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COMX 421.01M: Communication in Nonprofit Organizations

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COMX 421 Communication in Nonprofit Organizations

Fall 2018

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Joel Iverson

Office: L.A. 359

E-mail: joel.iverson@umontana.edu – that is where to reach me.

Office Hours: Thursday 8:30-10:30 AM (most Thursdays) and by appointment (This is reasonably flexible in case you have a conflict during office hours). I answer email once or twice a day on weekdays. I also answer some emails in class if others may have the same question.

Course Description and Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to provide you with an overview of issues and topics in nonprofit organizational communication, at micro and macro levels. Our method of study will be a combination of reading, discussion, lecture, research, and analysis with a goal of coming to a broad understanding of the role of communication in the nonprofit sector. We will develop a broad understanding of the current opportunities and challenges in the nonprofit sector, central communication issues for nonprofit organizations as well as engage in the local nonprofit community. During the semester, you will engage in an interview with a nonprofit organizational leader, write a literature review on an important topic in nonprofit organizational communication, discuss and of course celebrate the knowledge we have gained in written form. You will also be required to complete two celebrations (written expressions of knowledge) and two shorter papers.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. To develop a working knowledge over a range of topics involved in the study and practice of organizational communication in nonprofit organizations.
2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of issues and politics involved in nonprofit organizational communication.
3. To analyze and significantly address nonprofit organizational problems.
4. To increase your ability to write analytical papers.
5. To foster an open mind so that we may fully comprehend the complex social constructs that influence nonprofit organizations and communication
6. To enact a safe space for discussion and learning.

Required Texts

That is old terminology for a pre-digital age. We will instead have required readings, but those will be distributed in electronic form. Hooray for Moodle!!

Course Requirements

Celebrations of Knowledge:

There will be two events similar to what you know as examinations over the, articles, podcasts, and discussions. Since this is a writing course, the format of the exams will consist of short answer/essay questions as well as a few matching or multiple guess questions. Celebrations will serve to review and allow you the opportunity to synthesize the material we cover as well as express your own thoughts beyond the discussion.

Papers:

There will be two papers for this class. The first paper will be the result of your research about a nonprofit and an interview with a member of that nonprofit organization. Students will focus on questions generated from early readings in the course. The second paper will extend your work on the first. Multiple options exist for the second paper. I have included the general description in this syllabus as well. More details to come on each as is needed.

Grading

My Grading Philosophy:

An assignment that meets, but does not exceed the basic requirements will receive a grade somewhere in the “C” range. So, for example, if a written assignment requires you to answer a series of four (4) questions and you only answer three (3) questions, the MOST you can expect to receive on that assignment is 75%—regardless of how well you answered the other three questions. Assignments are developed to achieve a variety of academic and assessment goals and I have attempted to be very specific in the assignments about exactly what is required. So, if you have a question about the assignment—its content, format, etc., just ask. I welcome the opportunity to work with you on any of your projects. I will offer suggestions and review drafts. Please, if there is any doubt, do not hesitate to ask.

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.

Basis of the Course Grade

Celebration One	1000 points
Paper One	800 points
Paper Two	1000points
Celebration 2	1000 points
Reading/Activity	700 points max
Total	4,500 points max

Grading Scale: Grades in this class will not be curved, and will be assigned on the following scale:

A	92.5% or higher
A-	90% to 92.4999999999%

B+	87.5% to 89.999999999%
B	82.5% to 87.499999999%
B-	80% to 82.499999999%
C+	77.5% to 79.999999999%
C	72.5% to 77.499999999%
C-	70% to 72.499999999%
D	60% to 69.999999999%
F	59.999999999% or below

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. I am happy to correct mistakes I have made. I do not change grades because someone wants or thinks they should get a different grade. I evaluate the outcome.

Policies

1. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University.
2. All students must be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321.
3. All celebrations of knowledge will be due on the assigned date
4. Papers will be typed and proofread and turned in on the date assigned.

Respectful Environment:

You will be expected to act respectfully towards others in this class and assist in maintaining a civil and professional atmosphere for the class including discussions, email, and other exciting interactions. This includes respecting differing opinions, not using vulgar language, and creating a supportive environment.

Disability Statement

If you have a disability for which accommodations are needed please contact me in the first week of the semester. We will discuss what accommodations you need and will receive in this course. Also, please contact:

Disability Services for Students (DSS)	(406) 243-2243 (Voice/Text)
Lommasson Center 154	FAX 406-243-5330
The University of Montana	student life
Missoula, MT 59812	

Tentative Schedule for Fall 2011 COMM 421

Aug 28	Introduction	
Aug 30	3 Videos and 2 Readings	
Sept 4,6	CSOs and Org Comm	
Sept 11	A communication theory of NPOs	
Sept 13	Not Meeting	
Sept 18,20	Mission, and Effectiveness	
Sept 25	Boards and Effectiveness	
Sept 27	Not Meeting	
Oct 2	Boards and Effectiveness	Mission Analysis assignment due
Oct 4	Celebration of Knowledge 1	
Oct 9,11	Volunteers and Volunteering	Paper #1 Due October 12
Oct 16-30	Accountability and Stakeholders	
Nov 6	Not Meeting – Election Day	
Nov 8	Independent online assignment – Not Meeting	
Nov 13,15	Narratives, Globalism and Human Rights	
Nov 20	Narratives	
Nov 22	Thanksgiving Not Meeting	
Nov 27,29	Technology	
December 4	Paper #2 Due	
December 6	Celebration of Knowledge 2	
December 12 Final	Paper Presentations 3:20 PM	