

**DISCIPLINE CAPSTONE**  
**COM 490 - 001 (CRN 21841)**  
**SPRING 2008**

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**Office Hours:** Monday – Thursday 11-1  
& everyday by appointment

**Required Texts:** COM 490 – Course Pack – Assignments and Evaluation Forms (print this)  
 COM 490 – Course Pack - Handouts  
 Available from my website as PDF document

**Required Readings:** Additional required readings may be placed on reserve or on website.

**Required Items:** Preparing for Success in Corporate America: College Guide by La Shawn Samuel  
 (available through SkillPort – Books 24/7)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

A review of communication studies fundamentals as applied theoretically and in practice, to your next step. This course will present an opportunity to reflect on your academic experience and contemplate your professional future.

Think of this course as an opportunity to discover answers to the following questions:

- Who am I?
- What are my dreams beyond “what I want to do after I graduate”?
- What are my dreams beyond a job that will allow you to “make lots of money”?
- How does my degree in Communication Studies merge with my plans?
- What obstacles could prevent me from achieving my dreams?

This *course is not a placement service*. By semester’s end, some of you, employing concepts and techniques discussed and practiced, may reach a “final” decision about your NEXT STEP and/or secure employment, admission to a graduate program, etc. However, your success in this course will not rely on that outcome. Rather, your participation in the process of exploring possibilities and, more importantly, the products you submit toward that end will be the chief artifacts under evaluation.

This course was created based on the following presuppositions:

- Each student is willing and able to engage in personal reflection about his or her past as a college student; present as a soon-to-be graduated senior; and future as someone with a unique combination of values, skills, and interests.
- Each student is willing and able to specify what material he or she found particularly interesting in the academic discipline of Communication Studies.
- Each student wants to find meaning in the years he or she has spent in undergraduate study and the semesters spent majoring in Communication Studies. Then springboard from that meaning to a vision for himself or herself that extends at least as far as “next steps” in his or her life.
- Each student is prepared to incorporate knowledge learned in previous COM classes into this class. Examples include application of favorite theories to assignments and workshops, as well as presentation skills developed in COM 110 and other performance courses.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this course are to guide students through five basic processes:

- Identify values and aspirations;
- Assess academic and professional aptitude(s), knowledge and capabilities;
- Explore potential next-step issues and opportunities (graduate school, professional employment, professional service or other) in light of identified values and aspirations;
- Articulate and/or demonstrate academic and professional aptitude, knowledge and capabilities; and
- Develop a plan to bridge the gap between current aptitude and professional future goals.

## CLASS PARTICIPATION

Participation in this class means *being actively involved* in class discussions and presentations. *Just attending class does not count as participation.* Asking relevant challenging questions of your teacher, guest speakers, and fellow students and providing information *relevant* to class discussions/presentations are just two of the many ways you can participate in this class. Participation means reading base readings for class discussions and being prepared to participate in the discussions. Participation also means being in class respectfully observing your classmate's presentations. Attending class but not volunteering during discussions, appearing to study for other classes or gazing off in the distance are just three examples of negative participation. Arriving late or leaving early does not allow for full class participation.

It is your responsibility to check your campus email account on a regular basis (at least daily). Additional information, reminders, job announcements from Career Center or others, etc. will be provided via email. If any contact information changes, please notify the instructor immediately.

It is highly suggested that you also provide the school with your current contact information. This can be accomplished through Student Information and Registration Access on SeaNet.

## INSTRUCTOR PARTICIPATION

My participation is that of a guide. I will lead you in your reflection of your past, present and future. I will provide the resources necessary for an enjoyable and successful trip. As a guide I will ask questions, make suggestions and point you towards those who can help you reach your goals. *My job is not to do it for you.* My job is to provide you with a map, have resources standing by, and be there to encourage you on your journey.

## CLASS ATTENDANCE

You are expected to attend all class meetings. You may miss **two (2)** class meetings without penalty except as noted in next paragraph. Therefore, make sure that you arrange your personal affairs (e.g. job responsibilities, family obligations, vacations, etc.) to allow you to fulfill the requirements of this course. For all **absences after the second** you will **lose 10 points** off your **final point total for each absence**. If you have a major life or family crisis that precludes your attendance, contact me within 24 hours of the absence to discuss the situation. Do not wait until I give you a progress report noting your absence(s) to make an appointment to talk with me regarding your situation.

***Absences during Capstone Experience Presentations at the end of the semester are unacceptable.*** Your classmates' grades depend in part on your participation in the forum. If your first absence is during this time there will be a five (5) point penalty. If both of your absences occur during these presentations you will earn twenty (20) point penalty for both absences. Attendance on exam day is mandatory for all students. If you choose not to attend the presentations on exam day, you will earn a fifty (50) point penalty. The penalties are points that will be subtracted from your final point total.

An attendance sheet will be passed at the beginning of every class. It is your **responsibility** to sign the sheet when it is passed. ***If you do not sign it you are absent!!!!!!*** Appearing later in the session with your notes for the day you did not sign the sheet does not remove the absence(s).

On presentation days and days when we have guest speakers, the classroom door will be shut at 9:30am sharp. I will use the clock on the computer to determine the time. You will **not** be allowed to enter once the class door is shut. If you are not in the classroom on your presentation day, you will be unable to complete the assignment.

Read the class calendar carefully as well as the sheets noting your presentation/observation dates. The class calendar is available on my website. Note your required days on your personal calendar. In the Course Pack – Handouts I have included a monthly calendar with due dates noted.

***Use your absences wisely!*** If you think college students should not have to show up for class and you do not like this policy please do not take this section of this class. I respect your opinion, but for a successful class for all students you must adhere to the standards set forth in this policy.

## UNIVERSITY STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

“In choosing UNCW, you have become part of our community of scholars. We recognize that the UNCW learning experience is challenging and requires hard work. It also requires a commitment to make time available to do that hard work. The University expects you to make academics your highest priority by dedicating your time and energy to training your mind and acquiring knowledge. Academic success in critical thinking and problem solving prepares you for the changes and challenges you will

encounter in the future. Our faculty and academic support resources are readily available as partners in this effort, but the primary responsibility for learning is yours." <http://www.uncw.edu/gc/about-expectations.htm>

### UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE

"The University of North Carolina at Wilmington is committed to the proposition that the pursuit of truth requires the presence of honesty among all involved. It is therefore this institution's stated policy that no form of dishonesty among its faculty or students will be tolerated." For specific information refer to your 2007-2008 Code of Student Life book or the on-line version.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism you may refer to the Code of Student life available on the school website, or you may refer to the handouts included in your course pack.

### UNIVERSITY POLICY ON VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

"UNCW practices a zero-tolerance policy for violence and harassment of any kind. For emergencies contact UNCW CARE at 962-2273, Campus Police at 962-3184, or Wilmington Police at 911. For University or community resources visit <http://uncw.edu/wrc/crisis.htm>."

### ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

All *written assignments* and papers are due on time unless you complete negotiations with me *at least 24 hours before* the assignment is due. If you have a personal emergency or family crisis that prevents you from submitting your *written* assignment on time or negotiating with me 24 hours in advance you must contact me within 24 hours of when the assignment was due. I must be given a phone number where you can be reached. At this point we will discuss your situation and determine what will occur. If you do not contact me following these guidelines you will not be allowed to make-up the assignment except under extremely mitigating circumstances and the professor will determine what an extremely mitigating circumstance is. Most written assignments will *not* be accepted via email. I have noted on the assignment the very few accepted by email.

All *presentations* will be completed at the scheduled time unless you complete negotiations with me *at least 24 hours before* your presentation is due. The *telephone interview* must be rescheduled three business days before your scheduled interview. Instructions are included in the assignment with regards to the telephone interview. *Capstone Experience* presentations cannot be rescheduled, there are no spare days.

Negotiation is not equivalent to leaving a message on my voice mail or sending me an email announcing your absence(s). Negotiation occurs when we discussed your situation.

All presentations will be taped.

Please feel free to stop by my office during my office hours or make an appointment if you would like assistance preparing the various assignments. I will be glad to work with you, answer questions, proof papers/outlines, etc.

Should you disagree with your assignment grade I will gladly discuss this. However, I will not discuss your grade before class, during class, after class or in the hallway. Please follow these guidelines:

- Read ALL of the written comments on your Evaluation Form and assignment as well as the typed comments attached to your assignment (if any)
- Type the reason(s) you disagree with the grade you received.
- Schedule an appointment with me to discuss your assignment in *my office*.
  - If a speech bring your returned packet and your typed comments to the meeting. If you have the VHS tape in your possession you must bring it to the meeting.
  - If a paper submit your returned packet and your typed comments 24 hours before our appointment.

*Time Limits:* In the "real" world, time is money. In most speaking situations you will be given a general time limit to which you must adhere. On the job exceeding time constraints may result in a poor job performance evaluation. In this class time is taken just as seriously. The time limit on each presentation is monitored closely. A strict time limit encourages you to fine-tune and practice your presentation. If you are unable to hit a two-minute window you have not prepared sufficiently. You will not know how long your speech is unless you practice it aloud several times. For each speech, you will be given a window in which you must deliver your speech. The penalty for failing to meet the time window (either over or under) will be noted on the individual assignment.

### COURSE CALENDAR

Your class calendar will be updated on a regular basis as class size stabilizes. The calendar is available from my website (<http://people.uncw.edu/bulgert>). You will be notified via email if and/or when changes are made. Once presentation dates are set changes will not occur except in an emergency.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

The following are brief descriptions of the various course assignments. Your course pack (on-line) contains the assignments, evaluation forms, and additional information.

***Personal Inventory Paper*** – In this 2 to 4 page paper you will begin your exploration of your personal values, visions, aspirations and goals. You will begin to focus on how those goals will play/might play a role in your NEXT STEP decisions.

***Informational Interview Presentation*** – In this 6 to 8 minute presentation you will inform the audience about a specific post graduation opportunity. The information for this presentation will be gathered through an informational interview with someone currently in the position (school) you believe could be your NEXT STEP. You will also be defining the communication studies major as it relates to the position (graduate school program). Interview attire required for speakers, and business professional attire required for the audience.

***Professional Portfolio*** – This is an organized collection of artifacts of your work from your college years that may be used to support your candidacy for a position (graduate program) after graduation. You will incorporate items from your portfolio into your Portfolio Presentation.

***Portfolio Presentation*** – In this assignment you will present your elevator speech and respond to a prompt. The prompt response will require effective presentation of your skills as they relate to the position, as well as incorporation of at least two items from your portfolio.

***Telephone Interview Assignments*** – This is a multi-part assignment. Part #1 include a targeted resume, targeted cover letter, and targeted position summary. Part #2 encompasses the Career Center – Telephone Interview and self-reflection.

***Custom Skills & Computer Based Training*** – You will complete four computer based training sessions. Upon earning an 80% or higher on each test you will print a certificate. You will also be completing a data sheet after your self-assessment.

***Workshop/Participation Points*** – As discussed earlier participation in class discussions is an important part of this class. Being prepared for the various workshops is the only way to effectively comment during the discussions. Therefore your participation points for this class will be linked to our class workshops. This breakdown is provided in the course pack.

***Extra Credit*** –The only form of extra credit provided in this class is explained in the course pack with due dates noted on the calendar. This extra credit will assist you research your journey. Do not ask me for additional extra credit assignments throughout the semester.

## ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CLASS

***Interview Attire:*** This must be your very own ensemble-not a bunch of clothing items frantically borrowed a couple of hours before you need them-of formal business attire appropriate for your gender. You will wear these clothes at several COM 490 activities and, I hope, at job or grad school interviews (not to mention weddings, professional functions, and so on) during or after COM 490. If you do not have this attire already, prices begin at about \$200 for a serviceable ensemble. If you work somewhere having a sale or know of sale, please share that information with me and I will share with your classmates.

***Business-Casual Attire:*** This too must be your very own ensemble. It is very possible that a couple of components of your interview ensemble may serve as business-casual attire. In addition, your wardrobe may already contain business-casual clothing items.

***Printing and Office Supplies:*** Prepare to absorb the costs for such items as high quality stationary, a sturdy and attractive portfolio, perhaps color copies of written artifacts, etc. A minimum of \$40 should fund you throughout this semester.

## GRADING POLICY

Work that meets all of the minimum requirements and is relatively free from errors constitutes an average grade of “C”. To receive a higher grade you must exceed the minimum requirements defined by the assignment. Remember our goal is to Strive for Excellence.

**Grading:**

Assignment	Total Points	Points Received
Personal Inventory Paper	75	
Informational Interview Presentation	100	
Professional Portfolio	85	
Portfolio Presentation	50	
Mock Interview		
Part # 1- Pre-Interview Assignments (100 points)	135	
Part #2 - Career Services -Mock Interview (35 points)		
Capstone Experience	180	
Computer Based Training	125	
Workshop Points	30	
Participation Points (pop quizzes, guest speakers, etc)	20	
<b>Total Class Points</b>	800	
Extra Credit Points ( <i>maximum of 20</i> )		+points earned
<b>Total Points Received</b>		

**GRADING SCALE BY PERCENTAGE**

87% - 89% = B+	94% - 100% = A	90% - 93% = A-
77% - 79% = C+	84% - 86% = B	80% - 83% = B-
67% - 69% = D+	74% - 76% = C	70% - 73% = C-
	64% - 66% = D	60% - 63% = D-
		59% & below = F

To calculate your letter grade on a particular assignment, divide the points earned by the points available, multiply by 100 to convert to a percentage, and compare that result to the scale above. For example:

$$\frac{\text{Points Earned (42)}}{\text{Points Available (50)}} = .84 \times 100 = 84\% = B$$

To calculate your final semester grade, divide the total points earned by the total number available for the semester (800), multiply by 100 to convert to a percentage. Remember to subtract additional absences and add in extra credit earned.

For example, you earned 730 points had no additional absences and did not complete extra credit.

$$\frac{\text{Points Earned (730)}}{\text{Points Available (800)}} = .9125 \times 100 = 91.25\% = A-$$

For example, you earned 730 points but lost 30 points due to three additional absences. Your actual points earned would be 700 (730-30).

$$\frac{\text{Points Earned (700)}}{\text{Points Available (800)}} = .875 \times 100 = 87.5\% = B+$$

For example, you earned 730 points on your assignments, had no additional absences, and you completed extra credit assignments (+20 points). Therefore your actually points earned would be 750 (730+20).

$$\frac{\text{Points Earned (750)}}{\text{Points Available (800)}} = .9375 \times 100 = 93.75\% = A$$