MSE 8200 Syllabus

Engineering Communication MSE 8200, Section AA, 1 credit

Fall 2026

Instructor Information

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General Course Information

Description

This course focuses on advanced presentation skills that the students will develop by speaking on topics related to their own research work. Students will gain experience with both delivering and evaluating presentations. Equal emphasis will be placed on achieving excellence in content, delivery, and slide design. Each presentation will have a stated objective, such as informing others of one's research (for example, at a professional conference), or explaining highly technical information to a general audience (both in a standard-length presentation and short form). Each presentation will be recorded so that students can evaluate their own presentations and assess their progress.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Create (know how to structure) and deliver conference-quality research presentations that effectively communicate research questions, methods, and results to peers.
- Adapt technical content for nontechnical audiences in presentations that prioritize clarity and audience understanding.
- Design slides that enhance (rather than undermine) the story told in a technical oral presentation.
- Critically evaluate peers' oral presentations and visual design, providing constructive feedback on content, delivery, and slides.

Required Course Materials

None.

Grading Policy:

Though peer evaluations will be done on many assignments, the peer review score will not be considered when assigning the grade. I will be the final determiner of the grades for any in-class work, quizzes, tests, presentations, and papers. Active participation is part of your grade, which includes all in-class activities or out of class assignments, including peer reviews, self-evaluations, and all formal assignments. There will be no final.

Final grade will be based on the following assignment groups:

Attendance	10%
Warm up exercises	10%
Seminar speaker critique	10%
Elevator Pitch	10%
Single-slide presentation	5%
3MT	10%
Presentation for non-technical audience	17.5%
Conference-style presentation	17.5%
Poster + Pitch	10%
Total	100%

A>90; B>80; C>70; D>60

Description of Graded Components

Overall, students will need to be active participants in the classroom. They will be responsible for delivering several individual presentations as well as evaluating their peers' presentations for content, delivery, and slide design. A standard evaluation sheet will be provided, and it must be filled out during each set of presentations. Additionally, each student will be required to submit a self-assessment write-up. Students have the option of scheduling individual conferences with me to discuss their presentations. Other more spontaneous professional speaking skills and practice will be included in the course. There is no final exam.

Conference-style presentation and a presentation for nontechnical audiences with slides will be both 10 minutes (min: 9 minutes, max: 11 minutes) long. In addition, each student will give a ~60-second elevator pitch. These will be done without slides or any supporting material, and a 3-minute thesis (3MT) talk on their work, accompanied by one slide, for general audience. Finally, students will also design a scientific poster in the format suitable for a presentation at a professional conference.

Each presentation will be recorded so that students can critique their own performance for their self-evaluation write-up. On presentation days, students will be required to come to class with cell phones that are sufficiently charged and have a sufficient storage capacity.

Students will be required to keep before and after versions of their presentations and send them to me when they submit their self-evaluation.

Course Policies

Electronic Devices in Class

This is a small interactive class during which you will be expected to be fully engaged in discussion. Only use your devices to take notes (and this will rarely be necessary), to take pictures of the white board, or to do some other class activity that is requested. Please **do not email, text, or otherwise do non-class activity on your devices**. I expect that the majority of the time your devices will be stowed during class.

Attendance

Attendance is required for all classes. Missing class means you miss assignments that it may or may not be possible to make up. Students who know that they will miss a class to attend a conference or out of town professional interview must inform me well before the date. Each unexcused absence will lower a student's final grade by ½ a letter grade. Excused absences require documentation, and a student may only have 2 excused absences during a semester.

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review Georgia Tech's Honor Code and the student Code of Conduct.

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. The Student-Faculty Expectations articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Collaboration, Group Work, and Use of Generative AI

Collaborative work is not just allowed but encouraged in this course. Indeed, it lies at its very core. The use of large language models (LLMs) to do your homework is not allowed, unless you are instructed to do so. There are some instances in which LLMs can be used productively in writing (and I will alert you to those instances and explicitly direct you to use LLMs in those cases). However, for the most part, learning happens through an active engagement of your brain, i.e., through what your brain does when you perform an analysis, not through (simply reading) its results. If you're curious why, check out this study (called "Your Brain on ChatGPT: Accumulation of Cognitive Debt When Using an AI Assistant for Essay Writing Task")

Extensions, Late Assignments, & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams

Some assignments, such as post-presentation reflections, can be made up/submitted late, although a late penalty will apply. However, assignments that form the basis for in-class work cannot be made up; if you fail to submit them before the start of class, you will receive a zero that cannot be replaced.

Inclement Weather and Digital Learning Days

In case of inclement weather, the class will, as a rule, meet online (Zoom or Teams).