skills:
Students should have basic computer skills, knowledge of word processing software, and a basic understanding of how to use search engines and common web browsers.

Backup Plan for Technology:
In the event MCC's technology systems are down, you will be notified via your MCC student email address. Please note that all assignments and activities will be due on the date specified in the Instructor Plan, unless otherwise noted by the instructor.

Email Policy:
McLennan Community College would like to remind you of the policy (http://www.mclennan.edu/employees/policy-manual/docs/E-XXXI-B.pdf) regarding college email. All students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to use their McLennan email addresses when conducting college business.

A student's McLennan email address is the preferred email address that college employees should use for official college information or business. Students are expected to read and, if needed, respond in a timely manner to college emails. For more information about your student email account, go to www.mclennan.edu/studentemail.

Instructional Uses of Email:
Faculty members can determine classroom use of email or electronic communications. Faculty should expect and encourage students to check the college email on a regular basis. Faculty should inform students in the course syllabus if another communication

method is to be used and of any special or unusual expectations for electronic communications.

If a faculty member prefers not to communicate by email with their students, it should be reflected in the course syllabus and information should be provided for the preferred form of communication.

Email on Mobile Devices:

The College recommends that you set up your mobile device to receive McLennan emails. If you need assistance with set-up, you may email Helpdesk@mclennan.edu for help.

You can find help on the McLennan website about connecting your McLennan email account to your mobile device:

- Email Setup for iPhones and iPads
- Email Setup for Androids

Forwarding Emails:

You may forward emails that come to your McLennan address to alternate email addresses; however, the College will not be held responsible for emails forwarded to an alternate address that may be lost or placed in junk or spam filters.

For more helpful information about technology at MCC, go to MCC's Tech Support or email helpdesk@mclennan.edu.

Disclaimer:

The resources and policies listed above are merely for informational purposes and are subject to change without notice or obligation. The College reserves the right to change policies and other requirements in compliance with State and Federal laws. The provisions of this document do not constitute a contract.