

COM 312-027: Effective Communication (Fall 2025)

Professor Kellett
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Instructor's Contact Information:	Course Information:
Professor: Zackary Kellett Email: zk39@njit.edu Office Hours: Cullimore 432 Tues/Fri 1:00-3:00 PM (or by appointment)	COM 312 Section 027 Fall 2025 Tuesdays & Fridays: 4:00 PM - 5:20 PM FMH 319 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. This is, in fact, a skillset. One that is learnable. One that you will learn! This course will build your confidence and skill in public speaking and other pertinent communication methods via a practical application of relevant skillsets.

Course Catalog Description

This pre-professional course is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to intentionally and effectively communicate across an array of real-world contexts. Through a mixture of instruction and practical application, students will learn to identify the conventions and needs of audiences across modalities and rhetorical situations such as oral presentation, collaborative discussion, and one-on-one interviews, and apply appropriate approaches leveraging organizational, vocal, physical, and visual strategies to achieve their predetermined goals. 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. Participate in a presentation as a conscious audience member
6. Evaluate oral messages and the skills presenters have successfully mastered.

Required Course Materials:

All course materials will be available in Canvas. You will need to have a valid UCID to access Canvas. See schedule 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.

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 communicator.

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

1. Complete the assigned course prep (as assigned on Canvas) prior to class
2. Come to class with any notes or questions that you have - ready to ask questions, share your reflections, and apply what you've learned
3. Apply course materials to authentic situations
(complete assigned in-class presentations, using course materials and your notes, to help you master the content and understand its application)
4. Participate as a conscious audience member and provide constructive feedback (complete in-class)

Originality of Your Work, Etiquette, and Academic Integrity:

This course is highly interactive and facilitates a great deal of reflection, collaboration, and discussion. Although you are encouraged to collaborate with classmates as you work through problems and course materials, all of the work you submit in this course must be entirely 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.

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 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.

Technology Policies:

This is a highly participatory course, and as such, laptops, phones, and other personal electronic devices-- as well as the use of headphones of any type-- are not permitted during lectures. You may use these devices during individual activities or as otherwise specified by your professor.

Generative AI:

There will be cases in which generative AI will be utilized in assignments given by your instructor. Aside from these instances, it is expected that students will submit their own work, without the use of these LLM's in their writing and other assignments.

Attendance Policies:

Students are expected to arrive to class on time each day and remain engaged for the duration of the class period. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class, and those not present will be counted absent. Similarly, leaving class early will result in an absence. As all class dates are posted in advance, any conflicts must be sent to your professor at least two weeks prior to any absences. Emergency situations are accounted for as two absences will be forgiven at the end of the semester.

Grading Policies

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

1. **Attendance/Participation (15%):** As this course is highly practical in nature, participation is a requisite part of the learning process. Students are expected to both be present and participate in discussion/class activities. Students will be counted present only if they are in the classroom at the time roll is called. As make-up presentations are not given, students should contact their professor well in advance if they know of any potential conflicts for presentation days.
2. **Assignments (15%):** Home assignments are given in conjunction with in-class lectures and activities and will often be necessary for the following class. As such, no late assignments will be accepted, and if any extensions are to be given, they will be doled out on a class-wide basis. No individual extensions will be given outside of extenuating circumstances.
3. **Presentation practice (20%):** Because becoming a better speaker takes practice (a LOT of practice), you will use course materials to develop and give presentations to help you practice the skills you're learning. You will receive constructive feedback - from me and your classmates - designed to help highlight what you're mastering and where you have opportunities to keep growing as a presenter. If you give your presentation, stay engaged as an audience member for others, and provide real-time feedback to your classmates, you will receive full credit for the assignment. If you do not present and/or are not present to provide feedback for your classmates, you will receive zero points for the assignment. Of these presentations, your lowest grade will be dropped. No late submissions will be accepted, and no make-up presentations or assignments will be given. PLEASE NOTE: evaluating the skills other presenters have successfully mastered will help you in your own growth and preparation for the midterm and final.
4. **Midterm Presentation (20%):** Based on course lectures, assigned readings/videos, in-class discussions, presentation practice, and constructive feedback, you will prepare and deliver a presentation 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. You must be present for the duration of all midterm presentations and participate as an audience member. No late submissions will be accepted, no make-up midterm will be given, and failure to give your midterm presentation will result in zero points.
5. **Final Presentation (30%):** Based on course lectures, assigned readings/videos, in-class discussions, presentation practice, and constructive feedback, you will prepare and deliver a presentation 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. You must be present for the duration of all final presentations and participate as an audience member. No late submissions will be accepted, no make-up final will be given, and failure to give your final presentation will result in zero points.

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

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%	Extra credit may be assigned on a class-wide basis. No individual assignments will be issued.
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Course Content and Schedule*

This semester you will be working to answer the question:

How can I become a more effective communicator to reach my goals?

Week	Date	Topic
Week 01: Syllabus and Intro	09/02	Syllabus and Expectations (register for career fair)
	09/05	Toolkits and Body Language
Week 02: Career Orientation	09/09	Intention, Audience, and Tactics (Email Assignment given)
	09/12	CDS Guest Lecture (TypeFocus Assignment)
Week 03: Professional Comms	09/16	Resumes, CV's, and Cover Letters
	09/19	Interviewing Effectively (Mock Interviews Assigned)
Week 04: Mock Interviews	09/23	Mock Interviews
	09/26	Mock Interviews
Week 05: Organization	09/30	XR Lab Storytelling Exercise
	10/03	Organization and the 3 Rules of 3 (Simplification presentation assigned)

Week 06:	10/07	Simplification Presentations
Simplification	10/10	Simplification Presentations

Week 07:	10/14	Canva and Visual aids (Midterm Assigned)
Visuals	10/17	Newark Museum Field Trip

Week 08:	10/21	Midterm Storyboarding & Editing
Midterms	10/24	Peer Reviews

Week 09:	10/28	NO CLASS (Optional 1-on-1's)
Halloween	10/31	Halloween Special (Midterm assignments due)

Week 10:	11/04	Ad Tactics and Persuasive Techniques
Persuasion	11/07	Infomercial Presentations

Week 11:	11/11	Debates and Constructive Disagreement
Rhetoric and Debate	11/14	Class Mini Debate

Week 12:	11/18	Comedy Annotation
Comedy and Choice	11/21	Storytelling Exercise

Week 13:	11/25	NO CLASS
THANKSGIVING BREAK	11/26	NO CLASS

Week 14:	12/02	XR Lab Practice Presentations
Final Presentation Prep	12/05	Final Presentation Workshop

Week 15:	12/09	Final Presentations 1
Final Presentations	12/11	Final Presentations 2 and End of Semester Party

*Any changes to the schedule will be announced in class and/or via canvas