

COM 312-013/005/011-Effective Communication

Fall 2025 | Instructor John Esche

Overview

	COM 312-013 – Wednesdays & Fridays from 8:30 to 9:50 am FMH 313
Class	COM 312-005 – Wednesdays & Fridays from 10:00 to 11:20 am FMH 319
Meetings	COM 312-011 – Wednesdays & Fridays from 1:00 to 2:20 pm GITC 2315A

Email John.N.Esche@NJIT.edu

Office Hours 309 Cullimore Hall **Wed. & Fri. Noon to 12:45 pm** and by appointment

Pre-Requisites **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.** This course satisfies the three-credit 300 GER in History and Humanities.

Course Description

"Effective Communication" will focus on improving our writing, speaking, research, and citation skills in preparation for upper-class and post-collegiate standards, ie. 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.

Course goals

During this course you will:

- Speak in front of an audience
- Use adequate volume
- Time presentations exactly
- Create a professional appearance

- Keep your audience's attention
- Communicate in small and large groups
- Integrate visuals and videos

Textbooks and Readings

- *The Overnight Guide to Public Speaking* by Ed Wohlmuth (any edition)
- *Excerpts from Aristotle's Rhetoric (Logos, Ethos & Pathos in persuasion)*
- Additional readings and films available on the Class Google Drive file
 - <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18WDS8EgACZEwkIgSSh0-NkASFZphOcVj?usp=sharing>
 - [Links to an external site.](#)

Assignments and Grading

- Weekly writing and/or speaking assignments (main assignments indicated below)
- Brief (7 to 10 page) research paper on a screened speech and historical research in MLA citation and format in first and second draft. We will have one required out of class conference on the first draft, prior to revised second draft.
- Written assignments must be submitted **IN HARD COPY** on or before the due date either in class or to my mailbox in **309** Cullimore Hall as well as digitally through "Turn It In" in Canvas. Make sure you have access to an inexpensive stapler for multiple page assignments and a flat Portfolio for your Semester-End Submission of work,
- While I understand the temptation to use developing AI tools to get one started writing when facing the dread "blank page," part of the skills we will be developing is finding the ideas and structure for effectively making an argument on ones' own (I'm sure you have seen the news coverage of professionals who have lost careers from relying too heavily on these artificial tools), so papers will be reviewed for traces of AI involvement (those detection tools are also developing fast!) and greater than 5% involvement *may* result in a failing grade.
- You need to send me an email before the end of our second week (with your **FULL CLASS NUMBER** at the **START of the Subject Line, AS WITH ALL CLASS-**

RELATED EMAILS) letting me know what technology you have available for this class (webcam with your laptop or smart phone, scanner, etc.) **in case we need to pivot to online meetings** for renewed epidemic or weather reasons.

Formal Assignments: Homework, Scheduled Quizzes, & Exams

During each week, there will be a homework assignment or paper for independent research and/or viewing. These homework assignments, group projects, class participation, and four scheduled quizzes during the semester will be allotted points as noted below. **If you expect to have a problem completing an assignment or quiz by the scheduled deadline, let me know the specific reason BEFORE the deadline and I will try to work with you. ALL Quizzes and Exams** are cumulative through the material assigned for that day. The anticipated progress of the classes and the general topics and deadlines currently anticipated are indicated in the course schedule listed below.

Assignment 1: Reading and Discussing “The Six Points” from The Ed Wohlmuth book and Aristotle’s Three Tools of Persuasion...together with attendance & class discussion. **10%**

Assignment 2: Informative (NJIT related) Speech (5 min.) **10%**
....demonstrating use of effective research & Wohlmuth points.

Assignment 3: The Pitch – persuade a group to adopt something (5-7 min.) **10%**
...demonstrating improvement & use of Aristotle points.

Assignment 4: Team formation & Proposal for Umbrella Debate Topic **10%**
Including written preparation of Affirmative Debate Plan.

Assignment 5: Preparation of Visual Aid(s) supporting Affirmative Plan **10%**
...and participation in Parliamentary Procedure Workshop

Assignment 6: Debates (individually 8 min.) Cumulative use of all skills. **10%**

Assignments 7-8: Four Quizzes Demonstrating command of principles studied & used **20%**

Assignment 9: Final Research Paper relating class principles to outside address. **10%**
...including First Draft review.

Assignment 10: Final e & Hard Copy Portfolios **10%**

Tentative Class Schedule

*Please note that the below schedule for covering the above material is approximate and subject to change. We may move at a faster or slower pace depending on a number of factors, but you are responsible for the readings on the schedule indicated (which will be fleshed out later). I would recommend having prepared the readings at least one class in advance. EACH of the topics we will be covering bears on the others, and should be brought to bear as we progress through the semester. **DON'T FALL BEHIND!***

Class/WEEK	Chief Content	Side Notes – prepare prior to class
Week 1 Sept 3 - 5	<i>Introduction to each other & public experience</i> <i>Logos, Ethos & Pathos Major persuasion tools</i>	Note Class & Example #1 on Google Drive
Week 2 Sept 10 - 12	<i>We are how we are perceived!</i> <i>Open discussion: Elements to HOLD attention</i>	Screen <i>PYGMALION</i> in Google Drive or online <i>Find 1 GOOD and 1 BAD speech for discussion</i>
Week 3 Sept 17 - 19	<i>MLA, APA Citation forms & Footnotes</i> <i>Wohlmuth's "Six Signals" First Quiz</i>	Review Research Roadmap (link in Google Drive) <i>Speech for Research Paper will be Assigned Today</i>
Week 4 Sept 24 - 26	<i>First Major Speech (Assignment 2) on Topic Assigned Week 2</i>	
Week 5 1 - 3	Oct <i>Curriculum Vitae / Resumes</i> <i>2nd Quiz</i>	Bring published Editorial for discussion
Week 6 Oct 8 - 10	<i>Second Speech (The Pitch - Assignment 3)</i>	First Draft Paper due
Week 7 15 – 17	Oct <i>Second Speech (Assignment 3)</i>	
Week 8 22 - 24	Oct ...continued <i>3rd Quiz</i>	<i>Form teams for debates</i>

Week 9 29 - 31	Oct	<i>Start work on Debates on Debates (Assignments 4 - 6) incl. Proposals for Umbrella Topic.</i>	
Week 10 5 - 7	Nov	<i>Continue Preparation & Start Debates (Assignment 4 -6)</i>	<i>Out of Class team rehearsal for Debates</i>
		<i>Debates (Assignment 6) continue</i>	<i>Researched Speech Paper due</i>
Week 11 12 - 14	Nov		
		<i>Debates (Assignment 6) continue</i>	
Week 12 19 - 21	Nov		
Week 13 Nov 26 - 28		<i>Final Quiz (WEDNESDAY!) & Thanksgiving</i>	
Week 14 3 - 5	Dec	<i>Parliamentary Procedure Workshop</i>	
Week 15 10	Dec	<i>Parliamentary Procedure Workshop Con. Class (Thurs.classes meet Tues.; meet Wed.)</i>	<i>Final Fri.</i>

Final Grades Due Dec 22

Please Note: All assignments, readings, etc., must have been prepared prior to class meetings on due dates. Revisions of work must be accompanied, when submitted for evaluation, by all prior drafts.

Late Penalty

All assignments are to be submitted on or before the specified deadline. The standard late policy is a deduction of one letter grade per Class date. I reserve the right to refuse any assignment submitted more than one week late and assign a grade of zero.

Quizzes

Please note: Americans in recent years have been notoriously weak in their knowledge of geography and this can harm them in the business world - **ALL my quizzes WILL have map questions!** If a place is referred to in the readings or in class discussion, FIND it on a map. You may be held responsible for locating it.

Papers

All papers (unless otherwise specified, anything prepared outside of class) are to be **college-level research papers** (unless otherwise stated): **typewritten, numbered by page, with citations to the research used in MLA format** (parenthetical citations linked to an alphabetically sorted reference page at the end – neither the reference page nor the cover page, is included in the page count) and neatly stapled together (it is highly recommended that you invest in a cheap \$1 stapler). As in the work world, presenting your ideas and work properly is essential to ensure that they are received and evaluated correctly. **Your grade will be affected by spelling errors, grammatical errors, punctuation errors, and especially by missing deadlines.** All abbreviations and acronyms should be clearly identified and consistent; please observe standard grammatical usage and IDENTIFY any abbreviation or acronym before regular use. Please use a standard 12-point font, double spaced to facilitate corrections and comments. **ALL WORK MUST HAVE YOUR NAME AND FULL CLASS NUMBER IN THE UPPER CORNER.**

Just to repeat a few especially important points: If you fear you may miss a deadline for work-related or emergency reasons beyond your control, explain the reason to me as soon as possible, and I may be able to work with you.

E-Mails

Be sure your **FULL Class Number** is the **FIRST** thing in the **SUBJECT LINE** on any e-mail so I will see it in a crowded inbox. While questions are welcome, and I check my email daily, they are particularly appreciated if you ask them in open class or open a Discussion Forum in Canvas so that the entire CLASS may be able to get you a quick answer and/or may benefit from the answer.

Portfolios

Every student will be required to maintain an “e-portfolio” (drafts of your research, written work and debate plan) and a HARD COPY Portfolio of their class work and Quizzes which they will turn in with a working link to the e-portfolio by the Final class. **This portfolio will contain your class notes, clean and corrected copies of any papers or drafts, and any quizzes or exams.** Failure to turn in your hard copy Portfolio and a working link to your e-portfolio *may* result in the filing of a grade of “F.”

Grade Points

A = 93-100+

B+ = 89-92

B = 83-88

C+ = 79-82

C = 70-78

D = 60-69

59 & below: Don't go there!

FURTHER IMPORTANT POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND

Academic Integrity

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. 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 that is found at: <http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>.

[Links to an external site.](#)

*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 using any online software inappropriately 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

The Writing Center at NJIT

The Writing Center is available for one-hour individual and group appointments with professional writing tutors both onsite and online. This resource is intended to help you to improve your communication and writing skills and has proven extremely helpful to many of your peers in the past. Tutors can help with planning assignments, improving your writing,

refining an essay or multimedia project, or other communication-based needs. Students will most likely need to schedule one week in advance for appointments. For more information, please visit <https://www.njit.edu/writingcenter/>

Class Recordings

In past semesters I recorded my classes as a back-up for students. These recordings were only allowed to be used as an educational resource and were not distributed or used outside of this class. The university policy currently discourages such recordings as too easily misused, however, if you desire to record or have recorded your own presentations as an aid to understanding how you can present yourself better, clear this recording in advance with me and I will do my best to accommodate you.

Students are expected to respect their fellow students' privacy and freedom to learn without disruption. Students are not allowed to capture or reproduce anyone's name, image, or voice without permission. They must be polite and respectful in the online chat. Informal chat is okay, but typing is restricted to things that one would say out loud in front of the entire class. Students must always conduct themselves on their webcam video as they would in person in a classroom.\

Office of Accessibility Resources and Services

Please contact the Humanities Office for help with accommodations. Note that in order to receive special accommodations, you must go through the Office. **If you believe you are entitled to accommodations, contact the office immediately** — I can't accommodate you retroactively at the end of the semester; this needs to be handled up front, at the start of the term, so it can be properly taken into consideration.

Office of the Dean of Students

For other concerns and assistance, please contact the Office of the Dean of Students.

Whenever I have multiple sections of a course, I have a standing invitation to all my students to sit in on other sections of the class and I post the class roster of all my sections to assist you in finding and maintaining study groups (you may have friends in other sections and I will try to keep all sections on basically the same schedule). I *highly* recommend setting up study groups of three to five or more friends in all your classes to prep for Quizzes and to proof-read papers. It can make a major difference in your grades.

Here are my 312 Class rosters for this semester as of August 29, 2025:

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