

LaGuardia Community College  
HUC151 Organizational Communication  
Spring I 2020  
Dr. Andy Kai-chun Chuang

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOAL**

This course offers an overview of organizational communication. It provides a survey of communication-based perspectives on organizational topics such as structure, rationality, management, culture, identity, networks, systems, power, leadership, branding, and globalization. Organizational communication is a discipline embracing a wide range of perspectives, and this course offers an important window of understanding communication perspectives in the dominant forms of contemporary social life -- the organization.

### **COURSE REQUIRE TEXT**

Miller, K. (2015). *Organizational communication: Approaches and processes (7<sup>th</sup> Ed)*. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.

Barry, M. (2006). *Company*. New York, NY: Vintage.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and describe major historical and contemporary perspectives on organizational communication.
- Apply major organizational communication concepts and theories to understand common organizational situations in contemporary society.
- Diagnose typical communication-based problems and identify solutions in organizational settings.
- Interpret how the individuals shape their own organizational and work identities and aspirations within organizations in contemporary society.
- Analyze power structure critically to common organizational situations in contemporary society from communication perspectives.
- Challenge the notion of taken-for-granted organizational lives and appreciate the uniqueness of organizations from critical communication perspective.
- Make ethical choices in organizational settings for improving overall organizational communication.

### **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **Organizational Journals: 100 points**

During the course of the semester, you will be asked to connect your readings about various organizational communication concepts to your own organizational experience. To do so, you will select *one* organization of which you are a member. Throughout the semester, you will be asked to reflect on your experiences as a member of that organization, and to connect what you are learning in the course to those reflections. You may select any type of organization (e.g., a business, church, volunteer organization, campus club, etc.), provided it meets two requirements: 1) you are *currently* a member of the organization and 2) you will be *significantly* involved in that organization over the duration of the semester. In your journal, you will be asked to identify and reflect on different concepts from the

readings over the week that particular resonates with you or helps you to make sense of your organizational experience. Each journal should be between 500 and 700 words long.

**Application Presentation: 100 points**

For this assignment, you will prepare a 10-minute presentation in which you apply a significant concept from one of Miller’s chapters on communication processes in organizations to the representation of the concept in *Company*. Your presentation needs to include: (a) a thorough and detailed explanation of the communication concept you are using, demonstrating research into that concept beyond Miller’s introduction, (b) a clear application of the concept to relevant moments from *Company* (this will typically require you to draw on multiple scenes from the novel), and (c) two discussion questions that you will pose at the end of your presentation (one which will invite discussion of the concept as it is portrayed in *Company* and one which will help move the discussion to explore the concept in the “real” organizational world). This is not a group presentation, but you will need to coordinate with the other presenter on your day to make sure that you do not duplicate concepts.

**Mid-Term Exam: 100 points**

A mid-term exam will cover the approaches to organizational communication outlined in the first half of the course. The exam will include a combination of objective answer, short answer, and essay questions.

**Final Exam: 100 points**

At the conclusion of the semester, you will complete a take-home exam that will ask you to explore two communication processes as they appear in *Company* from the perspective on one of the communication approaches from the first half of the semester.

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE**

| DATE   | TOPIC  | ASSIGNMENTS DUE |
|--------|--|-----------------|
| Week 1 | <b>Course Overview</b><br><i>What is Organizational Communication?</i><br>Miller Chapter 1                                 |                 |
| Week 2 | <b>Classical Approach</b><br>Metaphors in organization<br>Communication in management theory<br>Miller Chapter 2           | Journal 1       |
| Week 3 | <b>Human Relations/Resources Approach</b><br>Legacy of Hawthorne Experiments<br>Theories of motivation<br>Miller Chapter 3 | Journal 2       |
| Week 4 | <b>System Approach</b><br>Systems and networks<br>Sense-making<br>Miller Chapter 4   | Journal 3       |
| Week 5 | <b>Cultural Approach</b><br>Culture: Variable or root metaphor<br>Models of culture<br>Miller Chapter 5                    | Journal 4       |

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| Week 6     | <b>Critical Approach</b><br>Models of power<br>Systems of control<br>Miller Chapter 6                               | Journal 5                              |
| Week 7     | <b>Midterm Exam</b><br><b>Case Study</b><br>Barry Company   |  |
| Week 8     | <b>Decision-Making Process</b><br>Limits of rationality<br>Paradoxes of participation<br>Miller Chapter 8           | Journal 6<br>Application Presentation  |
| Week 9     | <b>Conflict Process</b><br>Conflict Management<br>Miller Chapter 9  | Journal 7<br>Application Presentation  |
| Week 10    | <b>Socialization Process</b><br>Stage models<br>Work socialization<br>Miller Chapter 7                              | Journal 8<br>Application Presentation  |
| Week 11    | <b>Organizational Diversity Process</b><br>Emotional labor<br>Miller Chapter 11                                     | Journal 9<br>Application Presentation  |
| Week 12    | <b>Technological Process</b><br>Technology as tool<br>Communicative properties of technologies<br>Miller Chapter 13 | Journal 10<br>Application Presentation |
| Final Week | <b>Final Exam</b>   |  |