

Spring 2013
M & W 2:50pm – 4:10pm
CI-212

192:357

Organizational Communication

Professor: Matthew Weber, Ph.D.
Email: matthew.weber@rutgers.edu
Office Hours: M & W., 1pm – 2pm and by appointment.
Office: CI-206
Office phone: 732-932-7500 x8148

Grader: Heewon Kim
Email: techne@rutgers.edu

[A] Course Overview

Organizations come in all shapes and sizes: from profit-driven businesses to nonprofits staffed by volunteers - from large multinational corporations to individuals running small startups. Organizations form, exist, survive, and fail through communication. In fact, many organizational scholars and practitioners agree that 'organization' and 'communication' are synonymous-- an organization cannot exist without communication and communication enables us to organize the world around us.

The purpose of this course is to develop your understanding of the role communication plays in organizations. Communication enhances and undermines relationships, persuades, motivates, insults, compliments, misleads, manipulates and facilitates in organizations. Communication is central to the understanding of such organizational processes like teamwork, employee motivation, organizational culture and climate, gossip, turnover, socialization of employees and the diffusion of innovations. Indeed, communication is central to the very structure and functioning of organizations everywhere.

Throughout this course, you will be exposed to the theoretical foundations necessary to understand organizations as communicative entities. In addition, we will examine a series of case studies and through the course of class discussion we will develop successful communication strategies for succeeding in organizations.

[B] Course Learning Goals & Objectives

At the end of this course, you should:

1. Be able to understand and explain how organizational communication influences work processes and organizational structure.
2. Be able to actively apply theoretical perspectives and concepts to analyze organizational situations and settings.
3. Be able to make recommendations for resolving organizational issues.
4. Be able to develop intellectual agility with “big ideas” and abstract theoretical concepts, particularly extending and applying concepts in contemporary settings.

[C] Course Format

This is an upper division course, and therefore, I expect that you will come to class on time, having completed the assigned readings for that day. I also expect that you will be prepared to participate actively with questions, insights from the readings, and equally importantly, stories from your own life experiences. The class will be a mix of lecture, class discussion and group activities that will require your active participation in each class meeting.

Subject matter from the readings will be referenced and built upon, but lectures will also cover other material, which makes your attendance essential to successful learning. I consider material from class discussion to be an essential part of the learning experience.

[D] Course Readings

Required texts:

Conrad, C. & Poole, M. S. (2005). *Strategic organizational communication in a global economy* (6th Edition). Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth (ISBN: 0-534-63621-7).

- (Available in the University bookstore, NJ Books, and on 2-hour reserve at Alexander Library)
- Note: This book is referred to as OC later on the syllabus.

Writing Guides:

- American Psychological Association (2011): Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Washington D.C. (APA Style Guide).

- Strunk W., and White, E.B., (1979). The Elements of Style. New York: Longman

Additional readings are posted online at the Sakai site, unless otherwise noted.

[E] Instructor Expectations, Requirements & Grading

You should expect to be challenged. To succeed in this class, you will be required to spend time developing your own interpretations of the readings that I will assign, and developing your own perspectives on the material we cover.

Attendance:

Students should make every effort to attend all lectures and class meetings. Attendance is more than just showing up. You are expected to be on time for class and to attend for the full class time. I also expect you to be courteous to your fellow students; this means turning your cell phones off (not mute, not silent, not vibrate).

Similarly, using computers to take notes in class is a privilege, not a right—if a student with a computer continuously shows signs of disengagement from the class, they will be asked to take notes by hand until the end of the semester.

Since lectures will not repeat material from the required readings, they cannot be an adequate substitute for attending class. Should you have to miss class, it is your responsibility to arrange with a classmate to borrow their notes. The professor will not provide his lecture notes to you.

Two unexcused absences will be permitted over the course of the semester. If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence (an email is automatically sent to me). Please note that reporting your absence via this system does NOT automatically excuse you from any due dates, quizzes, or exams (see the policy on late work below).

If you know you will be absent for several classes because of student athletics or ROTC, you must bring me a list of those dates with proper documentation in advance. Students missing more than an occasional class due to serious illness or serious personal circumstances should provide documentation to the Dean of Students (<http://deanofstudents.rutgers.edu>) to authenticate the absences.

It is University policy to excuse without penalty students who are absent from class because of religious observance, and to allow the make-up of work missed because of such absence. However, students are required to let me know as soon as possible about necessary absences for religious observances. Students will be responsible for making up missed work by an amended due date or the work will be considered incomplete.

Evaluation Criteria (1000 points possible):

1. Class Participation (100 points possible):

Your attendance and participation during class meetings is encouraged and expected. Since learning is an active process, this class will require real engagement with texts and ideas. Therefore, class will be taught interactively. Students must come to class prepared to talk about the readings assigned for that day, with questions or comments to promote class discussion. Class participation will also be assessed based on your participation in i-Clicker activities (polls, quizzes, etc.).

Everyone, from the most talkative to the most shy, will be expected and encouraged to contribute frequently. Respecting and actively supporting your classmates when they are presenting their projects in class is also a factor in your participation grade. Class participation may include the occasional quiz or in-class assessments/activities, at the instructor's discretion.

2. **Response Papers – RESP - (150 pts total - 75 pts each):** Response papers – 2 to 3 pages in length - are individual assignments intended to help you develop a better understand of core theories and concepts. There will be three response papers during the semester, and your grade will be based on your top two scores. If you are satisfied with your grade after having completed two response papers, you do not need to complete the third. If you miss one during the semester, you will have to complete the other two. Details of the assignment will be posted to Sakai.

3. **Power Presentations & Case Studies – PPRES - (250 points):** In the second week of the semester, you will be assigned to working teams. These teams will consist of 4 -5 people. Teams will be reassigned after the midterm.

Working teams will assemble for group activities throughout the semester, including case studies, activities and debriefs.

At these checkpoints, teams will be asked to respond to a pre-determined set of questions based on the given activity and relevant theories. Following a brief preparation period, a randomly selected number of teams will be asked to present. These are meant to be high-impact, short oral presentations that deliver important information about the topic assigned and how that information is applied to a real-world organizational situation. These are content-rich but last only 4 minutes (hence, the name “power presentations”). Teams will present 2 – 4 times throughout the semester.

Credit will only be given to those members who are present for a given activity/presentation. **There is no make-up for group projects.** In addition, you will work in teams to complete case studies and group work.

4. Exams (Midterm Exam: 200 points; Final exam 300 points):

There will be a midterm exam and a final exam. The midterm exam will be on **Monday, March 11**. The final exam will be held **Wednesday, May 15, 12PM – 3PM**. The final exam is cumulative.

Please note that it is necessary to complete ALL assignments and exams to pass the course. Failure to do so will result in a failing grade.

Grading Policy:

Please note that it is necessary to complete ALL assignments and exams to pass the course.

Writing is a critical part of communication, and in order to be successful in this class it is important that you communicate in a clear and concise manner. Rutgers has a Writing Program where students can obtain help with writing skills and assignments: <http://plangere.rutgers.edu/index.html>. I encourage students to take advantage of these tutoring services before handing in written work.

Note that I expect you to follow the APA Manual for references and paper structure.

With regards to grading, Rutgers SCILS allows the following standard grades: A, B+, B, C+, C, D, and F. An F is used for failing work or for a student who has stopped attending class without formally withdrawing.

Final Grade: Your final grade will be determined by summing scores on all assignments completed this semester. Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A	(90-100%)	=	900-1000 Points
B+	(87-89.9%)	=	870-899 Points
B	(80-86.9%)	=	800-869 Points
C+	(77-79.9%)	=	770-799 Points
C	(70-76.9%)	=	700-769 Points
D	(60-69.9%)	=	600-699 Points
F	(00-59.9%)	=	000-599 Points

What does an A mean? In order to receive an A on an assignment, I expect that you will have shown a clear understanding of key concepts associated with an assignment, and you have further added your own insight to the material. Assignments receiving an A will be generally free of grammatical errors, and show an advanced level of comprehension.

B work reflects a general understanding of core concepts, and basic application of material. B work will have some grammatical errors, but generally shows strong writing skills. Work receiving a C reflects a basic understanding of core concepts

with minimal or inaccurate application; work receiving a C reflects passable writing skills.

For all graded materials except exams, Heewon Kim, the TA, is your point of contact for discussing your grades. There is a 24-hour waiting period for any questions regarding grades. Once you have received your grade, wait 24 hours and then email with a reasonable explanation of why your grade should be changed. Please do not come to me until you have first discussed any grading questions or issues you have with her. Please do not ask to have your grade changed for reasons other than mathematical error. Applying subjective standards after the fact invalidates the standards applied to the entire class and is unfair to every student.

An incomplete, IN, can only be assigned to a student who due to unforeseen (and generally emergency) circumstances cannot finish coursework within the given semester. Students should not assume that they have the option of an IN grade; this option will be utilized infrequently and at the professor's discretion.

A note on late assignments: ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS. I show up on time, and I expect you to show up on time as well. Late assignments will be docked one letter grade per day that the assignment is late. You are welcome to submit work in advance of class either in person, to my mailbox, or to my office.

Don't wait to the last minute to print your assignments!!!

A note on communication: Since much of your communication with me will be electronically this is a great opportunity for you to practice the art of communication via mediated forms.

- Emails for this class should always start with "COM 357:" as the beginning of the subject.
- Sign your emails with your full name.
- Clearly indicate what your question is. The more relevant information you provide, the more helpful and timely my response can be.
- Use full sentences and proper grammar.

A note on group work: With regards to group work and group participation:

- You are responsible for being preparing, and coming to class armed with organizational examples that illustrate the readings.
- If there are problems in a group, you must first try to resolve the problem together. Begin by holding a group meeting and constructively discussing your group dynamics, in general, as well as each individual's contributions. Have each individual take a turn where s/he articulates his/her most important membership strength and key weakness.

- If meeting as a group to discuss everyone's participation qualities fails to address particular problems, you must write a memo to the member(s) who is/are not working up to group expectations.

A designated group member must email this memo to the group member and copy all other members of the group. In your first confrontation, do not include me. Try to resolve the problem within your group, first. If any member of the group (including the accused) believes the first confrontation requires my involvement, then that member should forward the first email with an update on the actions that have been taken to me and must copy all members of the group on that email.

Upon my involvement, I will act as the judge after hearing all cases and my resolution will be followed by all members. By involving me in the group problem, all members agree to adhere to my final decision. I will do my best to be as fair to all involved as I can, given my perspective and experience in managing such circumstances.

Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities (both short- and long-term) who wish to have appropriate accommodations in this class must do so through Rutgers Disabilities Services Office and/or the Dean of Students of the school. Please bring me the necessary documentation as early in the semester as possible so that we can work together to accommodate your needs.

Academic Integrity:

The consequences of academic dishonesty are very serious. Rutgers' academic integrity policy can be reviewed at

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/understand.shtml>

Academic integrity means, among other things, that you will:

- Develop and write all of your own assignments.
- Show in detail where the materials you use in your papers come from.
- Create citations whether you are paraphrasing authors or quoting them directly.
- Keep your eyes on your own work during exams.
- Not fabricate information or citation in your work.

If you are not sure about any issue related to plagiarism, please come to discuss it with me.

Technology in the Classroom: Multitasking in the classroom distracts from your ability to learn. There are numerous studies of college students that clearly establish this as fact.

I allow technology in the classroom if it is being used to further learning. You are welcome to bring you laptops to take notes (or iPads, etc). If you are using technology in the class, I expect that you will be paying attention to lecture. In order to insure this, I employ a variation of the Socratic method of teaching in order to check your comprehension of class discussion. If you are using technology during lecture, and do not appear to be paying attention, you will become a top candidate for the hotseat.

Mobile phones, however, are banned from the classroom. Mobile phones should be turned off at the beginning of lecture. If you are on your phone during class (texting, checking Facebook, etc.), you will (1) be warned and (2) subsequently asked to leave.

Semester Plan and Readings

Note: Readings and topics covered are subject to change at the instructor's discretion

Date	Topic & Reading	Assignment Due
Week 1:		
Wed., 1/23:	Introductions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class introductions, review syllabus, discuss blogging assignment 	
Week 2:		
Mon., 1/28:	Overview of organizing, tacit knowledge, cultural influences, and work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OC Ch. 2 	
Wed., 1/30	Overview of organizing, tacit knowledge, cultural influences, and work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OC Ch. 2 	
Week 3:		
Mon., 2/4:	Scientific and Bureaucratic Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OC Ch. 3 • Nutra-Care Products Case 	PPRES#1
Wed., 2/6:	Scientific and Bureaucratic Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mumby Pg. 118-130 	
Week 4:		
Mon., 2/11:	Scientific and Bureaucratic Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hi-Fli in-class activity 	
Wed., 2/13:	Culture and Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OC Ch. 5 • Case: A parting ceremony 	

Week 5:

Mon., 2/18:	Participation and Networked Forms of Organizing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OC Ch. 4 	RESP #1 Networks Assigned
Wed., 2/20:	Participation and Networked Forms of Organizing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OC Ch. 6 Forbes: Schmoozing still Works 	

Week 6:

Mon., 2/25:	Power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OC Ch. 8 	RESP #1 Networks Due
Wed., 2/27:	Power HBS Case Study: "Thomas Green"	PPRES #2

Week 7:

Mon., 3/4:	Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mumby Ch. 11 	
Wed., 3/6:	Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case Study: Third Bank 	

Week 8:

Mon., 3/11:	Midterm	
Wed., 3/13:	Decision Making & Conflict Management OC Ch. 9	

Week 9:

Mon., 3/18:	Spring Break	
Wed., 3/20:		

Week 10:

Mon., 3/25:	Decision Making & Conflict Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HBS Case Study: "Jamie Turner at MLI, Inc." 	PPRES #3
Wed., 3/27:	Decision Making & Conflict Management Movie - PBS: Triumph of Evil	

Week 11:

Mon., 4/1:	Decision Making & Conflict Management Movie - PBS: Triumph of Evil	
Wed., 4/3:	Diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OC Ch. 10 • Case Study 	RESP #2 Diversity Assigned

Week 12:

Mon., 4/8:	Globalization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Marketing Exercise 	
Wed., 4/10:	Globalization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OC Ch. 11 	RESP #2 Diversity Due

Week 13:

Mon., 4/15:	Globalization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Marketing Exercise 	RESP #3 Assigned
Wed., 4/17:	Image, Influence and Ethics (Identity)	

Week 14:

Mon., 4/22:	Image, Influence and Ethics (Identity) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mumby Ch. 14 	
Wed., 4/24:	In-Class Working Session for Final Power Presentations	RESP #3 Due

Week 15:

Mon., 4/29:	Final Presentations I	
Wed., 5/1:	Final Presentations II	

Week 15:

Mon., 5/6:	Wrap up!	
------------	-----------------	--