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COMM 230S.50: Organizational Communication

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Organizational Communication COMM 230
Spring 2013 Online

Instructor: Dr. Joel Iverson   **Phone:** 406.243.4426 (I am not always in the office, so I do not check every day)

Office: L.A. 359 – and the virtual world of Moodle   **E-mail:** joel.iverson@umontana.edu

Office Hours: I will be available electronically through email as well as during the semester on Tuesday and Thursday from 8:45 to 9:30 AM. I will also be available for appointments other days as well when arranged. For email, I am not "always on" like electronic help, but I do check most every weekday. I will try to answer emails within 24 hours, except Saturdays and Sundays. The discussion forums also work for asking questions.

Required Text: Miller, K. (2012). Organizational Communication: Approaches and Processes. 6th Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. I make no claims about earlier editions being similar. If you want to risk it, that is up to you.

Course Objectives:
1. To introduce you to the field of organizational communication.
2. To examine a range of perspectives, theories and issues to explore the ways in which varied perspectives can shape, expand, or limit our understanding of communicating and organizing.
3. To apply theoretical knowledge to an understanding of real world processes through class discussion and other exercises.
4. To develop and enhance your analytical organizational communication skills.
5. To connect theory and research to your own lived experiences in organizations. Therefore your experiences, insights, questions and concerns will be a key part of the course.

Course Information

Course Format:

The course objectives are met entirely over the Internet. In virtual organizational terminology, this class is asynchronous and distanciated (not co-located) meaning that we are not all on at the same time. By removing many of the constraints of time and location, this course has the potential to fit your unique needs in a way that many traditional courses are not equipped to do so. During this class, students will read the text, interpret and analyze the text through discussion questions, visit websites, write papers, and formulate plans.

One potential disadvantage for this class is that more time and patience will be needed than in many other classes. It may take us some time to get used to the Moodle system or get the technology to work. Plan for this time. I am planning for it, and struggling through it as well. A good example of this is that the online quizzes (celebrations of knowledge I like to call them) may require a newer system for the drag and drop version of matching, but we will get to that after the first chapter.

I plan to meet my typical educational goals in this class despite the less traditional format. For some of you an online course is not new, but for others it is. I have used online materials, a few online education systems including earlier Moodle and WebCT, and studied online organizational systems such as portals and enterprise content management systems (ECM), but Moodle continues to change and I continue to learn. This should be fun.

Also, please realize that technology can fail, connections not work, or other issues (my dog ate my laptop?) but since technology is our **only** link to this class, you need to be diligent, save work often and in multiple places. Also last minute work is risky. See below.

Respectful Environment: You will be expected to act respectfully towards others in this class and assist in maintaining a civil and professional atmosphere in class. This includes respecting differing opinions, not using vulgar language, not flaming (online verbal aggression), and creating a supportive environment. Also, personal information may be revealed in this class. You are expected not to repeat that information or use it to harm others. Also, harassment is not acceptable in any form. Any instance should be reported, and all actions allowable will be used to deal with it. Students are responsible for reviewing and complying with all University policies. See www.umt.edu/studentaffairs/policy/code.htm for full policies.

Deadlines: Although the time constraints of going to a class at a particular time, deadlines are still inevitable. The temptation to avoid or procrastinate assignments is higher, but so is the danger. Assignments must be completed by the deadline, and early is also welcome. As a result, I have adopted a policy used by other online instructors at the U of Montana: "Assignments not up-loaded to the website by 8 p.m. (Mountain Time) on the date due will receive a 10% grade deduction PER DAY. Once a week has passed since the deadline, no late assignments will be graded. *Please note that even one minute late does constitute lateness,* Do your very best to get assignments in as early as you complete them, and communicate with me immediately any difficulties you foresee in meeting a deadline." Find out what backup systems (such as a public library or a computer lab if you are in Missoula) are available to you in advance just in case you need to use them to meet a deadline.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS: If you require accommodation for a disability, please contact me during the first few days of class so that I may make arrangements for you.

A NOTE OF CAUTION: Cheating, plagiarism and other forms of scholastic dishonesty should not be committed in this course and will be dealt with as severely as allowed. Please familiarize yourself with the University's penalty for these offenses. Again, see www.umt.edu/studentaffairs/policy/code.htm for full policies.

Grading and Assignments:

Grading

My Grading Philosophy:
To earn an "A" on an assignment, you will need to be extremely proficient at explaining, applying, evaluating, and synthesizing the concepts, models, and theories covered in this class. An "A" goes to truly excellent work. I hope you will approach this grading philosophy as a challenge to do your best work. That said, with real effort an A is very achievable.

Remember that grades are earned, not given. Grades do not define who you are, but do reflect on the outcome or product you turn in. I cannot evaluate effort, but effort does tend to result in a better outcome. I work to fairly evaluate the work on the criteria we set forth. If you feel I have made an error in evaluation, write down that objection to my evaluation of the content and then email me or schedule an appointment. I am happy to correct mistakes I have made or to help you understand what led to the grade you earned. I do not change grades because someone wants or thinks they should get a different grade. I evaluate the outcome.

<u>**Basis of the Course Grade**</u>
Celebrations of Knowledge (Exams) (CoKe) (3 @ 50 each)   150 pts
Written Applications of Knowledge (WAK): (2 @ 100 each)   200 pts
Forums Reflecting InDividual and Group Experiences (FRIDGE) (16 @ 25 per)   400 pts
Final Reflection of Organizational Communication (FROC) (50)   50 pts

Total Points   800 pts

Grading Scale: Grades in this class will not be curved, and will be assigned on the following scale:
A 800 to 720   B 719 to 640   C 639 to 560   D 559 to 480
F 479 or less

Assignments: So we develop our own technical language, I will generally use the Acronyms developed for the class on the schedule.

Forums Reflecting InDividual and Group Experiences (FRIDGEs): For each chapter you will be required to participate on the discussion section of the course website. This is not simply chatting, but serious discussion about the material. Since this is our primary mode of interacting, I take this seriously and grade you based upon not only the quantity, but the quality of your posts. It should be clear that you have read, processed and are critically engaged with the class materials. Integrating that with other materials from other courses, experiences, and ideas is also encouraged. That is what makes learning from interaction so great. This is a Communication Studies class, so good posts communicate by drawing specifically on the course material, uses very specific language from the material (best way to learn it is to use it), and extends our thinking about the material.

Please respond to the discussion topics that I post for each area.

Celebrations of Knowledge (Exams) (CoKe): These will test you over basic information on the course. These are timed and serve to check your understanding of the material. Notice that they are divided up for each unit and serve to test your understanding of key concepts. These will allow you to see where you are at, but also provide an opportunity to review the material. Questions will consist of a multiple guess, matching, and other similar styles.

Written Applications of Knowledge (WAK): Each WAK (paper) is a short (2-4 pages) analysis of an organization using one of the theories in that section of the course. In two to four pages you should describe an organizational event or moment (briefly), explain a component of a (one) theory from the material (one paragraph), and apply that concept from theory to the aforementioned organizational event or moment and conclude with one reflection about the theory. This paper will have 4 parts – each with a heading: Organizational Event, The Theory, Analysis of the Event, and Theory Reflection. The paper should be

double spaced, 12 point font – times new roman is the best choice with standard margins (see APA if you need to know more).

Final Reflection of Organizational Communication (FROC): This assignment is the final reflection writing about the materials and how they have changed or reinforced your understanding of organizations (roughly 2 pages). It will be due during Finals Week (of course you can do it early).

Overall, that is the course. I will include a schedule of weekly activities and due dates on the syllabus I post on Moodle once I complete testing some of the online stuff to see how long it takes.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading(s)	Due:
Unit One (1/28 – 2/15)	Ch 1 Intro to Org. Comm. Ch 2 Classical Approaches Ch 3 Human relations and Human Resources	Chapters 1-3 Notes Web Links	UM Online 101 (Feb 1) Introduction (Feb 1) FRIDGE for Ch. 1 (Feb 1) FRIDGE for Ch. 2 (Feb 8) FRIDGE for Ch. 3 (Feb 15)
Unit Two (2/19 – 2/29)	Ch 4 Systems Approaches Ch 5 Cultural Approaches	Chapters 4-5 Notes Web Links	FRIDGE for Ch. 4 (Feb 22) FRIDGE for Ch. 5 (Feb 29) WAK #1 Due 2/25 Celebration of Knowledge (CoKe) 1 due **3/3**
Unit Three (3/4 – 3/29) **Spring Break**	Ch 6 Critical Approaches Ch 7 Socialization Ch 8 Decision-Making Ch 9 Conflict Processes **April 1-5**	Chapters 6-9 Notes Web Links	FRIDGE for Ch. 6 (Mar 8) FRIDGE for Ch. 7 (Mar 15) FRIDGE for Ch. 8 (Mar 22) FRIDGE for Ch. 9 (Mar 29)
Unit Four (4/8 – 4/26)	Ch 10 Change & Leadership Ch 11 Emotions in Orgs. Ch 12 Organizational Diversity	Chapters 10-12	FRIDGE for Ch. 10 (Ap 12) CoKe #2 (April 15) FRIDGE for Ch. 11 (Ap 19) FRIDGE2 for Ch.11 (Ap19) FRIDGE for Ch. 12 (Ap 26) WAK #2 Due April 29
Unit Five (4/29 – 5/13)	Ch 13 Technological Processes Ch 14 Changing Landscape Finals Week	Chapters 13 & 14	FRIDGE for Ch.13 (May3) FRIDGE for Ch.14(May10) CoKe #3 Due May 13th FRAC Due May 15

All assignments are due via Moodle system by 8:00 p.m., MST time, on their due date in the right- hand column of this schedule.