



G209 Communication Skills

3 credits. Prerequisite: B112 Interpreting the Bible

👤 Saskatoon Campus 'A' Livestream 📺 Video on Demand

September 14 – December 18, 2026

Fall semester

Tuesday, 9am–noon SK

(11am – 2pm ET; changes to 10am-1pm ET on November 1)

Rick Schellenberg, MDiv, STM

rschellenberg@horizon.edu

Course Goals

Course Description

This course explores the theory and practice of communicating effectively with a variety of audiences, both in groups and one-on-one. Considering oral, visual, and written contexts we will deepen our understanding of language as a system for making meaning and practice and evaluate the use of image, story, and logic as tools for communicating clearly and concisely. The course emphasizes audience analysis, message design, and communication strategies across various platforms, including conversations, speeches, written, and online messages. Students will develop skills to inform, persuade, motivate, and engage their audience ethically and strategically.

Relationship to Horizon and MCS's Missions

This course prepares students for Christian leadership by equipping them 1) to listen carefully and critically to the ideas of others, 2) to convey their own ideas with purpose, clarity, and grace, and 3) to communicate effectively in both private and public communications in both group and one-on-one situations.

Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes



To demonstrate competency in *Skilled Communication*, students will

1. Apply principles of effective communication in written, oral, and visual formats both in-person and online.
 - *Assessment:* Persuasion Analysis; Storytelling; Analysis and Articulation; Sensitive Issue Response
2. Effectively research, plan, write and revise a script for speaking.
 - *Assessment:* Storytelling; Analysis and Articulation; Sensitive Issue Response; Reading Quizzes
3. Deliver confident, organized, clear, and engaging presentations, including adapting the presentation to maximize audience engagement.
 - *Assessment:* Storytelling; Analysis and Articulation

4. Effectively navigate difficult conversations to reach consensus.
 - *Assessment*: Analysis and Articulation; Sensitive Issue Response; Reading Quizzes

Course Work

Required Readings

Schultze, Quentin J. *Communicating with Grace and Virtue: Learning to Listen, Speak, Text, and Interact as a Christian*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020. ISBN 978-1540961273.

[DTL](#)

University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing. *Communication in the Real World – An Introduction to Communication Studies*. 2016. ISBN: 9781946135070

<https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/274>

Required Videos

Brown, Brené. “The Power of Vulnerability.” *TEDxHouston*, June 2010.

https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability.

Cuddy, Amy. “Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are.” *TEDxGlobal*, 2012.

https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_may_shape_who_you_are.

Chris Fenning. “The 60 Seconds That Make or Break a Conversation” *TEDxEindhoven*. 2025.

11:31. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpFmRq5KeJs>.

Eber, Karen. “How Your Brain Responds to Stories -- and Why They’re Crucial for Leaders.” *TED Talk*.”

https://www.ted.com/talks/karen_eber_how_your_brain_responds_to_stories_and_why_they_re_crucial_for_leaders.

Sinek, Simon. “How Great Leaders Inspire Action.” *TEDxPuget Sound*. Sept. 2009

https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action.

Treasure, Julian. *How to Speak so That People Want to Listen*. TEDGlobal2013. June 2013.

https://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_how_to_speak_so_that_people_want_to_listen

Young Entrepreneurs Forum. *5 Practical Ways to Improve Effective Communication Skills Every Day*. 2025. 4:38. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPajChiAZPU>

Others as listed in Populi

Suggested Reading/Reference

Horkoff, Tara. “Developing a Strong, Clear Thesis Statement.” In *Writing for Success: 1st Canadian HSP Edition*, 1st Canadian. BC Campus, 2021.

<https://opentextbc.ca/writingforsuccesssh5p/chapter/developing-a-strong-clear-thesis-statement/>

Moxley, Joseph. Organization – ‘Mastering Writing Structures for Academic and Professional Success’ in "Writing Commons" (2012). *Textbooks Collection*. 5.

<https://writingcommons.org/section/organization/>

**While students have the benefit of accessing many of their textbooks online through the [Digital Theological Library](#), they will not have access to the Digital Theological Library upon graduation. Therefore, we encourage students to purchase select textbooks to build their personal library.

Course Assignments and Activities

1. *Persuasion Analysis* – 10%

Listen to **all** of the following podcasts, then choose one to listen to again. Outline the argument of the podcast of your choice and critique the logical flow of the presentation. Describe the persuasive tools the speaker uses to win over and motivate his or her audience to action. Upload your report on Populi.

1.1. Simon Senik -

https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action

1.2. Brené Brown - https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability

1.3. Julian Treasure -

https://www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_how_to_speak_so_that_people_want_to_listen

To successfully complete this assignment the student will 1) Follow the Horizon & MCS Format Guide and 2) Review the lesson and rubric in Populi.

- Related learning outcome(s): #1.
- **Assignment length:** 900 to 1,000 words.
- **Due date:** September 28

2. *Storytelling* – 20%

Write a contemporary story reflecting the key idea of one of the biblical passages listed in Populi. You are **NOT simply retelling** the Bible Story in modern language but making the same point in a new story. Ensure the story follows a typical story arc and has a clear point to make. In essence, you’re creating a modern parable. Record your 8-minute story on Padlet and upload your manuscript to Populi by October 9. View and comment on 5 of your classmates’ stories on Padlet. Your comments should consist of 1) a specific example of a ‘surprise’ moment, 2) a suggestion for a wording improvement, and 3) observations on the flow and organization of the story. Revise your manuscript based on your peers’ comments and upload the revised version to Populi by October 16.

To successfully complete this assignment the student will 1) Follow the Horizon & MCS Format Guide and 2) Review the lesson and rubric in Populi

- Related learning outcome(s): #1, 2, 3.
- **Assignment length:** 8 minutes; manuscript length 1040 - 1280 words.
- **Due dates:**
 - Oct 9 – Manuscript and Padlet video

- Oct 14 – Comments on 5 other students' Padlet videos
- Oct 16 – Revised manuscript

3. *Analysis and Articulation* – 45%

Choose one of the social issues listed in the Populi description of this assignment or suggest an alternative to your instructor. Research a Christian perspective on the problem and at least three different approaches towards a solution. Your research should include 3 books, 3 journal articles (peer-reviewed), and 3 credible online sources. Include a bibliography with your manuscript and use Horizon and MCS formatting. Using your research and including real-life examples, create an 8-minute** presentation, including presentation software, to 1) outline the problem, 2) present at least two possible solutions/options, 3) state your preference, and 4) convince your fellow students to act in accordance with your perspective. Please use Scripture in defending your position. You will share your presentation with the class. Be sure to rehearse your presentation because the time limit is firm (set in Populi, dependent on course enrollment).

Submit a draft of your manuscript at least **one week prior to** your presentation. Edit your manuscript based on the instructor's feedback. You will upload **both** your edited manuscript and PowerPoint (presentation software) to Populi on the day before your class presentation (or earlier). All students are required to comment on all presentations (live and VOD), either in class or online.

** Presentation time and due dates may be adjusted based on course enrollment.

- Related learning outcome(s): #1, 2, 3, 4.
- **Assignment length:** 8-minute presentation + approximately 1040 to 1280 words manuscript.
- **Due date:**
 - Topic and thesis statement – October 23
 - Submit a draft of your manuscript – November 10
 - Edit your manuscript based on the instructor's feedback. Then upload both your edited manuscript and PowerPoint (presentation software) on Populi – November 16
 - Presentations – November 17
 - Feedback Comments on fellow students' presentations – November 20

4. *Sensitive Issue Response* – 15%

Complete the readings and associated lesson in Populi. Using one of the case studies listed in the Populi lesson, analyze the situation and people involved, then write emails to all parties involved informing them of your knowledge of the situation and the next steps you will take. Then write a script for a meeting with the volunteers involved.

Using an AI editor, edit your original communications (both email and script) for a professional tone, then edit it again asking for an empathic tone. Create a 3-minute Padlet video comparing the three versions. Then choose the best of each to do a final draft. Upload all four versions to Populi. You will hand in the three draft versions in one document and upload a separate document for your final version.

- Related learning outcome(s): #1, 2, 4.
- **Assignment length:** maximum 1100 words (final version and script).

- **Due date:**
 - Three draft versions (one document) – December 4
 - Final version and script for meeting – December 10

5. *Reading Quizzes* - 10%

- Related learning outcome(s): #2, 4.
- **Due dates:**
 - September 21
 - October 5
 - October 19
 - November 23
 - December 7

Video-on-Demand (VOD) Student Requirements

As indicated on the course schedule, this class is offered by VOD. Students taking the course through VOD are required to indicate this during their course registration. While VOD recordings are available for any student who may be absent from class, non-VOD students are expected to attend class live following the class attendance policy.

- For this course, VOD students have the *same assignment due dates* as in-class students. For the class presentation assignment, VOD students' recorded presentations will be included in the class schedule for presentations.
- By Saturday at 11:59PM SK time each week, VOD students are required to watch and engage with all lecture content and in-class activities from the previous week's class. VOD students will submit a 2–3-minute video report that 1) affirms you have watched the required recording, 2) summarizes one thing you learned that will help you reach the course learning outcomes, and 3) explains at least one question you had after watching the class recording.
- *Note: you may need to watch the current class video before starting your work on the assignment related to that topic.*
- Students will complete the reports according to the following schedule:
 - Week 1 Lectures and Report due September 19
 - Week 2 Lectures and Report due September 26
 - Week 3 Lectures and Report due October 3
 - Week 4 Lectures and Report due October 10
 - Week 5 Lectures and Report due October 17
 - Week 6 Lectures and Report due October 24
 - Week 7 Lectures and Report due November 14
 - Week 8 Lectures and Report due November 21
 - Week 9 Lectures and Report due November 28
 - Week 10 Lectures and Report due December 5
 - Week 11 Lectures and Report due December 12
- Students registered to attend by VOD will fulfill the course attendance requirements through their video report submissions. They must submit their VOD reports on time to be registered as present for class.

Estimate of Time Investment (individual time investments may vary)

Readings / Viewings	26 hrs	N/A	Assignment Weighting
Classroom time	30 hrs	N/A	
1. Persuasion Analysis	4 hrs	Sept. 28	
2. Storytelling	8 hrs	Oct 9-16	
3. Analysis and Articulation	14 hrs	Oct 23 – Nov 17	
4. Sensitive Issue Response	8 hrs	Dec 4-10	
5. Reading Quizzes		As scheduled	10%
Total =		90 hrs	

All assignments are due at 8pm **SK time**, unless otherwise indicated.

Assessment Rubrics

Assignment rubrics can be found on Populi. Click on the name of the assignment to access each rubric.

Class & Reading Schedule

Class Date	Topics	Reading due two days before class.	Quiz on content of readings to date
Sept. 15	Intro and Syllabus Foundations for Communication Developing Confidence	CRW – Cptrs 1,2,7 Schultze - 1 Video by Cuddy	
Sept. 22	Rhetoric and Persuasion Analyzing Communication Storytelling Basics	CRW – 5, 11 Schultze – 7	Sept. 21 – Reading Quiz #1
Sept. 29	Developing a Speech/Message	CRW – 9-10 Schultze – 2 Video by Eber	
Oct. 6	Gathering Evidence and discernment Supporting your “big idea”	CRW – 12 Schultze - 3	Oct. 5 Reading Quiz #2
Oct. 13	Crafting Your Speech/Message Use of Presentation Software	CRW – 3,4	
Oct. 20	Class still meets during Revision Week. Truth and Ethics Assessing Your Audience	CRW – 6, 8 Schultze – 4 Video by Young Entrepreneurs	Oct. 19 Reading Quiz #3
Oct. 27	<i>No class - Reading Week</i>		
Nov. 3	<i>No class - Module B</i>		
Nov. 10	Review of Presentation Basics Crucial Conversations	Schultze – 5 Video by Fenning	
Nov. 17	Class Presentations		

Nov. 24	Communicating in Crisis	CRW - 13 Schultze - 6	Nov. 23 Reading Quiz #4
Dec. 1	Supporting Material Organizing Communication	CRW – 14 Schultze - 8	
Dec. 8	Course Evaluations Language and Style Conclusion	CRW - 15, 16	Dec 7 Reading Quiz #5

- Revision week is December 14-18. Students are encouraged to submit revised assignments soon after they receive their marked assignments.
- No resubmission of assignments will be accepted after the course end date: December 18, 2026.

Academic Policies

General Assignment Guidelines

Please see the [Horizon](#) & [MCS](#) Format Guide for assignment submission, grammar, and formatting guidelines. The length of papers should fall within +/- 10% of the stated length. Papers that fall outside the length guidelines may not be graded. Assignments should be submitted via Populi under *Submissions* (not *Comments*). The resource at this [link](#) explains how to submit assignments on Populi.

Extensions

To submit extension requests, students must submit the *Request Extension Form* on the [MCS](#) or [Horizon](#) website and *before the due date*. Professors reserve the right to deny extensions. Generally, the sooner that a student asks for an extension, the more willing faculty tend to be in granting extensions. Furthermore, no extensions will be granted beyond the final day of a term or semester unless approval is granted by the Associate Academic Dean (MCS) or Assistant Academic Dean (Horizon).

Late Assignments

Students are expected to submit work by the assigned or extended due dates, as part of their development of the Leadership and Administration competency. A late penalty will be assessed for all overdue assignments: 1-3 calendar days late, penalty of 10%; 4-6 calendar days late, penalty of 20%; after 6 calendar days late, an assignment receives a grade of 0 and no opportunity for revision. Any late penalty incurred on a first submission will be applied regardless of if the student chooses to continue learning through the revision process.

Assignment Completion

Professors usually will not accept assignments that have not been completed according to the instructions given in the syllabus. If a professor informs a student that a submitted assignment is incomplete, the student will be given the opportunity to complete and resubmit the assignment quickly. If this is not possible, the assignment will be regarded as submitted late.

Competency Assignment Revisions

After each assignment has been marked, students have the opportunity to continue learning in response to feedback they receive on assignments. Students can submit one revision for each assignment, although a professor may accept more revisions if the professor determines the student is addressing all of the professor's instructions and making significant progress toward demonstrating competency. Revised assignments may be submitted up to the course end date, although students are encouraged to submit them soon after they receive their marked assignments. Assignments submitted later than one week before the course end date are ineligible for revisions.

Horizon and MCS's College Assessment of Student Work

The goal of courses is to help students develop their competency, rather than solely earn letter grades. Assignments are the means by which instructors evaluate development of competency by assessing learning outcomes as outlined in the syllabus and each assignment. Once a student's assignment has met all assignment completion requirements, the professor will assign a grade for that assignment. The opportunity for revisions exists according to the "Assignment Revisions" policy.

Horizon and MCS Competency Scale		Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point	U of S Equivalency
E	Exceeding expectations	Student demonstrated exceptional achievement of the learning outcomes.	A+	4.0	90-100
		Student demonstrated excellent achievement of the learning outcomes.	A	4.0	85-89
			A-	3.7	80-84
M	Meeting expectations	Student demonstrated good achievement of the learning outcomes.	B+	3.3	77-79
			B	3.0	73-76
			B-	2.7	70-72

BTM	Beginning to meet expectations	Student demonstrated satisfactory progress in achieving the learning outcomes.	C+	2.3	67-69
			C	2.0	63-66
			C-	1.7	60-62
		Student demonstrated minimal progress in achieving the learning outcomes.	D+	1.3	57-59
			D	1.0	53-56
			D-	0.7	50-52
NYM	Not yet meeting expectations	Student made insufficient progress toward meeting learning outcomes.	F	0.0	0-49

Academic Integrity

Students learn best when practicing academic integrity. A lack of integrity is displayed in acts such as deception, abuse of confidentiality, cheating, inappropriate collaboration, or plagiarism.

Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the words or ideas of another person or an artificial intelligence (AI) tool in such a way as to give others the impression that it is their own words or ideas. In academic writing, there should be no doubt which words or ideas are the student's and which are drawn from other sources or AI. Students are expected to submit their own original work and give due recognition to sources from which all substantial phrases, sentences, or even ideas are drawn. Note also that you may not submit work done in one course to satisfy the requirements of another course (unless both instructors agree beforehand to accept such work). See [here](#) for examples of plagiarism and further guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Horizon and MCS have a subscription to software that ensures the originality of academic writing, verifies the proper citation of all sources, and detects AI-generated content. When you submit an assignment, you will automatically receive a summary on Populi that includes your submitted files along with an originality score (a high originality score is positive).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage

In keeping with the Academic Integrity policy above, students must disclose on the title page of all assignments whether or not they have used AI and how they have used it. If the assignment has no title page, the student must disclose this to the instructor by some other means, such as in a comment on Populi. Students are expected to follow the policy for acceptable use of AI that is published in the [Horizon](#) and [MCS](#) Student Handbooks.

Accessible Learning Services Information

Horizon and MCS are committed to provide safe and inclusive learning environments which equalize the opportunity for students with disabilities to meet the requirements of the institutions, programs, and courses. The application for Academic Accommodations begins with a student disclosing a medical diagnosis or professionally documented learning disability during the application process. Enrolled students may contact Accessibility services personnel (at MCS, the Director of Academic Success, Wendy Holmes at wendy.holmes@mcs.edu; at Horizon, the Academic Accommodations Coordinator, Richelle Bekkattla at rbekkattla@horizon.edu). All Academic Accommodations will adhere to the Guiding Principles listed in the Student Handbooks. Students with documented accommodations on file pertaining to accessing course readings in alternate formats are encouraged to contact the librarian for assistance with as much advanced notice as possible.

Class Attendance

Students should attend all classes in order to facilitate competency development. Students are expected to be present through the delivery method that they registered for. Students registered to attend on-campus or via livestream must be present for the full duration of a class period to be marked as present for the class. Students registered to attend by VOD must submit their VOD reports on time to be marked as present for class. In the case of illness or other unforeseen circumstances, students may miss up to twenty percent of the total class time (e.g., one day of a module course, two 3-hour classes, etc.) without academic penalty. Students who are absent for more than this will automatically fail the course. Students wishing to be exempted from this policy due to extenuating circumstances may make an academic appeal, where they will need to document and verify those circumstances. Students who miss a class are responsible to get missed notes or handouts from another student, rather than from the professor.

Livestreaming Etiquette

Students taking the course through livestreaming are required to indicate this during their course registration. While livestreaming access is available for on-campus students who are unable to attend class due to illness, on-campus students are expected to attend class in person following the class attendance policy.

If attending class online via livestream, in order to be marked present for class, you must keep your camera on and stay present and attentive throughout the class session, extending the gift of engagement. Access your class with a computer (preferably) or tablet, not a cell phone. Arrive to class on time, and dress as you would if you were attending class on campus. Join the class from a quiet space with minimal background noise and mute your microphone until you wish to speak to the class.

Use of Technology

Horizon and MCS encourage the use of electronic devices in the classroom to enhance learning. Careful consideration must be given to privacy issues, copyrighted materials, and the general care and concern for others. Please respect the following classroom policies:

- Please use online access for course learning only. This is a matter of respect for the instructor's teaching, your own learning, and fellow students who may be distracted by other uses.
- Students should secure permission from the instructor to record any teaching material. This includes PowerPoint slides, white board illustrations, notes, and any form of audio or video.
- Student feedback is a valuable input for course improvements. Please resolve any classroom grievance about the instructor or course with the instructor personally, through the grievance procedures, or the Populi-based course evaluations. It is inappropriate to air classroom grievances on a social media platform.
- When instructors use recording mechanisms in the classroom, recorded materials will be used for the sole purpose of instruction (potentially including future online video courses) and cannot be released to any social media outlet without the written consent of the students whose images have been recorded.
- In general, it is not acceptable to share photographs or videos of students in the classroom setting without permission from those whose images appear in such media.

Library Support and Research Assistance

Library staff are available to meet with students (online or in person) who need assistance with

- citing sources and identifying credible resources;
- developing research and information literacy skills;
- searching DTL and other library resources.

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