SYLLABUS

COM 317: Organizational Communication

3 CREDITS

COURSE INFORMATION

Organizations encompass our lives in powerful ways – and no one in our society is exempt from interacting with and within organizations. This course is designed to address the vital role of communication within these organizational contexts. Whatever your career goals, the knowledge you gain from this class will prepare you to think critically about the role that communication plays in organizations, and in turn, the role that organizations plan in human experience.

Organizational communication, as a field of study, analyzes how the actions of people inside and outside organizations are coordinated and controlled to achieve some collective outcomes. It is also concerned with the ways that individuals are shaped by those organizational interactions. Therefore, rather than offer a set of skills that allow you to fit into the world of work, this course will attempt to show how communication is key to understanding how organizations function. Only when we understand how organizations work can we change them and consciously shape our own experiences within them.

LEARNING GOALS

We will build on the following 3 primary learning goals throughout the term:

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of different perspectives for understanding organizational communication, as demonstrated by reading responses and the midterm and final exams.

- Students will develop skills that clearly demonstrate the ability to analyze organizational phenomena through organizational communication perspectives, theories, and concepts in their case study final paper.

- Students will integrate understandings of organizational communication theory into their daily life, and be able to apply these understandings to their own organizational experiences, as demonstrated by the final paper and project presentation.
TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS

The textbook for this course is:


The following additional readings will be available on our Canvas website:


GENERAL POLICIES

1. All class members are expected to constructively engage in class discussions and to display respect for one another. Due to the subject matter of this course, students can reveal a lot about their personal experiences as a way to apply theories to everyday life; in fact, personal application is encouraged. Therefore, you are expected to help create a supportive, respectful, safe environment in our classroom.

2. If you must miss class due to an extenuating circumstance, inform me before you miss class and present documentation. If you arrive late on a consistent basis, I will count your late arrivals as absences. If you need to leave class early for a specific reason, please let me know at the beginning of class and then sit by the door so you will be able to exit quietly. Missed classes and late arrivals **past 4 unexcused absences** will negatively impact your participation grade.
3. Please silence and put away your cell phone. Abuse of technology will result in a reduced participation grade. Bring your textbook or reading notes to class.

4. Except in cases of true emergencies (such as documented hospitalization), late work will be subject to a penalty of 25% per day for each calendar day it is late, and will not be accepted more than 3 days late.

5. If you miss an exam due to extenuating circumstances, you will be expected to complete a make-up exam (which will be different from the original exam) at a time determined by me. You will be expected to provide adequate documentation for your absence.

6. If you require exam accommodations, you must contact me at least two weeks prior to both exams in order to arrange for extra time or a reduced distraction environment.

7. Check your UNLV email and our Canvas website on a regular basis.

ASSIGNMENTS

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS (400 POINTS)
This course concludes with a case study assignment. The case study requires you to illustrate and analyze an organizational communication perspective or theory by conducting a case study of a real life example. These examples may come from a film, novel, personal experience, news article, or another relevant source. The objective is to develop your capacity to apply an organizational communication perspective or theory to a concrete organizational context and to analyze the communication processes in this context. The Case Study is a semester project that will include three parts: (1) A proposal; (2) Theoretical lens (Part #2); and (3) Critical Analysis (Part #3). Part #3 will serve as the final paper for the course and will include much of the work than Parts #1 and 2. Each of the three assignments will be described in more detail during the semester, and resources will be available on Canvas. A breakdown of this grade is as follows:

- Part 1 Proposal: 50 points
- Part 2 Interpretive Analysis: 150 points
- Part 3 Critical Analysis: 200 points

FINAL PRESENTATION (100 POINTS)

One important part of studying organizational communication is its potential for application. Your last assignment related to the paper will be a 10-minute professional presentation to our class. The presentation should report on your findings in the final paper and suggestions to improve the organization you studied. This presentation is good practice for potential future
consulting and HR jobs, and explaining to employers why a communication degree is useful at work. More details will be provided during the semester.

**EXAMS (2 x 100 POINTS)**
Exams are designed to give you an extended opportunity to demonstrate your careful thinking about the issues discussed in class. They also help you to synthesize information across several course topics. You are responsible for all course material, including in-class discussions, even if we have not discussed a particular assignment in class. Exams will include a combination of multiple choice and essay questions. The midterm exam will focus on materials from the first half of the semester (Ch. 1–6), and the final exam will focus on materials from the second (Ch. 7–14).

**PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE (200 POINTS)**
Your course engagement grade is based upon your ability to contribute thoughtfully throughout the duration of the course. This requires arriving at class prepared for the discussions. You are allowed 4 absences throughout the semester without any penalty. Excused absences will be granted for religious observance, athletic travel with UNLV teams, emergencies and illness, and some family/community commitments. You will need to provide documentation in order to have an excused absence. For religious observance and athletic travel, you will need to provide notice in advance of absences. Please speak with me if you have concerns about attendance.

**Quizzes:** In addition to general in-class activities, this class includes occasional reading quizzes. Reading quizzes are worth 10 points each, ask 1 question, and are answered within the first 10 minutes of class. Potential reading quiz questions are found on the weekly reading guides on Canvas. You do not have to complete the reading guides, but they are meant to help focus your reading on key concepts. However, if you do complete a reading guide (or take any notes) you are welcome to use those during the quiz.

**POINT DISTRIBUTION:**

**Midterm Exam, 100 points (11%)**

**Final Exam, 100 points (11%)**

**Case Study Paper, 400 points (44%)**

**Project Presentation, 100 points (11%)**

**Participation, 200 points (22%)**
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS= 900

GRADING
Grades are best discussed in an environment that is relaxed and private. If you wish to discuss a grade, please email me to set up an appointment at least 24 hours after the grade is posted. I do not discuss grades over email or in front of the rest of the class.

Here are what letter grades mean to me:

“A” is an extremely good grade. It means you have demonstrated excellent mastery of the material; your work and performance were consistently better than nearly everyone else in the class.

“B” is a very good grade. It means you did all of the required work and performed in class at a level that is noticeably and demonstrably superior to many of your classmates.

“C” is a good grade. It means that you met all of the expectations for students noted in the syllabus, and you did all of the required work at a level that was competent.

Anything below a “C” means you did not master the material adequately. A grade below C should prompt you to assess your study/classroom habits and visit office hours so you can diagnose what you need to do differently in your studying, assignment preparation, etc.

For grades to be meaningful (to you, me, or anyone else) they have to reflect differences in mastery. If an “A” means that you merely did what you were asked to do, it is no different than a “C,” and it therefore means nothing at all.
UNLV Institutional Policies, Guidelines, and Resources

Academic Misconduct

Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the Campus community; we all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility, and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy, and are encouraged to always take the ethical path whenever faced with choices. Students enrolling at UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV’s educational mission. An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another person, from the Internet or any other source without proper citation of the sources. See the Student Conduct Code, https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct.

Auditing Classes

Auditing a course allows a student to continue attending the lectures and/or laboratories and discussion sessions associated with the course, but the student will not earn a grade for any component of the course. Students who audit a course receive the same educational experience as students taking the course for a grade, but will be excused from exams, assessments, and other evaluative measures that serve the primary purpose of assigning a grade.

Classroom Conduct

Students have a responsibility to conduct themselves in class and in the libraries in ways that do not interfere with the rights of other students to learn or of instructors to teach. Use of electronic devices such as pagers, cellular phones, or recording devices, or potentially disruptive devices or activities, are only permitted with the prior explicit consent of the instructor. The instructor may rescind permission at any time during the class. If a student does not comply with established requirements or obstructs the functioning of the class, the instructor may initiate an administrative drop of the student from the course.

Syllabus, COM 317
COPYRIGHT

The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves with, and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you, nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional copyright policy information is available at http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright.

DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER (DRC)

The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A, Room 143, https://www.unlv.edu/drc, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. Students who believe that they may need academic accommodations due to injury, disability, or due to pregnancy should contact the DRC as early as possible in the academic term. A Disabilities Specialist will discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours, so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

FINAL EXAMINATIONS

The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur on the date and at the time specified in the Final Exam schedule. The general schedule is typically available at the start of the semester, and the classroom locations are available approximately one month before the end of the semester. See the Final Exam Schedule, https://www.unlv.edu/Registrar/calendars.
IDENTITY VERIFICATION IN ONLINE COURSES

All UNLV students must use their Campus-issued ACE ID and password to log in to WebCampus.

UNLV students enrolled in online or hybrid courses are expected to read and adhere to the Student Academic Misconduct Policy, https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/misconduct/policy, which defines, “acting or attempting to act as a substitute for another, or using or attempting to use a substitute, in any academic evaluation or assignment” as a form of academic misconduct. Intentionally sharing ACE login credentials with another person may be considered an attempt to use a substitute and could result in investigation and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Academic Misconduct Policy.

UNLV students enrolled in online courses are also expected to read and adhere to the Acceptable Use of Computing and Information Technology Resources Policy, https://www.it.unlv.edu/policies/acceptable-use-computing-and-information-technology-resources-policy, which prohibits sharing university accounts with other persons without authorization.

To the greatest extent possible, all graded assignments and assessments in UNLV online courses should be hosted in WebCampus or another UNLV-managed platform that requires ACE login credentials for access.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

The grade of “I” (Incomplete) may be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session, but cannot complete the last part of the course for reason(s) beyond the student’s control and acceptable to the instructor, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. For undergraduate courses, the incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester. Graduate students receiving “I” grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course
Requirements are not completed within the period indicated, a grade of “F” will be recorded, and the student’s GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an incomplete grade do not register for the course, but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the “I” grade.

Library Resources
Librarians are available to consult with students on research needs, including developing research topics, finding information, and evaluating sources. To make an appointment with a subject expert for this class, please visit the Libraries’ Research Consultation website: http://guides.library.unlv.edu/appointments/librarian. You can also ask the Library Staff questions via chat and text message at: http://ask.library.unlv.edu/.

Missed Classwork
Any student missing class, quizzes, examinations, or any other class or laboratory work because of observance of religious holidays will be given an opportunity during that semester to make up the missed work. The make-up opportunity will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor within the first 14 calendar days of the course for Fall and Spring courses (except for modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for Summer and modular courses, of their intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit the Policy for Missed Work, under Registration Policies, on the Academic Policies webpage, https://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531

In accordance with the policy approved by the Faculty Senate regarding missed class time and assignments, students who represent UNLV in any official extracurricular activity will also have the opportunity to make up assignments, provided that the student provides official written notification to the instructor no less than one week prior to the missed class(es).
The spirit and intent of the policy for missed classwork is to offer fair and equitable assessment opportunities to all students, including those representing the University in extracurricular activities. Instructors should consider, for example, that in courses which offer a “Drop one” option for the lowest assignment, quiz, or exam, assigning the student a grade of zero for an excused absence for extracurricular activity is both contrary to the intent of the Faculty Senate’s policy, and an infringement on the student’s right to complete all work for the course.

This policy will not apply in the event that completing the assignment or administering the examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the University that could reasonably have been avoided. There should be a good faith effort by both the instructor and the student to agree to a reasonable resolution. When disagreements regarding this policy arise, decisions can be appealed to the Department Chair/Unit Director, College/School Dean, and/or the Faculty Senate Academic Standards Committee.

For purposes of definition, extracurricular activities may include, but are not limited to: fine arts activities, competitive intercollegiate athletics, science and engineering competitions, liberal arts competitions, academic recruitment activities, and any other event or activity sanctioned by a College/School Dean, and/or by the Executive Vice President and Provost.

Rebelmail
Rebelmail is UNLV’s official email system for students, and by University policy, instructors and staff should only send emails to students’ Rebelmail accounts. Rebelmail is one of the primary ways students receive official University communications, information about deadlines, major Campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the University. Emailing within WebCampus is also acceptable.
Tutoring and Coaching

The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching, and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, please visit the ASC website, https://www.unlv.edu/asc, or call 702-895-3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of SSC A, Room 254. Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library, and on the second floor of the College of Engineering building (TBE A 207).

UNLV Writing Center

One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, https://writingcenter.unlv.edu/, located in the Central Desert Complex, Building 3, Room 301 (CDC 3–301). Walk-in consultations are sometimes available, but students with appointments receive priority assistance. Students may make appointments in person or by calling the Center, 702-895-3908. Students are requested to bring to their appointments their Rebel ID Card, a copy of the instructions for their assignment, and two copies of any writing they have completed on their assignment.