

Seminar in Organizational Communication

Fall 2017 (3 Credits)

Dr. Melissa Maier

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Tues. 5:30 – 8:00 pm

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Course Description

This class is an advanced survey study of communication in organizations. The course is seminar style and covers the application of traditional and contemporary theories of communication and organizations in current research and practice. The focus will be on communication within organizations, rather than between organizations. Students will be able to:

- Describe the historical roots of organizational communication.
- Discuss key theories in organizational communication.
- Summarize and critique classic and contemporary scholarship in organizational communication.
- Identify connections between organizational communication theories and research your own scholarly and practical interests.
- Develop a final project grounded in organizational communication theory.

Required Text

There is no required textbook for this course. Readings for each week are located on the course D2L site.

Course Evaluation

Discussion	300 points
Discussion Facilitation (2 @ 50pts)	100 points
Thought Papers (6 @ 50pts)	300 points
Final Project	300 points
Total:	1000 points

Letter grades assigned on the following scale:

A = 94-100%	A- = 90-93.9%	
B+ = 87-89.9%	B = 84-86.9%	B- = 80-83.9%
C+ = 77-79.9%	C = 74-76.9%	C- = 70-73.9%
D+ = 67-69.9%	D = 60-66.9%	
	F = 59.9% or below	

Assignments & Graded Work

Discussion: Graduate seminars are typically organized and conducted differently from undergraduate courses. Specifically, graduate students spend little time listening to lectures and much more time reading and analyzing course materials, participating in thoughtful and focused discussion about the material, and synthesizing old and new ideas. In hopes of fulfilling these goals, your weekly responsibility is to bring your readings (and any relevant notes) to class (hard copy or electronically). As you read, you should be making notes of questions or issues an article raises, critiques about the methodological or theoretical assumptions in the readings, applications of the ideas and/or research to “real-life” issues, factual questions you have about the work, and any other observations you make while reading. You are expected to discuss issues related to the readings and your own and classmates’ thoughts/reflections. This part of your grade is based on the quality and quantity of your participation, as evidenced by the thoughtfulness of your active discussion during the seminar meetings.

Discussion Facilitation: You will work in pairs to facilitate discussion for the assigned readings for 2 days throughout the semester. The specific dates will be chosen during the first class. As a discussion leader, your responsibility is to provide a typed outline of the main points for each reading (1 page max.), and then present and integrate the main ideas in a way that promotes active discussion among the class. Three ways that you can promote discussion include (but are not limited to): assigning outside readings for the class, developing an interactive activity related to the material; and/or preparing 3-5 discussion questions for your colleagues to consider and discuss. The latter is very similar to what a round-table facilitator would do at a professional conference. This part of your grade will be determined by the thoroughness of the summary outline, the energy with which the discussion is facilitated, and your command of the topic.

Thought Papers: On weeks when you are not facilitating, you will submit a thought paper (6 total) for the readings. Papers should be 2-3 pages and address a central issue across the weekly readings. (Note: these should not be outlines/summaries, but papers that strive to answer a question about the readings and critically analyze them). You will pick the topic for your paper. It should be an issue that links at least 2 of the readings. For example, for week 2 you might offer and defend a definition of organizational communication created across the readings, synthesize major trends and turning points in organizational communication research, or compare/contrast methods or theories in organizational communication research. The thought paper should take the form of an argument; that is, it should contain a thesis that reflects your own opinion on an issue, which is supported by reasons and developed by drawing from and/or contrasting your position with the readings.

Final Project: The final project will bring readings, reflections, and discussions full circle. The project will require you to engage organizational communication theory and research to (a) conduct a review of literature, (b) complete a research project, or (c) develop a consulting project or case study. Full details can be found on the Final Project assignment sheet. The project can be completed individually or as a group. Students will be able to determine which project would best suit them—a review of literature, a complete research project, a consulting project, etc.

Course Policies

Grading: Grade inflation has led many students to expect that showing up and turning in every assignment guarantees them an “A” in the course. To avoid any later confusion, I’d like to clarify my grading philosophy:

- **A:** Exemplary, nearly flawless work, greatly exceeds expectations.
- **B:** Above average, consistently high achievement, exceeds expectations.
- **C:** Average, satisfactory performance. Meets minimum expectations.
- **D:** Below average, unsatisfactory, fails to meet minimum expectations of course.
- **F:** Insufficient quality for college-level work. Does not meet expectations.

Grade reassessment: If you disagree with a grade you are assigned, you have the right to request a grade reassessment. I will not answer questions about grades before, during, or immediately after class. Any grade inquiry must be made through a written grade reassessment request. Please be aware that a reassessment of your work means it will be regarded. Reassessments may result in a grade change, and reassessment grades may be lower or higher than the original grade. Once reassessed, the new grade will be entered in the grade book, cancelling out the original grade. If you would like to request a grade reassessment, please adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Grade reassessment requests can be submitted beginning 24 hours after grades have been posted.
2. To request a grade reassessment, you must provide a 1-2 page, typed justification for the reassessment, and must indicate how the work met the requirements of the assignment.
3. Grade reassessment requests must be received within one week of grades being posted and should be submitted via email.

Written work: Turning in well-prepared, carefully proofread, and on-time written work says a great deal about yourself and your level of respect for me. Below are the specific guidelines for written documents in this course:

1. Written assignments should be prepared using word processing software (e.g., Word, Pages). Written work should follow *APA* 6th edition style manual guidelines. Work should be carefully proofread for errors.
2. All assignments should include a title centered on the top of the page and your name in the top right corner of the page.
3. Written work should be submitted through the “Dropbox” tab on D2L. I will NOT accept homework via email or in hard copy. Homework submitted via email or hard copy and not to D2L will be subject to late penalties, outlined below.
4. All uploaded assignments must use the following format for filenames: LastNameAssignment (e.g., MaierHomework1). When I download and grade your assignments, this aids in ensuring the correct document is being uploaded for each student. Thank you in advance.
5. All written assignments are due 30 minutes before class time (Section 1: 1:30p.m.) on the due date indicated on the syllabus, or as otherwise posted on D2L. Assignments become late when they are turned in after the due time on their due date. A late assignment will receive an initial 10% penalty, and an additional 10% deduction for each weekday that it is late. You are provided ample time to complete each assignment. Please plan accordingly and use your time wisely, as extensions will not be granted. Technology problems, athletic schedules and the like will not excuse you from adhering to the deadlines.

Office hours: I am available to meet with you during my office hours (noted on page 1) and always by appointment. Please feel free to drop in during my office hours or email me for an appointment if you are unable to see me during the allotted time. In addition to meeting in my office, I am fairly accessible via email. Should you have a question about something covered in class, an assignment, or about life in general, send me an email and I will try to respond to you within a reasonable time. Questions regarding specific assignments sent within 24 hours of the assignment deadline will not receive a response. Be aware of this and plan accordingly. Additionally, I have other obligations immediately after our class. Because I need time to transition, I will not answer questions after class. If you have questions after class, plan to stop by my office during office hours.

Email policy: Teaching is very important to me. So is this course; however, this course is not my only responsibility during the semester. I teach other courses during the semester, as well as conduct research and perform service as part of my job responsibilities, in addition to my personal responsibilities. Email consumes a great deal of my time.

Considering this, I ask that you consider carefully before emailing me, and please adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Emails should be reserved for setting up appointments with me.
2. Emails should not ask general questions about assignments, deadlines, etc. All policies, assignment guidelines and rubrics are posted to D2L, or on the course syllabus. If you cannot find the answer to your questions in those places first, ask a classmate.
3. Emails should not ask grade questions. Please see the grade reassessment policy above. I will not discuss grades over email.
4. I will respond to emails within 2 business days, during regular business hours. I can typically respond to emails fairly quickly; however, there are times when I am unable to do so. I will do my best to respond as quickly as I am able, but please allow 2 business days for a response before sending a follow-up email.
5. Emails should be professional and respectful. Emails should be written in full sentences with appropriate greetings (my official title is Dr. Maier) and salutations. Please include the course number in the subject line.

Equal treatment: The principle of equal treatment of all students is a fundamental guide in responding to requests for special consideration. No student will be given an opportunity to improve a grade that is not made available to all members of the class. This policy applies to requests for special treatment both before and after the course is completed. Examples of unacceptable opportunities for an individual include “extra credit” work, redoing an assignment, retaking an exam, taking an extra exam, or an extension of time on an assignment or exam. This policy is not intended to exclude reasonable accommodation of verified student disability or circumstances beyond a student’s control.

Class behavior: I have a strong commitment to the development and maintenance of an instructional climate that supports equality of opportunity and respect for differences based on sex, culture, race, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation. Your enrollment in this class assumes that you will treat your fellow students with respect. I also expect that you will treat me with respect. Your behavior in our classroom is based on a single assumption—all members of the class are adults. You will therefore be expected to comport yourself as an adult. While a number of controversial topics may be discussed in class, and your active engagement in class discussions is desired, your engagement in class should give the utmost importance to showing respect for those around you. Instances of intolerant, disrespectful, or belligerent behavior will not be tolerated. If you are being deliberately intolerant, disrespectful, or hostile you will be required to leave the room. Patterns of unacceptable behavior may result in a failing grade in the class.

Technology and Cell Phones: As a member of the learning community, each student has a responsibility to other students who are members of the community. When cell phones or pagers ring and students respond in class or leave class to respond, it disrupts the class. Therefore, the use by students of cell phones, pagers, PDAs, or similar communication devices during class is prohibited. All such devices must be turned off or put in a silent (vibrate) mode and ordinarily should not be taken out during class. Given the fact that these same communication devices are an integral part of the University’s emergency notification system, an exception to this policy would occur when numerous devices activate simultaneously. When this occurs, students may consult their devices to determine if a university emergency exists. If that is not the case, the devices should be immediately returned to silent mode and put away. Other exceptions to this policy may be granted at the discretion of the instructor. Additionally, laptops used in class should be used for note-taking purposes only. Violating this policy will result in a grade deduction.

University Policies

Academic Dishonesty: Academic integrity is central to the mission of higher education in general and UWSP in particular. Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) is taken very seriously. Don't do it! The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. For more information, see the "Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures" section of the Community Rights and Responsibilities document, UWSP Chapter 14. This can be accessed by viewing page 11 of the document at: <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/CommunityRights.pdf>.

Disability Accommodation: Students are required to provide documentation of disability to the Disability and Assistive Technology Center prior to receiving accommodations. To request academic accommodations for a disability, contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center (6th Floor, Library Resource Center), or visit: <http://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/default.aspx>

Religious Accommodation: Relief from any academic requirement due to religious beliefs will be accommodated according to UWS 22.03, with notification within the first three weeks of class.

Dropping a class: It is your responsibility to understand the University's procedure for dropping a class. If you stop attending this class but do not follow proper procedure for dropping the class, you will receive a failing grade and will also be financially obligated to pay for the class. For information about dropping a class or withdrawing from the university, contact the Office of the Registrar at 346-4301.

Emergency Response Statement: In the event of a medical emergency call 9-1-1 or use Red Emergency Phone located outside CAC 203. Offer assistance if trained and willing to do so. Guide emergency responders to victim. In the event of a tornado warning, proceed to the lowest level interior room without window exposure at CAC 118. In the event of a fire alarm, evacuate the building in a calm manner. Meet at north entrance to Old Main. Notify instructor or emergency command personnel of any missing individuals.

Active Shooter/Code React – Run/Escape, Hide, Fight. If trapped hide, lock doors, turn off lights, spread out and remain quiet. Call 9-1-1 when it is safe to do so. Follow instructions of emergency responders. See UW-Stevens Point Emergency Procedures at www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures for details on all emergency response at UW-Stevens Point.

Tentative Course Schedule

	Date	Topic	Discussion Leaders	Assignment due
1	Sept. 5	Course Introduction		
2	Sept. 12	Introduction to Organizational Communication		
3	Sept. 19	Communication and Anticipatory Socialization		
4	Sept. 26	Communication during Organizational Entry		Final Project plan
5	Oct. 3	Organizational Culture		
6	Oct. 10	Communication Networks		
7	Oct. 17	Power and Sexual Harassment in Organizations		
8	Oct. 24	Conflict		First Draft
9	Oct. 31	Leadership		
10	Nov. 7	Emotion		
11	Nov. 14	Work Relationships		
12	Nov. 21	Work-Nonwork Interface		
13	Nov. 28	Organizational Exit		
14	Dec. 5	Final Project Work Week		
15	Dec. 12	Final Project Presentations		Final Submission/presentation
16	Dec. 19	Course Wrap-up, 7:15-9:15pm		

Tentative Course Schedule

September 5th | Week 1: Course Introduction

No Readings.

September 12th | Week 2: Introduction to Organizational Communication

Putnam, L.L. & Mumby, D.K. (2014). Introduction: Advancing theory and research in organizational communication. In L.L. Putnam & D.K. Mumby (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 1-18). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mumby, D.K., & Stohl, C. (1996). Disciplining organizational communication studies. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 10, 50-72.

Deetz, S. (2001). Conceptual foundations. In F.M. Jablin & L.L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication* (pp. 3-46). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

September 19th | Week 3: Communication and Anticipatory Socialization

Kramer, M. & Miller, V. (2014). Socialization and assimilation: Theories, processes, and outcomes. In L.L. Putnam & D.K. Mumby (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 525-548). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gibson, M.K., & Papa, M.J. (2000). The mud, the blood and the beer guys: Organizational osmosis in blue-collar work groups. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 28, 68-88.

Clair, R.C. (1996). The political nature of the colloquialism, "a real job": Implications for organizational socialization. *Communication Monographs*, 63, 249-267.

September 26th | Week 4: Communication during Organizational Entry

- Van Maanen, & Schein, E.G. (1979). Toward a theory of organizational socialization. In B.M. Staw (Ed.), *Research in organizational behavior* (209-264). Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- Miller, V.D., & Jablin, F.M. (1991). Information seeking during organizational entry: Influences, tactics, and a model of the process. *Academy of Management Review*, *16*, 92-120.
- Myers, K.K. (2005). A burning desire: Assimilation into a fire department. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *18*, 344-384.

October 3rd | Week 5: Organizational Culture

- Keyton, J. (2013). Organizational culture: Creating meaning and influences. In L.L. Putnam & D.K. Mumby (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 549-568). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Meyerson, D., & Martin, J. (1987). Cultural change: An integration of three different views. *Journal of Management Studies*, *24*, 623-647.
- Weick, K.E. (1993). The collapse of sensemaking in organizations: The Mann Gulch disaster. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *23*, 628-652.

October 10th | Week 6: Communication Networks

- Tichy, N.M. (1981). Networks in organizations. In P. Nystrom & W. Starbuck (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational design* (pp. 225-249). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bullis, C., & Bach, B.W. (1991). An explication and test of communication network content and multiplexity as predictors of organizational identification. *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, *55*, 180-197.
- Eisenberg, E.M., Monge, P.R., & Miller, K.I. (1983). Involvement in communication networks as a predictor of organizational communication. *Human Communication Research*, *10*, 179-201.
- Feeley, T.H., Hwang, J., & Barnett, G.A. (2008). Predicting employee turnover from friendship networks. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *36*, 56-73.

October 17th | Week 7: Power and Sexual Harassment in Organizations

- Pierce, T., & Dougherty, D.S. (2002). The construction, enactment, and maintenance of power-as-dominance through an acquisition: The case of TWA and Ozark Airlines. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *16*, 129-164.
- Allen, M., Dilbeck, K., England, N., Herrman, A.R., Kartch, F.F., Kim, J., Kulovitz, K.L., Lau, A., Maier, M.A., May, A., McNallie, J., & Omori, K. (2014). Test of a causal model for sexual harassment using data from a meta-analysis. In N.A. Burrell, M. Allen, B.M. Gayle, & Preiss, R.W. (Eds.), *Managing interpersonal conflict: Advances through meta-analysis* (pp. 94-105). New York: Routledge.

Scarduzion, J.A., & Geist-Martin, P. (2010). Accounting for victimization: Male professor's ideological positioning in stories of sexual harassment. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 24, 419-445.

October 24th | Week 8: Conflict

Poole, M.S. & Garner, J.T. & (2006). Perspectives on workgroup conflict and communication. In J.G. Oetzel & S. Ting-Toomey (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of conflict communication: Integrating theory, research and practice* (pp. 321-348). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kuhn, T. & Poole, M.S. (2000). Do conflict management styles affect group decision making? Evidence from a longitudinal field study. *Human Communication Research*, 26, 558-590.

Bollen, K., & Euwema, M. (2013). Workplace Mediation: An Underdeveloped Research Area. *Negotiation Journal*, 29(3), 329-353.

October 31st | Week 9: Leadership

Fairhurst, G.T., & Connaughton, S. (2013). Leadership communication. In L.L. Putnam & D.K. Mumby (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 401-423). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Tourish, D. (2008). Challenging the transformational agenda: Leadership theory in transition?. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 21, 522-528.

Cogliser, C.C., Schriesheim, C.A., Scandura, T.A., & Gardner, W.L. (2009). Balance in leader and follower perceptions of leader-member exchange: Relationships with performance and work attitudes. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 20(3), 452-465.

November 7th | Week 10: Emotion

Miller, K. (2013). Organizational emotions and compassion at work. In L.L. Putnam & D.K. Mumby (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 569-587). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miller, K.I., Considine, J., & Garner, J. (2007). "Let me tell you about my job": Exploring the terrain of emotion in the workplace. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 20, 231-260.

Kramer, M.W., & Hess, J.A. (2002). Communication rules for the display of emotions in organizational settings. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 16, 66-80.

Shuler, S., & Sypher, B.D. (2000). Seeking emotional labor: When managing the heart enhances the work experience. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 14, 50-89.

November 14th | Week 11: Work Relationships

Sias, P. (2013). Workplace relationships. . In L.L. Putnam & D.K. Mumby (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 375-399). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lee, J. & Jablin, F.M. (1995). Maintenance communication in superior-subordinate work relationships. *Human Communication Research*, 22, 220-257.

Hovick, S.R.A., Meyers, R. A., & Timmerman, C.E. (2003). Mail communication in workplace romantic relationships. *Communication Studies*, 54(4), 468-482.

Sias, P.M., Pedersen, H., Gallagher, E.B., & Kopaneva, I. (2012). Workplace friendship in the electronically connected organization. *Human Communication Research*, 38(3), 253-279.

November 21st | Week 12: Work-Nonwork Interface

Kirby, E.L., & Buzzanell, P.M. (2013). Communicating work-life issues. . In L.L. Putnam & D.K. Mumby (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 351-373). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Greenhaus, J.H. & Beutell, N.J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of Management Review*, 10, 76-88.

Kreiner, G.E., Hollensbe, E.C., & Sheep, M.L. (2009). Balancing borders and bridges: Negotiating the work-home interface via boundary work tactics. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52, 704-740.

Miller, V.D., Jablin, F.M., Casey, M.K., Lamphear-Van Horn, M., & Ethington, C. (1996). The maternity leave as a role negotiation process. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 8, 286-309.

November 28th | Week 13: Organizational Exit

Holtom, B.C., Mitchell, T.R., Lee, T.W., & Eberly, M.B. (2008). Turnover and retention research: A glance at the past, a closer review of the present, and a venture into the future. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 2, 231-274.

Scott, C.R., & Stephens, K.K. (2009). It depends on who you're talking to...: Predictors and outcomes of situated measures of organizational identification. *Western Journal of Communication*, 73, 370-394.

Cox, S.A. (1999). Group communication and employee turnover: How coworkers encourage peers to voluntarily exit. *Southern Journal of Communication*, 64, 181-192.

December 5th | Week 14: Final Project Work Week

December 12th | Week 15: Final Project Presentations

December 19th | Week 16: Course Wrap-up