

**MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**General Education Course Assessment Report**

This report is a summary of the activities (assessments and modifications) that have occurred since the course was approved for inclusion in the General Education Program. Please submit the report as an e-mail attachment to the General Education Office at [Sheila.Otto@mtsu.edu](mailto:Sheila.Otto@mtsu.edu) by March 23, 2012.

**Course Prefix/Number and Title: COMM 2200 Fundamentals of Communication**

**Report Prepared by: Peg McCree, COMM 2200 Coordinator**

1. Review the original General Education course proposal and revise if necessary (for example, a revised course proposal should reflect any changes in course topics, student activities, evaluation procedures, etc.). Explain the rationale for any revisions to the original proposal. If applicable, attach a revised course proposal.

Only two changes to the original document are necessary.

**Change #1**

The original document states that the following topics are to be included: informative speaking, persuasive speaking, ceremonial speaking, and group discussion. This list should be modified to allow for the option of including either ceremonial speaking or group discussion.

**The original document states:**

B. Course Structure (page 4)

VII. Informative and ceremonial speaking

- A. Functions and techniques of informative and ceremonial speaking
- B. Types and designs

VIII. Persuasive speaking

- A. Characteristics, process, challenges of persuasive speaking
- B. Functions and designs
- C. Evidence, proof, arguments
- D. Defective persuasion

IX. Leadership and small group communication

- A. Nature of leadership, dyads, small groups
- B. Cultural and gender influences on leadership
- C. Relationship of interpersonal communication to group communication
- D. Group decision making and problem solving processes
- E. Managing conflict in small group communication

**Change to:**

B. Course Structure (page 4)

VII. To: Informative Speaking

A. Functions and techniques of informative and ceremonial speaking

B. Types and designs

Ceremonial Speaking and/or Leadership and small group communication

IX. Ceremonial Speaking

A. Functions and techniques of ceremonial speaking

B. Types and designs of ceremonial speaking

X. Leadership and small group communication

A. Nature of leadership, dyads, small groups

B. Cultural and gender influences on leadership

C. Relationship of interpersonal communication to group communication

D. Group decision making and problem solving processes

E. Managing conflict in small group communication

This change is necessary for two reasons: 1) The cap of 25 students per class, and 2) the reduction in the days per semester that was implemented after this proposal was adopted. The above changes also more accurately reflect what instructors are doing in the classroom. This change does not impact the seven learning outcomes as established by the TBR for this course.

Change # 2

D. Course integrity (page 7)

1. The number of sections and seats required has significantly increased. The estimates from the original report are reflected in Table 1. The number of sections offered and the number of seats is reflected in Table 2

TABLE 1

Original Report		
	Number of sections	Number of seats
Fall	50	1400
Spring	50	1200
Summer 20		500

TABLE 2

	Number of sections	Number of seats
Fall (2011)	90	2225
Spring (2012)	87	2160
Summer (2011)	23	525

2. Approximately 150 seats each semester will be required for department majors/minors

3. The department currently employs twenty-one faculty to staff these sections: seventeen full-time temporary faculty (FTT) and four adjunct faculty. One or two tenured/tenured track faculty teach several sections each semester. One member of the faculty serves as the COMM 2200

coordinator. We have thus far been able to find qualified FTTS. (Three of the FTTS have terminal degrees.) However, we continue to find it difficult to locate qualified faculty willing to teach for the adjunct compensation.

4. A common textbook is used in all sections of COMM 2200 Fundamentals of Communication. All faculty are given a sample syllabus and a list of the minimum requirements for the course. (Appendix A). A COMM 2200 Instructor site has been established on D2L that serves as a common depository for course materials. The course coordinator also maintains an active file of sample materials and various teaching materials that are available for perusal by faculty and adjuncts in the Speech & Theatre Department.

5. Honors sections are currently limited to 20 students. The section for International students is also limited to 20 students. The recommendation in the original report that class size for Honors sections needed to be reduced to 15 students per section has not yet been implemented. Retaining a class size of 20 for these honors sections means that honor students will not be afforded the opportunity to speak five or six times during the course of the semester. Fortunately all other COMM 2200 sections have been reduced to 25 students for both the fall and the spring semesters. Currently COMM 2200 sections are being capped at a 25:1 student/faculty ratio and we strongly recommend that class sizes not be allowed to go above this 25:1 ratio. Any increase in class size will only hamper efforts to maintain and improved the ability of our instructors to provide adequate instruction in COMM 2200 and assure that all students meet the minimum competency requirements.

Attach a common course syllabus. If there is no common syllabus (for example, if course syllabi differ across various sections—honors, learning communities, online, larger sections versus smaller sections, themed sections, etc.), provide a brief summary of the variation and attach representative syllabi.

The minimum course requirements are the same for all COMM 2200 sections, including honors, the on-line hybrid course, raider-learning communities, and the course for international students. Attached is a sample syllabus for a regular section and for an honors section.

An analysis of the course syllabi of all COMM 2200 instructors also reveals that there is a high level of consistence with regards to requirements from section to section. (See Appendix B)

2. Describe how the General Education learning outcomes are assessed and the extent to which students are meeting the outcomes.

Randomly selected sections of COMM 2200 are identified for the Informative Speech Outline assessment and for the Persuasive Speech assessment. Informative speech outlines are collected from students in each of the selected sections. Five or more persuasive speakers in each of the selected sections are recorded. In spring semester 2010 data was collected from 221 students (110 Presentation Outlines and 111 Oral Presentations). In spring semester 2011 data was collected from 253 students (127 Presentation Outlines and 126 Oral Presentations). A panel of three evaluators then assesses a random sample of the outlines and a random sample of taped speeches. The assessment is based on a rubric specifically designed for this assessment project.

With regard to the five TBR Learning Outcomes, a summary of the assessments for 2010 and 2011 reveals that students are meeting all of the General Education Learning outcomes.

For Outcome I (Clear Articulation of a Purpose Statement) students showed significant improvement with over 87% of students scoring at the satisfactory level or higher on the speech

as compared to 64% in 2010. Improvement on outlines was likewise indicated as scores of satisfactory or higher were increased from 53% in 2010 to 88% in 2011.

For **Outcome II** (Ordering of Main Points in a reasonable and convincing manner) performance also remained strong with 89% of the students scoring at the satisfactory level or higher level as compared to 70% who scored at the satisfactory level or higher in 2010.

**For Outcome III** (The use of appropriate rhetorical patterns) 86% of students scored at the satisfactory level or higher on the speech and 94% scored at the satisfactory level or higher on outlines. Significant gains were indicated as a much smaller percentage of students received an unsatisfactory score in 2011 (10%) as compared to the percentage who received unsatisfactory scores in 2010 (57%).

Performance was also strong for **Outcome IV** (diction, syntax, usage, grammar, mechanics) with more than 98% of students scoring at the satisfactory level or higher on both the outline and speech assessments. A higher percentage of students also received a superior rating in 2011. On average 30% of students received a superior rating in 2011 compare to 11% who, on average, received a superior rating in 2010.

Performance on **Outcome V** (the gathering and use of multiple sources) was also moderately strong with some indication of significant improvement. While the number of students receiving a satisfactory score remained relatively the same in 2010 and 2011 (21% and 23% respectively), the number of students who received a superior rating in 2011 increased from 18% in 2010 to 37% in 2011, and the number of students who received an unsatisfactory score decreased from 60% in 2010 to 40% in 2011.

3. Discuss recent and/or planned improvements in curriculum, instruction, and/or student performance in response to assessments of student learning.

Based on the outcomes of the first assessment (2010) a renewed effort was made to assure that all COMM 2200 faculty were aware of the minimum requirements for the course. Additionally, at the beginning of the fall 2011 semester all but one of the COMM 2200 instructors participated in a four-hour workshop during which time the assessment results from 2010 were discussed in detail. One area of focus in this workshop was Outcome V (the gathering and use of multiple sources) as 60% of students received an unsatisfactory score on the assessment. Prior to the workshop the coordinator met with members of the MTSU library staff to discuss the outcomes of the assessment. As a result of this meeting the library staff developed a new website and the power specifically for COMM 2200 instructor to use in their classes on how to research using the MTSU library. During the fall workshop the new website and the power point presentation were demonstrated. Another presentation featured the Digital Media center and the assistance their staff could provide to assists students gathering research materials for speeches. This collaboration with the library staff will continue throughout the academic year.

Another workshop was held prior to the beginning of the Spring 2012 semester. This workshop focused on the 2011 assessment results. During this workshop instructors will have an opportunity to discuss and develop specific strategies for improving instruction on all the competencies, with special focus on those areas where students continue to fall below the satisfactory level of competence.

These annual fall and spring workshops will continue.

4. Describe the process for overseeing this General Education course. (For example, is there a General Education coordinator or committee? What is the role of the coordinator or committee? Does the coordinator/committee review course syllabi? Is there a process for training new Gen Ed faculty? Is there a mentoring or evaluation process in place for Gen Ed faculty?)

There is a COMM 2200 coordinator. In this capacity the coordinator: communicates on a regular basis with the COMM 2200 instructors, with the Comm Studies Coordinator and with the Department chair, oversees the course, designs and implements the annual workshops, conducts regular teaching observations of the FTT and adjunct faculty, provides resources and instructional materials to instructors, assists with classroom management issues, assists with identifying and with hiring qualified instructors, mentors new faculty, and coordinates the TBR assessment each spring semester.

In order to more effectively oversee the course, the coordinator conducts an annual review of syllabi. In the fall a review of course policies of individual instructors is conducted. (For a summary of the results of fall 2011 see appendix C). In the spring semester a review of the specific class content is reviewed. (For the results of spring 2012 review, see appendix D)

5. Identify any additional resources needed to improve teaching and learning in this General Education course.

The reduction of class sizes would be the single most important factor in improving instruction. The reduction in the number of students would allow more time for instructors to work one-on-one with students, would provide additional class time for developing critical thinking skills, including organization and outlining and the examination and critique of a variety of speeches. Instructors would also be able to assist students with research.

The reduction of class sizes to 20 students in all sections of COMM 2200 would also put this general education course on the same footing as the other two general education courses included in the TBR Communication Core, and it would align the course size with the recommendation of the National Communication Association. *The National Communication Association's Standards for Undergraduate Communication Programs*, updated April 2011, clearly states in the section on "Guideline #6:Curriculum" that, "Performance classes should be comparable in class size to similar programs in the institution and in communication programs across the country but should not have more than a 25:1 student /faculty ratio" [Italics added].<sup>1</sup> Both English 1010 and English 1020 are currently capped at 20 students. If 20 students is the standard for these two Gen. Ed courses in the Communication core, it should also be the standard for COMM 2200 classes.

The addition of additional tenured track faculty would help to increase the number of tenured faculty available to teach COMM 2200.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.natcom.org/Tertiary.aspx?id=199>. March 22, 2012.

## Minimum Course Requirements for Comm 2200

**Textbook - The Art of Public Speaking (10<sup>th</sup> edition) by Stephen Lucas will be used in all Comm 2200 classes.**

1. Specific reading assignments / exercises, review questions/ critical thinking questions should be assigned from the text.
2. Instructors are *strongly encouraged* to make use of the material on the ConnectLucas website.
3. Instructors are also expected to **administer quizzes** and/or **tests** over the material in the text as well as material presented in class.

### Speech Component -

1. During the course of the semester, each student should successfully complete, *at a minimum*, three graded oral presentations.
2. Four graded presentations *are recommended* for regular sections and five graded presentations *are recommended* for honors sections.
3. One of the graded presentations *must be a research based informative* speech (5-8 minutes recommended).  
NOTE: For the research component, a minimum of 6 sources must be required
4. One of the graded speeches *must be a research based persuasive* speech. (5-8 minutes recommended).  
NOTE: For the research component, a minimum of 6 sources must be required
5. All of the required oral presentations must be graded by the instructor.
6. Each student should be required to use presentation aid(s) in one or more of the graded oral presentations.

### **Minimum Requirements for the Informative Speech AND the Persuasive Speech**

1. To pass the course, a student must receive a passing grade on both the informative speech and the persuasive speech.
2. The focus for each of these speeches should be on a **significant** topic, problem, or concern that is of interest to the classroom audience.
3. A minimum of 6 credible sources should be used in preparing both the informative and then persuasive speeches.
4. A *detailed* outline for each of these two speeches is required (see below).
5. Each speech should be 5 to 8 minutes in length.

### Outline Component -

1. Each student should submit 3 to 5 detailed speech outlines during the course of the semester.
2. *Both* the informative speech outline and the persuasive speech outline *should be graded* by the instructor.
3. A portion of each student's semester grade should be determined by the outline grades.

### **Minimum Requirements for the Informative Speech and the Persuasive Speech Outlines**

1. The following information should be included on the informative and persuasive speech outlines:
  - Statement of specific purpose
  - Thesis or "Central idea statement"
2. The three divisions of a speech should be evident (Introduction, Body, Conclusion)
3. The Introduction should include the following:
  - An attention step
  - A topic statement
  - A credibility statement
  - A preview
4. The Conclusion should include the following:
  - A clear summary statement
  - An effective close or call to action
5. The body portion of the outline should be well developed
6. The use of *complete sentences*/ or complete phrases for the preparation outline is required.
7. A proper and consistent outline format should be used throughout
8. Correct spelling, syntax and grammar should be used throughout
9. A Works Cited page or bibliography with a minimum of 6 sources should be included
10. The sources should be cited correctly using MLA or another approved citation style (e.g. APA)

### Additional classroom activities

1. Each student should participate in class discussions, exercises and activities that focus on the following areas:

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- Speech preparation and presentation
  - Effective group participation
  - Problem solving
  - Critical listening
  - Critical thinking
  - Analyzing and evaluating a variety of speeches (in-class and out-of-class speeches are acceptable.)
2. A portion of the student's grade should be determined by his/her participation in these classroom discussions, exercises and activities.

### Instructional time:

1. In order to meet the minimum instructional time required for a 3 credit course, ALL speech classes should meet during the final exam period and some significant educational activity should be conducted during this class.
2. If you are not going to meet your class as scheduled, please notify someone in the main office. (898-2640).
3. To arrange an absence in advance, please complete the Faculty Absence form-  
[http://www.mtsu.edu/forms\\_emp\\_dept.shtml](http://www.mtsu.edu/forms_emp_dept.shtml)

## Appendix B

Number of speeches required				
3 speeches+ group presentation	3 speeches	4 speeches	More than 4 speeches	
6	1	14	2	
Informative Speech required	23			
Persuasive Speech required	23			
Outlines required	23			
Quiz and/or test over textbook and lecture materials				
Quizzes only	Quizzes and tests	1 or more exams	None	
3	3	13	4	

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Appendix C

	INFORMATIVE	Speech			
<b>INSTRUCTOR</b>	<b>Time limit</b>	<b>Outline format</b>	<b>Citation Style</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Presentation aid</b>
A	5-6 minutes	preparation outline	not specified	6 academic sources	visual aids
B	5-7 minutes	full sentence	not specified	6 sources	1 visual aid
C	6-8 minutes	typed, simple sentence outline	APA	6 credible sources	
D	5-8 minutes	Complete outline	APA	6 sources	not specified
E	6-7 minutes	Outline	APA	6 sources	not specified
F	6-8 minutes	complete sentences outline	MLA/ APA or other	6 credible sources	Visual aid
G	5-8 minutes	Formal outline	not specified	6 citations	Visual aid
H	6-8 minutes	4-5 page preparation outline	APA	6 oral citations	not specified
I	5-7 minutes	formal outline	APA or MLA	6 sources	Presentation aid
J	5-7 minutes	not specified	MLA	6 sources	Visual aid
K	3-5 minutes	Full-sentence outline	APA or MLA	3-5 sources	not specified
L	5-8 minutes	formal outline	not specified	3-5 sources	not specified
M	5-7 minutes	typed outline	APA or MLA	6 sources	not specified



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N	4-6 minutes	preparation outline	not specified	3 sources	VA optional
O	4-6 minutes	preparation outline	APA	6 sources	visual aid
P	4-6 minutes	preparation outline	MLA or APA	6 sources	not specified
Q	4-6 minutes	preparation outline	MLA or APA	12 credible sources	not specified
R	5-7 minutes	preparation outline	MLA or APA	6 sources	visual aid
S	5-6 minutes	preparation outline	not specified	6 academic sources	visual aids
T	5-7 minutes	full sentence outline	not specified	6 sources	1 visual aid
U	6-8 minutes	typed, simple sentence	APA	6 credible sources	not specified
V	5-8 minutes	Complete outline	APA	6 sources	not specified
W	5-7 minutes	detailed outline	MLA or APA	6 credible sources	1 visual aid
X	6-8 minutes	Preparation outline	not specified	6 sources	1 visual aid
Y	3-5 minutes	Preparation outline	MLA	6 sources	not specified
Z	4-8 minutes	formal outline	MLA	5 sources	VA optional
AA	5-8 minutes	full sentence outline	MLA	6 sources	VA optional

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	PERESUASIVE SPEECHES				
<b>INSTRUCTOR</b>	<b>Time limit</b>	<b>Outline</b>	<b>Citation</b>	<b>sources</b>	<b>Presentation Aid</b>
A	6-7 minutes	Preparation	not specified	3-4 sources	required
B	6-8 minutes	preparation	not specified	6 sources	not specified
C	6-8 minutes	preparation	APA	6 sources -	not specified
D	5-8 minutes	preparation	APA	7 sources	not specified
E	6-8 minutes	Preparation	MLA or APA	6 souces	not specified
F	6-8 minutes	preparation	not specified	6 required	1 required
G	5-7 minutes	preparation	MLA	6 citation	Required
H	5-8 minutes	preparation	MLA	6 citations	not specified
I	7-10 minutes	Formal Outline	not specified	5 sources	action - handout VA required
J	6-7 minutes	prepared outline	APA	6 sources	not specified
K	7-9 minutes	Full sentence outline		6 sources	not specified
L	6-8 minutes	formal outline	not specified	6 sources	required
M	7-9 minutes	Preparation outline	APA	7 sources	required
N	6-8 minutes	Complete sentence outline	APA or MLA	6 sources	not specified
O	6-8 minutes	presentation outline	not specified	6 source	required

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P	5-7 minutes	outline - full sentences	not specified	5-7 sources	power point
Q	5-8 minutes	typed formal outline	not specified	6 sources	required
R	5-7 minutes	typed outline	MLA or APA	6 sources	required
S	5-7 minutes	preparation outline	not specified	3 sources	optional
T	5-7 minutes	preparation outline	APA	6 sources	required
U	6-8 minutes	preparation		8 sources	required
V	5-8 minutes	forml outline	MLA or APA	not specified	where applicable
W	5-7 minutes	preparation	MLA	6 sources	required
X	6-8 minutes	preparation		6 sources	1 required
Y	5-7 minutes	preparation	MLA	6 citations	Required
Z	5-8 minutes	Preparation	MLA	6 citations	not specified
AA	7-10 minutes	Formal outline		5 sources	Required