

## **Dr. Kenneth Embry**

When students are asked to apply course concepts to practical challenges, the work becomes more meaningful and the learning becomes more visible. These experiences encourage students to think critically, solve problems with purpose, and communicate their ideas clearly. Over time, that kind of learning environment helps students build confidence and strengthens the ways they collaborate with others.

Faculty who challenge their students to meet practical challenges with innovative solutions can also lay the foundation for a culture where critical thinking and problem solving are paired with communication and respect between students, their peers, and their professor. Dr. Kenny Embry, Associate Professor of Communication Management, uses these strategies in his communications courses. He brings to life a teaching philosophy where critical thinking skills, relationships, and a willingness to seek clarification are paramount. This focus on authentic learning helps students move beyond simply completing assignments and instead engage in learning that feels connected to real expectations. It also reinforces a classroom culture where thoughtful discussion is encouraged, questions are welcomed, and students practice explaining their thinking with clarity and respect. As students navigate challenges together, they strengthen the communication habits that support both academic success and professional growth. Through this approach, authentic assessments become more than an evaluation tool. They become a foundation for a learning community where critical thinking, problem solving, and respectful communication go hand in hand.