

**CMST 3250: Organizational Communication**  
MWF: 10:30-11:20 am; Bldg.: Merrill-Cazier Library, Rm. 405

**Instructor:** Kristin K. Andersen

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**Office:** Eccles Conference Center (ECC) 108H

**Office Hours:** MW 1:30-2:20, 3:30-4:30 pm; T 9-11 am by appointment

***\*Allow at least a 48-hour window for a response to your email and always use your USU email account when corresponding.***

**A. Course Title**

CMST 3250: Organizational Communication

**B. Course Description**

This course covers the study of internal communication requirements of organizations (e.g., small businesses, large corporate offices, non-profit organizations). This includes the analysis of communication problems associated with conflict, diversity, interpersonal influence, communication technology, and information flow. Concern is given to the development of effective communication practices.

**C. Pre-requisites**

CMST 2110: Interpersonal Communication or instructor permission

**D. Course Objectives**

1. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, and theories of organizational comm.
2. Learning to apply course material from this course (e.g., text, lecture, supplemental readings) in order to improve critical thinking and decision-making.
3. Developing specific competencies, points of view, and skills needed by professionals.
4. Acquiring skills in working with others as a member of a team through group work.
5. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

**E. Required Textbook and Instructional Materials**

- **Miller, Katherine & Barbour, Joshua (2015). *Organizational Communication: Approaches and Processes*. Cengage. (7<sup>th</sup> Edition).**
  - ISBN for Textbook: ISBN-13: 9781285164205
  - ISBN for E-Book: ISBN-13: 9781305226166

**F. Email Etiquette**

Email etiquette is essential when students are communicating with instructors; treat all emails as professional communication. Begin emails with "Dear Ms. A, ...", have a dedicated body, and end with your signature. Emails will only be answered if they follow professional standards.

### G. Technology Policy & Distractions

The use of technology is disruptive to class, so please do not use technology during class time. If you are being disruptive (in any form, e.g., talking), expect any or all of the following:

- To be “called out” in class.
- Asked to leave class and be marked absent for the day.
- Forfeit all points for that class (i.e. attendance, participation).
- **If you are being disruptive during a presentation**, all of the above applies AND the student’s presentation grade will be negatively affected at the instructor’s discretion.

### H. University Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy.

As stated by Utah State University:

*“When you accepted admission to Utah State University, you agreed to the following honor pledge: ‘I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity.’ This pledge means that a commitment to honesty will be fundamental to the decisions you make. When faced with a choice, you will err on the side of maintaining your integrity as a student and a scholar” (Utah State University, 2018).*

You can go to the following site for more information on what constitutes academic dishonesty: <http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=3140>. “Not knowing” is not an excuse.

### I. Syllabus Statement

The syllabus is a *general plan* for the course, but deviations may be necessary. Any changes are at the instructor’s discretion and will be announced by email or during lecture. Thus, I strongly advise regular class attendance and email check-ins to ensure you don’t miss announcements.

### J. Attendance Policy

You are allowed **three (3) absences** in this class without penalty and where no excuse is required. **There will be a 10-point reduction in your final grade for every absence after three.** **If you are more than 10 minutes late for class, you will be counted absent** and it will count against one of your allowed absences. **You should use your absences wisely.**

### K. Topical Outline

The following outline gives you a general sense of what topics are covered in this class; note that this list is not comprehensive.

1. Challenges in Organizational Communication
2. Theoretical Approaches to Understanding Organizational Communication, including:
  - a. Classical/Foundational
  - b. Human Relations & Resources
  - c. Cultural
  - d. Critical & Feminist Perspectives
3. Processes of Organizational Communication, including:
  - a. Decision-making Processes
  - b. Conflict Management Processes
  - c. Leadership Processes
  - d. Processing Emotion and Stress

**K. Schedule of Principal Course Assignments**

This schedule is approximate and may change at the discretion of the instructor. Any changes will be announced either by email or in lecture.

| FALL 2018 CALENDAR  |       |  |                 |
|---------------------|-------|--|-----------------|
| Week/Date           |       | Topics                                   | Readings        |
| <b>Week 1, Mon.</b> | 8/27  | Course Introduction & Intro to Org Comm. |                 |
|                     | 8/29  | Challenges of Org. Comm.                 |                 |
|                     | 8/31  | Challenges of Org. Comm.                 | Ch. 1           |
| <b>Week 2, Mon.</b> | 9/3   | <b>LABOR DAY</b>                         | <b>NO CLASS</b> |
|                     | 9/5   | Classical Approaches                     | Ch. 2           |
|                     | 9/7   | Classical Approaches                     |                 |
| <b>Week 3, Mon.</b> | 9/10  | Human Relations & Resources Approaches   | Ch. 3           |
|                     | 9/12  | Human Relations & Resources Approaches   |                 |
|                     | 9/14  | Human Relations & Resources Approaches   |                 |
| <b>Week 4, Mon.</b> | 9/17  | <i>OA Presentations (8)</i>              | Ch. 4           |
|                     | 9/19  | Systems & Cultural Approaches            |                 |
|                     | 9/21  | Systems & Cultural Approaches            |                 |
| <b>Week 5, Mon.</b> | 9/24  | <i>OA Presentations (8)</i>              |                 |
|                     | 9/26  | Constitutive Approaches                  | Ch. 5           |
|                     | 9/28  | Constitutive Approaches                  |                 |
| <b>Week 6, Mon.</b> | 10/1  | <i>OA Presentations (5)</i>              |                 |
|                     | 10/3  | Critical & Feminist Approaches           | Ch. 6           |
|                     | 10/5  | Critical & Feminist Approaches           |                 |
| <b>Week 7, Mon.</b> | 10/8  | <i>OA Presentations (5)</i>              |                 |
|                     | 10/10 | Review                                   |                 |
|                     | 10/12 | <b>Midterm</b>                           |                 |
| <b>Week 8, Mon.</b> | 10/15 | Socialization Process                    | Ch. 7           |
|                     | 10/17 | Socialization Process                    |                 |
|                     | 10/19 | <b>FALL BREAK</b>                        | <b>NO CLASS</b> |
| <b>Week 9, Mon.</b> | 10/22 | Decision-Making Processes                | Ch. 8           |

|                                |  |  |             |
|--------------------------------|--|--|-------------|
|                                | 10/24  | Decision-Making Processes              |             |
|                                | 10/26  | Decision-Making Processes              |             |
| <b>Week 10, Mon.</b>           | 10/29  | Conflict Management                    | Ch. 9       |
|                                | 10/31  | Conflict Management                    |             |
|                                | 11/2   | Conflict Management                    |             |
| <b>Week 11, Mon.</b>           | 11/5   | Org. Change & Leadership               | Ch. 10      |
|                                | 11/7   | Org. Change & Leadership               |             |
|                                | 11/9   | <i>Group Project Workshop/Work Day</i> |             |
| <b>Week 12, Mon.</b>           | 11/12  | Processes of Emotion                   | Ch. 11      |
|                                | 11/14  | Processes of Emotion                   |             |
|                                | 11/16  | <i>Group Project Workshop/Work Day</i> |             |
| <b>Week 13, Mon.</b>           | 11/19  | Processes of Emotion                   |             |
| <b>Week 13,</b>                | <b>11/21-11/23: THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>                                 |  |             |
| <b>Week 14, Mon.</b>           | 11/26  | Organizational Diversity               | Ch. 12      |
|                                | 11/28  | Organizational Diversity               |             |
|                                | 11/30  | Organizational Diversity               |             |
| <b>Week 15, Mon.</b>           | 12/3   | Changing Landscape of Organizations    | Ch. 13 & 14 |
|                                | 12/5   | <b>Group Presentations</b>             |             |
|                                | 12/7   | <b>Group Presentations</b>             |             |
| <b>FINALS WEEK: DEC. 10-14</b> |  |  |             |
| <b>Week 16</b>                 | <b>Final Exam: Friday, December 14<sup>th</sup> from 9:30-11:20 am</b> |  |             |

**\*\*Final Grades entered by Thursday, December 20 at 5pm.**

### L. Grading Policy

**There are a total of 1000 points in this class.** I will do my best to keep grades up to date, but please keep a record of your grades until you receive your final grade for the semester. Use the formula below to assess your work and grade.

**Formula:** Your grade % = (all the points you have earned) / (maximum points possible)

|                    |                    |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                    | <b>B+ = 87-89%</b> | <b>C+ = 78-79%</b> | <b>D+ = 68-69%</b> |
| <b>A = 93-100%</b> | <b>B = 83-86%</b>  | <b>C = 73-77%</b>  | <b>D = 60-68%</b>  |
| <b>A- = 90-92%</b> | <b>B- = 80-82%</b> | <b>C- = 70-72%</b> | <b>F = 0-59%</b>   |

**M. Specific Course Requirements for Grading Purposes**

Your course grade will be determined by combining scores from the following:

- A. **Activities/Homework & Discussion Questions (100 points)**
  - i. In this course students are expected to complete in-class activities or homework assignments, which may involve individual or group assignments.
- B. **Participation (100 points)**
  - i. **Students are expected to actively participate in class.** Participation will be assessed every class period and will count toward the final grade. Discussion should be RELEVANT to the subject matter, and discussion that is irrelevant will not be counted toward a student's participation grade. *Note: PARTICIPATION IS NOT ATTENDANCE.*
- C. **Organization Analysis - Presentation (100 points)**
  - i. Students will give small presentations to the class on an organization, and discuss the functioning/problems of the company in relation to their assigned theoretical approach. Details will be discussed in class and posted on Canvas.
- D. **Exams (300 points)**
  - i. This course has two exams – a midterm and a final. Each exam is worth 150 points and might contain multiple choice, T/F, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer questions. *Note: Make-up exams are rarely given, and only when for specific reasons with adequate documentation (see policy below).*
- E. **Short Papers (200 points)**
  - i. There will be 2 short papers worth 100 points each for which students will have to investigate and analyze a chosen organization (on the topic assigned). Students will work individually on these assignments. Details on the nature of the papers will be provided in class and then posted on Canvas.
- F. **Group Presentation— Issues in Organizations (200 points)**
  - i. Students will be formed into groups of approximately 5 individuals to present their analysis of a prevalent issue in an organization. Details about the project will be provided in class and posted online. *Note: Grades are awarded as a group.*

**N. 24/7 Rule for Grade-related Discussions & Appeals**

- A. **24-Hour Rule (Voicing Concerns/Appealing the Grade):** I require that you wait at minimum 24 hours after receiving your assignment grade before addressing your concerns. I will not respond to any inquiries submitted before that time. You have the right to inquire about a grade (OF COURSE!), as careful consideration of one's graded work facilitates useful and meaningful discussions about assignments. *Please be thoughtful of any grade, instructor feedback, and how you voice your concerns.*
- B. **7 days/1 Week Rule (Taking Action):** You are encouraged to take action if you believe an assignment was graded inaccurately. Students should submit *a typed argument in essay format within one week* after the assignment is returned in to the student. Essays should cite class material to argue for why the assignment should be re-evaluated. No grade appeals will be considered after the one (1) week mark.
- C. **Grade Re-evaluation:** Be advised that a grade appeal could result in a lower or higher assignment grade. A grade appeal may have one of three outcomes: (1) grade is upheld (remains the same); (2) grade is lowered; or (3) grade is raised.

**O. Late & Make-Up Policy****1. Late Policy**

- a. Being over 10 minutes late to a class or leaving 10 minutes early constitutes an absence for that class period.
- b. If you are late to an exam/quiz, you will not have extra time to finish.
- c. After the first person to finish the exam has left, I will not accept any latecomers.

**2. Make-Up Policy**

- a. Make-ups (e.g., exams, quizzes) are rarely given and never for personal reasons (e.g., work, family events, airline ticket reservations, vacation plans, etc.).
- b. Make-ups are allowed for the following reasons with proper documentation:
  - a. *Absence due to a University-sanctioned activity as an official representative* of Utah State University where prior notice has been provided to the instructor.
  - b. *Absence due to observance of a religious holiday*.
    - a. NOTE: Documentation for these reasons needs to be submitted within the first two weeks of the semester to be valid.
  - c. *Absence due to an emergency that has been documented by a University official* (e.g., advisor, Student Affairs) or serious illness verified by your physician.
    - a. NOTE: Documentation from your physician does not need to indicate the specifics, but does need to explicitly state that you must not attend class.

**P. Reasonable Accommodation Policy**

Students with learning disabilities who may require accommodations should contact The Disability Resource Center (<https://www.usu.edu/drc/>). Accommodations will be determined on a case-by-case basis according to each student's individual needs and documentation. Please come speak with me if you have any accommodations that you require so we can work out a plan for the semester. If needs change throughout the semester, please bring documentation (for verification of DRC knowledge) and we will create or alter plans accordingly.

**Q. Copyright**

All materials from this course including the syllabus, course notes, quizzes, activities, paper assignments, exams, etc., are copyrighted as intellectual property (unless otherwise noted and credited) and are not to be duplicated, reproduced or posted to any website (e.g., Koofers).

**R. Emergency Preparedness**

**In case of emergency, call 911 immediately.** If the fire alarm sounds, we will exit the building and reassemble at a designated location so I can make sure everyone has exited the building safely. Do not use the elevators and make sure to notify others as you leave. If you have special circumstances that I need to know about in case of an emergency (e.g., earthquake, tornado, Godzilla walking through downtown Logan), please speak to me during the first week of class. If you have concerns about other emergencies, please speak to me and also check the Department of Public Safety, Emergence Management Division website at: <https://dps.usu.edu/emergency/>. Additionally, you may check here for Public Safety, EMD resources: <https://dps.usu.edu/emergency/preparedness-tips>.