

LMC 3813: Introduction to Communication

FALL 2026 | 90670 | SKILES 002 | TUES/THURS 9:30AM–10:45AM

professor: Dr. Allegra W. Smith (she/her/hers)
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office: Skiles 324
drop-in hours: Thursdays 2pm–3:30pm or [by appointment](#)

General Information:

(OFFICIAL) COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Introduces students to rhetoric through exploring theories and research in communication, discourse, and writing studies.

DR. ALLEGRA'S COURSE DESCRIPTION:

How do we know what we know about communication? This course focuses on a variety of research methods used by communication researchers to understand how knowledge gets made, and to teach students how to use those methods themselves. We'll begin by exploring rhetoric, the groundwork for contemporary persuasive practice, before delving into existing research in the fields of communication and writing studies. You'll conclude the semester by designing your own pilot study to put into practice your growing knowledge of how communication is studied, and to join the conversation with your own contributions to knowledge in this field.

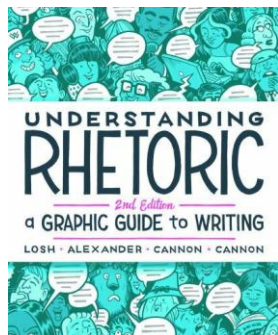
COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of LMC 3813, students will be able to...

- Articulate and apply key theories of rhetoric, communication, writing, and discourse in both historic and contemporary contexts
- Use primary and secondary research methods to study communication
- Convey analytical findings clearly and concretely through both written and oral communication

PREREQUISITE:

Undergraduate semester level ENGL 1102 (English Composition II), minimum grade of D.



Required Materials:

Losh, E., Alexander, J., Cannon, K., & Cannon, Z. (2017). *Understanding rhetoric: A graphic guide to writing* (2nd edition). Bedford/St. Martin's. (\$5–\$60; please be sure to buy the 2nd edition).

All required reading and viewing for this course will be made available on Canvas or through the [Georgia Tech Library](#) resources.

You are also expected to purchase two necessary items to ensure that you are able to complete course assignments:

1. **A paper notebook suitable for taking notes on course readings.** I recommend 5"x7" or larger size, with 80 pages or more, to take notes on readings for the 16-week semester. The cost of this notebook could be as low as 35–97¢ at [Walmart](#), \$3.00–\$18.98 at the [Barnes & Noble @ Georgia Tech campus bookstore](#), or \$2.97 and up on Amazon.
2. **Enough pencils or pens to take notes in your notebook, as well as to write your responses to paper reading quizzes over the course of the semester.** I recommend at least two writing utensils, just in case one breaks, runs out of ink, etc. The cost of these writing utensils could be as low as 47–92¢ at [Walmart](#), \$3.98–\$12.98 at the [Barnes & Noble @ Georgia Tech campus bookstore](#), or \$4.36 and up on Amazon.

If you anticipate being unable to purchase these supplies due to cost issues, it is your responsibility to notify Dr. Allegra no later than the Friday of week 2 of the semester so that she can secure them for you.

Reading quizzes will be open-note, but the only notes allowed will be those you have handwritten in your notebook. Notes may not be shared among students: you must write your notes individually. If you need to type or voice-dictate notes because of a disability, you must also notify Dr. Allegra by this deadline to secure accommodations. Dr. Allegra will not provide pencils or pens on quiz days. You must bring your own writing utensils. Failure to have a pen or pencil on a quiz day will result in a grade of 0 for that quiz.

Assignments & Grading:

Note that these are just brief descriptions. Each project has multiple required components; full assignments will be provided on Canvas. See the course calendar for due dates. Assignments subject to change; any changes will be announced on Canvas, with a new calendar uploaded.

Reading Quizzes (10% of final grade) To ensure that students complete assigned readings, there will be 8 quizzes over the course of the semester. These quizzes will be unannounced, and make-up assignments will only be given if arrangements are made with the professor prior to the missed class. See the “Required Materials” section of this syllabus for information on allowed notes for these quizzes. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped, thus only 7 will count toward your grade. *If 85% or more of the class completes the CIOS at the end of the semester, then the lowest 2 quiz scores will be dropped.*

Group Rhetoric Presentation (10% of final grade) Deliver a 7-to-10-minute presentation, with 2 other classmates, defining a rhetorical term, tracing its history, and providing examples of how it’s useful to us as communicators today.

Review of Research (15% of final grade) Identify a relevant topic in communication, writing studies, or rhetoric, build a brief bibliography of existing research, and write a comparison of two texts that approach the subject.

Design of Research Project and Pilot Study (25% of final grade) Investigate your chosen topic in more depth by developing a research question, writing a review of the literature, and proposing a pilot study that you can complete this semester to investigate it. After conducting your pilot study, write up the results in a brief report.

Research Poster, Pitch, and Handout (25% of final grade) Share your study by preparing a research poster with accompanying handout and talk. We'll showcase these posters in class at the end of the semester.

Reflection and Assessment (5% of final grade) By assessing your learning during this semester, you will consider your own work and take stock of your growth.

Short Assignments, Classroom Participation, and Professional Ethos (10% of final grade) Participating in classroom activities, writing short assignments, workshopping classmates' drafts, and engaging in other work will form this component of your course grade.

FINAL GRADE POLICY:

I do not round up grades or offer extra credit. The grading scale for this course is as follows:

A	B	C	D	F
100%–90%	89%–80%	79%–70%	69%–60%	59% or below
4.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	0.0

LATE WORK:

Let me know if you feel the need to submit something late; I'd rather you turn something in late and well done than on time and half-baked, but you need to get permission from me first. Assignments are due at 11:59pm Eastern Time on the specified date, unless otherwise noted.

WHAT IF I GET STUCK?

If you're struggling with course content, projects, or deadlines, please talk with me sooner rather than later! You can always stop by my office hours, ask to schedule an appointment with me, or send me an email. I'm here to help. The [Naugle Writing and Communication Center](#) is also an excellent resource for undergraduate and graduate students, offering consultations on writing projects, as well as job documents, presentations, multimedia, and more.

Attendance & Participation:

Participation is essential in this course. Come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Plan on expressing your ideas, frustrations, questions, and confusions, even if you're not able to articulate them without some hesitation—sometimes, ambivalent or ambiguous remarks spark the liveliest discussions! Although your participation will not be explicitly graded, you will be evaluated on your preparedness for class. I will use my assessment of your participation to manage borderline grades; thus, it will help you to attend class, share your views on readings, and participate in activities. If you repeatedly arrive late to class, expect that your grade will also be lowered. If you are concerned about

this assessment at any time, you can contact me to request a “snapshot” of your current grade or discuss ways to improve your participation.

You have six (6) permitted absences regardless of documentation or excuse; for each absence after six (6), your final course grade will decrease by 5%. Absences will be recorded through the Attendance function on Canvas; it is your responsibility to keep up with your absence count in the class. It is also important to come to class on time. If you are more than 15 minutes late for class, you will be marked absent for that class period. If you are absent, you miss valuable class time with your colleagues, as well as instructions for assignments that will help you complete quality work. If you miss class, you are still responsible for obtaining class notes and completing work you missed.

Because this class is discussion-based, it is also important that each student be respectful of their classmates and classroom environment by refraining from talking while someone else has the floor. Side conversations make it difficult for others to hear, concentrate, and participate, and they are disruptive to our learning community. **If I need to repeatedly address disruptive talking during class, I will ask the student(s) involved to leave for the remainder of the class period.**

Technology Requirements:

To participate in course activities, the following technologies are required:

- A laptop or desktop computer (not all course activities can be completed on a mobile device)
- A high-speed internet connection, which you will access daily for course messages, as well as to use Canvas
- A microphone and/or webcam, for video conferencing
- A program that can open PDFs (such as Acrobat or Preview)
- Microsoft Office or Google Docs (please save documents in .doc, .docx, or .pdf formats—no PAGES files, please!)
 - You will need the desktop version of Microsoft Office (not the in-browser app) to complete some course activities and assignments. If you do not have Office downloaded, you can download it for free using your GT Office 365 account.
- If you haven't already, you should also create a free account on [Canva](https://www.canva.com) for designing content

Make sure that technology use during class is not a distraction to yourself or others. Do not take phone calls, scroll social media, catch Pokémon, snap, livestream, or do work for other courses unless you have made arrangements with me ahead of time (due to an emergency or urgent issue). **TL;DR If technology isn't supporting classwork, turn it off.**

Copyright and Intellectual Property:

All videos, documents, and content in this course may only be used in and for this class. No video, document, or content may be downloaded or captured for personal use beyond this class without the written permission of its owner. Likewise, you must seek permission from the instructor before recording (video or audio) the instructor or any portion of class.

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. See the [Institute Rules and Regulations](#) for 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.

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. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit the [Honor Code Policy website](#) or the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing 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.

GENERATIVE AI POLICY (CHATGPT, COPILOT, CLAUDE, ETC.)

This course involves writing, communication, design, and critical thinking. Generative AI agents such as ChatGPT, Copilot, Claude, and others present great opportunities for learning and for communicating. However, AI cannot learn or communicate for you, and so cannot meet the course requirements for you.

In this course, using generative AI tools in the work of the course (including assignments, discussions, ungraded work, etc.) is allowed only in instances specified by your professor.

As with any technology, generative AI tools need to be used critically and according to academic and professional expectations. Thus, in instances in which your instructor allows generative AI tool use, you are expected to adhere to these principles:

Responsibility: You are responsible for the work you submit. In instances in which your instructor allows generative AI tool use, this means that any work you submit should be your own, with any AI assistance appropriately disclosed (see “Transparency” below) and any AI-generated content appropriately cited (see “Documentation” below). This also means you must ensure that any factual statements produced by a generative AI tool are true and that any references or citations produced by the AI tool are correct.

Transparency: Any generative AI tools you use in the work of the course should be clearly acknowledged as indicated by the instructor. This work includes not only when you use content directly produced by a generative AI tool but also when you use a generative AI tool in the process of composition (for example, for brainstorming, outlining, or translation purposes).

Documentation: You should cite any content generated by an AI tool as you would when quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing ideas, text, images, or other content made by other people. If you do not

clearly attribute AI-generated work, and/or attempt to pass it off as your own, you will receive a reduced or failing grade for the assignment.

Using generative AI tools at times not allowed by the instructor will be considered an infraction of the Georgia Tech Honor Code subject to investigation by the Office of Student Integrity. Likewise, using generative AI tools in the course without adhering to these principles will be considered an infraction of the Georgia Tech Honor Code subject to investigation by the Office of Student Integrity.

This policy has been adapted from the Georgia Tech Writing and Communication Program (WCP).

Accessibility:

If you are a student with learning needs that require accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404) 894-2563 or via [their website](#) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also email me within the first week of the semester to schedule an appointment to discuss your learning needs (you don't have to have a documented disability with the Office of Disability Services to do this!).

Mental Health Note:

If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, or in need of support, student mental health services are available. For help, contact the Center for Mental Health Care & Resources at (404) 894-2575 or [its website](#), or through its counselors located at the Charles A. Smithgall, Jr. Student Services Building during business hours.

Basic Needs Statement:

Any student who faces challenges securing food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in this course is encouraged to contact the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) (Student Engagement & Well-Being) and/or the Center for Mental Health Care & Resources for support. Additionally, the [Klemis Kitchen](#) (in four locations on campus) offers food pantry services and meals. You can also notify me if you are comfortable doing so; this will enable me to connect with you with any resources I may have access to.

Nondiscrimination Policies:

The Georgia Institute of Technology has a commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, ancestry, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, age, disability, genetics, or veteran status. If you or someone you know believes you are experiencing any type of discriminatory behavior, even if none of the above policies have been violated yet, please consider reaching out to the Equal Opportunity, Compliance, and Conflict Management (EOCCM) team to learn more about possible supportive measures, resolution pathways, and on-and-off campus resources. The [EOCCM website](#)

has more information on [reporting options](#) for students, faculty, and staff, as well as [resources for support](#).

Limits to Confidentiality:

Written and spoken materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the Institute's student record policies. However, students should be aware that Institute employees may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of GT community members and others. As the professor for this course, I must report the following information to other Institute offices (including the university Title IX Coordinator and Police Department) if you share it with me:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if maltreatment happened when you were a child;
- Allegations of sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, or sexual harassment; and
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting, you are encouraged to make an appointment with the [Center for Mental Health Care & Resources](#). If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:

- [Report an Incident of Sexual Misconduct](#)
- [Georgia Tech's Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Campus and Community Resources for Sexual Assault, Rape, Dating or Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment, Stalking, and Related Issues](#)

Some course language and activities adapted from Andre Brock, Danielle Nicole DeVoss, and Bradley Dilger.