

**COMM 581: APPLIED ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION
SYLLABUS
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
SPRING 2012**

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OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday: 8:30-11:00

Thursday: 8:30-11:00

And By Appointment

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Cheney, G., Christensen, L.T., Zorn, T. E., & Ganesh, S. (2010). *Organizational communication in an age of globalization* (2nd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press. (ISBN: 978-1-57766-640-0)
- Course Pack of Readings from Blackboard
- Microphone for PC Or Webcam with microphone
- Internet and Blackboard Access

HELP DESK INFORMATION

- <http://www.wku.edu/infotech/index.php?page=123>
- <http://www.wku.edu/online/bbtutorial.html>
- <http://www.wku.edu/helpdesk>
- (270) 745-7000

***Please direct all computer and/or software questions to the WKU IT help desk.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to COMM 581 – Applied Organizational Communication! This is a survey course designed to expose graduate students to organizational communication theory in practice. This course emphasizes the applied nature of organizational communication using foundational and current research in the field. Throughout the semester, we'll also direct our attention to understanding relevant research designs and methodologies for studying communication in organizations.

COURSE GOALS

1. To provide in-depth exposure to organizational communication theory and research.
2. To understand the application of theory to organizations and employees.
3. To apply communication concepts, models, and theories using multiple perspectives.
4. To learn how to analyze research for its strengths and weaknesses.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS

Participation

The lecture method of dispensing information is often an inefficient method of instruction especially at the graduate level. With teacher direction and facilitation, students acquire more information and

employ personal learning strategies. Although this course is on-line, it is designed to function much like a graduate seminar where you can play with ideas and concepts via discussion with classmates. Learning to jump into these discussions and to communicate and develop your ideas is one of the most important outcomes of this class. ***Don't be shy!*** Come to on-line discussion prepared to question, to defend, to debate, to disagree, to apply, to integrate, to develop...etc. In addition, I encourage you to bring forward research that informs and explores the days' issues that you have noted in your own readings.

Course Attendance

Successful learning online requires you to actively participate and *attend* the course. Attendance for this online course is defined as signing on to the Blackboard site and making substantive postings and completing course assignments. You are required to have substantive participation a *minimum of 3 days per week*.

You must meet the attendance minimum to stay active in the class. If you do not meet this attendance requirement for two consecutive weeks you will receive an "FN" for the course. If you have not attended class (posted one or more notes to the main class meeting) during the first seven days of the term, you will be considered to be in non-attendance and will be withdrawn from the course.

If you are unable to participate due to prolonged serious illness or personal emergency, you are expected to contact me as soon as possible. If you are unable to participate due to technical problems, you are expected to notify the appropriate technical support personnel and then, notify me. Failure to notify me will be considered a missed deadline. All assigned work must be completed regardless of the reason for nonparticipation.

On-Line Participation and Discussion Boards

This on-line course involves intensive discussion board assignments on the readings and paper assignments. The "post by" dates for discussion boards are located on the weekly schedule. Your grades for the discussion board assignments are based on the frequency of your participation, and the quality of your written contributions (i.e. offers new topics for discussion, adds new information, references the readings, written at a graduate level).

It is essential for you to actively participate in the course activities and to keep up with the readings. If you do not do the reading, do not expect to benefit substantially from the course or to score well on the discussion boards. **Assigned chapters and journal articles should be read in accordance with the schedule and referred to in the discussion boards** so that you will be able to contribute to the class discussions and activities and perform well.

You are required to read all of the chapters, articles, notes, and postings on the course site and the discussion posted by me and your classmates. The quantity and quality of your participation in the discussion area will be graded along the following categories: timeliness, quality of initial post, quality of follow-up posts, clarity and ethical group participation. The points and rubric for each category are posted in Blackboard.

Substantive participation in discussion boards include:

- Responding to discussion questions as well as discourse between students related to subject matter within the course. A response may offer a question about another's work, agreement with or challenge to the point of view expressed (supported by a reference to the readings and/or course material), or critique of someone's work.

- Contributing to the discussion based upon course content, theory, research, and personal experiences, **not** simply personal opinions

This is a writing intensive course, so it is critical that you use correct spelling and appropriate grammar. Throughout the course you will expand your personal vocabulary through the study of terms related to the course. Your written work will be evaluated on both content and mechanics. Good writing should be reasonably free of mistakes and without composition errors, which are called gross errors (sentence fragments, run-on sentences, subject-verb disagreement, misspelled words, and typographical errors which result in such errors). All of your work should use no more than 12 point type with margins not exceeding 1 inch) and double-spaced—unless otherwise indicated. Please use APA 6th edition for citing and documenting outside sources.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/ASSIGNMENTS

Discussion Leader Presentations

Each week a discussion leader will be assigned to review the chapter and articles and to provide the class with discussion questions. Discussion leaders will create an 8-10 minute audio overview of the reading with a corresponding PowerPoint presentation using Tegrity Classroom and facilitate the discussion board for their article.

In addition to your audio and slide overview of the week's readings, as discussion leader you should decide how best to generate discussion from your class members including:

- Posing follow-up questions with the board
- Finding an article or website on-line, post a link to the article or website and ask your classmates to discuss this artifact based on concepts you point them to from the reading;
- Monitoring the discussion and taking responsibility for continuing the dialogue. (Part of your grade is your ability to generate and maintain a productive discussion.)
- Posting relevant, clear, articulate, and grammatically correct messages that are well thought out and course-based.
- Posting final Follow up (posting back) to the board at the very end to wrap things up

Weekly Discussion Boards

When you are not assigned as a presenter or discussion leader, you will be a participant in the weekly discussion board. The discussion boards are intended to help you integrate and apply the material you have read for the week. Posts will be evaluated using the rubric explained above.

Literature Review, Case Study, and Presentation

For the major research project in this class you will write a literature review on a specific topic relevant to organizational communication processes and analyze this topic further through an organization case study. Finally, at the end of the semester, you will present your findings through a Powerpoint and Tegrity presentation lasting 8-10 minutes that will be posted to Blackboard.

For the literature review, identify an organizational communication concept that is particularly interesting to you and that you would like to learn more about. Potential topics include anything we've studied throughout the semester. Topics could include: organizational identification, organizational relationships (friendship, peer, supervisor, etc), workplace bullying, organizational dissent expression, organizational culture, power, hegemony, recruitment, socialization, conflict, supervisor-subordinate communication, trust, feedback, peer and coworker communication, work-life balance, organizational rhetoric, democracy in the workplace, communication technology in organizations, emotion at work, stress and burnout, etc. Since this is a case study, the first 10

pages will constitute the literature review. The second 10 pages will analyze this concept within a real organization.

For the case study, select a profit/service organization. You are to make contact with the organization with the goal of gaining adequate information to discuss your topic. Your case study should provide a rich description of the organization and provide adequate information for understanding the context surrounding your topic of analysis. Consider interviewing multiple members of the organizations, conducting participant observation, interviews, and document analysis.

Basic Requirements: The literature review should be 8-10 pages and the case study should range from 8-10 pages. All written work should be double-spaced and use APA documentation style.

DETERMINATION OF FINAL GRADE

Assignments are weighted as follows:

Weekly Discussion Boards (13)	40%
Discussion Leader Role	10%
Literature Review	20%
Case Study	20%
Project Presentation	10%

On the following pages, you'll find a schedule that outlines the topics we'll be discussing each week and the articles that you should read prior to each class. This is a challenging list of readings, so please plan your time accordingly. If you are worried about how the class is going or your learning process, please come and talk to me about it. We both have the same goal—to help you develop your knowledge and skills!

COURSE ASSUMPTIONS

Completion of Assignments. It is assumed that you will turn your assignments in on time. All written assignments are due on the published due dates. All assignments should be proofread carefully before turning them in, and late work will result in a reduction of assignment grade. As a rule, late work will be reduced at least a letter grade. Excessively late work will not be accepted. Poor planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part OR a good reason for turning work in late.

Academic Integrity. Written work for this course must be the original work of the student. Any student guilty of knowingly using, or attempting to use another person's work will receive a grade of "F" for the course. Such conduct may also constitute grounds for dismissal from the University.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

WEEK	TOPICS/READINGS
WEEK 1 January 23-28	<p>Introduction to the Course Importance of Theory in Organizational Communication</p> <p>Chapter 1: Introduction</p> <p>Mumby, D.K. & Stohl, C. (1996). Disciplining organizational communication studies. <i>Management Communication Quarterly</i>, 10, 50-72.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Intellectual Autobiography Due by 1/28 Discussion Board 1 Closes 1/28</p>
WEEK 2 January 30- February 4	<p>Foundational Managerial Theories of Organizational Communication</p> <p>Chapter 2: Organizational Structure and Process</p> <p>Ashcraft, K.L. (2001). Organized dissonance: Feminist bureaucracy as hybrid form. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i>, 44(6), 1301-1322.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Discussion Board 2 Closes 2/4</p>
WEEK 3 February 6- 11	<p>Foundational Managerial Theories of Organizational Communication</p> <p>Chapter 3: Rationality, Decision Making, and (Ab)Uses of Information</p> <p>Dougherty, D.S. & Drumheller, K. (2006). Sensemaking and emotions in organizations: Accounting for emotions in a rational(ized) context. <i>Communication Studies</i>, 57(2), 215-238.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Discussion Board 3 Closes 2/11</p>
WEEK 4 February 13-18	<p>Organizations as Cultures</p> <p>Chapter 4: Culture, Subcultures, and Organizational Socialization</p> <p>Stohl, C. (1986). The role of memorable messages in the process of organizational socialization. <i>Communication Quarterly</i>, 34(3), 231-249.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Discussion Board 4 Closes 2/18</p>

WEEK 5 February 20-25	<p>Identification</p> <p>Chapter 5: Communicating Identity Individually and Collectively</p> <p>Bullis, C. & Bach, B.W. (1989). Socialization turning points: An examination of change in organizational identification. <i>Western Journal of Speech Communication</i>, 53(2), 272-293.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Discussion Board 5 Closes 2/25</p>
WEEK 6 February 27-March 3	<p>Organizational Relationships</p> <p>Chapter 6: Connecting through Social Relationships and Networks</p> <p>Lutgen-Sandvik, P., Tracy, S.J., & Alberts, J.K. (2007). Burned by bullying in the American workplace: Prevalence, perception, degree, and impact. <i>Journal of Management Studies</i>, 44(6), 837-862.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Discussion Board 6 Closes 3/3</p>
WEEK 7 March 5- 10	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS
WEEK 8 March 12- 17	<p>Participation and Democracy</p> <p>Chapter 8: Participation, Teams, and Democracy at Work</p> <p>Stohl, C. & Cheney, G. (2001). Participatory processes/paradoxical practices. <i>Management Communication Quarterly</i>, 14, 349-407.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Discussion Board 7 Closes 3/17</p>
WEEK 9 March 19- 24	<p>LITERATURE REVIEW DUE 3/24</p> <p>NO DISCUSSION BOARD THIS WEEK</p>

<p>WEEK 10 March 26-31</p>	<p>Power and Control</p> <p>Chapter 9: Power and Control in Organizational Life</p> <p>Kassing, J.W. (2008). Consider this: A comparison of factors contributing to employees' expressions of dissent. <i>Communication Quarterly</i>, 56(3), 342-355.</p> <p>Discussion Board 8 Closes 3/31</p>
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<p>WEEK 11 April 2-7</p>	<p>Communicating Change</p> <p>Chapter 11: Organizational Change and Change-Related Communication</p> <p>Lewis, L.K., Schmisser, A.M., Stephens, K.K., & Weir, K.E. (2006). Advice on communicating organizational change: The content of popular press books. <i>Journal of Business Communication</i>, 43(2), 113-137.</p> <p>Discussion Board 9 Closes 4/7</p>
<p>WEEK 12 April 9-14</p>	<p>Technology and Surveillance</p> <p>Chapter 12: The Meaning and Uses of Organizational Communication Technologies</p> <p>D'Urso, S.C. (2006). Who's watching us at work? Toward a structural-perceptual model of electronic monitoring and surveillance in organizations. <i>Communication Theory</i>, 16, 281-303.</p> <p>Discussion Board 10 Closes 4/14</p>
<p>WEEK 13 April 16-21</p>	<p>Communicative Management of Work and Family</p> <p>Kirby, E.L., & Krone, K.J. (2002). "The policy exists but you can't really use it": Communication and the structuration of work-family policies. <i>Journal of Applied Communication Research</i>, 30(1), 50-77.</p> <p>Alberts, J.K., Tracy, S. J., & Trethewey, A. (2011). An investigative theory of the division of domestic labor: Threshold level, social organizing, and sensemaking. <i>Journal of Family Communication</i>, 11, 21-38.</p> <p>Discussion Board 11 Closes 4/21</p>

WEEK 14 April 23-28	<p>Dignity and Worker Identities</p> <p>Lucas, K. (2011). Blue collar discourses of workplace dignity: Using outgroup comparisons to construct positive identities. <i>Management Communication Quarterly</i>, 25 (2), 353-374.</p> <p>Conrad, C. (1988). Work songs, hegemony, and illusions of self. <i>Critical Studies in Mass Communication</i>, 5(3), 179-201.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Discussion Board 12 Closes 4/28</p>
WEEK 15 April 30-May 5	<p>FINAL CASE DUE—WEDNESDAY, May 2</p>
WEEK 16 May 7-11	<p>Final Case PowerPoint Presentations DUE MONDAY, May 7</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Discussion Board 13 Closes 5/11</p>