

Communication 410: Organizational Communication
Fall 2014
Dr. Jennifer Waldeck
Chapman University

TEXTBOOK:

Eisenberg, E. M., Goodall, H. L., & Trethewey, A. (2010). *Organizational communication: Balancing creativity and constraint* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.

COURSE DESCRIPTION & LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Instruction includes a mix of theory and practice of communication in organizational settings. Major theories and lines of research are analyzed through analysis of case studies and current business news events.

This course overviews contemporary philosophies, methods and designs for studying the communication systems within organizations of varying sizes. This course also considers organizational needs assessment and a variety of the methods available for improving communication in organizations. To a large extent, in-class discussions will address the more sensitive and challenging issues facing managers and employees in their efforts to communicate with each other. Through lecture, discussion, and activities, we will focus on communication as a process and skill that can help individuals and their organizations gain competitive advantage.

Upon completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of contemporary philosophies, methods and designs for studying the communication systems within organizations of varying sizes. Focus on how individuals can learn to “work around” personality problems in organizations, improving systemic conditions that lead to communication failure.
2. Describe the various forms of communicative relationships within organizational networks and the functions that they serve.
3. Explain the effects of and coping strategies for communication overload, stress, and burnout.
4. Understand the importance of effective organizational assimilation in organizational communication.
5. Discuss and practice decision-making and conflict-management processes utilized in organizations; identify and address predictable, harmful patterns that reoccur in organizations.
6. Grasp the theoretical and everyday implications of emerging technologies, globalization, and diversity for contemporary organizations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Several take-home assignments will be made throughout the semester. Further guidelines and criteria for each will be provided and discussed in class.

“Where Do I (or Have I) Worked” Communication Analysis: Prepare a 5-7 minute oral briefing on an organization for which you currently or previously have worked. Introduce us briefly to this organization and to your role within it (title, tasks performed, etc.). Then select the approach to organizational communication discussed in Chapter 2 (pp. 26-36) that best describes communication within the organization you selected. Describe why/how it fits, providing examples to help us understand. (50 points)

Cultural Comparison Storyboard: You and a partner will select two competing organizations (e.g., Coffee Bean and Starbucks; Target and Walmart) and collect data from /about each organization. Data may include interviews and observations, advertisements, general environmental scans, Internet materials, pictures. (Note: It is wise to obtain permission before conducting interviews or taking pictures). Once the data have been collected, compare and contrast the two organizations. Using the concepts from Chapter 4 (reading ahead to Chapter 9 might be helpful, too), analyze how each organization develops and supports its culture through various messages and how it strategically positions and differentiates itself from the competition. This project does NOT ask you to report your findings in a paper; instead, you will create a Powerpoint storyboard that compares and contrasts the two organizations and tells their story visually and in text. (100 points)

Leadership Oral Report: You and your teammates will select an individual in an organizational leadership position and conduct an interview. You will then prepare a presentation to the class in which you will address issues of leadership theory, this person’s perspective on the communication skills required of leadership, and more. (100 points)

Tests. There will be two multiple-choice/true-false type exams. (100 points)

Quizzes. There will be a weekly quiz, covering the **textbook** readings assigned for that week. The two lowest quiz scores will be dropped prior to calculating your final grade. ***Therefore, there are no makeup quizzes for any reason.*** (50 points)

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Week	Topic	Reading
1	Introduction to the course How can we use communication to create and sustain a positive and strong impression within an organizational environment?	Preface, Ch. 1
2	Defining organizational communication	Ch. 2
3	In-class discussion and workshop: Work on “Where Do I (or Have I) Worked?” assignment	
4	Where Do I Work presentations	
5	Early perspectives on organizations and communication	Ch. 3

6	The systems perspective	Ch. 3
7	Cultural & critical studies of organizational communication	Ch. 4, 5
8	Exam #1: Chapters 1-4, readings, lectures, discussions	
9	Identity and difference in organizational life	Ch. 6
10	Communicating leadership in organizations	Ch. 8
11	Presentations of Cultural Comparison Storyboards	
12	Collaboration in organizations	Ch. 7
13	Organizational communication alignment: Managing the total enterprise	Ch. 9
14	Leadership Oral Reports	
15	Leadership Oral Reports	
	Final exam Chapters 5-9, readings, lectures, discussions	