

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title: Communication Theory and Pedagogy

Section: LMC 3813-CK

Credits 3 credits

Semester and Academic Year Summer 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Caitlin Kelly

Email: caitlin.kelly@gatech.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Georgia Tech alumni repeatedly cite the importance of communication skills in their professional and personal lives. Addressing this need, in this course you will study how people learn to communicate, particularly through writing, and learn strategies to help others improve their communicative abilities. We will achieve these purposes through several means:

- the study of those theories and research methods that have informed what we currently know about how writing and communication works (and doesn't work!);
- the study of the history and development of writing and communication education;
- the investigation of your own writing and learning strategies;
- the observation of one-to-one instruction in the Naugle Writing and Communication Center; and
- the design of a research project intended to improve the practice or deepen our understanding of communication at Georgia Tech.

Students who successfully complete this course (with an A or B course grade) will be eligible to apply for paid employment as peer tutors in the Naugle Writing and Communication Center. ***NOTE: For most students, this course counts as a free elective. If you are expecting to receive another type of credit, check with your academic advisor first.***

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- explain historical developments in writing and communication instruction in higher education in the United States;
- identify challenges to the teaching of writing and communication today, including the challenges writers face;
- explain the relationship between writing and thinking;
- provide clear and constructive peer feedback that supports the development of both better writing/communication and better writers and communicators;

- deploy effective tools and techniques for revising and editing their own work; and
- demonstrate an understanding of how research on writing and communication is conducted, including study design and methods, as well as ethical considerations related to human subjects research.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

All readings will be available through the GT Library or our Canvas course site. As a fully online course, in addition to regular internet access, you will need to be able to create and post documents, audio, and videos to Canvas in order to complete assignments. You will also need to be able to participate in online tutoring (synchronous or asynchronous) offered through the Naugle Writing and Communication Center.

GRADING POLICY

This course uses a specifications grading system. Everything you will do is designed to help you wrestle with what you are reading and learning. In other words, the assignments and class discussions are part of the learning process, not evaluations or assessments of what you did or did not learn. **To that end, final grades will be determined based on the work you complete at a satisfactory level.** You will receive feedback on each assignment you submit as well as an assessment of “complete” or “incomplete.” Each assignment will have a detailed instruction guide that outlines what you need to do to successfully complete an assignment, and you may revise and resubmit work as often as time allows in order to receive a “complete” assessment. **If you do not complete an assignment to a satisfactory level (receive a "complete" for it), you will receive no credit.** What constitutes Satisfactory/Complete work will be clearly described for every assignment.

DESCRIPTION OF GRADED COMPONENTS

Reading Annotations (20%)

Students will annotate each week's assigned readings using Perusall, a collaborative reading tool integrated into our Canvas course site.

NWCC Sessions + Critical Reflection (20%)

Students are required to make use of the Naugle Writing and Communication Center, completing 2 tutoring appointments online (both synchronous video and asynchronous written feedback appointment options are available). Following the completion of their 2 tutoring appointments, students will compose a critical reflection essay.

Tutoring Simulation, Reflection, and Analysis (10%)

Students will provide written feedback on a simulated writing assignment and then describe a plan for providing feedback in person, analyzing the differences in the methods of feedback and reflecting on their choices.

Source Summaries (10%)*

Students will select a broad topic of interest relating to the teaching or learning of writing, and then identify, read, and summarize 4 peer-reviewed articles on that topic.

Research Narrative (15%)*

Students will use their sources summaries to write a narrative of their research process, emphasizing what they learned through their reading and how that has impacted their understanding of the topic.

Presentation (15%)*

Students will transform their research narrative into a recorded presentation using the Ignite format.

Research Study Proposal + CITI training (10%)

Students will complete human subjects research ethics training and then develop and propose a research study designed to help us better understand writing and communication at Georgia Tech.

**The source summaries, research narrative, and presentation are linked assignments, meaning you must complete them in a series.*

COURSE POLICIES**Attendance and Engagement**

In this fully online course, there are no class meetings to attend, and students may complete their work at any time during the week (course weeks begin on Monday and end on Sunday). Attendance is defined as active engagement with the course on a weekly basis. Active engagement includes annotating assigned readings and providing peer feedback; submitting assignments; and communicating with the course instructor by email, during office hours, or during a scheduled meeting.

Course Completion

Failure to actively engage in the course on a weekly basis and/or submit assignments on time—or communicate with the instructor when unable to do those things—may result in failure of the course, as determined by the instructor.

Late and Missing Work

Life happens and failing to submit a paper at a specific time on a specific day does not indicate anything about your learning and understanding of the course material. Most work will not be considered late if received within 2 days of the due date. If you need more than 2 extra days to complete an assignment, email me and we will work out a solution together; however, all assignments must be submitted within two weeks of the assigned deadline. Additionally, assignments (aside from those due during finals week) will not be accepted after the final day of class.

AI Policy

Tools like ChatGPT are only as good as the materials they are trained on and the prompts we give them—it's like autopilot on a plane, which requires human input and constant monitoring. More often than not, ChatGPT and the like produce work that is at best impersonal and at worst inaccurate. And, because these tools don't cite their work, there are ethical questions involved in using what they produce, even when *you* acknowledge and cite *your* use of these tools. As such, in this class, the use of Generative AI tools is restricted to knowledge checks for studying, brainstorming and developing topics and research questions. You should NEVER submit writing that has been generated by or edited using AI tools. Work submitted that has been created or edited using AI will not be considered complete/satisfactory. Writing is hard and this class is designed to explore why that is and what we can do to become better writers and support others in doing the same. As such, struggle in the writing process is a key part of the experience...and why this class uses a specifications grading system that allows you to revise your work as much as needed.

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 an 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 email 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.

Syllabus Modifications

This syllabus may be modified as the semester progresses to meet course outcomes and address the needs of members of the class.