Comm 3263: Organizational Communication Fall 2012
M-W-F 12:30 to 1:20 PM, Price Hall 2030

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8-5 M-F

Course Goals:

This class is designed to acquaint students with many of the major theories, concepts, and research findings related to the study of organizational communication. While it is more of a theoretical course than a "hands on" or "practical skills" course, the information should be of practical value since individuals spend much of their lives in organizations. The course involves a significant amount of writing. The course has the following units:

Unit 1: General Organizational Theory and Communication
Unit 2: Culture, Change and Assimilation?
Unit 3: Dyadic and Group Communication in Organizations
Unit 4: Evaluating Internal and External Communication


Course Assignments:

1. A schedule of all assignments is attached. Students should have read the assigned readings or have completed the other assignments on the day that they are listed unless the professor announces a change in the schedule. Quizzes must be taken before class on the assigned dates.

2. Four case studies (2-3 pages each) are listed on the schedule. Copies of the actual case studies will be posted in D2L. The assignments are explained in more detail on the attached pages. These will be submitted through D2L and Turnitin.com

3. One major paper assignment is the assimilation paper, an analysis of organizational entry described on the attached pages. The article to read will be posted on D2L (6-8 pages).

4. A project analyzing the public communication from an organization is required at the end of the semester. This is described on the attached pages (5-7 pages).

Class Management and Rules:

1. Attendance is expected. Exams cover information from the text and readings, as well as supplemental information presented in class. You may have five absences without any penalty. However, on your sixth absence you can expect that your course grade will be reduced one full grade. On the eleventh absence your grade can be reduced two full grades.
2. After absences, you are responsible for catching up on what was missed by obtaining handouts, notes, etc. from other students. After you "catch up," please see me if you have questions.

3. Assignments and tests will be accepted on the assigned day only. Except for documented reasons (medical bill, etc.) late work will not be accepted. This includes quizzes taken on-line.

4. Plagiarism occurs when you take credit for someone else's idea without giving them credit. Information that is common knowledge or is from your personal experience does not need to be referenced. However, if the idea or information comes from a source (written, internet, or in person), you must give credit to the source whether you are using exact wording or paraphrasing ideas. When plagiarism occurs, the grade for the assignment will be reduced significantly. A failing grade on the assignment or in the course can be the result.

5. Cheating is an extreme form of plagiarism. Copying significant portions or the entire text of someone else's work and presenting it as your own or allowing someone else to copy your work is cheating. If discovered, this will result in the individual receiving a zero on the assignment, being turned in for academic misconduct to the Academic Integrity Office and could result in failure of the course and suspension from the university.

6. Use of electronic devices should not be distracting to the instructor or others students. This means cell phones should be on silence and not be used. Computers should only be used for taking notes.

Grading (tentative weighting):

1. The sum of the grades on the case studies, rough drafts, quizzes (taken and graded on line), and participation will count for 10% of your grade.
2. Each of the first three examinations will count 12% of your final grade.
3. The final exam (partially comprehensive) counts 20% of your final grade.
4. The project and paper will each count 15% of your final grade.
5. Scale: 100-94% A; 93-91 A-; 90-88 B+; 87-85 B; 84-82 B-; 81-79 C+; 78-76 C; 75-73% C-; 72-70 D+; 69-67 D; 66-64% D-.

American Disabilities Act:

All necessary accommodation will be made for students under the ADA. Students with disabilities who require accommodations are requested to speak with the professor as early in the semester as possible. Students with disabilities must register with the Office of Disability Services prior to receiving accommodations in this course. The Office of Disability Services is located in Goddard Health Center, Suite 166, phone 405-325-3852 or TDD only 405-325-4173.

Religious Holidays:

It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Please inform your professor prior to any such holidays so that reasonable accommodations can be made.
Case Study Assignments

Case Study #1  DUE: Friday, August 24

Read Chapter 1 and Case Study "Chain of Command." Choose one of the three main perspectives for studying organizational communication described in the chapter that you feel can be used to analyze this case study. Describe the essential characteristics of the perspective and then, as a researcher, analyze or interpret the case study from that perspective. Be sure to refer to specific information in the case or chapter to support your ideas (using proper APA citation format). Be sure to discuss communication in your analysis. Your essay should have an introduction, thesis statement, supporting examples, conclusion, etc.

Case Study #2  DUE: Monday September 10

Read Chapter 4 and the case study, "Prophecy Fulfilled". Then in an essay address these two issues:

1. What particular management "theory" (classical, human relations, human resource, theory Z) does Mary Ann seem to use in her interaction with subordinates? Provide evidence from her communication and actions that show she exemplifies that "theory."

2. If she operated from one of the other theories, how would Mary Ann approach the situation differently? How would her communication and behaviors be different?

While you may choose a particular classical management theory (Fayol, Taylor, or Weber), when you do your comparison, do not use another classical management theory.

Case Study #3: Organizational Culture—University of Oklahoma  DUE: Wednesday, Sept 26

1. Find an oral story or tradition about the University of Oklahoma, preferably not one handed out by public relations officials. The stories may be about people, places, or events and may be about auxiliary organizations such as fraternities/sororities. The stories may be fact, myth, or some combination of the two. You can record alternative versions if you know of them. Write down the essential details of the story as you heard it or obtain a copy of it.

2. Analyze the story as a part of the culture of the University. You may use a script analysis or a metaphor analysis or a combination if it works best (discussed in class). Ultimately your essay should explain what the story says about OU’s culture. Turn in the complete story (can be on a separate page) and your analysis of the story.

Case Study #4: Power and Conflict  DUE: Wednesday, November 7

Read the case study "Having an Attitude". Consider power and conflict from the perspective of each employee. Then in an essay, choose one individual and discuss how conflict styles and power combined to influence the interactions or situation over time. Then draw some conclusions about the overall case from either a tradition, interpretive or critical perspective.
ASSIMILATION PAPER DUE Friday October 17

Read the following article for class by Monday, October 1


As you read this paper, pay particular attention to the sections on boundary passages (section III) and socialization strategies (section V).

Choose an organization with which you are familiar. The assignment works best for an organization you work in, but could be a university, a fraternity or sorority, a church, etc. It must be an official organization.

Based on your understanding of the article and your experiences, write a description and analysis of assimilation in that organization. This includes personal experience, but should also include your observations of others as well.

The following is a possible organization for the paper, but other organizational patterns are acceptable if they cover the appropriate topics:

1. Provide a brief organizational description or history (@2 brief paragraphs).

2. Provide a description of how people typically enter the organization (i.e. how they hear about it, how they are recruited, how are they "interviewed", etc.).

3. Discussion how the organization typically uses each of the six sets of socialization strategies discussed in the article and any other points of interest. You'll need to define the strategies with citations.

4. Discuss the important norms of the organization that are learned through this process. What type of culture does the organization have?

5. Discuss how people cross various organizational boundaries. Crossing means changing positions (promotions, lateral moves), not simply communication across boundaries. Again be sure to use citations.

6. Discuss characteristics of leader/member or superior/subordinate communication.

7. Draw a conclusion(s) as to the general nature of the assimilation in the organization based on your experiences and those of others you have observed. In particular, does the organization seem to focus on "individualization or socialization" as they are defined in class? Do members primarily assume custodial roles, innovative ones, or rebel?

In your paper, use an APA style of reference to refer to parts of the article to define terms and to show similarities between your experiences and the article. Be sure at the end of an idea that refers to the article you would put (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 220). Include page numbers only if it
is a direct quote. Be sure to use references to the article to define or clarify points you did not know before reading it to avoid plagiarism.

General Guidelines:
   a. length should be 6-8 pages of text
   b. accuracy of writing, style, etc., is expected
   c. all papers are due Wednesday, October 17
   d. submit to D2L and turnitin.com

COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS PROJECT: Due in D2L for Friday, November 30,

There are two portions to this assignment: 1) preparation and a written summary; 2) the presentation of your findings during class time.

1. Obtain copies of at least four examples of public communication from one organization. The organization may be public, private, government, military, voluntary, etc. Consider organizations you might like to work for after graduation. Avoid OU organizations unless you have no alternatives. You are encouraged to use various types of internal or external public communication such as company newspapers, annual reports, media interviews, releases, or WWW. No product/service commercials should be used although public image or public service type commercials may be acceptable (check if unsure).

2. Analyze the examples you have gathered. To do this, you may need to do a little background research on the organization if it is not familiar to you. As you analyze the examples try to answer questions like the following (although other more interesting questions may occur):

   What purpose or purposes does the communication serve?
   Who are the direct and indirect audiences? Are there multiple audiences?
   What seem to be the surface and/or deeper messages of the communication?
   Does it contain strategic ambiguity? Does it omit information?
   Does the communication source affect the meaning of the message?

3. Write a brief analysis (5-7 pages) of your ideas. Probably you should begin with a brief background of the company. You may briefly discuss each individual piece if necessary. Focus your paper on the overall or cumulative impact of the communication. This should lead you to some conclusions about the public image and/or culture of the organization. As you make those conclusions, refer to specific examples from the communication. There is no particular best organization for this, but create an interesting introduction, conclusion, etc. Hand in copies of the materials or a transcript of the media presentation in class on the due date. For webpages, print the main page only, not the entire site. I will return these materials to you if you want them back.

4. Papers only will be submitted through D2L and Turnitin.com. For class, be prepared to present your ideas orally. Also be prepared to defend you interpretation and analysis (approximately 4-5 minutes).
Tentative Course and Assignment Schedule Fall 2012

1. Mon, Aug 20 Introduction to Class
2. Wed, Aug 22 Chapter 1: Orientation (pp. 1-16) & writing hints
3. Fri, Aug 24 Case Study #1 Due
4. Mon, Aug 27 Chapter 2: Communication and Its Functions (pp. 19-36) Quiz 2 Due
5. Wed, Aug 29 Nonverbal Communication in Organizations
6. Fri, Aug 31 Other views of language (pp. 36-44)
7. Wed, Sept 5 Chapter 3: Organizational Comm Structure (pp. 50-63): Quiz 3 Due
8. Fri, Sept 7 Communication Networks (pp. 63-75)
9. Mon, Sept 10 Chapter 4: Organization Theory Case Study #2 Due
10. Wed, Sept 12 Teamwork, self-managed work teams (pp. 390-400)
11. Fri, Sept 14 Examination 1: Chapter 1-4
12. Mon, Sept 17 Chapter 5: Organization Theory: Systems Theory (pp. 104-110) Quiz 5 Due
13. Wed, Sept 19 Weick’s Organizing and Sense-making (pp. 111-124)
14. Fri, Sept 21 Chapter 6: Culture (pp. 127-137) Quiz 6
15. Mon, Sept 24 Culture Continued (pp. 137-157)
16. Wed, Sept 26 Case Study #3 Due
17. Fri, Sept 28 Chapter 8: Assimilation (pp. 194-199)
18. Mon, Oct 1 Van Maanen & Schein Article Article Quiz Due
19. Wed, Oct 3 Assimilation Continued
20. Fri, Oct 5 Organizational Exit
21. Mon, Oct 8 Diversity (pp. 199-227)
22. Wed, Oct 10 Examination 2: Chapters 5, 6, & 8
   Friday, Oct 12 No classes
23. Mon, Oct 15 Chapter 7: Information Technology (pp. 161-189) (On-line discussion)
24. Wed, Oct 17 Continued Assimilation Paper Due
25. Fri, Oct 19 Chapter 9: Group Relations (pp. 233-245) Quiz 9 Due
26. Mon, Oct 22 Organizational Decision Making
27. Wed, Oct 24 Roles and Norms (pp. 245-256)
28. Fri, Oct 26 Chapter 10 Leader-Member Relationships (pp. 260-277)
29. Mon, Oct 29 Organizational Leadership (pp. 278-286)
30. Wed, Oct 31 Chapter 11: Power (pp. 291-296)
31. Fri, Nov 2 Power continued (pp. 296-313) Quiz 11 Due
32. Mon, Nov 5 Chapter 12: Conflict (pp. 317-332) Quiz 12 Due
33. Wed, Nov 7 Conflict continued (pp. 332-345) Case Study #4 Due
34. Fri, Nov 9 Examination 3: Chapters 7, 9-12
35. Mon, Nov 12 Chapter 13: Strategic Communication: internal and external
36. Wed, Nov 14 Continue Chapter 13
   Friday, November 16: No class: National Communication Association Convention
37. Mon, Nov 19 Communication Audits (no reading)
   Wednesday to Friday, November 21-23: Thanksgiving Break
38. Mon, Nov 26 Communication Audits (no reading)
39. Wed, Nov 28 Communication Audits (no reading)
40. Fri, Nov 30 All Projects Due: Begin Presentations
41. Mon, Dec 3 Presentations
42. Wed, Dec 5 Finish Presentations
43. Fri, Dec 7 Review and Evaluate

Wednesday, December 12, 1:30-3:30 P.M. Final Exam (@1/2 comprehensive & 1/2 last unit)