
ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Instructor: Dr. Patricia Comeaux

Office: Lakeside Hall, Room 220

Office Hours: TR: 11:00 – 12:00 & 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. or by appointment
 MW: 2:30 - 3:30p.m. or by appointment
 Fridays: By appointment
 ***Please note** that I will be in my office most of the day on Monday and Wednesday so don't hesitate to stop by.....

Phone: University: 962-3265

E-mail: comeauxp@uncw.edu
 Note: Email is the easiest and quickest way to communicate with me outside our classroom. Never hesitate to email me with any questions or concerns; I am on email very frequently—including weekends.

=====

Texts

Required: Miller, Katherine. Organizational Communication: Approaches and Processes. Fourth Edition. Thompson/Wadsworth, 2006.

Two electronic readings (chapters: one from Senge book and one from Goodall & Eisenberg)

Recommended/optional:

Senge, Peter M. The fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization. NY: Doubleday, 1990. **Note: two copies of this book are on 3 day reserve for this course.**

Required use of Blackboard (an internet environment) which we serve as an extension of our classroom mainly through discussions (occurring in small groups) and resources (required readings, case studies and example previous student work). You can access our course website either through the following URL: <http://ncvista.blackboard.com>. (see details of access information below).

Particulars about using Blackboard and Technical Support

Most important: you really need road runner or a similar fast access rather than dial-up to use this environment. Dial up will probably frustrate you; so use university computers if you only have dial-up at home.....

The easiest (and most reliable) access for Blackboard is through the URL: <http://ncvista.blackboard.com>. You can bookmark it on your computer. Click on UNC Wilmington, to arrive at the log in page. Type your UNCW email username (without @uncw.edu) in lowercase letters and for the password, type in your Seanet password.. If you

experience **any login difficulties** (after trying several times), please contact the UNCW Technology Assistance center at 910- 962-4357 or tac@uncw.edu and in your message include the following information: COM 327 Organizational Communication, Instructor, Patricia Comeaux.

Your first task in Blackboard will be to make sure you ran a Browser check and disable your pop-up blocker for this site. Check to always allow pop-ups for this site. (also if you ever encounter a window that says “This application digital signature has an error. Do you want to run the application?” Click Run). There are instructions on the log in page to run a browser check and do both of those and call the help desk if you need assistance. Then you need to access the course—so try logging in NOW. There are two example student papers on Personal Mastery that will prove very helpful for your first major assignment (worth 50 points and due September 5). These papers are .PDF files and you will need Adobe Reader to read them. If you do not have an Adobe Reader you can download one for free at the following <http://adobe.com>. If you experience any technical difficulties doing so, contact the UNCW help desk: 962-4357. They are open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and can address any technical problems related to your Adobe download, your UNCW email account or other computer problems associated with your course work at UNCW. There is also a feature on the course home page called **Ask Dr. C (Blackboard Link)**—*that link will give you assistance and the Dr. C. is not me!*

Once you set up your Adobe Reader (done with the help of UNCW helpdesk, if need), the other features we are using in Blackboard are fairly user friendly. In the discussions area, I have set up a topic titled, **General Questions**. If you have any questions about technical stuff, you can post them under that topic and most probably one of your classmates will respond with the know-how. On the other hand, if you figured out how to do something or have advice for us for using the discussion area, feel free to post it there. You may also use that topic area for questions about the assignments or concepts in the text. In that way, when I answer your question it may serve to clarify issues for others. However, you must alert me (via email) that you have a question for me. I check email several times daily (even on weekends) and **email is the quickest most efficient way to communicate with me outside our classroom.**

NOTE: I am not a technical whiz (not even close) but I am not afraid to ask for help. Make sure you go to the right sources indicated above for the technical help you need. Notice that my name is not listed for any of those sources. I like the advantages the online environment provides for us—I teach a fully online course once a year called **Communication in Groups and Virtual Communities**. Check it out this spring and experience all the wonderful advantages for yourself.

NOTE from Blackboard: Internet Explorer 7 is not recommended for use in Blackboard. See the Browser Tune Up Page for more information about supported browsers. <http://www.webct.com/tuneup>

Instructional Design and Approach

This course is about communication in organizations (or understanding the pervasiveness of communication in the workplace), and as such it can prove extremely useful to your present and professional future. We will study organizations from five major perspectives of organizing/communicating: 1) learning organizations (systems); 2) situating communication in organizations; 3) traditional/scientific; 4) relational/interpersonal; and 5) cultural/assimilation. In addition, we will examine contemporary issues that impact communication in organizations. As a class, we will examine such issues as gender, diversity, and the impact of technology on communicating at work and how teams function in the workplace. In groups (teams of 3), you will select other current topics/issues found in your texts and relevant leading journals, find a particular application for that topic/issue and then prepare a presentation that will enhance and extend our understanding of how communication functions in the workplace.

The course topics are arranged as follows:

- Knowing yourself (values, perceptions, vision, goals–personal mastery).
- Understanding communication perspectives in organizations.
- Examining Peter Senge’s Learning Organization (a system’s perspective): Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Shared Vision, Team Learning.
- Situating Communication in organizations.
- Examining the impact of technology in today’s organization.
- Viewing organizations from a cultural/assimilation perspective.
- Understanding the influence of traditional/scientific strategies of organizing.
- Understanding the influence of human relations or relational strategies of organizing.
- Discovering current topics/issues in today’s organizations.
- Understanding how communication functions in specific organizations.

This course will follow the structure of a seminar. The nature of a seminar depends on input from all participants. A mode of inquiry and a desire to discover knowledge is as important as is a tolerance of uncertainties and ambiguities. At times, we will have more questions than answers; the “answers” will not be the same for all individuals. This will be a cooperative rather than a competitive venture.

While I will provide a general structure and questions for discussion, the particular direction will come from our interactions as a class and from the collected and shared insights. **Critical thinking, inquiry, and writing will be a major part of our seminar.** We will need to learn to describe what we know (from our experience, our readings, our observations and our interviews) and learn to interpret and analyze that information. We will also learn to draw informed conclusions about communication in particular situations. This knowledge will enable us to make more competent communication choices for ourselves and in our interaction with others.

Survival in this class requires a commitment from each individual to read all assigned class materials thoughtfully and critically. Please make sure you can keep that commitment before you continue in this class. **Missing one class is equivalent to missing a week of classes.** Please be there prepared; we need your contributions. Please note that for each reading assignment beginning September 12 there will be a quiz on your reading. This is to motivate you to read actively and to be prepared for discussion as well as a quiz. These quizzes will range from 10 to 20 points and cannot be made up, so make sure you are there ON

TIME and prepared. Our three-hour class sessions will be based on facilitated discussion and/or a case study application. I will expect you to participate in the class discussion or class activity from an informed perspective and that can only happen if you have thoughtfully and actively read the assigned material.

Operating Principles and Class Structure

1. Attendance and active participation is built into the course. Please see attendance policy and absences for effects on your final grade.
 2. There are **no make-ups for the quizzes** (see schedule) as they are part of the class learning structure and cannot be made up. In addition there is **no make-up for the scheduled exam**. In the event of a personal emergency, the student is responsible for contacting me **IN ADVANCE OF THE TEST**. There can be no negotiation to reschedule a test without talking with me in advance.
 3. Papers and assignments are due on time **unless** you negotiate with me prior to the due date.
 4. In the event you are absent from class (for whatever reason, it is your responsibility to secure any notes and handouts that are given in class. If an assignment is given during one class and due the next and you want to earn credit for that assignment, you need to make arrangements to get what you need before, rather than after, the fact. Sometimes, the most efficient way to handle this is to arrange to have a classmate get the notes and handouts for you.
 5. **Classes start promptly at 6:30 p.m**, please arrive on time, and plan to stay till the end of class: 9: 15p.m.
 6. Success (and survival) in this class requires a commitment from each individual to read all assigned course materials thoughtfully and critically. It also requires regular attendance and the ability and willingness to participate in class discussions.
- Suggestions for reading and writing for excellence/success in this course:
 - First, understand the relationship of the assigned reading to the course (*i.e.*, the relation of the part to the whole).
 - Before reading, find clues to meaning—title, central themes, opening description or summary—then skim article or chapter to get an idea of what it is about.
 - Read with a pencil/pen (if your own book), marking significant ideas.
 - Write an outline of the main ideas and examples.

Attendance/Absence Policy

You are allowed two absences for sickness or personal business. Beyond that, the following will result:

- 3 absences result in final grade lowered ½ letter grade
- 4 absences result in final grade lowered full letter grade
- 5 or more absences result in course failure

The total number of class points are 365- 395 (see next pages); assignment grades as well as your final semester grade will be based on a plus/minus system according to the following percentage scale:

A = 94 or above	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69
A- = 90-93	C = 73-76	D = 63-66
B+ = 87-89	C- = 70-72	D- = 60-62
B = 83-86		F = 59 or below
B- = 80-82		

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 (355 for example). *Remember to "adjust" your final letter grade to reflect the attendance policy and absence scale stipulated above.*

$$\frac{\text{POINTS EARNED (255)}}{\text{POINTS AVAILABLE (325)}} = .7846 \times 100 = 78 = C+$$

Assignments (Learning Activities)	Points
"Personal Mastery" Analysis Paper (3-4 typed pages) (Instructions on Blackboard under assignments ; also example excellent papers)	50
Quizzes on assigned chapters from text	30-50
In-class learning activities (case-studies, quizzes, etc.)	20-50
Multiple Choice and Applied Exam	100
Team Topic Proposal and Outline for presentation.	15
Team Presentations (Selected topic/issue & communication in a case study application or a particular organization) (See Blackboard for Assignment and 2 example presentation outlines)	50
Final Exam, Comprehensive Essay Exam (forthcoming on Blackboard)	50
Attendance and informed class participation in discussions.	10
TOTAL	325 – 375

Requirements for Readings in your Miller text:
Make sure you read the complete chapter; this includes the *Case in Point and Spotlight on Scholarship* sections and definitely the Case Studies. You will be held accountable for the complete chapters assigned.

Class Schedule

- Aug 22 **Introduction to course and WebCT environment.**
Data sheets and self-inventory (Knowing Self and Others), Values and Perception Workshops, **Stephen Covey** (30 min. of video).
Group Activity: Creating a business organization (**5 points**)
Demonstration of Blackboard (our internet classroom)
- Aug 29 **Systems Perspective and Personal Mastery**
Personal Mastery (from **Senge**—optional text); **Read and be prepared for discussion. Copy of chapter on electronic reserve for this course.**
Log into Blackboard and read two example student papers on Personal Mastery: P.M. Paper. 2004 and P.M. Paper. 2006. These are excellent papers and will provide further explanation of Senge's concepts and also provide a model of excellence and quality.
* Discussion of Senge's Systems Perspective (Mental Models, Shared Vision, Team Learning): Personal Mastery Analysis Paper assignment distributed.
Tom Morris (motivational consultant) video; **Peter Senge** (Creating Learning Organizations) video
Blackboard: discussion groups: compare and contrast views/perspectives.
- Sept 5 **Personal Mastery Analysis Paper Due (50 pts.)**
(Hard copy and electronic copy required): Discussion of applications of personal mastery.
Discussion of Special topics and issues for Team Presentations: Impact of Technology, Gender, Diversity, Communicating & Working in Teams, etc.
Preview of Team Presentations from previous students: **See the 2 presentation outlines and the Team Presentation assignment on Blackboard.**
Initial individual choices of topics and issues (# 1 & 2); plus justification of choice (why, where work, what experience or what application).
Read Chapter 14, "Changing Landscape of Organizations" (be prepared for discussion—bring text to class)
- Sept 12 **Communication Perspectives in Organizations:** Read "Situating Organizational Communication" which is a chapter from a text by Goodall & Eisenberg (be prepared for **quiz and discussion**). **Copy of the chapter is on electronic reserve for this course.**
Also read handout on Blackboard, under Resources "Definitions. Perspectives of Organizing."
Read Chapter 1 of Miller text, **Classical Approaches** (be prepared for **quiz and discussion**). Be sure to read case study: *Creamy Creations Takeover*
- Sept 19 **Relational Strategies of Organizing:** Read Chapters 2 & 3 in Miller, Human Relations and Human Resources Approaches, (*be prepared for quiz and discussion*). Read also: Student Paper: S.S. on Blackboard as an example application of Relational Strategies. *Reminder:* read the case studies: *Motivation at Fitness Club* and *Teamwork at Marshall's Plant*

- Sept 26 ***Cultural Perspective and Assimilation Strategies of Organizing:***
 Read Chapters 5 & 7 in Miller, Cultural Approaches & Assimilation Processes, *(be prepared for quiz and discussion)*.. Also read Student Paper A.C. in Blackboard which is an excellent explanation of the assimilation process.
Reminder: be sure to read the case studies, Rise and Fall of Enron and Letters to Delta Chi
- Oct 3 Special Topics continued: Dateline and video on Sexual Harassment issues
 WebCT discussion: Initial discussion of topic and proposal choices for teams:
 teams finalized and begin work on ****Brief Draft Proposal**-due Oct 24 (see # 4 on team presentation assignment):
- Oct 10 **EXAM—(100 pts.): MC and essay**
- Oct 17 **NO physical Class (a required virtual class via Blackboard** discussion;
 details forthcoming—**20 point** potential for each team.
- Oct 24 ****Brief Draft Proposal Due (5 points)**—one from each team (see # 4 on team presentation assignment): **as an email attachment to Dr. Comeaux by NOON.**
 (Note: use Blackboard as planning sessions to discuss with team mates your topic and plan of action for gathering information about topic.
 Class activity: feedback and final decisions about topic choices and class time to work on team presentations.
Possible Guest Speaker:
- Oct 31 Draft outlines due for Team Reports (**10 points for team**) via email **NO Later than NOON as an email attachment.**
 Class activity: feedback on outlines to teams; dates selected for presentations and discussion of delivery and presentation expectations. Class time to finalize team outlines.
- Nov 7 Team Presentations (**50 points**) 3 or 4 teams
- Nov 14 Team presentations continued
- Nov 21 **Thanksgiving Break**
- Nov 28 Team presentations completed
- Dec 5 Final Class Wrap- Up
 Take-Home Essay Exam, on teams presentations and communication in organizations, distributed
- Dec 12 **Final Essay Exam (50 points) Due: Exam time 7:00 p.m. (Wednesday)**