

COMM 385: SURVEY OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION  
 Spring 2008 (Class # 20424R)  
 3:30 - 6:20 pm ASC 204

Professor: Dr. Colleen M. Keough  
 Office: ASC 121B Telephone: 740-3944 EMAIL: keough@usc.edu  
 Office Hours: 5:30 -6:20 W, 2:00 – 3:20 Th and by appointment

Course Description:

This course is designed as an **introductory** course in the area of organizational communication. It provides a fairly comprehensive review of major issues and topics in the field of organizational communication (e.g., organizational structure and process, leadership, conflict, organizational cultures, and new communication technologies). In this course, we will study how people communicate in organizations and how communication creates and sustains organizations.

Learning Objectives:

- To develop a basic understanding of the range of communication issues in contemporary organizations (corporate, nonprofit, governmental, etc.)
- To utilize self-assessment instruments and experiential activities to determine your own competencies
- To develop research and writing skills expected by employers of communication students
- To improve your analytical skills in examining common organizational communication problems and to make you a more effective member of organizations
- To promote critical thinking about communicating in contemporary organizations

Preparation:

It is **STRONGLY** recommended that students have completed an empirical research methods course.

Text:

Modaff, D. P., DeWine, D., & Butler, J. (2008). Organizational communication: Foundations, challenges and misunderstandings (2nd ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Additional readings may be posted on Blackboard or deposited in the ARC.

Course Assignments:

Midterm	100 points
Final	100 points
Group Project: Organizational Culture	100 points
Research Project	150 points
Class Participation & Activities	50 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>500 points</b>

Project Descriptions:

Group Project: Organizational Culture Analysis

Students work in groups to analyze an organization's culture and its impact on selected organizational variables. The "organizations" will be from film or TV. A research-based paper and oral presentation

Interview Project--Students will select a concept and conduct independent research on the concept, create a schedule of questions and then interview someone in an organization. This 12 - 15 page paper should integrate research findings with the comments of the interviewee. This is a formal research term paper and must conform to APA style. Students will then present an informative speech on the findings of this project.

### Course Policies:

1. Much of the learning in a communication class comes from observing presentations and participating in class discussions so it is very important that you attend class. The University of Southern California *prohibits* the awarding of points solely on a student's physical presence in a class. However, they allow the use of unexcused absences and excessive tardiness to count against a grade. This includes leaving class early. *Unexcused absences will lower your grade.* The first and second unexcused absences will result in a lowering of 1/3 grade (from a B to a B-, B- to C+) for each absence; more than two unexcused absences may result in course failure. Tardiness or leaving early is 1/3 unexcused absence per incident.
2. Turn cell phones off. Laptops may be used in class to take notes. Students who are instant messaging, web surfing (non class related), or involved in other similar activities during class will be marked as absent.
3. In-class activities that are awarded participation points cannot be made up.
4. Please be sensitive to appropriate language usage. Papers and presentations are to be given in gender neutral language.
5. Failure to complete all assignments is grounds for course failure.
6. All assignments must be the original work of the student and cannot have been used or currently submitted for any other academic course.
7. Questions about grades should be addressed in a timely manner. There is a 24 - hour "wait period" after receiving a grade, but then you should address questions within the next 10 days.
8. Academic integrity is important:  
The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's Academic Integrity code as detailed in the Scampus guide. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violations or pattern of violations of the Academic Integrity Code will result in the student's expulsion from the Communication major or minor.

### ADA COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

"Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776."

**Course Schedule - Organizational Communication  
Spring 2008**

**Week 1**

1/17 Introductions, What is the Academic Study of Organizational Communication?

**Week 2**

1/24 Chapter 1 Introduction, Chapter 2 Classical Theories of Organizations, Chapter 3 Humanistic Theories of Organizations

**Week 3**

1/31 Chapter 5 Organizational Culture Theory and Critical Theory,

**Week 4:**

2/7 Chapter 6 The Communicative Organization  
Chapter 4 Systems Theory and Chapter 14 Communication & Technology

**Week 5**

2/14 Chapter 13 Leaders and Leadership; guest speaker Ms. Suzanne Alcantara

**Week 6:**

2/21 Group Presentations

**Weeks 7 – 9 (2/28; 3/6; 3/14) Organizational Socialization and Managing Yourself**

Chapters 7, 8, and 10, along with outside readings will be covered during these three weeks. The specific assignment per week will be given later as the semester progresses. See Blackboard for updates.

*SPRING BREAK MARCH 17-21*

**Week 10:**

3/28 Chapter 11 Peer and Co-Worker Communication

**Week 11:**

4/3 Chapter 12 Organizational Teams

**Week 12:**

4/10 Chapter 9 Conflict in the Organization

**Week 13:**

4/17 Interview Project Speeches

**Week 14:**

4/24 Interview Project Speeches

**Week 15:**

Finish up remaining topics; May 1 Review for final

**Final exam is Tuesday, May 13 from 2 – 4.**

**INTEGRITY CODE\*\*\*STUDENT COPY**

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are not tolerated at Annenberg!

**PLAGIARISM INCLUDES, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO:**

Borrowing another person's ideas without acknowledging them

Not attributing paraphrased ideas

Not citing quoted material

Copying from any source, but presenting the work as yours

Downloading sentences, paragraphs or entire speeches off of the Web

Using someone else's speech, paper, outline, or website to fulfill any of the course requirements

**CHEATING INCLUDES, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO:**

1. Using or providing external assistance during an exam
2. Copying or allowing another student to copy any portion of your exam or assignment
3. Communicating with fellow students during an exam
4. Possessing or providing unauthorized notes or other materials during an exam
5. Changing answers, content, or form after an exam or assignment has been returned
6. Unauthorized collaboration on any assignment or exam
7. Attempting to hinder the work of another student
8. Falsification, alteration, or misrepresentation of absence/ illness authorization notes
9. Using an essay, term paper or speech in more than one course without the permission of all the instructors of both courses

(These definitions of "Academic Dishonesty" are partial. See the academic integrity section in Scampus for a full description of "Academic Dishonesty" prior to signing this form.)

**ANY ACT OF PLAGIARISM AND/OR ANY ACT OF CHEATING IS CONSIDERED AN ACT OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND WILL BE REPORTED TO THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT CONDUCT OFFICE.**

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Student's Signature

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Print name