



COM 312—Effective Communications—Honors

Professor: Dr. Risa Gorelick

Term: Fall 2025

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Office Hours: Monday 10:00 – 11:00 AM & by appointment.

NOTE: If you would like to meet with Dr. Gorelick for virtual office hours, please first email to confirm a time. Please come to the Zoom meeting from your NJIT account and turn your camera on. You may access the Zoom meeting at <https://njit-edu.zoom.us/my/gorelick>

Meeting Times:

COM 312-H01 Monday/Thursday 8:30 – 9:50 AM FMH 106

- Please note: I did NOT choose this time. I am as unhappy (or more) about the time schedule. We are adults and will make every effort to come to class on time (with lots of caffeine).

NOTE: This course is scheduled to meet Face-to-Face In-Person. However, if we need to meet Virtually, please use this link: <https://njit-edu.zoom.us/my/gorelick>

Prerequisites:

ENGL 102 and one History and Humanities GER 200 level course with a grade of C or higher.

Course 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.

Course Goals:

Skill in presentations, using the workplace as a basis for lessons. Students will improve oral abilities, including grammar, pronunciation, and presentation skills, using digital technology.

Course Objectives:

On the completion of the course, students will be able to do the following:

Content:

1. To develop skills in developing, shaping, and organizing content specifically for oral presentations;
2. To plan and prepare speeches that inform, persuade, by analyzing the purpose of the speech;
3. To use presentation aids to enhance speeches;
4. To conduct meaningful research;
5. To analyze the audience and design speeches to reflect analysis;
6. To understand the communication process;
7. To create a professional online presence;
8. Communicate in small and large online groups.

Non-Verbal:

1. To strengthen awareness of and use of non-verbal elements in oral presentations;
2. To improve posture, stance, gestures, movements, facial expression.

Self-assessment:

1. To strengthen skills in self-assessment and assessment of others' oral presentations by watching yourself, watching others, critiquing in writing, critiquing in private, re-presenting, and memorizing.

(Information on goals taken from: <http://communication.cofc.edu/syllabi/104wills-f08.pdf>)

Evaluation:

Table 1: Assignment & Assessment

Assignment	Assessment
Attendance/Participation/Course Reflection/Class Discussions	10%
Major Oral Presentations	80%
1. Job or How To Presentation I—Brainstorming (5%)	
2. Jobs or How To Presentation II—Media Integration Practice (0%)	
3. Jobs or How To Presentation III—Full Presentation (15%)	
4. Jobs or How To Presentation IV—Peer Review (5%)	
5. Interviews—(answering 2 question questions) (10%)	
6. Peer Review of Interviews (5%)	
7. World View Presentation I—Brainstorming/Proposal (5%)	
8. World View Presentations II—Full Presentation (20%)	
9. World View Presentation III—Peer Review (5%)	
10. Group Presentation: TV News or Podcast—Pre-recorded (10%)	
Self-Reflection Video File (Week 9: 5%)	10%
Course Reflection Video File 2 (end of semester: 5%)	
Total	100%

Individual and Group Work Grading Scale:

Table 2: NJIT's Grading Scale:

A	B+	B	C+	C	D	F
100-90	89-87	86-80	79-77	76-70	69-60	59-0

Required Text: *New York Times*

Register with NY Times for your FREE subscription:

REGISTER: All users must first register at using their NJIT email address. **You MUST be on NJIT's VPN to subscribe.** **PREFERRED BROWSERS:** Use Chrome or Firefox.

CONNECT: Once you have a login you can connect directly to [NYTimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com) on the web from any device.

- You may also download and use *NYTimes* apps on other devices, using this same login.
- To search the archive all the way back to 1851, you must use a browser rather than the mobile app.

EXPIRATION: Your account will expire within a year from initiation and renewal will be required through the same Group Pass URL.

Participation, Punctuality and Attendance

You must be present to win—please make every effort to attend F2F classes. All students are expected to attend all regularly scheduled classes. Attendance is critical to your success in this class. Participation in in-class activities, discussions, and workshops will contribute to your knowledge, ability, and performance.

Should you need to miss class for a reason that you think should be excused (illness, jury duty, family emergency etc.), please let the Dean of Students know and that office will inform all of your professors (dos@njit.edu). If the DoS determines that your absence is excused, I will do my best to work with you to complete the course.

You may miss up to one week of class without penalty. Please let me know if you cannot attend class prior to the class meeting. **Every subsequent unexcused absence will result in a deduction of participation points. More than 4 unexcused absences (two weeks of the course) will negatively impact on your grade. More than 5 unexcused absences put students in danger of failing.**

Missing a Presentation: Presentation days are scheduled in advance, so each student is prepared. While illnesses happen, there is not a lot of wiggle-room if a student misses his/her presentation. If you are ill, please let Dr. Gorelick know as soon as possible so she can try to reschedule you with another student. Please make every effort to be ready for your scheduled presentations. Please consider helping a classmate out if you by having your work ready in advance.

See the NJIT attendance policy: <http://www.njit.edu/registrar/policies/attendancepolicy.php>.

Students who expect to **miss classes because of religious observance must submit to their instructors a written list of dates** that will be missed **by the end of the second week of classes.** Students are expected to make up missed work within a week.

Tips for Speaking in Public

- **Project your voice.** Hold your chin parallel to the floor, and speak to the people in the back of the room as well as in the front. Do not shout.
- **Maintain eye contact.** Look at the eyes of **everyone** in the room, just as though you were speaking to that one person. **Do not turn your back** to the audience. Do not speak to the blackboard or the projector screen. **Do not read** from notes.
- **Speak slowly.** If your accent interferes with intelligibility, **slowing your rate** will improve comprehension.
- **Watch for nervous habits.** Everyone has nervous habits. Some of us use filler words (um, you know, huh, etc.). Others may use their arms so much that it distracts your audience. Some may twist their hair or tap their feet. Try to be aware of these habits and strive to eliminate them when you present to an audience.
- **Stand up straight.** Good posture helps you project your voice and look confident.

Tips for Using PowerPoint

The purpose of the slides is to help your audience understand your presentation by giving **key words or diagrams**. Slides need to be interesting, clear, and **easy to read**.

1. Write no more than **6 lines** of text, and no more than **6 words** per line, per slide.
2. Use a font of at least 24-point.
3. Use the full screen. Do not crowd the text at the top of the slide.
4. Plan no more than 3 slides per minute.
5. **Do not read** the slides aloud, but rather talk about each item.
6. **Do not look turn your back to the audience.** Refer instead to your computer screen in front of you.
7. **Think of the design** of your slides. Keep in mind, if you are in a large room presenting, how would the slide look if someone is sitting in the back of the room? If you're giving a video presentation, how would this appear on someone's smartphone? Is the color scheme easy to see? Is there a mix of text and other items (graphics, graphs, photos, video, etc.)?

Rules for Preparing Video Files—10%

In addition to preparing presentations for each class period, your second project also entails recording and sending a Video files to me for review and comment.

Please upload your video file to your NJIT YouTube Channel and post a link of the shareable YouTube video. I should be able to see the video in the Canvas assignment and just click on the YouTube link for it to open. I should not have to download the file to play it.

Self-Reflection: Video File 1 (due Week 9): Record a 2–4-minute self-critique of your presentations so far in the class where you tell me:

1. What you did well in some or all of your presentations to date?
2. What have you learned about yourself and your presentation skills?
3. What would you still like to improve?
4. How do you intend to work on improving your presentations in the future?

Course Reflection: Video File 2 (due Week 14): Record a 2–4-minute reflection of the course. Some questions to answer:

1. What worked well for you in the course?
2. Which assignments did you like?
3. Which assignments can be improved? How can they be improved?
4. How was the pacing of the course?
5. How do you think this course will impact your future?
6. Anything else you think Dr. Gorelick should be aware of to improve the experience in future courses.

In your Video Files, please:

1. **State your name and major field** at the **beginning** of the recording.
2. **Label** each file with your name.
3. **Write** down what you want to say.
4. **Practice** each reading before starting to record.
5. **Record** your video. If you aren't satisfied with your video, record until you are (without making yourself crazy).
6. **UPLOAD YOUR VIDEO TO YOUTUBE** (each student has a YouTube account, accessible through Gmail by clicking the 9 dots and scrolling to YouTube). Make the video viewable to those at NJIT (or it cannot be viewed/graded).
7. **Post your YouTube video link to Canvas. Make sure it is a shareable link** (or Dr. Gorelick cannot watch and grade it). The video should be viewable in the assignment link (there should be a YouTube icon on the Canvas page that I can click on).

Major Assignments COM 312

Job or How To Presentation—20%

Choose your own topic.

OPTION 1: Job: You can discuss jobs you have had, volunteer positions, your dream job, the job of someone you know (parent, friend, sibling). You could research and report on types of jobs (best, worst, highest / lowest paying).

OPTION 2: How To Demonstration: Teach the class how to do something that you are an expert (or near expert) in doing. It must be something you can safely demonstrate in class (so you may be an auto mechanic but can't demonstrate how to change the oil in a car as you can't bring a car into the classroom). Some ideas: how to program in a certain computer language, how to make skateboard, how to play a game, how to study for an exam, etc.

There are three parts to this assignment: brainstorming, media integration practice (to work out technical issues) and the full, 8-12-minute presentation. The full presentation will be done in class.

- **Part 1 – Brainstorming 5%**
- **Part 2 – Media Integration Practice 0%**
- **Part 3 – Full Presentation 15%**

Interviews—10%

You will be given a list of difficult job interview questions. Choose two and practice your answers. In class, you will provide Dr. Gorelick with your resume and 3 questions from the list that you want to be asked. Dr. Gorelick will select 2 of the 3 questions. You have 5 minutes to answer the questions. These will be done LIVE in class. You will critique other students on their performances.

World View Presentation—25%

Choose a topic you enjoy or are interested in and want to learn more about. The topic should be on one aspect of the world around us – global, economic, political, arts, health & medicine. Your 8–12-minute presentation will be a summary of the research you have done on the topic with your conclusions. There are two parts to this assignment and the full presentation will be done in class.

- **Part 1 – Proposal 5%**

- **Purpose:** brainstorming with your group to choose a good topic. Then write a brief (< 1 page) proposal as to what you wish to cover in your presentation.
- **Part 2 – Full Presentation 20%**
 - **Purpose:** final formal speech with in-class peer review, combining oral presentation with images and video, focusing on volume and timing.
- **Part 3 – Peer Review of classmates (5%)**

Group Project: TV Newscast or Podcast on a topic of your group's choice – 10%

This assignment is mainly for fun and practice working in groups. Prepare a pre-recorded television newscast or audio podcast on real or fake news. The topic of your newscast/podcast will be decided by your group. Groups should have four or five members. **All participants must speak** (try to make sure that the time each person speaks is even). You will critique group members to show what each individual member did and if s/he fulfilled the group's expectation of the work.

- Watch some news shows to see how “experts” do it—it can be nightly news, political news, sports news, or “fake” news like “The Daily Show” or “Saturday Night Live’s” Weekend Update.
- Newscast: You should have a news anchor (you can have multiple anchors like they do on sports, entertainment, or political news). The anchor(s) should introduce each news segment and provide background images and/or video. There should be reporters who report the news and coordinate the interviews.
- Individual members can either “act out” the news story or you can interview other people (real people or actors).
- Podcast: You should pick a topic where the group has some knowledge and can either have a host/hosts who facilitates the discussion or do a group roundtable where you discuss various aspects of the topic. You can choose a real topic or a fake topic (like a murder mystery podcast).
- While this is meant to be fun, please be aware that this is a course project, and the team should bleep out curse words (or edit them out altogether).
- Assign each person in the group a role:
 - Project Manager is responsible for managing participants.
 - Media Manager is responsible for assembling the final recording.
 - Project Editor is responsible for editing the project to show the class.
 - Multiple people can serve in the above roles. Make sure you list the group members and their roles in the credits of your newscast.

- There may be other roles in a podcast depending on your subject matter.
- We will vote for the best presentation at the end.
- **TIME FRAME:** The news video or podcast should run between 25-35 minutes in length (after editing). Editing takes time, so please make sure that you plan ahead to make sure your final product is of quality.
- If you use people in the project from outside of our class, you need them to sign a permission to share form so we can show them in class.

Purpose: practice working in a group, presentation, technical and creative skills.

Accessibility Needs

Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability, please see me as early in the semester as possible to discuss the necessary accommodations, and/or contact Student Disability Services at 973-596-3420.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is available for 45-minute individual and group online appointments with professional writing tutors usually beginning the 2nd week of the semester. This resource is intended to help you improve your communication and writing skills. Tutors can help with planning assignments, improving your speech writing, refining your project, or other communication-based needs. Tutors can help with your presentation slides, too. To make an appointment, please visit <https://njit.campus.eab.com/>.

NJIT University Code on Academic Integrity

The New Jersey Institute of Technology is an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge through teaching and research. We expect our graduates to assume positions of leadership within their professions and communities. Honesty in your academic work will develop into professional integrity.

The NJIT Code of Academic Integrity embodies a spirit of mutual trust and intellectual honesty that is central to the very nature of the university and represents the highest possible expression of shared values among the members of the university community.

All assignments submitted shall be considered “graded work” and all aspects of your coursework are covered by the Code on Academic Integrity. All projects and homework assignments are to be completed individually unless otherwise specified. Please make sure you include a works cited list on each project to cite the material in your speech.

The Provost’s Office requires this statement on all syllabi:

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

*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.”*

Table 3: Course Schedule (subject to change with written notification):

Week	Date Monday	Assignment Due	Class Activity	Date Thursday	Assignment Due	Class Activity
1	9/1		Labor Day	9/4		Intro to COM 312. Go over syllabus & get to know one another. Lecture on class rules; Saying & Spelling Names; small groups
2	9/8		Introduce Jobs Presentation; individual introductions; small groups	9/11	Jobs Presentation Brainstorming (5%)	Lecture on Presentation Conventions; Jobs Presentation brainstorming 9/15-9/16: Happy Milad un Nabi for those who celebrate!

Week	Date Monday	Assignment Due	Class Activity	Date Thursday	Assignment Due	Class Activity
3	9/15		Sample Jobs Presentation; assign dates for Full Presentation* ; finish any missed brainstorming	9/18	Jobs Media Integration (5%)	Start Jobs Presentation Media Integration, online. Expect technical difficulties.
4	9/22		No class. Work on your presentation on your own. Happy Rosh Hashanah to those who celebrate!	9/25	PPT Jobs/How To presentation slides must be ready today Jobs, PRACTICE	Finish Media Integration; small groups to Practice Jobs/How To presentation Continue small groups to Practice Jobs/How To presentation
5	9/29	Jobs, Full Presentation (15%) PPT Jobs/How To presentation slides must be ready today	Jobs Presentations (5 per class); Post slides by the day you present. 10/2: Happy Gandhi Jayanti to those who celebrate!	10/2	Jobs, Full Presentation (15%)	Wellness Day—No class! Wishing those who observe Yom Kippur an easy fast. Happy Dussehra to those who celebrate!
6	10/6	Jobs, Full Presentation (15%)	Continue Jobs/How To Presentations ; Post slides by the day you present. Last Day to Register to Vote Deadline for the New Jersey General Election 10/14/2025 VOTE.NJ.GOV	10/9	Jobs, Full Presentation (15%)	Continue Jobs/How To Presentations ; Post slides by the day you present. 10/11-10/12: Yom Kippur—may you have an easy fast to those observing. 10/12: Happy Dussehra to those who celebrate! 10/15: Last Day to Register to Vote Deadline for the New Jersey General Election VOTE.NJ.GOV

Week	Date Monday	Assignment Due	Class Activity	Date Thursday	Assignment Due	Class Activity
7	10/13	Make Up Jobs/How To	<p>Make Up Day (for anyone who needed to be rescheduled for an excused absence).</p> <p>Watch & critique sample Video Interviews; small groups</p> <p>10/15: Last Day to Register to Vote Deadline for the New Jersey General Election VOTE.NJ.GOV</p>	10/16	Job Interview Questions (10%)	(10 per class) Bring in Resume and select 3 of the questions for Dr. Gorelick to ask in a short initial interview (she'll ask you 2 of the 3 questions). These will be done live in class. You will peer critique these.
8	10/20	Job Interviews Questions (10%)	<p>(10 per class) Bring in Resume and select 3 of the questions for Dr. Gorelick to ask in a short initial interview (she'll ask you 2 of the 3 questions). These will be done live in class. You will peer critique these.</p> <p>10/20-10/21: Happy Diwali to those who celebrate!</p> <p>October 26 - November 3 Early Voting Period (in-person at home NJ County Offices)</p>	10/23	Finish Job Interview Questions (10%)	<p>(Last 4 students plus any who needed to be rescheduled).</p> <p>Bring in Resume and select 3 of the questions for Dr. Gorelick to ask in a short initial interview (she'll ask you 2 of the 3 questions). These will be done live in class. You will peer critique these.</p> <p>Sample World View (TED Talk) Presentation; small groups</p> <p>October 26 - November 3 Early Voting Period (in-person at home NJ County Offices)</p> <p>10/29: Deadline to apply for a NJ Mail-In Ballot by Mail for General Election</p>

Week	Date Monday	Assignment Due	Class Activity	Date Thursday	Assignment Due	Class Activity
9	10/27	World View (TED Talk) Brainstorming (5%)	WV (TED Talk) Presentation brainstorming; small groups; assign dates for Full Presentation 10/29: Deadline to apply for a NJ Mail-In Ballot by Mail for General Election If you are mailing an absentee ballot, please mail by today to ensure your vote is counted. Voting in-person? Make a plan for next week (11/5).	10/30	Due: Video File 1-Reflection (5%); upload YouTube video file in Canvas course assignment	Create groups for TV News /Podcast assignment; in-class group workday. Sign up for group presentations.
10	11/3	World View (TED Talk), Full Presentations (20%)	Start WV (TED Talk) Presentations Post slides by the day you present.	11/6	World View (TED Talk), Full Presentations (15%)	Continue WV (TED Talk) Presentations Post slides by the day you present. Last day to Withdraw from Classes (11/11)
11	11/10	World View (TED Talk), Full Presentations (15%)	Continue WV Presentations Post slides by the day you present.	11/13	World View (TED Talk), Full Presentations (15%)	Continue WV Presentations Post slides by the day you present.
12	11/17	World View (TED Talk), Full Presentations (15%)	Continue WV Presentations Post slides by the day you present.	11/20	World View (TED Talk), Full Presentations (15%)	Time to Work on TV News Group Presentations.
13	11/24	World View (TED Talk), Full Presentations (15%)	Time to Work on TV News Group Presentations	11/27	THANKSGIVING BREAK	NO CLASS! Enjoy! 11/27: THANKSGIVING—No class THURSDAY CLASSES MEET on TUES. 11/25—work on your Major Project & Oral Presentation on your own (you may use the classroom space if you need a place to work today). We will not meet as a group.

Week	Date Monday	Assignment Due	Class Activity	Date Thursday	Assignment Due	Class Activity
14	12/1	TV News Group Presentations (10%)	TV News Group Presentations workshop (time in class to work— you must report to class)	12/4	TV News Group Presentations (10%) Due: Video File II Course Reflection (5%)	TV News Group Presentations (Groups 1 & 2)
15	12/8	TV News Group Presentations (10%)	TV News Group Presentations (Groups 3 & 4)	12/11	TV News Group Presentations (Groups 5 & 6) Last Day of Class!	