

# COMM 6011



## COMMUNICATION IN ORGANIZATIONS

### Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- accurately describe key elements of the following theories: classical management, human relations, human resources, and critical
  - accurately describe key elements of the following processes: assimilation, organizational decision-making, conflict management, change and leadership
  - accurately discuss the role of the following concepts/issues to organizations: emotion, diversity, and technological change
  - identify communication problems in a specific organizational setting
  - create a solution to an organizational communication problem
  - discuss the importance of teamwork in organizations
- Students will work toward

achieving these objectives through the following activities:

- analyzing and discussing case studies of organizational communication issues
- reading and synthesizing scholarly literature in organizational communication
- explaining organizational communication principles and theories and applying them to a real-world organization
- working as a team to accomplish a goal

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Communication is critical to the functioning of organizations. In fact, some scholars have argued that communication is the central process through which we organize.

This course surveys the communication process in complex organizations. Specifically, this course will help students understand organizational communication theories, models, and processes; apply these principles to real world organizational examples; and learn management and leadership skills. This course also emphasizes teamwork, which is another crucial aspect of organizational life.

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# FACULTY INFORMATION

## Format

This course will be conducted completely online using a variety of instructional methods including group discussion, different types of media, and application activities. You are expected to complete reading assignments on time and participate in all class activities.

NOTE: this is NOT a self-paced class; time management is critical to success.

## Assignments

### Discussion Questions (all)

There will be a total of 14 graded DQs over the course of the semester. Each DQ will be posted on a wiki page, and you will post your response using the comment function. DQ responses should be approximately 200-400 words long, and will be graded based on their responsiveness to the questions. You will not be

graded for spelling and grammar or style, but I will be looking for direct evidence that you have read and reflected on the assigned chapters.

For each DQ, you will also be required to comment on your classmates responses-- comments should be substantive (minimum 1-3 sentences, avoid simple "yeah" or "I agree" or "good post" responses) and should reflect engagement with your peers' ideas and thoughts. You must post a MINIMUM of 3 comments (UNDERGRAD)/6 comments (GRAD) per DQ for a satisfactory grade (i.e. a 'C'). Comments will be included in the overall DQ assignment grade.

### Chat Sessions (all)

There will be six scheduled synchronous chat sessions held over the course of the semester. These sessions will require you to be logged in to an Adobe Connect web conference a predetermined time. The chat sessions also function as class participation, and will give us a chance to discuss assignments, ask and answer questions, and just generally get to know each other a bit

more. Chat attendance is required. If you have a conflict with a chat session, please contact the instructor ASAP for an alternative assignment.

### Article Summaries (COMM 6011 only)

In lieu of Module Quizzes, graduate students enrolled in COMM 6011 will be assigned 2-4 scholarly articles per module (in addition to the textbook). Graduate students will be responsible for posting summaries of these articles, and discussing how the assigned articles relate to the content covered in the textbook, and how the research findings can be

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND STUDENT CONDUCT

I use Turnitin to evaluate the originality of your assignments submitted for class. As part of this process, you will be required to submit electronic copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. According to the U of M's Office of Legal Counsel (10/17/2005) by taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.

According to the University of Memphis Student Handbook, your assignments must reflect your own effort UNLESS a specific assignment is specifically designated as a group project. When using outside sources – those written by other individuals - you must ALWAYS acknowledge your sources and properly cite them in the text of the document. Otherwise, it is plagiarism. **If you plagiarize or commit any other type of academic dishonesty, the minimum penalty is an F on the assignment;** other penalties could include an F for the course and/or suspension.

All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. Expectations for academic integrity and student conduct are described in detail on the website of the Office of Student Judicial and Ethical Affairs: <http://saweb.memphis.edu/judicialaffairs/dishonesty/definitions.htm>

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student who may need class or test accommodations based on the impact of a disability is encouraged to contact me within the first two weeks of the semester to discuss his or her specific needs. Students with disabilities should also contact Student Disability Services (SDS) at 100 Wilder Tower, 678-2880. SDS coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Helpdesk: 901-678-8888

<https://umhelpdesk.memphis.edu/>

applied to various organizational contexts.

## Exams (all)

Exam 1 covers Modules 1-4. and Exam 2 covers modules 5-7.

## Group Assignments: Organization Case Studies (all)

You will work with a group of 3-6 classmates to analyze a case study then present it to the class on the class wiki. Each group will be assigned two case studies to complete. In addition, everyone in the other groups must comment on each case study. Any group member who does not contribute to the assigned case study will receive a grade of zero (0) for that assignment. Additional instructions for the case studies will be given separately.

## Final Project (all)

You will complete a major applied research paper covering an organizational communication issue. A requirement of this assignment is to post a pre-recorded presentation summarizing your project on the "Final Project" section of the class wiki. Additional instructions for this assignment will be given separately.



# Class Policies

## Email

- Always include a subject line. Please include the course number in your subject line.
- Remember without facial expressions some comments may be taken the wrong way. Be careful in wording your emails. Use of emoticons might be helpful in some cases.
- Use standard fonts.
- Do not send large attachments without permission.
- Special formatting such as centering, audio messages, tables, html, etc. should be avoided unless necessary to complete an assignment or other communication.
- Respect the privacy of other class members.

## Chat

- Introduce yourself to the other learners in the chat session. Change your screen name to your first name if possible.
- Be polite. Choose your words carefully. Do not use derogatory statements.
- Be concise in responding to others in the chat session.
- Be prepared to open the chat session at the scheduled time.
- Be constructive in your comments and suggestions.

## Understanding Your Grades

### A = Outstanding Achievement

Should be understood as truly excellent work that integrates concepts, and theories and presents them in a well-argued

manner. The written work is generally error-free in spelling and grammatical errors. To earn an "A" on an assignment, you will need to be extremely proficient at explaining, applying, evaluating, and synthesizing the concepts, models, etc., covered in this class.

### B = Good Achievement

Should be understood as good work that demonstrates a firm grasp of concepts and class material and presents them in a solid manner. The written work has a minimal number of spelling and grammatical errors and is structured with an appropriate introduction and conclusion.

### C = Satisfactory Achievement

Should be understood as passable work that fulfills the requirements of the assignment in a basic way. It may have some organizational flaws but generally demonstrates an understanding of the key concepts. The written work has a moderate number of spelling and grammatical errors. An assignment that meets, but does not exceed the basic requirements will receive a grade somewhere in the "C" range.

### D = Poor Achievement

Should be understood as not acceptable work that demonstrates competence in less than half of the required concepts, theories, etc. It may have major writing or organizational flaws that hamper the interpretation of the work.

### F = Unsatisfactory

Should be understood as work that does not address the criteria of the assignment and does not indicate an understanding of the course material. It may have severe problems in expression, organization and writing, and accuracy.

## POLICY ON LATE WORK

All assignments are due on the date and time specified by the instructor. Because your interaction with other students is crucial to the success of this course, **Discussion Question posts and comments made after the deadline will NOT be counted for grading purposes.**

Late papers and team assignments will be penalized with a 10-point deduction for each day the assignment is late, including weekends. Papers more than 7 days late will not be accepted. I will also not accept a batch posting of late work at the end of the semester.

It is your responsibility to make sure to keep track of deadlines and turn all assignments in on time. Any exceptions to this will be granted at the sole discretion of the instructor.

## POLICY ON WRITTEN WORK

All written work must be computer-generated, double-spaced, with proper margins. Please adhere to the word limits established for each assignment, as points will be deducted for papers that are egregiously under or over the limits.

All papers must be accurately and completely documented using APA 5th or 6th edition style. Papers **MUST** be turned in electronically through the eCourseware site.

## Required Materials

This class is conducted entirely online using eCourseware: [elearn.memphis.edu](http://elearn.memphis.edu). We will also be using the University of Memphis wiki: [umwiki.memphis.edu](http://umwiki.memphis.edu) and Adobe Connect.

Students must use their [University of Memphis email addresses](#) and take responsibility for checking email regularly. Reliable internet access is crucial.

The following book is **REQUIRED** for this class: *Organizational Communication: Approaches and Processes*, SIXTH EDITION, Katherine Miller, 2012. ISBN: 978-0-495-89832-0.

Additional required materials for COMM 6011 will be available on eCourseware.

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

<http://www.memphis.edu/ecampus/technical.php>

## Grade Calculation

### COMM 4011

Chat Participation_____	5%
Quizzes (average)_____	5%
Discussion Questions_____	20%
Exams (2 @ 15% each)_____	30%
Group Case Studies_____	15%
Final Project_____	25%

### COMM 6011

Chat Participation_____	5%
Article Summaries_____	15%
Discussion Questions_____	15%
Exams (2 @ 10% each)_____	20%
Group Case Studies_____	15%
Final Project_____	30%

## Grade Disputes/ Questions

Assignments are developed to achieve a variety of academic and assessment goals and I always attempt to describe exactly what is required. However, if you have a question about the assignment—it's content, format, etc., do not hesitate to ask. Please see my email policy for specific about response times.

As a general rule I will return graded assignments within 7-10 days. All grades will be posted on eCourseware, giving you a running total of your grade in the course. If you have additional questions about your progress you may check with me at any time throughout the semester.

If you would like to discuss any assignment after receiving feedback/grades, please wait 24 hours to “catch your breath” and collect your thoughts; again, be sure you bring specific questions to our discussion. I hope you will approach the grading philosophy as a challenge, not as an obstacle :-)

### Breakdown of Letter Grades (in %)

A = 94-100    A- = 90-93

B+ = 87-89    B = 84-86

B- = 80-83

C+ = 77-79    C = 74-76

C- = 70-73

D+ = 66-69    D = 60-65

F = 0-59