# Introduction to Communication - Fall 2025 \*

**Professor Sonandre, dsonandre@tacomacc.edu\***

**CMST&101 15 OL Section 45687 | 5 Credits\***

**Dates of quarter –Start date Sept. 22 – Dec. 11, 20245**

**Canvas Class Direct Link: https://tacomacc.instructure.com/courses/2657227**

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## General Instruction Information\*

### Professor Information\*

Email: dsonandre@tacomacc.edu, Telephone number for messages: 360.460.4399. Bldg 18 Rm 202

Communication/Office Hour weekly – **Please make an appointment**:

9-9:45am Mondays via ZOOM – find the link in the Canvas Classroom Sept. 29 – Dec. 1

PLEASE email instructor first before leaving a message, emailing is the quickest way to communicate

### Welcome Message\*

Welcome to Introduction to Communication! I am looking forward to having you in my class this quarter. I was once a student here at TCC, experiencing what it was like to be new to college. It can be confusing and overwhelming, but if we work together, we can make this a great quarter. I’m here to help you succeed. If you feel worried about your learning and/or performance in this course, please contact me. I am happy to listen and strategize solutions that will improve your learning and performance. **CHECK IN DAILY.**

### Communication Policy\*

My preferred method of communication with you is email, which I check frequently. You can email me at any time, but you may not receive a response outside regular business hours and up to 48 hours if you email me on Thursday since I may not see the email until Monday. Business days are Monday–Friday, except for holidays.

Please set Canvas so that it sends you a message when I make a comment on your work. To do this, go to Canvas>Account>Notifications>Course Activities>Submission Comments. Click on the check mark for immediate notification to your home email or text, depending on what you prefer. You may also want to look at the other possible notifications and see what you would like to receive.

## General Class Information\*

### Class Information\*

Introduction to Communication – CMST&101

### Course Modality\*

Online Only – this class has NO prearranged times or dates to meet in person.

### Schedule and Location\*

This class is held in Canvas, a list of dates can be found in the syllabus as well as the calendar.

### Catalog Description\*

**Introduction to Communication**

A survey of fundamental principles of communication theory. Students are introduced to verbal and nonverbal communication, effective listening, interpersonal communication, small group discussion as well as culture and gender factors in communication. Written assignments, examinations and informal oral presentations are included.

We will read, write-about, and discuss texts that not only build our knowledge but also challenge our ideas about communication, language, and identity. You will write some, but you will also learn to look at your own writing in context, to integrate what you bring to the classroom, and to grow professionally and academically. My hope is that this course offers opportunities to express your cultural and linguistic identities in ways that sustain you and your community, and to learn to be a better communicator in various relationships. In a general sense, this CMST class is a survey of the Communication Studies discipline. If you have an interest in the Communication Studies specialization or have questions about an AA or bachelor’s degree in Communication Studies, be sure to ask.

### Prerequisites\*

None

### Textbooks & Supplemental Materials\*

### There is not a required textbook to purchase for this section. The class will be taught using Open Education Resources

### Technology Required\*

This is a fully online course meaning that our course materials are available online via Canvas. You will need regular access to a computer and internet. Minimal assignments can be completed on your phone while most are easier if done from a desktop, laptop, or tablet. If you need support using technology or learning how to use Canvas, please visit the Information Commons in Building 16 on the first floor at the end of the hallway.

## Learning Outcomes\*

Learning outcomes are what you will know by the end of the course if you complete the assignments and participate in class sessions. These learning outcomes align with the Specialization Learning Outcomes for a specialization in psychology. However, this class aligns with many specializations and can help you work towards your degree, even if it’s not in psychology. To learn more about specializations at TCC and their corresponding learning outcomes, visit the [College Catalog](https://www.tacomacc.edu/academics-programs/collegecatalog).

## Degree Learning Outcomes (DLO)

Tacoma Community College has identified six college-wide student-learning outcomes that form the foundation of our educational emphasis:

1. Core of Knowledge (COK): Demonstrate a basic knowledge of each of the distribution areas (Written Communication, Humanities, Quantitative Skills, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences; or, as applicable, specific professional/technical programs), integrate knowledge across disciplines, and apply this knowledge to academic, occupational, civic and personal endeavors.
2. Communication (COM): Listen, speak, read, and write effectively and use nonverbal and technological means to make connections between self and others.
3. Critical Thinking & Problem Solving (CRT): Compare, analyze, and evaluate information and ideas, and use sound thinking skills to solve problems.
4. Information & Information Technology (IIT): Locate, evaluate, retrieve, and ethically use relevant and current information of appropriate authority for both academic and personal applications.
5. Living & Working Cooperatively/Valuing Differences (LWC): Respectfully acknowledge diverse points of view and draw upon the knowledge as well as experience of others to collaborate in a multicultural and complex world.
6. Responsibility & Ethics (RES): Demonstrate an understanding of what constitutes responsible and ethical behavior toward individuals, the community, and the environment.

# Program Learning Objectives (PLO)

1. Craft, develop, and support a specific, debatable thesis. DLO: 1, 2, 3
2. Draft and refine a well-organized essay, speech, or other forms of communication appropriate to context and audience. DLO: 1, 2, 3
3. Read critically and research effectively to support thesis. DLO: 3, 4
4. Use appropriate writing and or communication strategies, standard grammar, and academic documentation conventions. DLO: 1, 2
5. Demonstrate ethical standards in all phases of the writing and or communication process to include using collaboration within academically appropriate guidelines. DLO: 5, 6

### Course Learning Outcomes\*

I have designed the class intentionally to meet these learning outcomes. If at any point during the quarter you think you are not on track to meet these learning outcomes, please email me so I can help.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Recognize the elements of the communication process. PLO: 3, 5
2. Describe and categorize the elements of the listening process. PLO: 2, 5
3. Explain how the various elements of nonverbal communication influence the perception process. PLO: 3,5
4. Describe effective conflict resolution management skills. PLO: 3, 5
5. Appraise how socio-cultural factors affect the communication process.

PLO: 2, 3, 5

### Instructional Methods Used

In this class, I use a mixture of discussion, self-reflection work, and group work activities. You can expect to:

* be engaged in frequent classroom activities to build on the readings, activities, and/or homework you have done for each class;
* work in small groups during class and for those groups to change on a regular basis; and to
* ask your instructor for clarifications, rather than expecting lectures.

## Professor and Student Expectations

Everyone has the right to be addressed by the name and pronouns that correspond to their gender identity. Class rosters don't list gender or pronouns, so you may be asked to indicate the pronouns you use so that I don't make assumptions based on your name and/or appearance/self-presentation. However, you are not obligated to share your pronouns. If you use a chosen name, please let me know.

## Chosen names and pronouns\*

Chosen names and pronouns are to always be respected in the classroom. Mistakes in addressing one another may happen, so I encourage an environment of seriousness and openness to correction and learning. Thank you.

### Professor Expectations\*

Respect is fundamental in creating a conducive learning environment. In all my classes I have a commitment to creating a positive and respectful environment of trust. I challenge each student, yes you, to push through current comfort zones but to always maintain value and respect for oneself as well as for one’s peers.

As your professor, we will work to create an atmosphere that will encourage and support your mastery of course concepts. As such, objectives for which I will strive to meet include to:

* Get to know you and what your goals are for this class.
* Meet with you individually at least one time during the quarter.
* Maintain a safe and supportive learning environment.
* Administer fair and equitable policies and procedures to all students.
* Provide a schedule of activities that is clear and communicate changes by email and on Canvas.
* Grade assignments, quizzes, etc. within one week after the stated due date.
* Grade projects (if assigned) and hand them back to students in class no later than one week after the stated due date.
* Answer email within one business day but me mindful of the day and time of your email, it takes up to 48 hours to respond to emails sent after 10am on Fridays.
* Provide feedback and comments that are thorough and meaningful.
* Be available for students during my office hours and by appointment and inform students of any changes to my office hours by email and Canvas.
* Equip students with general skills applicable to multiple career paths.

### Student Expectations

* **Attention to classwork:** Discussion board work and assignments is when we make meaning of the readings and assignments. It is important that you engage in discussions and assignments.
* **Engage in class:** Ask relevant questions. Take notes. Work cooperatively with other students.
* **Check Canvas:** Assignments and other assessments are in Canvas. Check Canvas daily if possible or at least three times per week to ensure you complete work on time and understand instructions.
* **Respect others:** Behave with respect toward each other including other students and your professor. Refrain from profane language or inappropriate/unrelated remarks.
* **Communicate with me:** Keep me updated of any circumstances that will not allow you to complete your work on time. I am here to help you learn and can be flexible if something unexpected comes up in your life.
* **Self-Advocacy**: Seek our resources you need to be successful. There are many resources available to help you succeed at TCC, for example the Writing and Tutoring Center, Access Services, and Counseling. Use the Student Resources Canvas page to access these resources and more.
* **Distractions should be avoided**: Treat your visual environment as you would your classroom on campus. That is to have the same respect for others, their time and to consider your time working as set aside and valued – not in the midst of daily chaos.

If there is a concern with your behavior during this quarter, we will use the Student Code of Conduct to frame our discussion. For more information on TCC policies related to student behavior, please refer to the [TCC Classroom Standards and Culture](https://www.tacomacc.edu/about/policies/tcc-classroom-standards) webpage.

### Recommended Study Habits

You can expect to devote an average of two hours outside of class to the subject matter (readings and preparation, as well as substantive assignments and participation exercises) for every 50 minutes in class (i.e. one class session). As this is a five-credit class, you can reasonably expect an average of 10 hours of reading/homework each week thus 15 hours is to be dedicated to EACH 5-credit class.

I have tried to ensure that the workload is evenly distributed throughout the class, students who do well in this class are able to connect concepts within the class and beyond the class to their other classes and their personal experiences. The more time you spend building connections with the class material to other areas of your life, the better!

## TCC Student Policies\*

TCC works hard to create a vibrant learning culture where you can succeed. Please refer to the [college-wide standards and policies](https://www.tacomacc.edu/about/policies/tcc-classroom-standards) that support this important work. Some of these policies include Religious Accommodations, Withdraw/Retakes, and the Student Code of Conduct.

## Class Policies and Procedures\*

* **Attendance:** Attendance is not tracked in this class. However, there are certain assignments, discussion posts and quizzes that you can only get points for if you complete them on time.
* **Due Dates:** All assignments are due by 11:59pm the day of the due date, unless otherwise listed on Canvas.
* **Late work:** Late work is accepted within the same module, but you must contact me PRIOR to the due date regarding an extension OR with an explanation of the extenuating circumstances that lead to late work.
* **Group work:** Participation in class discussions is an essential part of this class.
* **Suspended operations:** In the event of the campus closing due to inclement weather, a power outage, or another unexpected event, please check your Canvas messages for updates on how we will adjust our course schedule. You may be asked to watch videos in place of in-class time or complete an additional assignment to stay on schedule
* **Recordings -** Students who participate with their camera engaged or who utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their audio/video or image recorded. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded.
* [**Student Faith and Conscience Absence Notification Form**](https://www.tacomacc.edu/_attachments/academics-programs/enrollmentservices/academicforms/student_faith_and_conscience_absence_notification_form.pdf)  must be completed and submitted to the Enrollment Services Office, Tacoma Campus/Building 7, or to the Administrative Office at the Gig Harbor Campus. All requests for authorized absences urider this policy must be in writing using the Absence Notification Form. The exception being students enrolled in online courses; these students would notify their professor via Canvas and Enrollment Services with the date of absence requested for reasons of faith and conscience via email at: **enrollmentservices@tacomacc.edu**.
	+ Minor students (under the age of 18) must have a parent or guardian sign their Absence Notification Form prior to it being submitted.
	+ It is the student's responsibility to notify their professor and request they contact Enrollment Services if the requested days of absence have been rescinded. This must occur during the quarter of the requested absence(s}, and the day/days requested will be forfeited if this does not occur.
	+ It is the student's responsibility to notify each of their professors of their anticipated absence under this policy.
* AI -The use of generative AI in this course is allowed if you properly cite the AI generated content and use it responsibly. While it is not a requirement, I recognize that AI can serve as a useful tool to support your learning experience. You may choose to use generative AI to gain insights, receive feedback, or generate ideas, but always remember to give credit where it's due and ensure your work reflects your own originality.
* **AI is allowed, here are ways to use it:**
	+ 1. Use it as a brainstorming tool. Generative AI can help spark ideas and provide examples that can help you get started on writing assignments. You share the paper topic & thesis with AI, and you ask AI for a few ideas for a paper title. You should not use AI to generate any content for your paper, YOU should be the author of your paper’s content If you use generative AI to write a title for your paper, please disclose this in your AI-disclosure statement.
	+ 2. Build outlines for a paper: with a short description and a thesis statement, ask AI to provide an outline for the paper. Make sure to thoroughly review the outline and make modifications as necessary. Generative AI is known for lack of accuracies. If you use generative AI to create an outline, please disclose this in your AI-disclosure statement.
	+ 3. Ask for explanations. You can ask generative AI to explain concepts or summarize background information on a topic you are studying. This can help their understanding, especially regarding difficult text or concepts, but you still need to do the learning yourself! “Explain Beowulf Chapter 13 to me like I’m 5” “I’m having a hard time understanding [x], can you share a few analogies that can help me better understand this concept?”
	+ 4. Get writing suggestions. You can get writing feedback from AI. Ask for grammar review, readability feedback, and the strength of your thesis/arguments. But the actual writing should be done by you, the student. “Read my paper and let me know if you read any grammatical errors” “I’m writing a paper with the thesis statement [x], can you give me feedback on my thesis statement?” “I’m writing a paper with the thesis statement [x], and here are my arguments. Please give me feedback on my arguments, and let me know if there are any logical fallacies present?” If you use generative AI for writing feedback, please disclose this in your AI-disclosure statement.
	+ 5. Get writing feedback using your rubric. You can upload the assignment rubric, the writing prompt, and your paper and ask the AI to highlight any missing rubric categories or any rubric category that needs further development. If you do use AI as a “grader/reviewer”, please disclose this in your AI-disclosure statement.

While generative AI use is allowed as a learning aid, remember that they are not flawless. Expect some imperfections due to biases or limitations in the AI model's understanding. Always fact-check and verify the AI-generated content by cross referencing it with reputable sources. Additionally, exercise critical thinking to identify and address any inaccuracies that might arise. Remember that using AI runs the risk of inaccuracy thus authentic work, work solely created by you, is possibly better.

### Classroom Concerns/Disputes/Final Grade Appeal Process\*

If you have questions or concerns about this class, please talk to me about them. If we are unable to resolve your concerns, you may talk next with the Chair, Stephen Johns in F1-69, sjohns@tacomacc.edu or 253.460.4450. Professor Johns can assist with information about additional steps, if needed. If you think that your final grade has been given in error, please see the [final grade appeal process](https://www.tacomacc.edu/about/policies/final-course-grade-appeal-policy). Please note that summer session some faculty check email only once a week over the summer.

### Academic Dishonesty\*

In this class, academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade (“E”) for the assignment or the quarter. Direct copying is prohibited, while incorrect citation and referencing will result in points taken off. I also reserve the right to remove any inappropriate posts on Canvas such as, but not limited to, profanity or plagiarism. In such a case, you will lose posting privileges and be given alternate assignments. As stated in the TCC Catalog, “Students are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. Cheating, plagiarism, fabrication or other forms of academic dishonesty corrupt the learning process and threaten the educational environment for all students”. The complete Administrative Procedure for Academic Dishonesty is available on the [TCC website](https://www.tacomacc.edu/about/policies/administrative-procedure-for-academic-dishonesty).

## Graded Items\*

The assessment structure for this course was created to assess your learning on the course learning outcomes. In this class, we will have the following graded items: in-class activities, online activities, group quizzes, tests, and a group project. Each of these assessments is intended to help you learn about psychology and progress toward our course learning outcomes. Table 1 shows the points possible and weight of each assessment category.

## Assessment Structure\*

| **Categories**  | **Points Possible** | **Category Weight** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Discussion Boards | 87 | 25% |
| Module Assignments | 242 | 45% |
| Quizzes | 160 | 30% |
| **Total** | **489** | **100%** |

*Note – Total points might vary slightly due to minor changes in an assignment however this will not change the weighted categories.*

### *Grading*\*

Grades will be posted to Canvas as soon as assignments are graded, usually within 7 business days if not sooner. If you think there has been an error, EMAIL me as soon as possible to have it corrected. Disputes regarding a grading grievance must be received within 7 days of the assigned grade. Provide specifics, thus evidence as to what is specifically being disputed. If you need assistance accessing your Canvas account, please ask for help at the Information Commons in Building 16 or review the Canvas module in our Canvas course. Final grades will be assigned using the following scale:

 Grading

| **Grade**  | **Percent**  |
| --- | --- |
| A  | 95 to 100%  |
| A-  | 90 to 94%  |
| B+  | 87 to 89%  |
| B  | 83 to 86%  |
| B-  | 80 to 82%  |
| C+  | 77 to 79%  |
| C  | 73 to 76%  |
| C-  | 70 to 72%  |
| D+  | 67 to 69%  |
| D  | 65 to 60%  |
| E  | 59% and below  |

##

## Graded Item Submission Guidelines\*

All work is to be submit via Canvas. I will accept emailed work if there is an issue with submissions via Canvas. DO NOT EMAIL stating you could not submit the work unless you ATTACH the work to the email.

ALWAYS RETAIN A COPY OF YOUR WORK. You may wish to do your work on a MS Word document and transfer or upload to Canvas. A version of Microsoft Office is available free of charge to TCC students. Save your work frequently while you’re composing as we all have experienced power outages that lead to losing our work. While content is important, errors in grammar or punctuation, poor organization of material, lack of support for details, and careless proofreading will make it difficult for your reader to follow your ideas and will reduce the grade. If you are unsure about your writing skills, utilize the Writing Center. It is a free resource, and they are willing to tutor you online.

## Late Work\*

I have blocked out times in my schedule for grading your work so that I can give you feedback while the work is still fresh in your mind. Any late work is eligible to receive up to half the points possible if it is submitted within the same module it was assigned. For example, if you miss an online assignment before the first test during Module 1, you can submit that assignment for up to half points until the due date of Module 1 Quiz.

## Student Resources\*

During this quarter, you may encounter a need that goes beyond this class that affects your academic performance. We are here to help you be successful. You have access to great resources on campus and people ready to support you. Login to Canvas and access the [Student Resources](https://tacomacc.instructure.com/courses/1687752) course to learn about some of these excellent resources.

## Access and Accommodations\*

Your access in the learning environment is important to me. If you have already established disability accommodations with the Access Services office, please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course. You can request that Access Services email your Letter of Accommodation to me, or you can provide me with printed copies.

If you have a disability or health condition that may benefit from accommodations to ensure access and support success in this course—and have not yet established services, please contact Access Services at (253) 460-4437 or access@tacomacc.edu.

Access Services offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Services are established through an interactive process that begins with an intake appointment. Access Services is in Building 7.

## Safety\*

We care about the safety of our campus and community and all of us are needed to create a safe and secure learning environment. Please review the full list of safety resources available to you, which are listed on our [TCC Ready website](https://www.tacomacc.edu/tcc-life/campus-services/tcc_ready). Additionally, please watch [this brief video](https://vimeo.com/99287407) to familiarize yourself with our general safety practices. Please **program the Public Safety number into your cell phone (253-566-5111)** or 5111 from any campus phone (If this number is inoperable due to an emergency, dial **253-495-4146**) and [sign up for TCC Alerts!](https://www.tacomacc.edu/tcc-life/campus-services/campus-safety) to receive emergency notifications to your cell phone.

Tentative Class Schedule

| **Week** | **Subject/Assignment** | **Due** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Module 1 – Syllabus Contract |  Sept. 25 |
| 1 | Module 1 Discussion Board 1: Introduction | Sept. 25 |
| 1 | Module 1 Assignment – Pick for final project | Sept. 28 |
| 1 | Module 1 Quiz | Sept. 28 |
| 2 | Module 2 Assignment | Oct. 2 |
| 2 | Module 2 Quiz | Oct. 5 |
| 3 | Module 3 Assignment 1 | Oct. 9 |
| 3 | Module 3 Assignment 2 | Oct. 16 |
| 3 | Module 3 Quiz | Oct. 12 |
| 4 | Module 4 Discussion | Oct. 16 |
| 5 | Module 5 Assignment | Oct. 19 |
| 5 | Modules 4 & 5 Quiz | Oct. 19 |
|  | **Midterm Module – Research outline** | Oct. 23 |
|  | **Midterm Module – Check in**  | Oct. 26 |
| 6 | Module 6 Discussion Board | Oct. 29 |
| 6 | Module 6 Assignment | Nov. 2 |
| 6 | Module 6 Quiz | Nov. 2 |
| 7 | Module 7 Discussion Board | Nov. 6 |
| 7 | Module 7 Assignment | Nov. 9 |
| 7 | Module 7 Quiz | Nov. 9 |
| 8 | Module 8 Discussion | Nov. 12 |
| 8 | Module 8 Assignment | Nov. 13 |
| 8 | Module 8 Quiz | Nov. 16 |
| 9 | Module 9 Discussion | Nov. 20 |
| 9 | Module 9 Quiz | Nov. 23 |
| 10 | Module 10 Assignment | Nov. 25 |
| 10 | Module 10 Quiz 1 and Quiz 2 | Nov. 30 |
|  | **Final Discussion – Sharing Final Project** | **Dec. 1** |
|  | **Reflection on Course Learning** | **Dec. 3** |
|  | **Extra Credit Opportunity** | **Dec. 7** |
|  | **Final Project Speech Presentation** | **Dec. 7** |
|  | **Final Reflection on S.M.A.R.T. Goal**  | **Dec. 8** |

## Syllabus Subject to Change

Please note: This syllabus is subject to change. Students will be notified of any changes as soon as possible using multiple means of communication. Please check Canvas for the most updated schedule and assignment list during the quarter.

\*\*\*End of Syllabus\*\*\*