

COMM 3259: Organizational Communication  
Fall 2017

<b>Instructor:</b>	<b>Dr. Kaitlin Phillips</b>
<b>Class Meetings:</b>	MFW, 10:30-11:20, Merrill-Cazier Library room 405
<b>Course Website:</b>	<a href="http://usu.instructure.com">usu.instructure.com</a> (Canvas)
<b>Required texts</b>	Miller, K. (2015). <i>Organizational communication: Approaches and processes</i> (7rd. ed.). Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning. <i>Additional required readings are available on our Blackboard website.</i>
<b>Recommended Resources</b>	Purdue OWL APA formatting guide: <a href="http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/">owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/</a>

**Course Description:**

We are all part of various organizations, and within those organizations, we all communicate. This course is designed to introduce you to the field of organizational communication, examining historical approaches used to explore organizational communication and how those perspectives can shape, expand, and limit our understanding of communicating and organizing. Class discussions and exercises will allow you to apply various theories to real world processes, connecting theory and research to your own lived experiences in organizations. Hopefully, this class will provide you with real world understanding of organizational interactions, provide you with a basis in organizational communication research should you want to explore this field more thoroughly, and instill in you a passion for communication and organizing.

**Course Objectives**

The overall objective of this course is to provide you with both a theoretical and a practical introduction to organizational communication, including but not limited to:

- Describe historical and contemporary approaches to organizational communication including classical, human relations, human resources, systems, cultural, and critical approaches.
- Explain the different processes that occur within organizational communication including assimilation, decision-making, conflict management, change and leadership, emotion, diversity, and technology processes.
- Understand how different processes may operate within the different approaches to organizational communication. For example, how would the Critical approach view emotion in the workplace?
- Recognize and describe problems and strategies in organizational contexts in case studies.

**Expectations**

This course is designed with the expectation that you will come every class period prepared to participate. This means, reading and critically engaging the material both in- and outside of class. I understand that many students prefer to take notes on their computers; however, you must still be respectful of those around you and use any technology you have in a way that is conducive to the learning objectives of the whole class. In other words, not only do I expect you to be physically present in class, but also mentally present. In this course you will be expected to participate in discussions, both in small groups and with the whole class, and complete in class application exercises. Much of what you learn in this class will occur through active participation and application, not just listening.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

You final grade will be based on the following exams and assignments. The grading breakdown is as follows:

<b><u>Assignment</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage</u></b>
Exam 1	100 points
Exam 2	100 points
Exam 3	50 points
Blogs: Case Analysis	100 points (50 points each)
4 Wikis	50 points (12.5 points each)
Departmental Report and Presentation	<u>200 points</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>600 points</b>

Grades will be based on the following scale:

500-558 = A	557-540 = A-	539-522 = B+		
521-498 = B	497-480 = B-	479-462 = C+	461-438 = C	
437-420 = C-	419-402 = D+	401-378 = D	377-360 = D-	Below 360 = F

### **Assignment/Exam Description**

#### **Exams**

Exams will take the full class period to complete. They are designed to test your understanding and application of the concepts presented in the text, class lectures, group presentations, and activities. Exams will typically consist of multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and true-false items.

#### **Class Involvement/Attendance:**

In class, you will have the opportunity to practice the skills that you are learning and apply relevant course concepts and readings. The examples and connections you provide in class will help others to process the information in a useful manner.

Involvement includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Attending class regularly and on time (you are expected to attend all classes for the duration of the class period)
- Being focused and practicing good listening skills
- Participating relevantly and actively in class exercises
- Visiting office hours regularly to talk with me about class concepts, skills, and issues
- Completing homework assigned during class
- Demonstrating your understanding of course concepts as they apply to your in-class communication
- **This is one of your ONLY opportunities for Extra Credit. As long as you attend class, and have NO MORE than THREE unexcused absence and are actively involved in class you will earn 5 points of extra credit in the class.**

#### **REFLECTION BLOGS**

To help you reflect upon and synthesize the material in the class, you will post two case analysis blogs using the "Discussion board" link (Canvas). You will blog two times over the course of the semester. You will select an artifact (e.g. article, blog, video, book, etc.) to use as a case study. You will use one of the topics, theories, or approaches covered in that unit as a lens or framework in which explain and analyze the artifact. This analysis should be approximately 2-3 pages in length (typed) and in proper APA format. You must include a citation or attach a copy of the artifact to the analysis (you may also include a photo, video etc. in your blog posting). These 2-page (minimum) written reflections should demonstrate your thoughtful and critical engagement with the readings from the week(s), express your opinions, offer personal insights and examples, raise further questions, and/or describe ways that the concepts challenge or fit into your own views. In other words, you are expected to demonstrate your understanding of the theories and concepts from class in each blog. In order to engage in an online dialogue, you will be expected to respond meaningfully to at least two of your classmates' reflections. These responses should critically engage each other's ideas and perspectives while reminding you of yours.

#### **Wikis**

We will be using wikis (think of these as mini blogs) 4 times in the beginning of the term to assess real world organizational issues, in a virtual yet hands-on format. In other words, using the approaches presented, you will be asked to assess various organizations. This is a somewhat open-ended assignment in that wiki groups will be given a great deal of creative freedom in constructing answers to case problems or issues. The course resources (text, notes, etc.), each other, the web (youtube, links, images), creative software tools (Microsoft Suite or Apple applications) and any other interactive resources deemed credible to solutions are highly encouraged. Also, wikis are not limited to the classroom environment as students can add to them, continue discussions and review other wikis outside of class as this forum.

Wiki group grades will be assessed weekly. Grades will be based largely on content and completion. In other words, as long as wikis are completed by the appropriate deadline (see below) and address relevant issues, your wiki group will receive full credit. However, extra credit has been built into these wiki assignments. The wiki group members who create the most innovative, creative, and course supported wiki will receive 5 extra credit points and earn the week-long title (and bragging rights) of WOW - Wiki of the Week! Wiki groups have the opportunity to earn up to 20 extra credit points as WOW titles will be reestablished for each Wiki as we proceed through different chapters, cases, approaches, and problems. Deadlines for completing course wikis are as follows (assuming your wiki group does not finish the assignment during lab time): Wikis must be completed by 11:59pm the day the Wiki is due, and group members have until the following Monday morning prior to the start of class to respond to the Wikis.

### **Department Project**

From the first week of school our class will be structured as an organization. I am the CEO and chair of the board. You will be organized into several departments. Each department will complete a number of exercises over the course of the semester and prepare a final report about a communication topic/issue researched within a local organization. In many ways, you might think of this as the product for which your department is responsible throughout the semester.

#### **Exercises:**

Throughout the semester there will be exercises that will challenge you to engage the reading and put theoretical concepts into practice. These assignments will have very clear directions and will usually be completed in class. There will probably be little or no advance notice regarding these exercises. The final exercise will be a team evaluation where you will evaluate the other members of your project department—this shouldn't be a problem as long as you are a good team member. SPECIAL NOTE—if you make less than 60% on the team evaluation, your individual project grade will be reduced by 2 letter grades on the basis of your not contributing enough to the final product.

### **Report & Presentation**

Your department will prepare and present a report based on an identified communication issue in a local organization. This can be quantitative or qualitative, but must involve research of some sort. Each department will turn in one 15-20 page paper (typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. font) and make a 12-15 minute presentation, each of which is due during finals week. I would envision you accomplishing this by contacting people that you know in locally owned organizations and asking them about communication within their business. For example, if you know the manager of a local grocery store, ask that person about the communication issues that he/she sees as particularly salient. For example, you might identify a major strength or weakness in that organization. Ask what he/she does as manager to address those issues. Ask to survey/interview employees. The point is that you are using course material to investigate communication at a local organization. More information regarding this project will be discussed in class.

### **Course Policies**

***Late Papers and Make-up Exams:*** Late papers are not generally accepted and will only be considered for what I consider to be **emergency** situations. **You must discuss these with me within 24 hours of the due date.** If I choose to accept an overdue paper, it will receive a grade deduction of 10% for each day late (calendar days, including weekends). No late work will be accepted one week after due date. Make-up exams will only be given in the case of an emergency and will be different from the original exam. Make-up exams must be taken within one week of the regularly scheduled exam. **You must contact me within 24 hours of the scheduled exam in order for me to consider a make-up.**

***In-Class Etiquette:*** Your timely presence is required in this course. Tardiness is disruptive to your fellow students and me. Please be sure to turn cell phones off before entering the classroom and avoid talking to your peers during class lecture and discussion. Talking on the phone, reading non-course materials (e.g., the paper, readings for another class), surfing the web, checking Facebook, Instagram, etc., and texting are **unacceptable** behaviors, and

Syllabus adapted from Dr. Johny Garner

you may be asked to leave class if I see you engaging in any of them. These behaviors may also adversely affect your involvement grade. Laptops should only be used for note taking, if at all. If I see that you are using your computer for any other purpose during class I will ask you to stop bringing your laptop to class and to take handwritten notes.

**Accommodations:** Students with ADA-documented physical, sensory, emotional or medical impairments may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. Veterans may also be eligible for services. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Room 101 of the University Inn, (435)797-2444 voice, (435)797-0740 TTY, (435)797-2444 VP, or toll free at 1-800-259-2966. Please contact the DRC as early in the semester as possible. Alternate format materials (Braille, large print or digital) are available with advance notice.

**Academic Misconduct:** The department is committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on exams or purchasing papers or other assignments will receive a failing grade in the course.