

The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication
COM 250 – Introduction to Organizational Communication

Instructor:

E-mail:

Office:

Office Hours:

Read this syllabus carefully. By remaining enrolled in the course, you have accepted the conditions and expectations of the course. The requirements and expectations indicated in this syllabus are non-negotiable. Withdraw from the course immediately if any aspects of the course, its expectations, and/or requirements are not acceptable to you.

Required Text:

Miller, K. (2009). *Organizational communication: Approaches and processes* (5th ed.). Boston:

Wadsworth Cengage Learning. ISBN-13: 978-0-495-89832-0

Other Required Materials:

- Other sources (hand-outs, articles, and website references) are required readings and will be posted on Blackboard
- Access to ASU Student Help and Resources

Course Description: We humans are social creatures given to organizing ourselves in various forms to perform various functions in pursuit of various goals. Consequently, our lives are full of organizational involvement. This course seeks to examine the nature of that involvement – how people communicate to comprehend, create, control, and change organizations. During the first half of the semester, we will examine organizations by focusing on the progression of organizational approaches. The second half of the semester will focus on a number of organizational processes that include conflict management, decision-making, leadership, diversity, etc. By scrutinizing various organizational processes, you will be better prepared to oversee responsibilities as a leader and teammate in your own organizational endeavors.

Course Readings: It is expected that you will come to class having read the assigned reading so you may participate in discussion and activities.

Grades Based on Individual Performance:

Exams:

There are three exams throughout the semester. The “final” exam is not comprehensive. Exams will each consist of multiple choice, true/false, and short-answer questions covering the assigned readings and class lectures preceding each exam. Multiple choice and true/false questions will be worth 2 points and short answer questions will be worth 4 points. Each exam will be worth a total of 100 points.

Reaction Papers:

There are two reaction papers. Each paper will address the topics listed below and will conform to standards of scholarly writing: 1” margins, doubled-spaced, size 12 Times New Roman font, and APA standard citations, if applicable. Poor grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure will negatively impact the final grade.

Paper #1 (500-750 words) – 20 points:

The first reaction paper is a description of an organization of which you have been a member. Examples could include sports teams, church groups, places of employment, and fraternities or sororities. In addition to naming and describing the type of organization, select 2 or 3 of the following topics to address:

- purpose, vision, mission, values
- size, structure (flat or tall hierarchy, team design or other)
- types of policies and rules
- types of leadership and management
- a description of how you perceive the organizational culture to be
- types of interpersonal relationships
- recruiting and interview types and processes
- types of interaction internal and external to the organization

Paper #2 (750-1000 words) – 40 points:

The second reaction paper will require you to link scholarly research to current organizational issues. First, find a recent peer-reviewed research article from a scholarly journal that addresses an aspect of organizational communication. Second, find a minimum of two articles from the popular press that address the same/similar issue(s). You can choose to use articles posted to the discussion board over the course of the semester. Finally, summarize the articles and answer these two questions:

- What similarities are there between the scholarly research article you selected and current organizational issues found in your articles?
- What prescriptions for communication can be taken from scholarly research to help organizations with these types of issues?

See Blackboard for grading rubrics. Due dates are posted on the syllabus.

“Current Issues” Discussion Board:

You will be responsible for regular postings to the course “Current Issues” discussion board. There are two types of postings that will be evaluated: thread creation (initial post) and response to threads (response).

Initial Posts (up to 10 points per initial post – 40 points total):

Throughout the semester, you will be responsible for starting 4 discussion board threads to which other class members will respond. The purpose of these posts is to start a discussion about current events/issues related to organizational communication. You should pick an article/new story from a popular press site: news, sports, business, etc. about an organization or company. The topic is entirely up to you, but should involve the following: some aspect of organizational communication, a quick

summary of the topic and source, a reference to the text or other course material, the viewpoint/opinion of the student, questions for the class to reflect upon, and a link to the article or source or a reference to the program. Each post will need to contain a minimum of two paragraphs with a minimum of 8 sentences per paragraph.

Example post:

CNN.com posted a story about a restaurant where customers will not be expected to tip. Rather the company will start paying their servers a salary of \$35k, provide them with health care, and give them 500 shares in the business. Shares start at \$1, but increase in price with the employee's tenure. The employee is fully vested after 3 months. The employees will also be briefed on a bi-monthly basis on the financial health of the restaurant. In response, the company will have to raise the prices of some of its menu items. For example, an entrée that usually costs \$4 will increase to \$9. The owner hopes that these changes will maintain the growth the restaurant has enjoyed over the past year.

These changes communicate a sense of company dedication to the employee. As a server in another life, there were probably busy days when I would make more than this, but it was definitely not the norm. Also, I never received employer funded health care. This shift in policy relates to what we learned about the human relations approach. The owners focus on the most basic of Maslow's needs – level 1: physiological by paying a living wage. Additionally, the employee gets higher order needs like level 4: esteem met as well. From a human resources perspective, it is easy to see how these changes could lead to employee satisfaction and higher levels of productivity. Although these changes are employee friendly, it will be interesting to see if customers are OK paying more for food vs. tipping the servers.

http://money.cnn.com/2015/01/06/smallbusiness/restaurant-no-tipping/index.html?iid=HP_LN

-How do you think customers will respond to the “no tipping” policy in light of having to pay more per entrée?

-Do you think this could/will be a successful business model for other restaurants to adopt?

Response Posts (up to 5 points per response – 40 points total):

Students will also be responsible for a minimum total of 8 substantive responses over the course of the semester. A minimum of 2 response postings per each discussion thread group are required. To achieve maximum points, responses should be substantive and challenge the initial post's author's opinions or claims, or further the discussion by using other examples. Each response should contain a minimum of 1 paragraph of 5 sentences. Responses such as “I agree,” or “That is an interesting point” are not considered substantive.

Due dates for initial posts and responses will be listed on the course calendar.

Grades Based on Group Performance:

Company Profile Paper and Presentation:

You will work in groups of 4 or 5 and select an Arizona based company that they would like to profile. This could be a company that is admired because of their business practices, a company that has recently experienced a great amount of change, a company that has received negative press, etc. You will “profile” this company using the approaches discussed in class (classical, human relations, systems, critical, etc.) and do a short presentation of your paper for the class.

Company Profile Paper (50 points):

The group will be responsible for writing a 3-5 page company profile paper that examines an Arizona based organization. The paper should include a brief summary of the company (locations, home office, size, vision, etc.) which is followed by a description of how the organizational practices can be described/explained using the various approaches. Examples should be specific and cited (company website, interview with employees or management, etc.) For example, your group may select McDonalds Restaurants and describe how the organization focuses on consistency across all of the restaurants using classical approaches to organization and a focus on systems. The following is a list of questions that are applicable for your profile paper:

- Are the policies and processes of this organization more closely related to one approach than another? If so, which one?
- How does the organization present itself to the public? Which approach is this closest to and why?
- How does the company handle change, make decisions, deal with conflict, address issues of diversity, etc.?
- What are the organizations plans for managing work processes to match changing environments, customer bases, and technology?

Paper Presentation (10 points):

Each group will present their profile to the class in a short (5-10 minute) presentation.

See Blackboard for the grading rubrics. Each group member will receive the same grade. Due dates will be posted on the course calendar.

Class Participation (50 points):

You are expected to participate in class. This means you should 1) attend class, and 2) come prepared to add to class discussions. We will frequently do in-class writing/participation activities as well as have general discussions about organizational communication.

Attendance will be taken each class period. You can miss 2 days (1 week) of class without an impact to your class participation grade. Missing more than two days of class will negatively impact your participation grade regardless of your participation at times when you are present.

The following is the scale that will be used to calculate your participation grade:

- A (50-55) = absent 2 days or less and was a *frequent* contributor to in-class discussions.
- B (44-49) = absent 2 days or less and contributed to in-class discussion OR absent more than 2 days, but was a *frequent* contributor to in-class discussions.
- C (38-43) = absent more than 2 days and contributed to in-class discussions
- D/E <38 = absent more than 2 days and *infrequently* added to class discussions

NOTE: “frequently” and “infrequently” are subjective terms. My best advice to you in that you talk regularly so that you are seen as a “frequent” contributor. This is a communication class and my idea of “frequent” is likely different from yours. You can earn up to 50 participation points.

Grading:

	<u>Possible Pts.</u>
• Exam #1	100 points
• Exam #2	100 points
• Exam #3	100 points
• Reaction Paper #1	20 points
• Reaction Paper #2	40 points
• Thread Posts (10 pts x 4)	40 points
• Post Responses (5 pts x 8)	40 points
• Group Company Profile Paper	50 points
• Group Paper Presentation	10 points
• Participation	50 points
TOTAL POINTS	550 points

Grading Scale:

Grades will be assigned as follows:

<u>Grade:</u>	<u>Point Total:</u>
A+	545-550
A	512-544
A-	495-511
B+	479-494
B	457-478
B-	440-456
C+	424-439
C	385-423
D	330-384
E	0-329

PLEASE NOTE: I do not “give” grades. Grades are *earned* based on individual and group performance over the semester. Individual graded assignments do not determine your final grade. Consistent work over the entire semester is totaled to determine a final letter grade based on points earned.

Additionally, with the +/- grading system many students will only need a few points to attain a higher grade. Because of this, no grades will be rounded up.

General Course/Instructor Expectations

1. *You will be prepared for class.*

The interactive nature of this class requires your preparation and engagement.

Students who require special assistance or accommodation, and students participating in university-sanctioned absences (including religious holidays), should let me know within the first week of class. Students with university-sanctioned travel generally will need to complete assignments and exams in advance.

No late work will be accepted without advance arrangements made with the instructor or extensive documentation of an emergency situation.

2. *You will accept that your classmates are here to learn.*

When the instructor is speaking, you should not be speaking. A quiet environment helps support the learning of others around you.

Because communication courses by their very nature cover personal topics, it is important that we work together for an atmosphere of respect and support. Please respect the privacy of your classmates outside the classroom. It can be a very small world. An important part of your development as a scholar is modeling how to disagree with the concept versus the person.

In a communication class, it is especially important that we...

1. display respect for all members of the classroom – including the instructor and students;
2. pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities;
3. avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, surfing the internet, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.); and
4. avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom.

Any form of disruptive behavior can result in loss of attendance points. Verbal or physical aggression before, during or after class will result in permanent removal from the class and notification of proper authorities. See the Student Conduct information, below.

3. *You will attend all class sessions.*

Your input is valuable to your classmates, to the instructor, and to your learning. You cannot participate if you are not present. We will start promptly; be on time. Expect the class to last the full period. If a class session is missed, you are responsible for getting any notes from your classmates. See Attendance Policy, below.

4. *You will maintain high standards of personal civility.*

What you learn in this course is highly relevant to today's workplace and marketplace. We will model ourselves on standards of behavior reflecting professionalism and respect. For a detailed discussion of expected standards, see the Student Conduct section, below.

5. *You will maintain the highest standard of academic integrity.*

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication strongly believe in academic integrity; thus, instructors in the College and School do not tolerate cheating or plagiarism. Review the Plagiarism Policy, below.

Specific Course Policies

Attendance:

As addressed above, attendance will be taken during every class period. You are expected to be in class, to be on time, and to be well prepared. You will be allowed 2 absences.

You will be excused from class if you provide official documentation proving a legitimate reason for missing class:

- If you are too ill to come to class to take an exam or participate in your group presentation, you must have a signed (and dated) document from your doctor saying you had to miss the exam/presentation (on that particular day) because of your illness.
- If you miss class because of the death of a loved one, you must provide proof as requested by your instructor.
- If you will miss class because of the observance of a religious holiday, please let me know at least a week in advance.
- If you are active in University-sponsored events (athletic teams, debate, etc.) you must supply the appropriate school-provided documentation.

I reserve the right to determine what qualifies as a legitimate reason for missing class and/or as acceptable documentation.

Please note that group presentations must be given on the assigned dates. If a student is late or absent, the group must still make the presentation. Additionally, being absent on a day that an assignment is due does NOT mean you can turn the assignment in late.

Exams are given only on the assigned dates. If you are absent on an exam day, you will not be able to make-up the exam.

I will post lecture slides in Blackboard. DO NOT assume that these slides will encompass all information necessary for each chapter/section/topic. Reading, note taking, and active participation are critical if you wish to attain a good grade in this class.

Blackboard:

To succeed in this course it is essential that you have regular and reliable online access to Blackboard, that you be familiar with and able to use the Blackboard system, and that you regularly (i.e., daily) check the Announcements in the course Blackboard. (The “course menu” consists of the tabs, or “navigation buttons,” located on the left side of our course Blackboard site. Announcements are in chronological order and appear when you open the course site.)

Gradebook: Your class grade will be registered on the Blackboard site. You will utilize the gradebook to verify that you have correctly submitted a paper via SafeAssign.

SafeAssign: ALL written assignments will be submitted through SafeAssign by 11 p.m. on the due date posted on the syllabus.

NOTE: Each time you submit an assignment through SafeAssign, verify that your paper was submitted correctly. To do this, go to the grade center for your Friday breakout group. If you see a white exclamation point (“!”) inside of a green box present in the space where your grade will be, then your assignment was successfully received. It is your responsibility to verify this PRIOR to the deadline as no assignments will be accepted and graded that are not successfully submitted through SafeAssign.

“Computer problems” do not excuse late work. It is your responsibility to be certain that your available computer is compatible with Blackboard, and to do this well ahead of any assignments being due. In general, you should prepare your assignments and submit online assignments at least one day ahead of deadline, in anticipation of technical problems, including University-based problems.

Course Contact: Periodically, I will post announcements and/or send out individual and class emails. All email sent via Blackboard is automatically sent to students' asu.edu accounts. Therefore, you must regularly check your ASU email. Of course, you can forward your ASU email to another account if you wish.

If you have private issues or concerns, feel free to email directly. Note: ASU has strong firewalls. It's best to use your ASU email for contact. Email from accounts other than your ASU account might not get through.

Writing Requirements:

The required format for all papers is .doc, or .docx, NOT .pdf, etc. If you use the SAVE AS feature to change the file type, be sure to check the document before you submit it. All papers should be typed in black 12-point Times Roman font, double-spaced (except as directed) and have one-inch margins. [NOTE: Your computer default setting may not be 1". Reset it, as needed. Contact the ASU Helpdesk if you need assistance.] Any citations must be formatted in APA (American Psychological Association) style. You are expected to write at a collegiate level (consider grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.). Visit the ASU writing center for assistance. Watch the Reflection Paper tutorial on the Blackboard site before you write your first paper.

Grading will be based on:

1. meeting ALL of the defined requirements.
2. clarity of expression.
3. quality of reasoning (logical, consistent, sufficient).
4. mechanics (good writing, spelling, grammar, APA style, proper formatting, etc.).

Plagiarism Policy:

Plagiarism is intentionally or unintentionally using another's work (including wording, phrases, or original ideas) without giving the person proper credit. This includes representing anyone else's words as your own. Exact words can be used ONLY in direct quotes, clearly presented as such.

Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, or allowing another student to copy your work, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination.

If you have turned the work in for another class, it is considered self-plagiarism and violates University policy. Even within this course, each assignment must be a new paper; you may not duplicate material across assignments.

Instructors who find compelling evidence of academic dishonesty will actively pursue one or more of the following actions: Assigning a grade of XE ("failure through academic dishonesty") to the student, advocating the suspension or expulsion of the student from the College, and/or referring the student to Student Judicial Affairs. If a student who is charged with academic dishonesty is found to be in violation, then one or more of these disciplinary actions will be taken. For further information, please read the Student Academic Integrity policy and the code of conduct for Arizona State University: <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>.

Remember, any academic dishonesty in this course will result in failure of the course, and could also lead to disciplinary action by the college or university.

Grade Reviews (“24/7”)

I endeavor to be clear in our expectations of assignments and fair in grading the score the assignment has earned. I may make mistakes in grading or you may disagree with us on a grade, therefore I have a 24/7 policy. Use the first 24 hours after a graded assignment is returned to review the instructions, your work, and my feedback. After the initial 24 hours, you can initiate contact and request more detail about your grade. You have seven days to make these requests; after the 7 days I will assume all scores are accurate and the grade earned is understood.

Submission Policy:

Work needs to be submitted to SafeAssign by the due date.

Please DO NOT e-mail your assignments. I will only accept assignments via e-mail if you have a reasonable, documented excuse and/or if cleared with your instructor ahead of time. I am not responsible for attachments that do not open (or that are unreadable when they do open), or for late, lost, misdirected, misguided, or imaginary emails. Lastly, DO NOT turn papers/assignments in to the front office of the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication.

Deadlines: Deadline for all online assignments is 11 p.m. on the due date. Computer and/or system problems do NOT excuse late work or missed quizzes. Penalties will apply to all late work unless advance arrangements have been made with the instructor.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you have computer problems using Blackboard, do NOT contact your instructors for help. If you have computer/internet or Blackboard-related problems, you must immediately contact the Help Desk 24/7 at 1-855-ASU-5080 or the helpdesk tab on your “My ASU” page. Additionally, you can visit the technology studio at the Computer Commons.

Disability Service:

Students needing accommodations in this course due to disabilities must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) before requesting accommodations. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester, as I will be more than willing to make the necessary arrangements. The DRC is located on the first floor of Matthew’s Center. They can be contacted at <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/>. They can also be contacted at 480-965-1234 (voice)/480-965-9000 (TDD).

Technology in the Classroom:

Laptops are permitted for academic purposes. If you use a laptop during class, please note:

- be prepared for me to monitor your use
- accept moments when you are requested to put away electronic devices
- I reserve the right to override electronic use at any time

Cell phones must be on “silent” or off during class. No iPods or other entertainment devices will be allowed during class (no earphones, no texting, no Facebook, etc.).

Food and/or Drinks:

Please keep your work area clean. If you consume any food or liquid during class, please clean up after yourself.

Class Notes:

I strongly encourage informal networks in class. It is a good idea to exchange phone numbers or email addresses with one or more students. Do NOT rely on the instructor to provide you with class lecture notes or assignments if you are unable to attend class.

Feedback:

I welcome feedback about the course. If we wait until university evaluations at the end of the semester, I cannot make changes that will help you. I regularly ask the class for feedback. Please share your thoughts with me in a collaborative manner during the semester. You can make suggestions in class, with me privately during office hours, or via email.

Important Caveat:

I reserve the right to update or change portions of this syllabus in order to make the course a better experience for everyone. This may be in response to suggestions from students, from my own observations, or as the result of requirements by the School, College, or University. Changes will be announced in class and posted on the course Blackboard site.

Course Schedule Changes:

A tentative course schedule is attached to this syllabus. It indicates all reading assignments, exam dates, presentation dates, and all other assignments that are due. Please note that this is a tentative schedule that may change at any time. I will notify the class of any changes, but if students miss class when a change is announced or miss the announcement due to inattention, it is the students' responsibility to find out what changes (if any) were made to the course schedule.

Contacting the Instructor

I aim to be easily accessible to you in a variety of contexts, including face-to-face or email (which is the best way to contact me). At the same time, I also ask that you make use of the teaching materials available in the syllabus and on Blackboard. These materials were designed to answer many questions, so please check them before approaching me. Contacting me at the last moment does not shift your responsibility for completing an assignment. And please do not expect a response "A.S.A.P." simply because you waited until the last moment.

Please allow up to 48 hours for a response to any correspondence. If a response has not been provided to you within 48 hours, please try contacting again.

When sending an email, it is important to include the following:

- subject line that includes COM 250 and the class session
- address the party
- sign your name
- use professional language and sentence structure

Office Hours:

Office hours provide an opportunity for you to have one-on-one time with me to discuss issues and questions that you might have related to this course. Please use office hours. This time is set aside exclusively for your benefit. If your schedule does not work with my office hours, please collaborate with me to find a time that works.

My Grading Philosophy:

I am a strict grader when it comes to your written work. I grade you on your ability to follow directions (paper format, due dates, etc.) and write in an academic manner at a collegiate level (grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.). Here is my rationale for this:

1. You are, and will forever be, in a rules-based system. Your success in life will be, in large part, be determined by your ability to work within this rules-based system. Focusing on due dates and paying attention to details is critical (think applications, reports for your future bosses, planning events, client reports, etc.). We will work on the essential skill of “Attention to Detail” in this class.
2. This is a communication class. Writing is a form of communication. Your ability to express yourself using the written word is also critical for your success in the future (think emails to coworkers and clients, progress reports to your boss(es), etc.). I will help you with this by giving you a great deal of feedback (at least in the first two papers) about your writing style.
3. Our discipline maintains strict standards for writing that ensures academic integrity and consistency. These standards are clearly outlined in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th edition. If you use information from a secondary source (not your original thought) you must use proper citations.