

University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point  
Division of Communication

## Communication 240: Introduction to Organizational Communication

Tuesday/Thursday 12:35 – 1:35 CAC 237

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### Course Introduction and Description:

Communication binds people together in a shared identity and purpose. Some scholars believe communication is something that happens inside organizations, while others take it a step further and argue it brings organizations into existence. In either case, communication maintains the taken-for-granted culture, routines, and norms of daily work life. Organizational communication is at the heart of management, leadership, employee motivation, hiring, layoffs, training & development, production & profit, networking, change, decision-making, planning, and many other processes. Finding ways to better understand how these patterns of communication come into being, how they function, who they impact, and how changing them can help or hurt production and human satisfaction is what organizational communication is all about.

This course provides an introduction to organizational communication theories and workplace practices (UWSP 2010-2011 Course Catalog).

### Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- **Describe** communication-based approaches, processes, and theories influencing organizations.
- **Assess** the role communication plays to maintain and/or transform organizations.
- **Examine** how people are influenced (and exert influence upon) social, cultural, and <sup>[[ ]]</sup>political organizations found locally, nationally, and internationally.
- **Solve** problems facing local organizations using course theories, principles, and concepts.

### Required Materials

Miller, K. (2012). *Organizational Communication: Approaches and Processes* (6<sup>th</sup> Edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

## Course Assignments and Grading

Assignment	% of Final Grade
<b>Test</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Class Citizenship</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Application Assignments</b>	<b>60%</b>
Movie Presentation (Group)	30% (15% = group, 15% = individual)
Application Paper (Individual)	30%

## Grade Percentage Distributions

(Grades will be assigned using the following scale)

Letter	Percentage Points
<b>A</b> =	100 - 93
<b>A-</b> =	92.9 - 90
<b>B+</b> =	89.9 - 87
<b>B</b> =	86.9 - 83
<b>B-</b> =	82.9 - 80
<b>C+</b> =	79.9 - 77
<b>C</b> =	76.9 - 73
<b>C-</b> =	72.9 - 70
<b>D+</b> =	69.9 - 67
<b>D</b> =	66.9 - 63
<b>D-</b> =	62.9 - 60
<b>F</b> =	Below 60

## Course Policies

**Attendance: Attendance is mandatory.** You must be present to learn this material and benefit from class discussion.

I will take role at the start of each class. Students who walk in more than 15 minutes late to class will be counted as absent. Any activities missed for being late cannot be made-up and associated points will be lost.

Students with 4 total absences will receive (in addition to reduced Class Citizenship points) one (1) full letter-grade drop on their final course grade and an additional full letter-grade drop for each additional absence.

Exceptions to this rule are rare and handled on a case-by-case basis based on the causes for excessive absences, review of previous course assignment performance, class participation, and overall effort.

**Make-up Work:** If you miss class you miss any activities scheduled for that day. Be in class. **It is your responsibility to contact another student from class to get discussion notes or calendar updates if you are absent.**

Meet some people in class and fill out the following contact information early in the semester so you can get notes/homework etc. from someone if you miss class:

Comm 240			
Class Member Contact Info			
Student Name	Phone #	Email	Other

**Late Work:** I generally don't accept late work. If you know you will be missing class on a certain day – turn in your work before the day you will miss class to get credit. Assignments must be submitted in D2L drop box by 11:59 pm on the due date to be accepted.

### Written Material Guidelines

All assignment material in this class must be typed and conform to the following written guidelines. Material turned in that does not follow these guidelines will not be accepted and will receive a "0":

1. **Saved as Microsoft Word (.doc, .docx) files**
2. Times New Roman,
3. 12pt. font,
4. 1" margins,
5. Double-spaced formatting,
6. Page numbers,
7. APA citation style (in-text citations & References),
8. All written materials should also include a formal title page with the following information centered on the page:
  - Your name and (where applicable) the names of your group members,
  - Due Date,
  - Course title,
  - Professor name,
  - Title of assignment

### Group Work Guidelines

Working in groups and teams is a common practice at the university because it is an essential way of getting things done in almost every field of employment. There are definite benefits of working in groups. In a group you are able to accomplish larger projects than a single person could do on their own because the weight of the project is distributed among more members. You also have the advantage of tapping into people with different strengths and talents than you have. Having more than one perspective and people to bounce ideas off of can also help you come up with more creative approaches.

However, as you may have experienced, working in groups can also present unique challenges you normally don't experience when you work alone. Some challenges are practical ones that deal with organizing and following up with assignments and deadlines. Other challenges you face in groups come from personality differences between people. Unfortunately it is common for some group members to shoulder most of the work while others coast along doing little if anything to help with an assignment. Even when everyone is committed to working together, often group members have different ways of getting their work done and different expectations of themselves and other group members.

In this course, you will be assigned to work with a group of other students for one of your major assignments. To facilitate a positive group experience for everyone each student is expected to participate and carry an equal share of the planning, research, and delivery of a high quality presentation. You will receive additional instruction on effective group management during class but as with many skills the best instruction is often experience.

### Protocol for Group Member Disciplinary Action

As mentioned, there are times when some group members simply don't do what they are expected to do. To maintain a level of fairness and promote a positive group experience for all students, there will be consequences for students who consistently refuse to adequately participate (or consistently fail to participate in a productive and positive manner). The following protocol of disciplinary action will follow:

1. Group members must make every effort to 1) make the individual aware of their lack of participation, and 2) provide opportunity for them to participate. (group members **MUST** have a "paper trail" of emails that demonstrates this effort has been made.)
2. The group will contact me. They will relay their concerns about this student's refusal to participate and supply me with all email communication between group members and this member. I may request

an interview with the accused group member before making a final decision. This interview will be requested via email to ensure proper notification has been made to contact the individual before a final decision.

3. If I deem these concerns justifiable and that sufficient effort has been made on the part of the group to 1) make the individual aware of their lack of participation, 2) provide them with opportunity to participate, and 3) a majority of the group is in agreement, then one or more of the following penalties will follow:
  - The student will no longer be allowed the benefit of working with a group and will be expected to complete the entire project (which must be unique from the work their former group has done in topic and content) on their own.
  - The student will be required to present on the same day their group was originally scheduled to present.
  - The student will receive a full-letter grade deduction on the movie presentation project before any additional deductions (if any) are made.
4. Once a student has incurred this penalty – it is final and no appeals will be accepted.

**Students with Disabilities**

*The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Services, Student Services Center Room 103, call 715-346-3365, or email [disserv@uwsp.edu](mailto:disserv@uwsp.edu).*

**Academic Integrity**

Be honest in what you do in this class. Do your own work and hold yourself to the highest standard of integrity and hard work. Plagiarism is a big deal and is not tolerated in my classroom. Those caught plagiarizing will face charges of academic misconduct which may result in any of the following:

1. failing grade on the assignment
2. failing the course
3. university expulsion

Talk with your instructor and/or refer to Chapter 14 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code: "Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures"

(<http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs/rights/rightsChap14.pdf>) if you have any questions.

**Community Rights and Responsibilities**

As a UWSP student you have the right to receive fair and equitable evaluations based on course objectives outlined in the syllabus and without reference to personal or political views. You have the right to expect timely and accurate information and feedback about your progress and achievements in this course. You also have the responsibility to participate fully in the learning experience and to complete all course requirements. Please refer to the following link for more specific rights and responsibilities afforded to you as a UWSP student: <http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs/rights/rightsCommBillRights.pdf>.

## Course Assignment Descriptions

### Mid Term Test

You will take one mid-term test to measure your knowledge and ability to apply concepts covered in your textbook and from our class discussion. It is your responsibility to take good notes during class, ask questions, and keep up with the reading. This test will be delivered outside of class via D2L, is timed, and is open book/open notes.

### Class Citizenship

Your class citizenship grade will be calculated based on your:

- 1) Overall attendance in the course
- 2) Active positive contributions to class discussion, demonstrated preparation (i.e., study before class), etc.
- 3) Participation in & on-time completion of in-class activities, out-of-class assignments, etc.

### Application Assignments

#### *Movie Presentation (Group/Individual)*

This project will give you a chance to apply what you have learned about the five approaches we cover in *Part 1* of this class (classical, human relations/resources, systems, cultural, critical). You will be assigned to a project team and will choose a movie to watch from a list of options I will provide. You will be evaluated individually and as a group on this assignment. This project will give you a chance to demonstrate important organizational presentation skills and get a chance to develop your leadership and teamwork skills. More information on this project is available in the assignment description for this project which is posted on D2L. Your presentation will be recorded to aid in accurate evaluation.

#### *Application Paper (Individual)*

This is a 6-8 page paper. You will choose a business, government, or non-profit organization you currently work for, volunteer with, or are a member within the last year. This paper is divided into three parts:

**Part 1: DESCRIBE the organization and the problem** you experienced. Choose an organization you've worked in or are currently working in (job, UWSP student org, church, etc.) and one (1) problem you have experienced within that organization (conflict, indecision, disorganization, high turnover, gossip, prejudice, burnout, difficult manager, unmotivated employees, etc.) This section should be clear but concise – no more than 1 page.

**Part 2: EXPLAIN how course approaches and processes help us understand the cause(s) of the problem(s) you described in Part 1:**

- a. Two (2) different approaches we've discussed in class (i.e., Classical, Human Resources/Human Relations, Systems, Cultural, Critical) and
- b. At least two (2) different processes (Assimilation, Decision-making, Conflict, etc.) that could help us understand the problem better.

**Part 3: USE the approaches and processes you identified in Section 2** to show what could be done to make things better. Act as a consultant and use what you know from class material to create a detailed plan to resolve the problem(s) you have identified. Be sure to address all problem causes you described in Part 2 and support your ideas with clear reasoning.

# COMM 240 Course Calendar

\* Assignments/reading **due** on the day scheduled below

Wk	Day	Topic	Assignment Due/Reading
1	01/26	Introductions & Overview of Course <i>Approaches, Theories, and Practices</i>	
	01/28	What is Organizational Communication? <i>Organizations, Communication, and the Value of Organizational "Metaphors"</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 1
2	02/02	<b>Online Assignments to Complete – No in-class Time</b> Classical Approach <i>Machine Metaphor</i> <i>Fayol, Weber, &amp; Taylor</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 2 - Assignments to Complete Online via D2L
	02/04	<b>Online Assignments to Complete – No in-class Time</b> Classical Approach <i>Application of Classical Approach Theories</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 2 Assignments to Complete Online via D2L
3	02/09	Human Relations Approach <i>Relationships, Satisfaction, Motivation</i> <i>Maslow, Herzberg, &amp; McGregor</i> <i>Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 3, Movie Group Assignment Packet (via D2L)
	02/11	Human Resources Approach <i>Likert's System IV</i>  <u>Effective Practices for Working in Groups:</u> 1. Choose a Group Leader 2. Develop Group "Contract": - <i>Identify Ground Rules</i> - <i>Clarify Meanings ("quality work", etc.)</i> - <i>Identify Communication Channel</i> - <i>Set Consequences for Misbehavior</i> 3. Choose Movie from Movie List	Reading Assignment: Ch 3  <b>Task:</b> Select Movie Groups
4	02/16	Systems Approach <i>Apply: System Components, Processes, &amp; Properties</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 4 "System Components, Processes, and Properties"
	02/18	Systems Approach <i>Apply: Weick's Theory of Organizing</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 4 "Weick's Theory of Organizing"



5	02/23	Systems Approach <i>Apply: Cybernetics Theory, Principles of Networking, and New Science Theory</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 4 “Cybernetics Theory, Networking, and New Science Theory” & Chapter Case Study  <b>DUE:</b> Movie Presentation Group Topic Proposal (see D2L Discussion Topic)
	02/25	Cultural Approach <i>Explore UWSP Values, Identity, Identification</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 5
6	03/01	Cultural Approach <i>Diagnose: Organizational Culture using Schein’s “Onion” Model</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 5
	03/03	Critical Approach <i>Communication and Power</i>  <i>Prejudice, Bias, and Social Injustice</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 6
7	03/08	Critical Approach <i>Edwards and Control</i> <i>Concertive Control Theory</i> <i>Feminist Perspectives</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 6 & Ch 12
	03/11	Movie Project Final Preparations – in-class workshop (10 point individual grade deduction if absent)	<b>DUE:</b> Upload Group PPT files to D2L discussion topic “Movie Group Power Points” by 11:30pm.
8	03/15	Movie Presentations (1, 2, 3, 4)	<b>DUE:</b> (see assignment packet)
	03/17	Movie Presentations (5, 6, 7, 8)	<b>DUE:</b> (see assignment packet)
9	03/22	<b>SPRING BREAK - NO CLASS</b>	
	03/25		
10	03/29	Test Review Day - review notes & Chapters 1-6 prior to class  <b>Online Mid Term Test Opens @ 11:30pm via D2L</b>	
	03/31	<b>No Class – Take Online Test 1 via D2L</b>  <b>Online Mid Term Test Closes @ 11:30pm</b>	
11	04/05	Assimilation <i>Socialization vs. Individualization, Phases of Socialization</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 7
	04/07	Assimilation <i>Leader-Member Exchange Theory</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 7
12	04/12	Decision-Making <i>Overview of Application Paper Assignment</i>  <i>Experiment with Decision Making</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 8
	04/14	Decision-Making <i>Egg-Drop Activity and Group Worksheet</i>	<b>DUE:</b> Egg-Drop Activity Report
	04/19	Conflict Management <i>Dynamics of Conflict</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 9

13	04/21	Conflict Management <i>In-class conflict role play scenarios</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 9
14	04/26	Organizational Change & Leadership <i>Apply: Leading Planned Change</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 10
	04/28	Organizational Change & Leadership <i>Apply: Leadership Styles</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 10
15	05/03	Emotion <i>Bounded Emotionality, Emotional Contagion, Empathic Concern, Burnout, &amp; Coping Strategies</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 11
	05/05	Technology <i>Pro's and Con's of New Technology Impact, Use, and Choices</i>	Reading Assignment: Ch 13
16	05/10	Application Paper Workshop (In Class)	* bring full paper rough draft
	05/12	Open Work Day – class does not meet (Cade available in his office for support on Application Papers)	<b>Application Papers Due via D2L Dropbox at 5pm</b>
17	05/18	Open Discussion 10:15-12:15 (CAC 235) <b>No Attendance Taken</b>	