Online Syllabus: All course information posted online, including policies, is subject to being changed until the first day of the semester. Check the date at the bottom of the document for currency.

COMM240 Web-based course
Effective Listening

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Zoom online meetings by
appointment

Required text: Worthington, D. L., & Fitch-Hauser, M. (2018). *Listening: Processes, functions, and competency (1 ed.).* **New York: Routledge** https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315389202

WKU participate in The Big Red Backpack program. *The e-text is already included inside the Blackboard site. If you decide to opt out, the text will be replaced with a pay wall. I don't recommend opting out.

Other Requirements
- At least one email address you check daily
- At least one telephone number under which you can be reliably reached
- Access to the internet (a reliable high-speed internet connection)
- A webcam and microphone
- Ear plugs

Course Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able
to:
1. Identify your personal listening style and create a self-improvement plan.
2. List common barriers to effective listening.
3. Identify basic listening theory and research.
4. Function as an active listener through a Story corps interviewing project
5. Identify the level of listening within a specific organization.

Course Description

Listening is a central component of the communication process. However, few individuals receive any formal listening instruction. This course is designed to review the concepts necessary to observe, identify, and hone one's listening skills. We will study listening in contexts ranging from family to romance and education to organizations. The future of listening research will also be discussed. Toward that end, class assignments are designed to teach you the skills needed to be an effective listener. The skills and knowledge you will gain in this class will be useful for you in many ways. Developing your listening skills can make you a more supportive friend and family member, and help you process information more effectively.

Below are the policies and guidelines for this course. Please read these policies carefully. If you have any questions regarding them, please contact me as soon as possible. If you have any questions or problems with course assignments, my evaluation of your performance, or any other aspect of the course, please let me know. Issues are more easily dealt with earlier rather than later in the semester.

Assessment of Student Learning

Grades are figured based on points accumulated, not averages. Grades will be based on the

following scale:

A (900 – 1000 points): Excellent work
B (800 – 899 points): Good solid work
C (700 – 799 points):   Average work
D (600 – 699 points): Poor work
F (<599 points):   Failing work

Grades will be based on the degree to which students meet the guidelines laid out for each assignment. Please note that as you progress throughout the semester, the standards by which assignments are judged change with your level of knowledge and experience. Before submitting assignments, be sure to check the assignment to ensure that all of the required elements are present

Class assignment point values

Watson Barker Listening Test - 50 points
Personal Listening Goals - 50 points
Personal Listening Reflection - 50 points
Discussion Board assignments -145 points
Quizzes - 110 points
Story Corps Assignment - 135 points
Story Corps Reflection - 25 points
Library Project - 125 points
Organizational Listening Project - 110 points
Midterm Exam- 100 points
Final Exam -100 points

Total 1000 points

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Class Assignments

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Participation
Quality and quantity of contributions to discussion boards constitute your participation grade.

Watson Barker Listening Test
You will watch a 25-minute video test to assess your listening ability at the beginning of the course.

Personal Listening Goals Development
Before studying listening in-depth, identify several aspects of your personal listening habits that you would like to change as you participate in this course. Develop three specific listening goals for yourself, and be sure to explain why you chose these goals. This paper will be two to three pages (1000 to 150word count) in length with 1" margins and 12-point font, double spaced.

Personal Listening Goals Reflection
Think about the listening goals you identified in a paper at the beginning \ of the semester. Review your original paper. What did you learn this semester that you could apply to your goals? Refer to specific lecture and text materials. In what ways has your listening improved over the course of the class? The paper will be two to three pages in length. (1000 to 1500 words)

StoryCorps Assignment
Go to StoryCorps' website at www.storycorps.com
1. Go to "Record your Story" and sign up for a Do-It-Yourself Instruction Guide. (You will be asked to enter your email address.)
2. Select someone to interview and construct questions in advance.
3. Record at least 30 minutes using the guidelines in the instruction guide.
4. Provide a complete typed transcript of the conversation. This means that you type every response, just as in a court transcript. Your transcript will be several pages, but it can be single spaced. Indicate which person is speaking. For example:

Student: When and where were you born?

Aunt Patty: I was born in Lewisburg, Kentucky in 1933.

And so on….

Select a senior family member such as a grandparent, a great grandparent or a great aunt/uncle. If you don't have an older family member, please contact me to explore other options with you. You must get your interviewee approved in advance. You should turn in a complete transcript of your interview for total credit. A twenty-minute recorded interview would yield around 6-8 pages (At least 3000 words or more) of typed transcript. Provide a brief description of your project and complete the reflection on the space provided on the Blackboard Discussion Board.

Library Project
Go to the library or access EBSCO Host or JSTOR online through the WKU library and find two articles about listening. The articles should be less than five years old. One article should be a research-based article from a peer-reviewed academic journal. The other article should look at listening from an applied perspective and may come from a non-peer-reviewed source. Write a 2-page (at least 1000 words) summary of each article and be prepared to discuss them in a discussion forum. You will be expected to turn in your summaries and the articles.

Organizational Listening Project

Select an organization. Research that organization's history, its communication practices, and its purpose and mission. Identify who the target publics are and how the organization listens to those publics. Write a 4-5-page (2000 to 2500-word count) paper outlining what you find, using the following guidelines to help you investigate:

1. Who/what is your organization? How long has the organization existed?
2. What is the organization's history? What is the purpose of the organization and what does it do? What are the organization's \ goals and objectives? Mission?
3. Who/what are the target publics? On which target public does the organization want to focus? What does the public need or want from the organization? What is the organization's current image with its target publics? What does the organization want from the target public?
4. What type of listening is the client currently using? What methods has/does the organization use to reach out to its various publics? How effective or ineffective have these efforts been? How has the degree of effectiveness been measured?
5. What type of listening strategies has the organization used in the past?
6. What communication channels has the organization used?
7. What are the organization's current communication/listening needs?
8. What is your analysis and assessment of that project?

Assignment Submissions Policy for Online Courses

All assignments are submitted through the Blackboard. I do not accept assignments by email. Be sure to check submission due dates posted on the Course Calendar and in the weekly learning modules.

Examinations

There are two scheduled online examinations (one midterm and one final exam). The midterm will cover the first half of the semester, and the final exam will cover material discussed after the midterm. Questions on the exam may consist of multiple-choice, true-false, short answer, or essay questions. Tests will cover assigned reading, lecture material, and class discussion topics. All exams must be taken, and the final exam will be given only on the date(s) specified for this class.

General Course Information

Language. This course will be conducted in English.

Time. All times mentioned will be Central Standard Time.

Who is most likely to succeed in this course?

1. Students who approach the course material with a sincere interest in improving their understanding of listening and its influence on our lives.

2. Students who read and/or listen to instructions carefully, do their best to follow them, ask questions when they do not understand course material or assignments, regularly participate in class discussion, and submit any required material on time.

3. Specifically, for an online course, students should:

- be self-directed and motivated
  An online course offers you much flexibility in where and when you want to work on the course material. BUT: That also means that you have to be responsible yourself for planning your approach to the course and motivating yourself to get started!

- have good basic computer skills
  You do not have to be a computer wizard, but you need to be comfortable with some basics, such as creating word files and saving them in various formats, emailing and, very important, the use of various blackboard functions and the internet in general. To avoid problems in the course of the semester, make sure the computer you plan to use is protected by a good antivirus program.

- have good time management skills Have you already set aside the time you will spend on this course? If not, now is the time to do it! You need to reserve three hours (which you would normally spend in the classroom) plus 2-3 hours for each of those hours for the outside class work you would have to do. That makes 9-12 hours per week. An online course may be flexible, but the workload is just as real as in a face-to-face course. Set yourself up for success by planning what time you will use for this course now! Then, make sure you stick to your plan!

- be able to read and write well (and ideally like reading!)
  An online course naturally requires more reading and writing than a face-to-face course. Therefore, please carefully consider whether you are comfortable (and can be happy) with both before deciding to take this course!

- have continual access to a computer with Internet access
  This course will require you to be online frequently (i.e., at least every other day). A typical week could look like this: The weekly introductory video and any lecture material become available Monday for you to watch; you have until Wednesday to submit a worksheet showing that you watched the videos and did the readings; once you submit the worksheet you can take the weekly quiz; once you took the quiz, you can participate in the discussion of the week. One activity builds on the other, so you will need to be on blackboard frequently in the course of the week!

- feel comfortable asking questions when they need help. This applies to all courses but online courses even more than face-to-face courses. In a face-to-face class, I may see questions in your face and ask whether anything is unclear. In an online class, that is not possible. So, you really need to take the initiative and ask when you need help!

- be willing to share their experience with their instructor and fellow students in online discussion. In an online class, the discussion board is much like our classroom where we can share ideas and experiences. The more people are ready to share, the more exciting the course will be. Plus, participating increases your own motivation and performance in the course!

(Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, Academic and Student Affairs, 2011)

Assignment Formatting

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All written assignments must conform to APA style (7th edition). The following APA manual is available at the Helm-Cravens library. (6th edition okay)

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Washington, DC: Author. [APA]

You may also access limited APA information at the following Purdue website:

 http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Late Work

All assignments must be submitted to blackboard on their due date. E-mail submissions will not be accepted for credit unless an assignment is specifically announced as an e-mail assignment. No late work will be accepted without prior approval from the instructor. Submitting a corrupted file (i.e., a file that cannot be opened) will be counted as no submission, so check the file you are submitting to make sure it is not corrupted.

All written documents have to be in **Word doc, docx, or rtf** format. Other file formats will not receive credit. Pages doesn't work with Blackboard. You must convert to one of the above files.

Course Policies

Please note: Before discussing our rules for the course, let me **warmly thank** the many students who are conscientious and courteous while endeavoring to meet course obligations. I **do** notice your efforts. It is you who make teaching a joy. Thank you for being there! That said, rules are there to make sure **everybody** is on the same page before we embark on this learning experience together. So, please read the sections below carefully and hopefully we can avoid most issues in the course of the semester.

Contacting the Instructor

Email: The by far best way to reach me is **email**. I will check my email at least once a day from Monday-Sunday around 9:00 p.m. You can usually expect a response from me within 24 hours Monday through Friday, and on Monday if you email me on the weekend. If you do not receive a response within that timeframe, I probably did not get your message. In that case, please check your email to make sure it fulfills the requirements below and re-send it.

Required email format

Always include our course name and section number in the subject line plus a brief heading related to the content of your email. For example: "COMM240 700: Watson Barker question". I get a lot of emails and scan through them for emails from students. Including an appropriate subject line will ensure that I notice your email. Within the email, make sure to always include the following: a greeting, a closer, and your name. Including these items is basic courtesy in email exchanges. You will make a much better impression on whomever you email if you include these basic features. Please do not respond to an announcement I send to the whole class, as it may be buried in a string of email

"Attendance" Policy

According to the University Senate, **"Registration in a course obligates the student to be regular and punctual in class attendance."** In an online course, we do not have regular class meetings, but you are expected to regularly log into the course site, get updates on what is happening in class, and stay on track with readings, listening to lectures, engaging in discussions, and in general fulfilling course requirements. Please know that blackboard keeps a record of your presence in (or absence from) the course site.

Other Student Obligations

- You are responsible for your own learning. It is of no benefit to you if the understandings are in my head and not yours. Therefore, I will happily answer questions, as formulating good questions is part of the learning process, but ultimately the responsibility for acquiring a good understanding of the course material lies with you.
- You are responsible for keeping track of activities and due dates in the course. I will provide reminders early in the semester (and the syllabus has all deadlines listed), but you are expected to organize your own approach to staying on track and making due dates.
- If you have questions, it is your responsibility to ask. I will answer happily, but cannot read your mind to find out that you have a question.
- You are expected to actually be the person you represent yourself to be on all work. If not, this is grounds for failing the course.
- On the first day of the course, you will know when every assignment and exam is due.

Look at it now and plan your term! *If you don't like a due date, set your own earlier than the stated one. If your health or life is unpredictable, work ahead of the stated deadlines.*

What happens if bad weather, computer crashes, server outages, or the like interrupts the usual class activities?

In the event of an emergency local to you (but not to me or vice versa) that results in loss of connection (a technology breakdown, tornado, ice storm, hurricane, earthquake, etc.) do your best to contact me by any means once it is reasonable to do so (phones, fax, postal mail, smoke signals). Continue to make reasonable independent efforts toward course completion as per the syllabus. I do watch for news of the places in which my students are so I may be aware of the problem. Contact me sooner, rather than later.

Arrange a back-up plan for Internet access in case your primary computer fails. Libraries may offer a terminal, for example. WKU tends to do maintenance tasks on the weekends so you may

experience periodic outages. Please act with all haste to fix your computer within 2-3 days of a problem. It has been my experience that computers which are nonfunctional for longer than that result in significant problems in finishing coursework. I've had people try to use a neighbor's computer. That tends to hurt the relationship with the neighbor since you will be there frequently or sacrifice coursework. Please avoid viruses by using virus checking software, avoiding e-mails with "humorous" attachments, and avoid using thumb drives or floppies that have been used on public machines. If you don't know the sender, don't open it.

There are three circumstances in which accommodation is made for missing an exam. What are those special circumstances?

1. A personally life-threatening emergency (includes fever over 100 or being shipped off by military). Appropriate documentation of the emergency is required in order for me to assign a grade. The following are not life-threatening emergencies: Your best friend's relative dies; a cold (no fever); a hangover; a trip to Bermuda; a wedding. Life is about making choices. They are not always easy choices. I hope no one has to make these types of choices in this class, but having to make a difficult choice is part of being an adult, it is not a sign of being mistreated. I give you advance notice so you can make necessary arrangements. There are no surprises in this class so you can plan your life from day one. If you are seriously sick, get a note from the MD, save pharmacy receipts if you don't have insurance or think of how else it could be independently documented in a manner your peers would approve.

2. Business accepts as an excuse the **deaths of grandparents, parents (includes step), children, spouse or person for whom you are guardian** with documentation; so, I'll follow the same model. You have the opportunity on your Student Information Sheet to list the names of those in your immediate "family" however you define that. **I do need documentation of the death** to keep faith with the other students in the class. Although I am very sympathetic I need a newspaper obituary and funeral home card or confirmation from an established citizen, such as the minister, giving the date and time of the funeral and the relationship to you. The death of non-dependent cousins, aunts, uncles, etc. are not considered acceptable excuses. It would be impossible for me to judge the depth of relationships/trauma across all the students for such relatives. If you become a primary caregiver for a dependent after the term begins, (e.g., a sibling dies and you take on their child) notify me before the week of the exam to add them to your list. Again, some type of documentation is important, e.g., I am primary caregiver to an aunt and two elderly friends and am the only relative of a sister. Those are the people for whom I would have to take emergency leave. Once upon a time in small communities everyone knew everyone else and could judge the impact of a loss. Today I have students all over the country and thus need separate confirmation to be at peace with the other students. I regret the inconvenience for those truly experiencing such a loss, but I've heard students boasting about using a fake death as an excuse and I've become cautious to fulfill my obligation to other students to provide as level a playing field as possible.

3. The university may approve certain types of absences campus-wide, such as severe weather events.

Grade accommodation

If you meet one of the above conditions your grade on the missed test will be the average of your grade on the other exam. You must take the final exam to receive course credit. You can only use this process

on one exam. If you do not meet one of the above conditions, your grade on the missed exam will be zero. If you have two such traumas in a single semester it may be wiser to suspend school, or at least a few classes, for a while to cope with the stress.

Academic Honesty – Cheating and Plagiarism Policy

All work should be a reflection of your own efforts. A student who cheats or plagiarizes will earn zero points for that assignment and/or a failing grade for the course, and may be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. To avoid any impropriety, protect yourself: In written assignments, (1) provide the names of the authors of all ideas that are not your own, and (2) provide proper citations when you summarize or paraphrase another person's ideas in your own words. Student work may be checked by plagiarism detection software (such as Safe Assign). I regularly run student papers and other contributions through online search engines. Finding that students have copied part of what should be their own work is a big disappointment for me and creates a lot of trouble for the student. Please save me the disappointment and yourself the trouble by submitting work that is all your own! If in doubt about how to use sources appropriately, please ask!

Intellectual Property

It is a common misconception that material on the Internet is free. However, even if a copyright notice is absent, work is the property of the creator. I expect you will post only material that is yours by right of creation unless you give proper credit (author, title, location) and indications (e.g., quotation marks). The plagiarism policy applies on the Internet too.

Privacy Matters

The Internet may change or challenge notions of what is private and what is not. I prefer to provide disclosure up front so you know what the possibilities are. Although the course is protected by a password, such tools are not perfect as human beings are using them. You are relatively protected by the password but no one can guarantee privacy online. Privacy for every student depends on the actions of each individual student--sharing your password with a friend or spouse is violating the privacy of your classmates. Maintain trust with your classmates; do not share your password. You may trust your spouse with your life, but your classmates do not know this person.

Disclosure: The course software I use enables me to know which students have logged in and where in the course site they have visited. The technology support people have access to information posted at the site.

Course Security: In the event you use a public terminal (e.g., at work in a computer lab or at a hotel or library) you need to **completely close the browser software** when you are finished. This will prevent another person from accessing the course using your identification, doing mischief in your name, and violating the privacy of other students. For extra security and to prevent the next person at the terminal from seeing what you looked at, empty the cache on the browser.

In Internet Explorer: Tools...Internet Options...General...middle section of Temporary Internet Files...Delete Files. It may take a while if no one has done it before. In

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Mozilla/Firefox..Edit…Preferences….Advanced….Cache….Clear Cache Guard your password and change it regularly.

Student Disability Services

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in Downing University Center A-200. The phone number is 270-745-5004; TTY is 270-745-3030. Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the instructor without a letter of accommodation from the OFSDS.

References

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, Academic and Student Affairs
    (2011). Getting started online. Retrieved from
    http://www.vfc.project.mnscu.edu/
Kuhlenschmidt, S. (2011). Psychological Tests and Measurements – Psy 361: Web Site Syllabus. Retrieved from
    http://www.wku.edu/~sally.kuhlenschmidt/psy361/p361syl.htm