

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION  
COMM 161: BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL SPEAKING

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY  
SPRING 2007 SYLLABUS

<b>Instructor:</b>	
<b>Office:</b> <b>Phone:</b> <b>E-Mail:</b>	
<b>Office Hours:</b>	

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

COMM 161 is designed to increase your understanding of the principles and skills necessary for appropriate and effective communication within contemporary organizations. The course primarily focuses on developing your skills in preparing and delivering presentations to organizational audiences. Additionally, the course introduces you to materials related to communication processes in organizations including communication flow, culture, verbal and nonverbal messages, listening, interpersonal skills, decision-making, and small group communication. You will learn how to polish your communication skills in preparation for some of the unique situations encountered in modern organizations. Additionally, you will utilize PowerPoint software in at least one presentation. COMM 161 is part of the General Education curriculum and fulfills the Public Speaking requirement (Category A-III).

**REQUIRED MATERIAL**

Textbook: Adler, R.B. & Elmhorst, J.M. (2005). *Communicating at work* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

CAW Online Learning Center, available at <http://www.mhhe.com/adler9>

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

**Students will learn to:**

- Demonstrate knowledge of communication processes in organizations and understand organizational structures, direction of communication flow, appropriate channel selection, elements of verbal and nonverbal communication, barriers to listening, active listening processes, communication with multicultural audiences, and guidelines for ethical communication.
- Understand and perform informative and persuasive business presentations individually and in a team including: recognizing effective message design and delivery, applying various message organization patterns, analyzing audience needs and adapting messages, researching and utilizing supporting materials, designing visual supporting material using technology, and reducing communication anxiety.
- Apply and demonstrate communication principles of small group communication and decision-making including: interpreting interpersonal behaviors in groups, facilitating group participation, executing the steps of a decision-making process, conducting business meetings, and creating a team presentation.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **Penalty for Nonattendance**

We learn to communicate by communicating and by observing others; therefore, your attendance is absolutely essential. I expect you to be in class each day. The penalty guidelines are described below:

1. The final semester grade for a **3 day a week class will be reduced 2 percentage points for each unexcused absence over three.**
2. The final semester grade for a **2 day a week class will be reduced 3 percentage points for each unexcused absence over two.**
3. The final semester grade for a **weekly class will be reduced 6 percentage points for each unexcused absence over one.**

### **Penalty for Tardiness**

Not only are you expected to be in class each day, but you also need to be on time. Tardiness is unprofessional and disruptive. Attendance is defined not only as being present in class, but being present within 5 minutes of the start of class through the completion of the class session. Unexcused tardiness may be penalized by not being allowed to make up work done in class prior to your arrival and may lead to the same point deduction as an unexcused absence. If you come to class after the roll has been taken, it is your responsibility to notify me after class that you were present.

### **Excused Absence Policy**

**Make-up work is not allowed** unless I officially excuse your absence, which means you must provide me with proper documentation. You are responsible for contacting me regarding any excused absence. You must present written documentation in advance of an absence for a university-sponsored event and within 1 week of your return to class for any other absence. Approved make-up work is due the first class meeting of your return. Additionally, it is your responsibility to get class notes and missed information from a classmate.

An excused absence is defined as:

1. Illness of the student or serious illness of a member of the student's immediate family
2. The death of a member of the student's immediate family
3. Trips for members of student organizations sponsored by an academic unit, trips for University classes, and trips for participation in intercollegiate athletic events
4. Major religious holidays.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF A COMPETENT COMMUNICATOR**

In order to build an open, professional classroom atmosphere everyone should follow certain ground rules. These rules of civility include but are not limited to:

1. **Displaying respect** for all members of the classroom community, both your instructor and fellow students.
2. **Paying attention to and participating** in lectures, group activities, presentations, and other classroom exercises.
3. **Avoiding unnecessary disruptions** during class such as ringing cell phones (turn them off before class), text messaging, private conversations, reading newspapers, and doing work for other classes.
4. **Avoiding racist, sexist, homophobic, or other negative language** that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom community.

### **Cell Phone Policy**

Due to recent advances in technology, cell phones, ipods, pagers, etc. will not be allowed out during class time. Having your **electronic device visible or audible** could result in a deduction of points. If it is visible during quizzes/tests, I'll assume you are cheating and the penalties (described below) will be enforced.

## **MAJOR COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Presentation I**

Outline	50	
Presentation	100	
<i>Total</i>		<i>150 pts (15%)</i>

### **Presentation II**

Outline	50	
Presentation	100	
Self-Assessment of Recorded Presentation	50	
<i>Total</i>		<i>200 pts (20%)</i>

### **Team/Group Presentation**

Group Portfolio	50	
Group Presentation	100	
Individual Presentation	30	
Peer Evaluation	20	
<i>Total</i>		<i>200 pts (20%)</i>

**Exams and Quizzes** *300 pts (30%)*

**Homework & In-Class Activities** *150 pts (15%)*

In-class Speaking assignments  
Evaluation of Outside Speaker  
Communicoach Self-Evaluation  
Speech Preparation Activities  
End of Chapter Exercises  
Participation in Departmental Research

## **FINAL GRADE SCALE**

<b>1000—900 pts</b>	<b>90% – 100%</b>	<b>= A</b>
<b>899—800 pts</b>	<b>80% – 89%</b>	<b>= B</b>
<b>799—700 pts</b>	<b>70% – 79%</b>	<b>= C</b>
<b>699—650 pts</b>	<b>65% - 69%</b>	<b>= D</b>
<b>Blow 649</b>	<b>Below 65%</b>	<b>= F</b>

## **IF YOU NEED HELP**

If you have questions or concerns or find certain materials or assignments difficult please contact me by e-mail or come by during my office hours. If you have a special need that may require assistance or accommodation, please let me know as soon as possible. You need to provide documentation; then, we'll work to make reasonable accommodation. Students with Disabilities who require accommodations must contact the Office for Student Disability Services, Room 101, Garrett Conference Center. The OFSDS phone number is (270) 745-5004 V/TDD.

## **ACADEMIC OFFENSES: PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING**

I expect that all of the individual assignments you complete for COMM 161 (and in all of your other courses) are always your own work. However, many students are not sure exactly what "your own work" means, so, please read again the information on plagiarism and cheating from your student handbook. Aside from copying work, plagiarism includes incorrectly citing sources or presenting someone's information as your own, without crediting the source. To avoid this, you should carefully make notes to keep track of where your information came from. In written form, you must use quotation marks when referring to another's work. In a speech where you are paraphrasing, you can say "According to ... (give name)..." It does not take much effort to make sure you follow the rules for using another's thoughts.

**YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE** for telling your audience or reader whether you are:

1. directly quoting from a source
2. paraphrasing closely from a source, which means using significant portions of another source's sentences or language
3. using the ideas advanced by a different source

### **Penalty for Academic Dishonesty**

Western Kentucky University and the Department of Communication are committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on an exam, or purchasing papers, speeches, or other assignments will immediately receive a failing grade on the assignment and in the course, and will be reported for disciplinary action. Falsified medical excuses and presenting another student's work as your own fall within the guidelines of this academic integrity policy.

As you can see, these are extreme measures for academic offenses that we believe are serious. If you have any questions about whether you may be plagiarizing in your work, please be sure to contact me well in advance of the due date for your assignment.

## **DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Exams and Quizzes**

Exams and/or quizzes will be used to gage your understanding of the course material. The testing (exams and quizzes) schedule is located on the tentative daily schedule, but unscheduled quizzes may be given to assess your understanding of the chapter materials. Please come to class having read the chapter we are covering. Exams and quizzes may include various question formats.

### **Homework, In-Class Activities, and Participation**

Fifteen percent of your course grade comes from various assignments I give throughout the semester. These activities are both in and out of class, and require you to apply the course material. These activities may include: speech of introduction of classmate, In the News – an oral Briefing of a business article/business topic in the news, the ACRONYM impromptu speech, professional speaker observations, case studies, assessments, and other activities as assigned.

### **Presentation I (Expository Speaking Assignment 4-6 minutes)**

You will prepare and deliver an informative business presentation on one of the topics listed below. Develop a well-organized presentation with an appropriate organization pattern, credible sources, and skillful delivery.

*Sample Topics to Consider:*

- Demonstrate a process used in a past or current job.
- Explain a business-related concept.
- Orient or train personnel (the class) about a new policy, procedure, or operation.
- Explain a global business issue.
- Profile a business leader, entrepreneur or inventor, with particular emphasis on whatever accomplishments or personal philosophy have made him/her noteworthy

*General Requirements:*

- A minimum of three primary sources should be verbally cited within the presentation. Acceptable sources include: trade magazines, journals, newspaper articles, expert interviews, etc. Only one, credible website is allowed (this does not include accessing articles through the library research databases).
- Typed Works Cited (Reference) page in MLA or APA format
- Outline
- Visual Aid(s) may be required

### **Presentation II (Persuasive Speaking Assignment 4-6 minutes)**

You will prepare and deliver a persuasive business presentation to change or strengthen an audience's beliefs/attitudes or shape the audience's behavior based on the list of topics below. The presentation can persuade the audience to buy, give, act, think, or feel. The topic should relate in some way to issues within the world of organizations, business, professions, or public policy.

*Sample Topics to Consider:*

- Convince the audience to buy your company's product or service.
- Recruit listeners to join a business organization.
- Make a sales presentation to potential customers.
- Sell Yourself Project: Convince an employer to hire you.

*General Requirements:*

- 2 visual aids (3 slide limit if using PowerPoint)
- A minimum of three primary sources should be verbally cited within the presentation. Acceptable sources include: trade magazines, journals, newspaper articles, expert interviews, etc. Only one, credible website is allowed (this does not include accessing articles through the library research databases).
- Typed Works Cited (Reference) page in MLA or APA format
- Outline

**Team/Group Presentation (Informative or Persuasive Presentation 15-20 minutes)**

Following a systematic decision-making process, your team will plan and deliver a 15-20 minute informative or persuasive presentation on a relevant business topic (see the topics below for ideas). You will conduct out-of-class meetings complete with agendas and meeting minutes. Other requirements are listed below. The grade for this assignment is based on the delivery of the presentation as well as the content. In other words, it is a culmination of the skills you have learned throughout the semester. The points for this assignment are distributed between the group's overall performance and your individual performance as rated by your teammates (peer evaluations). Keep in mind that a large percentage of the points for this assignment is based on a team grade, which requires you to coach your classmates using constructive feedback. Your ability to resolve conflict and create an open communication climate is critical to the success of this project.

*Sample Topics to Consider:*

- Training Session: Your company (team) has been hired by Western Kentucky University to deliver a training session to its employees on an important communication concept. Identify the process and skills necessary for success at a particular business concept such as interviewing potential employees, providing superior customer service, dealing with difficult employees, or developing a business report (pick one).
- Convince a commercial loan officer to fund your business venture. Your team is convinced they have a winning idea for a new restaurant. You make a presentation (to a commercial loan officer) seeking financing.
- Convince members of your construction crew to observe safety practices more carefully. Your safety team is faced with a wave of injuries and must convince the crew to improve safety practices.
- Convince the management of your company to adopt a new vacation scheduling policy. Employees have grown increasingly disgruntled with management's policy on vacation scheduling. Your team is sent to present employees' grievances and convince management to adopt a new policy.
- Persuade the audience to invest in an innovative patented product (see website at <http://www.uspto.gov/>). Act as a sales team for an existing organization.

*General Requirements:*

- Document each Business Meeting (turn in agendas and meeting minutes in correct format).
- Follow steps in decision-making process
- Develop an outline in the correct format using a clear persuasive or informative organization pattern
- Plan for Question/Answer Session
- Include an information-gathering interview
- Incorporate 8-10 sources (limited to 2 credible websites)
- Turn in a references page in APA or MLA format
- Provide class with a program, agenda, or brief outline of your presentation
- Use visual aids
- Complete team (peer) evaluations on each group member, these are confidential and should be turned in separately from the team binder
- On the day of your presentation each team should turn in a professional (small) binder containing:
  1. Meeting agendas
  2. Meeting minutes
  3. Presentation outline
  4. References page
  5. Documentation of Informational Interview
  6. Visual aids