

Department of Communication & Theatre

COM 340: ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

MWF 10:55 – 12:05 C 202

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Required Texts:

Modaff, D. P., Butler, J. A., & DeWine, S. (2012). *Organizational communication: Foundations, challenges, and misunderstandings* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth. [ISBN: 0-534-61788-3]

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Organizational Communication (COM 340) focuses on the role and function of human communication, behavior, and expectations in organizational life. A central assumption of the course is that organizations are “collections of conversations” which both shape and are shaped by communicative interaction. Topics addressed include: models/approaches to organizational theory and communication, interpersonal dynamics evidenced in networks, stress and social support, impression management, and issues of diversity.

The course is taught through lecture, discussion, class activities, and a semester project all designed to help you develop critical thinking abilities as they relate to organizational life. Lectures will often introduce material beyond that which is covered in readings and will assume information supplied in the text. Lecture and text should complement, not substitute for each other. It is your responsibility to come to class ready to think, challenge, analyze, and apply the material covered.



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Course Learning Outcomes:

- (1). To gain sophistication with the terms, concepts, and theories of organizational communication.
- (2). To increase understanding and appreciation of the complexities of communication and organizational life.
- (3). To develop competencies in organizational analysis and change strategies.
- (4). To provide opportunities to improve written and oral communication, interpersonal skills, and conceptual and analytical thinking.

Course Assignments:

All assignments must be typed. Hand written work will not be accepted. Please note that standard font and margins are expected of one inch and 12 point font (New Times Roman). All papers should be double-spaced. There should be no grammatical errors or misspelled words in your assignments. Always proofread your assignments and have someone else proof them too.

All assignments are due on the day specified and on time. Late assignments will not be accepted.

- ❖ **Abstract Review** (25 pts): Choose an article from an academic journal that relates to an area of study in which you are interested. The only requirements are that: (1) the topic area must have a direct relationship to organizational communication; (2) the article must be from an academic journal (preferably a communication journal); (3) it must be at least 10 pages in length, exclusive of bibliography and appendices; (4) it should be an article published (or presented at a conference) within the last 10 years; and (5) it must be an *empirically-based, qualitative article*
- ❖ **Research Project** (150 pts): Research teams of 3 to 4 will work to produce a qualitative study on an organization of their choice. Students will contact and conduct interviews with the organization. A minimum of 8-10 interviews is required. The team will produce a 15 page scholarly paper reporting their findings.
- ❖ **Difficult People Workshops** (50 pts): Each research team will pick a type of difficult person and prepare a 15 minutes presentation/workshop on the topic.
- ❖ **Exams** (200 pts): There will be two exams over lecture and text material. Each exam will be worth 100 pts. These exams will be primarily objective in nature with some short answer/essays. The instructor will give a study guide for each exam.
- ❖ **Quizzes** (50 pts): Quizzes will be given at the discretion of the instructor at anytime over assigned readings.

Grading:

	Points Possible	Your Score
Abstract Review	25 pts	
Research Proposal	25 pts	
Exam One	100 pts	
Exam Two	100 pts	
Difficult People Presentation	50 pts	
Research Paper	150 pts.	
Quizzes	50 pts.	
Total Points	500 pts.	

Grading Scale:

Grade	Percent	Points	Grade	Percent	Points
A	93-100	463 - 500	C	73-76	363 - 382
A-	90-92	448 - 462	C-	70-72	348 - 362
B+	87-89	433 - 447	D+	67-69	333 - 347
B	83-86	413 - 432	D	63-66	313 - 332
B-	80-82	398 - 412	D-	60-62	298 - 312
C+	77-79	383 - 397	F	0-59	0 - 297

Grading Standards:

“A’s”.....are awarded for work that is highly exceptional and goes beyond all minimal requirements.

“B’s”.....are awarded for work that is above average and goes beyond minimal requirements.

“C’s”.....are awarded for work that meets basic standards and requirements.

“D’s”.....are awarded for below average work that usually lacks minimal requirements.

“F’s”.....are awarded for work that clearly does not meet minimal standards, or is not completed.

Grade Concerns:

If you feel that you were unjustly evaluated on any assignment, please talk with me within 1 week after the assignment has been returned. An appeal is welcome by scheduling an appointment or coming to my office hours. Do NOT approach me immediately after a grade has been returned in class. Please come with a well reasoned and written explanation of why the grade should be changed, and I will be happy to discuss it with you. Please note: Asking for an appeal and defending your case does not secure, nor imply a change of grade. If at any point during the course you are concerned with your overall class grade or other issues in the course, please feel free to make an appointment or stop by my office. I want to help you learn and succeed in this course.

Attendance Policy:

This course is a course in communication and presentation. In order to do both you must be present in class regularly. Therefore, attendance will be taken every class period. Each student is allotted 2 excused/unexcused absences for the semester. Upon the third absence the students FINAL grade will be lowered a half step. This means if you are getting a B in the class your grade will be dropped to a B-. For each subsequent absence the FINAL grade will continue to drop a half grade step each time! The only excused absence is one that is university approved. There for if you are ill or have to take a friend to the airport this does not count as excused and will be counted as an absence. In addition attendance in class means that you are attending to the class. Sleeping in class, excessive texting or talking during class will count as an absence for that day.

In the tragic event that you do miss class please get notes from someone in the class. **Do NOT ask me for notes.** You will be expected to get notes, handouts, and assignments from someone in class. Please do not ask me for my lecture notes!! You are responsible for missed material and should try to make a friend or two in this class that you can count on. In addition I do not post lecture material or power point presentations on e-class.

Make-ups & Extra Credit:

All assignments are due on the date specified in the syllabus. I am not responsible for turning in your assignments on time – YOU ARE! In the event of an unexpected and unavoidable scheduling conflict, it is your responsibility to make prior arrangements (well in advance) with me to resolve the problem. Excuses after the assignment dates are unacceptable with the exception of extreme circumstances. Extra credit is not available, so please do well on the assignments in the course.

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts, as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. Therefore, cheating and/or plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the course.

Classroom Conduct:

While I enjoy a relaxed classroom atmosphere, with lots of discussion and jokes, disrespect will not be tolerated. This means respect towards your peers as well as your instructor. Do not speak rudely to others or the professor. I appreciate a lively and bit disordered class that allows communication to happen. Your participation is highly encouraged in class and can even affect your attendance grade. While the course will encounter lots of opinions and views, it is everyone's responsibility to keep an open mind, and avoid character attacks, stereotypes, and racist or sexist language. You are welcome to challenge ideas in class, but must do so in a manner of the utmost respect!!

Presentations:

Please remember that attendance is mandatory for all on these days!! Presentations can be a nervous experience for some. Please NEVER walk in on a presentation under any circumstances. Do not leave either, but simply wait until you hear applause and then enter the classroom quietly and quickly. Furthermore, when presentations are occurring this is not the time to talk with your neighbor, read the paper, rearrange your backpack, or text message someone.

Appearance:

Your physical appearance on presentation days is important. You should be neatly groomed and dressed in a way that suggests you expect to be taken seriously. **At a minimum** this means a dress shirt and dress slacks for men, and dress skirt or dress slacks and blouse for women. Please do not wear hats, tennis shoes, shorts, or chew gum during your presentations. Physical appearance has been shown to affect the credibility of public speakers and as a result will also affect yours in this class!

Academic Accommodations:

All students are expected to meet the minimum standards for this course as set by the instructor. Students with learning disabilities who may need accommodations should first discuss options and services available to them in the Academic Support Center (ASC) during the first two weeks of the semester. The ASC, in turn will contact professors with official notification and suggested classroom accommodations, as required by federal law. Approved documentation must be provided by the student and placed on file in the ASC prior to the beginning of the semester.

Technology:

The use of electronic devices during class is NOT permitted. This includes cell phones, i-pods, and laptops! This means you should bring something else to take notes on! Students are not permitted to listen to music while taking a test or to use their cell phones during tests. Continued use of technological devices during class will result in an absence for that class period.

Daily Syllabus

Date	Discussion/Activity	Readings
T Jan. 13	Introduction to Org Com	
W Jan. 14	Defining Organizational Communication	Chp. 1
F Jan. 16	Perrow Article on Canvas	
M Jan. 19	MLK Day – No Class	
W Jan. 21	Communication in Organizations	
F Jan. 23	Abstract Assignment	
M Jan. 26	Classical Models of Organization	Chp. 2
W Jan. 28	Human Relations & Resource Models	Chp. 3
F Jan. 30	Case Study Groups	
M Feb. 2	Systems Models <i>Abstract Assignment Due!</i>	Chp. 4
W Feb. 4	Social Psychology of Organizations	
F Feb. 6	Weick Article on Canvas – Cause Maps	
M Feb. 9	Social Psychology of Organizations	
W Feb. 11	Organizational Culture	Chp. 5
F Feb. 13	Exam One Prep	
M Feb. 16	Organizational Culture	
W Feb. 18	EXAM ONE	
F Feb. 20	Case Study Groups	
M Feb. 23	Qualitative Research	
W Feb. 25	Organization Assimilation <i>Research Proposal Due!</i>	Chp. 7
F Feb. 27	Interviews	

Daily Syllabus

Date	Discussion/Activity	Readings
M Mar. 2	Information, Networks, Grapevines	Chp. 8
W Mar. 4	Information, Networks, Grapevines	
F Mar. 6	Research Groups	
M-F Mar. 9-13	Spring Break – No Class	
M Mar. 16	Impression Management	Chp. 10
W Mar. 18	Interviewing	
F Mar. 20	Interviews	
M Mar. 23	Power in Organizations	Chp. 9
W Mar. 25	Power in Organizations	
F Mar. 27	Difficult People Groups	
M Mar. 30	Social Support & Stress	Chp. 13
W Apr. 1	Stress & Burnout	
F-M Apr. 3-6	Easter Break – No Class	
W Apr. 8	Emotional Intelligence	
F Apr. 10	Exam Two Prep	
M Apr. 13	EXAM TWO	
W Apr. 15	Difficult People Presentations	
F Apr. 17	Research Groups	
M Apr. 20	Difficult People Presentations	
W Apr. 22	Difficult People Presentations	
F Apr. 24	Research Groups	

Daily Syllabus

Date	Discussion/Activity	Readings
M Apr. 27	Final Research Paper Due!	
W Apr. 29	Group Evaluation Day	
F May 1	Final Exam Prep	

Final Exam: Friday, May 8, 2015 – 10:30-1:00 PM