

# **SPCH1321-Business & Professional Communication**

## **Spring 2026**

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### **Faculty Information**

**Instructor:** Hilary Nixon

**Email:** [hnixon@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:hnixon@southplainscollege.edu)

**Virtual Office Hours in Blackboard Collaborate:** By appointment

**Communication Plan:**

- You can expect an email reply within 24 hours on weekdays, and within 48 hours on weekends.
- I will be posting course related announcements in Blackboard every few days.
- I DO NOT use blackboard messages. If you email within blackboard, you will not receive a response. Please email me from your SPC email address.

### **Office Hours**

Office Location:

Communications Building Room #139

- Monday Plainview Campus: 11:00am-1:00pm & 2:15pm-3:00pm
- Tuesday Levelland Campus: 12:30pm-1:00pm & 2:15pm-2:45pm
- Wednesday Levelland Campus: 11:00am-1:15pm
- Thursday Levelland Campus: 12:30pm-1:00pm & 2:15pm-2:45pm
- Friday Levelland Campus: 12:00pm-1:00pm

### **Course Description and Purpose**

Welcome to SPCH1321-Business & Professional Communication! It is my sincere hope that you will learn to enjoy the process of public speaking, while gaining confidence, improving your skills, and making new friends.

This course includes the basic principles of speech applied to communications in business and professional settings. The course emphasizes practice in the construction and delivery of several types of speaking situations and the application of interpersonal skills that occur in a business, organizational, or professional setting.

### **Core Objectives**

- Communication Skills - to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication
- Critical Thinking - to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information
- Teamwork - to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
- Social Responsibility - to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
- Personal Responsibility - to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to demonstrate proficiency in the following areas:

1. **Communication Process:** Understand and apply the communication process.
2. **Communication Systems and Cultures:** Develop an awareness and understanding of communication systems and cultures.
3. **Verbal Communication:** Identify, prepare, and deliver clear messages and presentations.
4. **Nonverbal Communication:** Understand, define, utilize, and interpret various categories of nonverbal communication.
5. **Listening:** Understand the causes of poor listening and realize the organizational and personal benefits of active listening.
6. **Interviewing:** Identify several types of interviews, evaluate effective interview skills, prepare job interview documents, and conduct an effective information gathering interview.
7. **Small Groups:** Identify the characteristics of small groups, identify the steps used for problem solving, and understand leadership tasks and functional and dysfunctional team behaviors.
8. **Public Speaking:** Successfully prepare and deliver multiple credible, confident presentations. Evaluate the speaking skill and content of other speakers.

## **Course Requirements**

1. To read the information assigned, you will be tested on this material, in addition to class lecture/discussion materials on scheduled exams.
2. To take thorough notes and study all lecture material, informational handouts, and assigned readings.
3. To actively participate in class discussions and group activities.
4. To show maturity and professionalism in preparation of assignments and in classroom behavior.
5. To show courteousness to fellow classmates/speakers.
6. To initiate consultations with the instructor whenever assistance is needed regarding class assignments.
7. To appropriately cite information obtained from other sources, both in written and verbal formats. Please refer to the academic honesty section below for further details.
8. To initiate withdrawal from the course if absences become excessive.

## **Required Course Materials**

Textbook:

Davis, Tasha. (2024). Business Communication: Strategies for Success. Open Educational Resources.

The course textbook is free and provided to you in blackboard under course content.

This resource is a collaboration between Austin Community College and Dallas College and was made possible by a grant from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

## **Technical Requirements**

- Desktop or laptop computer
- High speed internet access
- SPC E-mail
- Microsoft Office
- Audio and video capabilities (for watching and listening to course content)
- Web camera and microphone (for video conferencing and recording vlogs)

**Grade Distribution**

<b>Group Work- 100 points</b>	
Group Project	100 Points
<b>Speeches- 300 points</b>	
Introductory Speech	50 Points
Informative Speech	100 Points
Persuasive Speech	100 Points
Impromptu Speech	50 Points
<b>Exams- 250 points</b>	
Exam 1	100 Points
Exam 2	100 Points
Final Exam	50 Points
<b>Peer/Self Evaluations- 100 points</b>	
Informative Speech Peer	20 Points
Informative Speech Self	20 Points
Persuasive Speech Peer	20 Points
Persuasive Speech Self	20 Points
Mock Interview Self Reflection	20 Points
<b>Activities-100 points</b>	
SMART Goals Activity	20 Points
PRCA Activity	20 Points
Informative Speech Outline	20 Points
Persuasive Speech Outline	20 Points
Persuasive Speech PowerPoint	20 Points
<b>Career Development – 150 points</b>	
Mock Interview	50 Points
Resume	50 Points
Cover Letter	50 Points
<b>TOTAL POINTS:</b>	
<b>Extra Credit:</b> Career Research Essay	25 points

**Course Work****Presentations**

Completion of the three presentations (speeches) is a requirement for passing this class. On your scheduled speech dates, you will be presenting various types of presentations. You must be an attentive audience member for other presentations given during your scheduled group time, and you must complete all speeches to pass this course. Points will be deducted from your presentation if you are late, and not an attentive and respectful audience member. The two individual speech assignments are explained in Blackboard. Additional information can be found within the Module sections for the correct chapters.

**Participation/Activities/Attendance**

I expect you to attend class and will take attendance on a regular basis. This will count as part of your participation grade. I understand that life can happen, so as long as you communicate with me, I will do my best to work with you.

You will be asked to engage in discussions and to do learning activities throughout the semester. Some of these activities may be recording personal video blogs. The vlog activities will be weighted more.

### **Exams**

You will take 3 exams on Blackboard. You MUST take the exam by the deadline.

### **Attendance Policy**

- All students enrolled for this course are expected to attend class regularly, be on time, and remain until they are dismissed.
- Roll will be taken regularly.
- If a student is tardy, he/she should speak with the instructor after class to avoid having tardies count toward absences.
- Two (2) tardies will constitute an absence.
- If a student leaves class prior to dismissal of the class, he/she will be counted absent.
- Whenever absences become excessive and minimum course objectives cannot be met, the student should initiate withdrawal from the course.
  - “Excessive absences” can be defined as more than FOUR (4) unexcused absences through the course of the semester.
- The only absences labeled as “excused” are those absences due to participation in school functions, or documentable absences due to illness (doctor’s note required in the next class period), or a death in the family requires the student to be in attendance of a funeral (proof required).
- Students are responsible for all classwork covered during absences from class even in cases in which they can satisfy the instructor that the absence was unavoidable.
- Absences one day over your allotment may lower your final course total by 10 points.
- Each subsequent absence may lower your final course total by 5 points.
- If minimum objectives cannot be met, the student should withdraw from the course.

The department abides by this policy and enforces the following guidelines established for SPCH 1321:

For online/hybrid sections, you MUST attend face-to-face meetings and complete online coursework. If you have more than 1 unexcused absence or miss more than 2 major assignments, you may be dropped from the course.

**\*\*You may be exempt from the final exam if you have perfect attendance or have 850 points at the end of the semester. (When all assignments are completed). \*\***

### **Grading**

You can access your grades on the Blackboard Course Menu (My Grades). Grades will be posted after the due date and after all assignments have been graded. Speech Grading Rubrics will be made available to you when speeches are assigned so that you can prepare for my assessment methods.

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

- To earn an A, you need 895 points
- To earn a B, you need 795 points
- To earn a C, you need 695 points
- To earn a D, you need 595 points
- If your point total is 594 points or less, you will earn an F

If you have questions about or are concerned about a specific grade you earned, you will need to email me or visit me during my office hours to discuss the grade. If you want to appeal a grade you earned on a specific assignment, you have one week after the grade has been posted in Blackboard to approach your instructor about your questions or concerns. After one week, I will consider the matter closed. When you approach me after viewing your grade, you are expected to have revisited the assignment or speech description, the grading rubric, and the feedback provided to you by me.

### **Assignment Submissions**

You will submit all assignments through their designated submission link in Blackboard. You are required to title your assignment files in the following format: "lastname\_firstname\_assignmentname.doc".

### **Late Work/Make Up Work Policy**

Make-up work is NOT guaranteed. When an unavoidable reason for class absence arises, such as illness, an official trip authorized by the college or an official activity, the instructor **may** permit the student to make up work missed. If a student must be absent to represent the college, she/he should advise the instructor beforehand and should have a signed permit from his/her coach or sponsor. In such cases, it is the student's responsibility to complete work missed within a reasonable amount of time as determined by the instructor. Each student must make an appointment with the instructor to decide on make-up work. **Late work may not receive full credit.** An absence on the day that you are scheduled for oral presentations or examinations will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. **If, according to the instructor's discretion, the student is allowed to make up such a presentation or exam, the student will automatically receive a grade drop for the assignment (25-point grade reduction).**

### **Course and Technical Help**

Do not hesitate to call or e-mail me if you have course-related questions. I am here to guide you through the course. I will try to respond to calls and e-mails within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours (about 2 days) over the weekend.

Be aware that the Instructional Technology office and Blackboard both recommend using a browser other than Internet Explorer when using Blackboard.

Please realize that this is not a computer class, so our content is business and professional communication, not Windows or Word processing. I can answer any questions about the course content or assignments, but I will be no help with technical problems.

### **Blackboard Support**

For Blackboard support you may refer to the following resources:

1. When you log into Blackboard (BB), at the very top of the page, you will see a question mark icon with the word help next to it. Click on that icon.
2. You may also contact  
Information Systems  
Ext. 2600  
Direct: 806-716-2600  
[blackboard@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:blackboard@southplainscollege.edu)  
[helpdesk@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:helpdesk@southplainscollege.edu)

### **Server Problems**

When the Blackboard server needs downtime for maintenance, the Blackboard administrator will post an announcement in your course informing the time and date. If the server experiences unforeseen problems your course instructor will send an email.

### **Lost/Corrupt/Disappeared Files**

You must keep/save a copy of every project/assignment on an external disk or personal computer. In the event of any kind of failure (e.g., Blackboard server crash or virus infection, students own computer crashes, loss of files in cyberspace, etc.) or any contradictions/problems, I may/will request you to resubmit the files. In other words, if you submit a document to me, and I do not receive it (lost in cyberspace) or it is corrupted when I open it, you need to resend it to me, corrected, with little or no “downtime” in regard to the timeline for submission.

## **SPC Tutoring Services**

### **SPC Tutors**

Tutoring is FREE for all currently enrolled students. Make an appointment or drop-in for help at any SPC location or online! Visit the link below to learn more about how to book an appointment, view the tutoring schedule, and view tutoring locations.

<http://www.southplainscollege.edu/exploreprograms/artsandsciences/teacheredtutoring.php>

### **Brainfuse**

You also have 180 FREE minutes of tutoring with Brainfuse each week, and your hours reset every Monday morning. Log into Blackboard, and click on the tools option from the left-hand menu bar. Click on the Brainfuse link and you will automatically be logged in for free tutoring. You may access Brainfuse tutors during the following times:

Monday – Thursday: 8 pm-8 am

6pm Friday – 8am Monday morning

**For questions regarding tutoring, please email [tutoring@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:tutoring@southplainscollege.edu) or call 806-716-224**

## **Intellectual Exchange Statement**

In South Plains College courses, the instructor will establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group difference and encourages engagement and interaction. Understanding and respecting multiple experiences and perspectives will serve to challenge and stimulate all of us to learn about others, about the larger world and about ourselves. By promoting intellectual exchange, we will not only mirror society as it is, but also model society as it should and can be.

## **Disabilities Statement**

Students with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of the individual's disability to the Disability Services Office. For more information, call or visit the Disability Services Office at Levelland (Student Health & Wellness Office) 806-716-2577, Lubbock Centers (located at the Lubbock Downtown Center) 806-716-4675, or Plainview Center (Main Office) 806-716-4302.

## **Non-Discrimination Statement**

South Plains College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Vice President for Student Affairs, South Plains College, 1401 College Avenue, Box 5, Levelland, TX 79336. Phone number 806-716-2360.

## **Title IX Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations Statement (Rev. 6/11/2024)**

If you are pregnant or parenting (paternal or maternal) with children under the age of 18 per Texas Education Code 51.982 and Title IX you have a right to reasonable accommodations to help continue your education. To activate accommodations you must submit a Title IX pregnancy and parenting accommodations request, along with specific medical documentation, to the Health and Wellness Center. Once approved, notification will be sent to the student and instructors. It is the student's responsibility to work with the instructor to arrange

accommodations. Contact the Health and Wellness Center at 806-716-2529 or email [r canon@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:r canon@southplainscollege.edu) for assistance.

### **CARE (Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation) Team**

South Plains College is committed to ensuring the safety, health, and well-being of its students and community. To support its campus community SPC has a CARE Team. This is a dedicated group of campus professionals responsible for assessing and responding to students who could benefit from academic, emotional, or psychological support, as well as those presenting risk to the health or safety of the community. If you see someone experiencing challenges, appearing distressed, posing a threat to their safety or someone else's safety, or causing a significant disruption to the SPC community, please submit a CARE Team referral. You may also submit a referral for yourself if you would like additional support. NOTE: In cases where a person's behavior poses an imminent threat to you or another, contact 911.

### **Campus Concealed Carry Statement**

Texas Government Code 411.2031, et al. authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in South Plains College buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and South Plains College policy, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations and Frequently Asked Questions, please refer to the Campus Carry page at: <http://www.southplainscollege.edu/campuscarry.php>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all South Plains College campuses. Report violations to the College Police Department at 806-716-2396 or 9-1-1.

### **COVID-19 (Rev. 8/17/2024)**

If you are experiencing any of the following symptoms, please do not attend class and either seek medical attention or get tested for COVID-19.

- Fever or chills
- Cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Muscles or body aches
- New loss of taste and smell
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Please also notify DeEtte Edens, FNP-C, Associate Director of Health & Wellness, at [dedens@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:dedens@southplainscollege.edu) or 806-716-2376

1. SPC will follow the recommended 3-day isolation period for individuals that test positive.
  - a. **Please note that day 0 is the date of positive test. Day 1 begins the first full day after the date of positive result.**
2. COVID reporting
  - a. Please have students and employees notify DeEtte Edens, FNP-C if they have tested positive to verify dates before returning to class or work.
  - b. The home tests are sufficient but students need to submit a photo of the positive result. The date of test must be written on the test result and an ID included in the photo. If tested elsewhere (clinic, pharmacy, etc.), please submit a copy of the doctor's note or email notification. Results may be emailed to DeEtte Edens, FNP-C at [dedens@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:dedens@southplainscollege.edu).
  - c. A student is clear to return to class without further assessment if they have completed:
    - i. The 3-day isolation period, symptoms have improved and

- ii. they are afebrile for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- d. **HEATH SCIENCE PROGRAMS ONLY:** Due to clinical requirements, students in health science programs returning to class or clinical from a positive test will be required to wear a mask in the health sciences areas including offices, hallways, and classrooms, as well as in the clinical setting for a 10-day period from date of positive test.
- 3. Please instruct students and employees to communicate with DeEtte Edens prior to their return date if still symptomatic at the end of the 3-day isolation.
- 4. Exposed individuals will not be required to quarantine. If exposed, SPC does request individuals closely monitor themselves. If an individual does become symptomatic, please do not attend class or work and be tested.

## **Artificial Intelligence Statement**

### **Purpose of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Applications:**

AI applications are advanced language models designed to aid and engage in meaningful conversations, as well as, generate and revise content. AI is intended to supplement learning, stimulate critical thinking, and enhance academic discourse. However, its use comes with certain responsibilities.

### **Academic Integrity:**

Using AI to generate academic work, including essays, reports, or assignments, without proper attribution is a violation of SPC academic integrity policies. Plagiarism undermines the learning process and is strictly prohibited. Students must ensure that their work reflects their own ideas, research, synthesis, and analysis and appropriately cites all sources, including AI.

### **Collaboration and Consultation:**

While AI can be a valuable resource, it is essential to strike a balance between seeking assistance and maintaining personal responsibility. Collaboration with peers, consulting instructors, and utilizing other approved learning resources should be prioritized. Overreliance on AI for solutions without actively engaging in the learning process is discouraged and can be grounds for academic integrity violations. Utilizing AI as a tool for brainstorming or research is allowed but the writing should be the student's own work and thoughts.

### **Critical Thinking and Originality:**

AI usage can provide suggestions and information, but it is essential to critically evaluate the responses and exercise independent thought. Relying solely on AI for answers deprives students of the opportunity to develop their analytical and problem-solving skills. In assignments where originality, creativity, and independent thinking are valued, AI would be detrimental to the student learning process. Critical thinking and originality emphasize the importance of independent thinking in all academic endeavors as part of the student's learning experience apart from outside influence and offers the student the opportunity to refine their unique, individual voice through academic discourse with other students and faculty.

### **Ethical Use and Bias Awareness:**

AI is trained on large amounts of data from the internet, which may include biased or inaccurate information. Be mindful of the potential for bias and critically evaluate the responses provided by AI. Therefore, when using AI, just like with using any other database, students must verify that the information is from reliable sources, question any potential biases, and ensure that the information and sources used in the paper are neutral, peer-reviewed sources.

### **Responsible Engagement:**

Students should engage with AI in a respectful and responsible manner and avoid using offensive language, discriminatory remarks, or engaging in any form of harassment or inappropriate behavior. Students should also uphold the standards of respectful communication in addressing both AI and fellow classmates.

### **Compliance with South Plains College Policies:**

Policies regarding the appropriate use of AI in South Plains College courses are set by instructional departments and individual instructors. Appropriate use of AI may range from strict prohibition to assignments they may require the use of AI. Misusing or violating the guidelines outlined in this syllabus warning may result in disciplinary action, including academic penalties. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the specific course policies regarding the use of AI and adhere to them throughout the semester.

***Remember, AI can be a tool to support your learning in certain courses and assignments, but it cannot replace the critical thinking, creativity, and independent work that are integral to your overall academic growth.***