COMM 331-900 – Organizational Communication
Six Week Online Course
Spring 2019 – 3 Credits

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Office Hours: Wednesday 4:00-5:00 for F-t-F meeting or Zoom conference
48 hour email response window

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Study the dynamics of communication activities in an organization.

REQUIRED TEXTS


Note: the chapters in the 7th edition are somewhat different. Comparison chapters will be available on Canvas to match the editions to each other and the content covered in the course.

APA manual—Michener Library Website: http://libguides.unco.edu/c.php?g=94689&p=615637

NATURE OF THE COURSE

In this course we explore the development of theory and practice in the communication discipline sub-area of organizational communication. This sub-area focuses on how we use communication to coordinate activity to accomplishing complex sets of interwoven goals. This study emerged in the early 1900’s when industrialists sought to gain understanding about what it took to have effective workers in successful corporations. In part, this course is about better understanding the communication that takes place in organizations with an emphasis on workplaces as organizations. It is also about understanding the aspects of all communication that function to organize and coordinate human activity. The course itself is designed as an experience in the co-orientation as well as text-conversation structuration that is definitive of organizational communication. In places where we have formal roles or jobs, communication is different than in places where we don’t. This formality in communication is an unavoidable aspect of working to achieve goals together with a large number of other people, as is also unavoidable an emphasis on documentation and written communication. On one level, you could say it is all about the paperwork! In this course, the results and ramifications of how we communicate to coordinate activity are experienced in our shared endeavor which is the full class project of jointly constructing an employee handbook for an organization of our choosing and design. The course also provides students an opportunity to be reflective on the choices they make regarding with which organizations they choose to become members and how they choose to interact within organizations in which they find themselves members.

Grading: The grading of all assignments is in keeping with the Communication Studies Program standards. These standards are available at: http://www.unco.edu/commstudies/grading_standards.html
Disabilities: Students with ability differences who may need academic accommodations should discuss options with the instructor a-priori or ASAP to co-construct an action plan. Students may also contact the Disability Access Center at (970) 351-2289.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COURSE/GRADING**

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<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Points Record</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Class Construct an Organization Project</strong></td>
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<td>Individual Intro. Discussion Post</td>
<td>205</td>
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<td>Individual Rank Orgs. to Construct</td>
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<td>Ind. Sign up for Teams/Committees</td>
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<td>Individual Group Intro. Discussion Post</td>
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<td>Group Meeting Documentation 1</td>
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<td>Group Draft Handbook Section</td>
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<td>Individual Draft Check-Off</td>
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<td>Individual Other Section Replies</td>
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<td>Group Meeting Documentation 2</td>
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<td>Group Final Handbook Section</td>
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<td>Individual Final Check-Off</td>
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<td>Group Source Summary</td>
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<td>Individual Source Check-Off</td>
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<td>Individual Group Member Evaluations</td>
<td>(10)</td>
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<td>Ind. Handbook Sections Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tests</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Textbook-Based Chapter Quizzes</td>
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<td>Cumulative Final Exam (from quizzes)</td>
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<td><strong>Real World Problem Project</strong></td>
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<td>Problem Proposal</td>
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<td>Problem Ranking</td>
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<td><strong>Daily Individual Work</strong></td>
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<td>Putnam Metaphors Discussion Post</td>
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<td>Portfolio</td>
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<td>Five Choice Discussion Posts</td>
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<td>Reflection Paper</td>
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Final letter grades will be based on the following:

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<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>465-500</td>
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<td>270-283</td>
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<td>269 and below</td>
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Extra Credit is available by completing additional choice discussion posts & the Unit 0 extra credit quiz. Max 35 pts.

See Canvas and pages 4-6 of this syllabus for more information on the course assignments.
SUGGESTED READING AND COURSE SCHEDULE

Quizzes are open throughout the course closing the last Wednesday of the course

**Bold Indicates a Required Assignment Due Date**

*Italics Refers to Supplemental On-Line Materials*

Week 1: Unit 0, 1 and 2

*Complete Unit 0 Trenholm Background Info to Prepare for Course*

*Post in Introduction Discussion, Suggest an Organization* Tuesday

*Listen to Welcome Podcast, View Overview Powerpoint (Unit 0)*

*Post in Putnam Seven Metaphors Article (read on Canvas)*

*Check out Foundations powerpoint, ch. 2 and 3 podcasts, class notes*

*Rank Possible Organizations to Construct* Thursday

*Sign-Up for Top Three Project Teams/Committees* Friday/Sunday

*Portfolio: Unit 1 and 2*

*Chapter Quizzes on chapters 1, 2, and 3*

*Choice Discussion Posts??*

Week 2: Choose from Units 3-7, 8 & 9 (suggest focus on **four** chs.) Read 4 Relevant Chapters

*Choose three chapters relevant to team/committee handbook section*

*Check out chapter relevant powerpoints, podcasts, and class notes*

*Post in Group Introduction Discussion* Tuesday

*Check out Unit 9 to see Samples of Handbook sections*

*Portfolio: Work on Relevant Units*

*Chapter Quizzes on three chapters most relevant to Handbook Sections*

*Choice Discussion Points??*

Week 3: Choose from Units 3-7, 8 (suggested focus on **two** chs.) Read 2 Relevant Chapters

*Work on Team/Committee Handbook Section*

*Check out chapter relevant powerpoints, podcasts, and class notes*

*Post Team/Committee Meeting Documentation* Tuesday

*Post Team/Committee Draft Handbook Section* Friday/Sunday

*Individual Draft Handbook Check-Off* Friday/Sunday

*Portfolio: Work on Relevant Units*

*Chapter Quizzes on two chapters of choice*

*Choice Discussion Points??*

Week 4: Choose from Units 3-7, 8 & 10 (suggest focus **three** chs.) Read 3 Relevant Chapters

*Post in Suggestion for Real World Problem to Solve (Unit 10)* Tuesday

*Portfolio: Work on Relevant Units*

*Chapter Quizzes on four chapters of choice*

*Rank Possible Problems to Work on Solving w/Org. Comm. (Unit 10)* Thursday

*Choice Discussion Points??*

*Ind. Reply to Other Team/Committee Handbook Section (Unit 8)* Friday/Sunday

Week 5: Choose from Units 3-7, 8 & 10 (suggested focus **two** chs.) Read Final 2 Chapters

*Read replies to your Team/Committee Handbook Section*

*Work on redraft of Team/Committee Handbook Section, confer with group*
Post Team/Committee Meeting Documentation (Unit 8)  Tuesday
Propose Org. Comm. Solution to Real World Problem (Unit 10)  Friday/Sunday
Portfolio: Work on Final Units  
Chapter Quizzes on final chapters  
Choice Discussion Point??  

Week 6: Unit 11  
Finalize Team/Committee Handbook Section  
Post Team/Committee Final Handbook Section  Tuesday  
Individual Final Handbook Check-Off  Tuesday  
Post Source Summary  Tuesday  
Individual Source Summary Check-Off  Tuesday  
Five Choice Discussion Posts  Wednesday  
Chapter Quizzes  Wednesday  
Portfolio  Wednesday  
Group Member Evals  Thursday  
Reflection Paper  Thursday  
Other Team/Committee Handbook Evals  Friday/Sunday  
Final Exam  Friday/Sunday  

**Brief Description of Assignments**  
(see additional information on Canvas)  

1. **Class Construct an Organization Project, Org. Employee Handbook – 205 points**  
This project will begin on the first week of the course when class members propose potential organizations to construct for this project. The class will choose the organization at the end of week 1 and project teams/committees will also be assigned at the end of week 1. Each class member will become one of nine organizational teams/committees  
   - organizational leadership/organizational change  
   - organizational leadership/stakeholder involvement  
   - organizational leadership/organizational structure (not available)  
   - human resources/organizational entry and exit  
   - human resources/member satisfaction  
   - human resources/member health,  
   - organizational management/team-building  
   - organizational management/member integration  
   - organizational management/organizational culture  

The final product for each team is a 4-6 page section of the employee handbook representing the area of specialization of the team/committee. There are fifteen sub-parts of this project.  

A. **Individual Post in Introduction Discussion**  
10 points  
On day number two of the course, students need to post a little bit about themselves and also propose a potential organization for the class to construct.  

B. **Individual Ranking of Top Three Organizations to Construct**  
5 points  
I will list all the proposed organizations and individuals will “vote” for their top three choices. This vote will determine the organization we construct as a class.
C. **Individual Sign-Up for Teams/Committees**  
5 points  
Each individual will rank the possible committees and choose their top three. Based on how many students we have in the class, I will make workable project groups.

D. **Individual Post in Team/Committee Intro Discussion Board**  
5 points  
Introduce yourself to your team-committee mates. It will be crucial to the success of your team/committee to make a plan and follow through on how you will communicate with each other. Start this process with this post and responses to your mates in this discussion board.

E. **Group Meeting Documentation**  
10 points  
Each Team/Committee needs to post some documentation that you have been in contact with each other and that everyone is aware of a shared plan of action on the CCO project. This posting can be a recording of a Zoom conference, a summary of a skype meeting, or written notes of what everyone is the group is doing next toward the completion of the handbook section. This should be a single submission, not one from each team/committee member.

F. **Group Draft Handbook Section**  
25 points  
This should be a full draft of all required elements of the section. It definitely can and should be a draft, but it needs to give enough so everybody can see the plan for your final section.

G. **Individual Check-Off on Draft Handbook Section**  
5 points  
Each team/committee member needs to complete a one question survey indicating that you, individually, check-off on this submission for the CCO project.

H. **Individual Replies to Other Team/Committee Handbook Sections**  
15 points  
Each student will reply to each of handbook sections pointed by other teams/committees. Does this section work with the section you have been a part of composing? What areas do you really like? What areas could be improved?

I. **Group Meeting Documentation**  
10 points  
Each Team/Committee needs to post some documentation that you have been in contact with each other and that everyone is aware of a shared plan of action on the CCO project. This posting can be a recording of a Zoom conference, a summary of a skype meeting, or written notes of what everyone is the group is doing next toward the completion of the handbook section. This should be a single submission, not one from each team/committee member.

J. **Group Final Handbook Section**  
75 points  
This is a final product. Thoroughly work through the entire assignment sheet. Make the product look as professional as you can. Respond to the feedback you receive from your peers. Make this product something that actually could be used in a real-world organization. 4-6 pages.

K. **Individual Check-Off on Final Handbook Section**  
5 points  
Each team/committee member needs to complete a one question survey indicating that you, individually, check-off on this submission for the CCO project.

L. **Group Source Summary**  
5 points  
Submit a one-page summary of the two chapters of the course textbook that were most informative for designing your handbook section. Submit this in the Sources Assignment on Canvas.

M. **Individual Check-Off on Source Summary**  
5 points  
Each team/committee member needs to complete a one question survey indicating that you, individually, check-off on this submission for the CCO project.
N. **Group Member Evaluations** 10 points
As happens in any organization, we need to be able to provide feedback on the job performance of our colleagues. Our organizations are only as good as how we work together. As such, team/committee complete an evaluation of their peers.

O. **Handbook Section Evaluations** 10 points
Since this is a shared endeavor, we all need to provide feedback on the work of our fellows. This is how we do this for this project.

2. **Tests on Course Material – 150 points**
There are object (matching, true/false, multiple choice) tests that cover the material in the textbook. This material is also covered in different ways in the powerpoints, podcasts, and class notes on Canvas. See the final review sheet for the concepts covered on the tests.

   A. **Chapter Quizzes** 100 points
   There are 14 10 point quizzes – one per textbook chapter. The top 10 quiz scores will count (the four lowest quiz scores will be dropped). Each quiz is open from the first day of the course until the closing date on Canvas and the daily schedule. The final exam review sheet highlights concepts from each chapter covered on the quizzes.

   B. **Final Exam** 50 points
   The final exam is composed of questions you have previously seen on the quizzes throughout the semester. The final exam review sheet is in your course pack and is available on Canvas.

3. **Real World Problem Project – 35 points**
In this project we will work together to use our knowledge of organizational communication to address things that happen in the real world. This is an exploration of the notion of organizational communication as it comes into play outside of the workplace.

   A. **Real World Problem Proposal** 5 points
   As included in chapter 1 in the Miller textbook, organizational communication can be used as an approach to solve or otherwise work on “big problems” in the real world: terrorism, climate change, disaster relief etc. In this discussion, post an idea for such a problem that we could work on as a class.

   B. **Rank the Potential Problems** 5 points
   All ideas proposed by students in the class will be posted in this discussion. Rank them in terms of interest for undertaking to find an organizational communication solution to this real-world problem.

   C. **Organizational Communication Solution Proposal** 15 points
   In this discussion, post your proposed organizational communication solution to the chosen problem (name the solution). See the Overview of Organizational Comm. powerpoint for key ideas to include in your solution as well as ch. 1 in the Miller textbook. What persons, what organizations are the nodes in the communication network? What is the information that needs to be flowing through these networks? What are the interconnected goals sought to be accomplished by the communication flowing through the network? **See assignment sheet for requirements.**

4. **Individual Daily Work – 110 points**
In this course, there are a set of assignments students complete throughout the course that allow the student to stay engaged with the content material on a daily basis.
A. Putnam Article Discussion Post

In unit of the course, students read a scholarly article that uses metaphors to present seven different relationships between communications and organizations. Students choose the metaphor that resonates the most and least with themselves. The discussion is where students share their thoughts about these metaphors.

B. Portfolio/Course Journal

Throughout the course there are short assignments related to the chapter readings that highlight key aspects of each chapter and provide the opportunity for students to think more in depth on these key ideas. Ideally students will complete these assignments as they move through the content in the textbook chapters. Since there is nor a prescribed order for working through chapters, students will be reminded by Canvas for the portfolio assignments related to Units 1 and 2 of the course, but there will be no reminders after that. Students can choose to upload portfolio assignments unit by unit or all at once by the portfolio assignment deadline.

C. Choice Discussion Posts

There are 15 different choice discussions on Canvas. Students need to make five posts total in these discussions. You can post on five different questions or make multiple postings on a single discussion. Many of these discussions are directly related to questions students are working with in the portfolio.

D. Reflection Paper

In 2-3 pages students have the opportunity to reflect on what they have learned in the course and apply it to a range of life circumstances.

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Official Notification: UNC Honor Code and HSS Statement on Plagiarism

HONOR CODE. All members of the University of Northern Colorado community are entrusted with the responsibility to uphold and promote five fundamental values: Honesty, Trust, Respect, Fairness, and Responsibility. These core elements foster an atmosphere, inside and outside of the classroom, which serves as a foundation and guides the UNC community's academic, professional, and personal growth. Endorsement of these core elements by students, faculty, staff, administration, and trustees strengthens the integrity and value of our academic climate.

1 According to the website of the Dean of Students at UNC, “Plagiarism is the act of attempting to pass another's words or ideas off as one's own. It is also using another's words or ideas and not giving the original author credit for them. Plagiarism ranges from using a single word, in the case of a word or phrase an author has ‘coined,’ to claiming ownership of an entire document written by someone else. It can also apply to works written by one author that have been substantially reworked or edited by another. The university further defines plagiarism as ‘the act of appropriating the written, artistic, or musical composition of another, or portions thereof; or the ideas, language, or symbols of the same and passing them off as the product of one's own mind. Plagiarism includes not only the exact duplication of another's work, but also the lifting of a substantial or essential portion thereof.’ This definition and other important policy information is available by accessing the Student Code of Conduct.” (http://www.unco.edu/dos/academicIntegrity/students/definingPlagiarism.html)