

Oral Presentation: Spring 2025

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Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Instructor's Contact Information:	Course Information:
Professor Stanik Email: stanik@njit.edu Subscribe to Receive Texts (optional): Text: @com312-h02 To: 81010 or (415) 780-9457 Or visit: remind.com/join/com312-h02 (Standard text messaging rates apply to anyone receiving messages.) Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays (by appointment)	COM 312 Section H02 Spring 2025 Tuesdays & Thursdays: 10:00 AM - 11:20 AM Central King Building G-17A Mode: Face-to-Face Students must bring a laptop or tablet to class. If you do not have access to adequate equipment, please contact the Office of the Dean of Students . Course Materials: http://canvas.njit.edu

People often believe the best public speakers “have something special about them,” as if the ability to effectively communicate a compelling message is an intangible talent one inherently does or does not possess. And when it comes to audiences, they are not fully present. Cognitive scientists found that people spend about 60% of their communication time listening but retain only 25% of what they hear.^{1,2}

This course will question those perspectives and explore what makes an outstanding speaker so effective and engaging.

Course Catalog Description

Instruction and practice in effective oral presentations. Students deliver a wide range of presentations adapted to the needs of a variety of audiences. Topics include voice and diction, presentation skills, the effective use of visual aids, reporting technical material and audience analysis. This course satisfies the three credit 300 GER in History and Humanities. Prerequisites: ENGL 102 with a grade of C or higher, and one History and Humanities GER 200 level course with a grade of C or higher.

Course Goals

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

1. Analyze course materials and relate them to authentic situations;
2. Create unique messages that are simple, tailored, unexpected, and valuable;
3. Deliver compelling, organized, and well-positioned presentations with clarity, confidence, and credibility;
4. Integrate data, multimedia, and discussions into presentations;
5. Responsibly use AI tools to enhance the quality of your presentation preparation and delivery;
6. Participate in a presentation as a conscious audience member, and
7. Evaluate skills other presenters have successfully mastered.

¹ Barker et al. 1980

² Nichols and Lewis 1954

Required Course Materials:

All course materials will be available in Canvas. You will need to have a valid UCID to access Canvas. See syllabus and Canvas for the order of assigned course materials. Any changes or additions to required course materials will be distributed in class or via Canvas. You also will be provided with access to a Grammarly account for the purposes of completing course assignments.

Course Assignments

COM 312 is a highly interactive class that uses problem- and project-based learning. The goal is for you, with my help, to develop your skills as a presenter and as an audience member.

To help you master these skills, we will explore aspects of effective presentation in each course module. For each module, you will be expected to:

1. complete the assigned course prep (as detailed in the syllabus/on Canvas) prior to class (research questions recommended but optional)
2. come to class with any notes or answers to research questions that you have - ready to ask questions, share your reflections, and apply what you've learned
3. complete a quiz for each reading/video to demonstrate you are prepared for class (quizzes will be in-class, multiple choice, and open notes)
4. apply course materials and AI tools to authentic situations (complete assigned in-class presentations, using course materials, your notes, and responsible use of AI to help you master the content and understand its application)
5. participate as a conscious audience member and provide constructive feedback (complete in class)

Originality of Your Work, Etiquette, AI Usage, and Academic Integrity:

This highly interactive course facilitates a great deal of reflection, collaboration, and discussion. It also makes intentional use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools to help you generate presentation topic ideas and images, structure content for different audiences, and test your presentation prior to delivering it to a live audience. Although you are encouraged to collaborate with classmates and use AI tools as you work through presentation preparation and course materials, all the work you submit in this course must be your own. You will have every opportunity to provide your best work; all assignments will be open notes because the goal is for you to apply and evaluate what you are learning - not memorize and restate it.

Although you are expected to build on, react to, criticize, and analyze the ideas of others, when you do, you must follow NJIT's Code of Student Conduct and Code on Academic Integrity.

Class participants must arrive on time, remain engaged, and be respectful of one another's time and turn to speak, even when opinions may differ. Scholarly debates are okay. Personal attacks are not.

When stating facts, you must provide a citation that names the original source where the idea was expressed (even if you are not directly quoting from the source or if you reworded the original idea). This policy includes if/when you use AI tools for those purposes. You must cite the AI used as shown on the [NJIT Library citation page](#). We discuss the responsible use of AI throughout the semester. If you ever have questions about drawing the line between others' work and your own or about the use of AI technology in this class, ask me for guidance or visit the NJIT Student Handbook (current edition).

Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the [academic code of integrity policy](#).

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing, or inappropriately using any online resources will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu.

Grading Policies

The evaluation of student proficiency in this course is based on the following components:

- 1. In-class quizzes (30%):** Each module will begin by you demonstrating your preparedness for class by completing a brief in-class quiz worth 17 points about the assigned reading and/or video(s). The quiz will be open book/notes, include multiple choice questions, and take no more than 15 minutes to complete. All quizzes must be completed in person in class using a laptop or tablet (no phones) via Canvas on the date assigned. There will be a total of 8 quizzes during the semester, and your highest 6 grades will count towards your semester grade. Failure to submit a quiz will result in zero points. *Because your lowest two quiz grades will be dropped, no late submissions will be accepted, and no make-up quizzes will be given.*
- 2. Practice Presentations (20%):** Because becoming a better speaker takes practice (a LOT of practice), at the end of each module, you will use course materials to develop and give a presentation to help you practice the skills you're learning. Instead of a formal grade, however, these presentations are pass/fail (i.e., you will receive all 17 points or zero points). Designed to help highlight what you're mastering and where you have opportunities to keep growing as a presenter, these pass/fail presentations will give you the opportunity to safely practice the skills you're learning and receive constructive feedback before being formally graded on your mastery of them. To earn full credit, prior to the start of class on the first day of in-class presentations, you must upload your completed presentation preparation template(s) as a PDF or Google Slides presentation (file labeled LastFirst_Mod#prep) to the assignment Google Drive folder. During the second half of the semester, in addition to the completed preparation templates, prior to the start of class on the first day of in-class presentations, you also must upload a Google Slides deck for the audience (file labeled LastFirst_Mod#slides). You must present and be in class on all days of a module's presentations to provide feedback to your classmates. Out of these 8 assignments, your highest 6 grades will count towards your semester grade. *Because your lowest two pass/fail grades will be dropped, no late or partial submissions will be accepted, and no make-up presentations or assignments will be given if you miss or cannot present.*
- 3. Midterm Presentation (20%):** Based on course lectures, assigned readings/videos, in-class discussions, practice presentations, and constructive feedback, you will prepare and deliver a presentation for a grade (0-100 points) to demonstrate that you have mastered course content and understand its applications. The midterm presentation must be completed in person in class on the date assigned. Prior to the start of class on March 11, you must upload your completed presentation preparation templates as a PDF or Google Slides presentation to the assignment Google Drive folder (file labeled LastFirst_Midtermprep). You must arrive on time, present, and participate as an audience member (on all days of presentations). *No late submissions will be accepted, no make-up midterm will be given, and failure to give your midterm presentation or be in class for all presentations will result in zero points.*
- 4. Final Presentation (30%):** Based on course lectures, assigned readings/videos, in-class discussions, presentation practice, and constructive feedback, you will prepare and deliver a TED-like presentation for a grade (0-100 points) to demonstrate that you have mastered course content and understand its applications. The final presentation must be completed in person in class on the date assigned. Prior to the start of class on April 29, you must upload your completed presentation preparation templates as a PDF or Google Slides presentation (file labeled LastFirst_Finalprep) and Google Slides deck for the audience (file labeled LastFirst_Finalslides) to the assignment Google Drive folder. You must arrive on time, present, and participate as an audience member (on all days of presentations). *No late submissions will be accepted, no make-up final will be given, and failure to give your final presentation or be in class for all presentations will result in zero points.*

Aggregate Grading Scale for Semester Grades (based on percentage of points earned):

<p>A = 100%-90% B+ = 89.99%-86% B = 85.99%-80% C+ = 79.99%-76% C = 75.99%-70% D = 69.99%-60% F = <60%</p>	<p><i>Final grades are not subject to post-semester rounding or adjustment—with the exception of the change of a grading error. Under no circumstances will students be given the opportunity to complete extra-credit papers or other assignments to bolster their final grades.</i></p>
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Course Attendance

Although attendance is not graded, it is a key aspect of this class and your academic success. Each module in this course builds on the skills learned in the prior module and includes an in-class quiz to demonstrate your preparedness for the module and an in-class presentation to demonstrate your application of the skills and techniques you learned. In addition to mastering presentation skills, throughout the semester, you also will be fine-tuning your ability to arrive early and fully prepared - and to cope with what that entails.

Just like a presentation, this class will start on time. If you arrive late on a quiz day, you will have only the remaining time the class has to complete the quiz (not the full time listed in Canvas). If you arrive late on a presentation day, you will not be able to present. Practicing arriving prepared and early will give you a chance to learn and implement routines to improve your organization and time management skills. It also will help you practice adapting to, navigating, and troubleshooting any last-minute changes, transportation/technical issues, and/or nerves that might bubble up. Some of the best presenters use the time before a presentation to assess the audience so they can better tailor their delivery to them. Intentionally practicing being early will improve your ability to center yourself, manage unexpected issues with greater ease and confidence, and maximize the impact of your presentations and presence in class and in life.

It's still anticipated that every student will need to miss or be late to class at some point for some reason during the semester. Regardless of the reason for your absence, you can miss two quizzes and two practice presentations without any negative impact on your grade.

So, whether you unexpectedly experience a parking/transportation issue, get sick or injured, have a religious obligation, need to help family or friends, have an athletic or club event, need a mental health day, have jury duty, or suddenly need to miss class for any reason - you do not need to report your absence through the Dean of Students Office for this class. It is your responsibility, however, to connect with a classmate for notes. After completing the module's course prep and reviewing any lecture slides and/or class notes associated with your absence, email me to make an appointment if you still have specific questions or need help understanding how to implement what you missed.

Be sure to review all course dates/assignments and your known obligations at the start of the semester so that you do not put your grade at risk. Missing more than two quizzes and two practice presentation days will negatively impact your grade. Remember, there are no make-up assignments or late submissions because four graded assignments are being dropped.

Attendance on all midterm and final presentation days is mandatory. If you have a known commitment or a true personal or family emergency during the semester that prevents you from being present for a midterm or final presentation day, notify me as soon as possible via email so we can coordinate the next steps. You will need to provide appropriate documentation through the Dean of Students Office.

Course Content and Schedule*

This semester you will be working to answer the question:

What makes an outstanding speaker so effective and engaging?

**any changes to the required course prep or schedule will be announced in class and/or via email*

Module 1: What makes an idea compelling, and what allows an audience to grasp it quickly and effortlessly?

Class date(s):	January 21 & 23
Required course prep	None
In-Class Quiz	N/A (instead, you will need to complete an online quiz about the syllabus via Canvas by 11:59pm EST January 27)
In-Class Presentation <i>Tell us about one lesson you've learned in your life that has changed the way you view or live life - and why/how it's changed your life for the better. Craft one complete sentence with a because clause (a reason) that trims down the life lesson to its essence so you can convey the idea clearly and concisely, avoiding any unnecessary or redundant words. Use the provided presentation outline, and focus on sharing the compact idea. Be mindful of making eye contact, projecting your voice, and staying within the time limit.</i>	January 23

Module 2: What sparks the curiosity of an audience?

Class date(s):	January 28 & 30
Required course prep	See Canvas
In-Class Quiz	January 28
In-Class Presentation <i>Share a life hack, a simple and clever way to make a familiar task easier or more efficient. Spark curiosity by highlighting (in one sentence) a commonly held thought, opinion, belief, or expectation the audience likely has about the compact idea and surprising them with an opposite truth...formatted similar to "It's common to think/believe/do ____, but the problem with that approach is ____."</i>	January 30

Course Content and Schedule (continued)

Module 3: How do effective presenters make their ideas understandable?

Class date(s):	February 4, 6, 11
Required course prep	See Canvas
In-Class Quiz	February 4
In-Class Presentation <i>Teach us something you learned in one of your college classes by incorporating a common language, shared perspective, and direct comparison(s). Remember, this presentation builds on the skills you've already learned so be sure to also define the compact idea and include an unexpected twist.</i>	February 11 (in-class prep February 6)

Module 4: How do effective presenters make the audience care?

Class date(s):	February 13, 18, 20
Required course prep	See Canvas
In-Class Quiz	February 13
In-Class Presentation <i>Use the 4-point positioning framework to prepare a presentation that introduces a made up word or a made up definition to an existing word. Be sure to center the presentation around an after effect and make the before/after transformation clear for the audience.</i>	February 18 & 20

Module 5: What makes an effective presentation so memorable?

Class date(s):	February 25 & 27, March 4
Required course prep	See Canvas
In-Class Quiz	February 25
In-Class Presentation <i>Using the 4-pt positioning framework and skills you've learned to amplify your authority and make your presentation memorable, prepare and deliver a toast. Imagine someone close to you is celebrating a special event - a birthday, wedding, anniversary, new job, etc. Deliver a toast that includes a story about them.</i>	February 27 & March 4

Course Content and Schedule (continued)

MIDTERM PRESENTATION:

In-Class Midterm Presentation Prep	March 6
Midterm Presentation (20 % of grade) <i>To demonstrate mastery of the skills learned in modules 1-5, prepare and deliver a presentation as outlined in class. You must use the 4-point positioning framework, include at least one story, and incorporate the skills you've learned to make your presentation compelling and memorable.</i>	March 11 & 13 (as assigned)

Module 6: How do effective presenters persuade the audience to stay focused?

Class date(s):	March 25 & 27, April 1
Required course prep	See Canvas
In-Class Quiz	March 25
In-Class Presentation <i>Using the 4-point positioning framework and skills you've learned, develop a visual presentation with at least one slide about the super power you would have if you were a super hero. Consider what life is like without that power and how life will be better with it. How can you show that visually? What should be on screen when you begin, and what "reveal" might you want to make? Use the rule of thirds and a color theme to focus the audience's attention.</i>	March 27 & April 1

Module 7: What makes an effective presenter believable?

Class date(s):	April 8, 10, 15
Required course prep	See Canvas
In-Class Quiz	April 8
In-Class Presentation <i>Using the 4-pt positioning framework and skills you've learned to amplify your authority, develop a multimedia presentation about one of your favorite places. Where it is, when did you go there, and why do you like it so much? Convey your passion for the place/experience using intentional gestures and movements; words that will engage lookers, touchers, and listeners; and lower pitch to end sentences (avoid uptalk).</i>	April 10 & 15

Course Content and Schedule (continued)

Module 8: What keeps an audience engaged and giving their undivided attention?

Class date(s):	April 17 & 22
Required course prep	See Canvas
In-Class Quiz	April 17
In-Class Presentation <i>Using the 4-point positioning framework and skills you've learned, create a visual presentation about one thing you would change at NJIT if you could. Incorporate at least one physical, one cognitive, and one linguistic engagement technique. Then, use the question fielding techniques you learned in this module to elicit and answer questions from the audience. Be mindful of how you create conversational threading, tilt and nod your head, restate the question, and appreciate the question/questioner before answering.</i>	April 22

FINAL PRESENTATION:

In-Class Final Presentation Prep	April 24
Final Presentation (worth 30% of semester grade) <i>To demonstrate mastery of the skills learned throughout the semester, prepare and deliver a TED-style presentation as outlined in class. You must use the 4-point positioning framework, include at least one story, incorporate the techniques you've learned this semester, and field questions from the audience.</i>	April 29, May 1, May 6 (as assigned)