COURSE OBJECTIVES

In every instance of organizational malaise that comes to mind, at some time and in some way, human communication behavior has been significantly involved.
-W. Charles Redding

In our complex and information-rich society, the key to organizational excellence is effective communication. Communication systems within organizations -- both human and technological -- are responsible for solving increasingly complex problems creatively. Organizations need competent communicators at all levels. With more complex decisions, rapid change, increased information, and high uncertainty regarding effectiveness of decisions, excellence in the information society depends on the abilities, commitment, and creativity of all organizational members.

The course in Applied Organizational Communication covers both a solid, contemporary, theoretical foundation in organizational communication, while improving your ability to apply this foundation to organizational situations, as both a functioning member and an observer. Specifically, this course aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Develop a communication approach to understanding organizations.
- Recognize the value of applied communication research.
- Explore the communication perspectives, principles, and pragmatics necessary to understand and succeed in organizations.
- Apply communication theories to actual organizational communication situations.
- Enhance your ability to assess and improve communication processes in various organizational situations.

REQUIRED READING:
Text:

Articles (COMM 581 Course Pack):


Frey, L.R. (2000). To be applied or not to be applied, that isn’t even the question; but wherefore art thou, applied communication researcher? Reclaiming applied communication research and redefining the role of the researcher. Journal of Applied Communication Research, 28(3), 178-182.


WEB-BASED INSTRUCTION
In addition to class meetings, this course will utilize web-based instruction. Each student must have easy access to the internet since a very significant portion of the work between class meetings will take place on that medium. When a student registers for this class, he/she automatically joins the BlackBoard website for COMM 581. Students should familiarize themselves with methods for accessing and using the various components of BlackBoard. The University provides help lines at (270) 745-7020 and the instructor will assist with this function as much as possible.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Examination  15%
There will be one essay examination. The exam will cover material from the textbook, course pack readings, and class lectures and discussions.

Group Research Discussions  15%
Students will be assigned to a group responsible for facilitating a review and discussion of research on an assigned current applied organizational communication topic. Each member will conduct research and select an article on the topic from a refereed communication journal to present to the class. The research article must apply relevant theory or theoretical approach to an actual real-life organization. It is the group’s responsibility to ensure the appropriateness of members’ selected articles (ie. Refereed research, organizational/applied focus, current, etc.). In presenting the research to the class you should:

• Present an abstract and review of the article (research focus/question, literature review, method, results, conclusion).  Please prepare a handout as a guide.
• Prepare a list of questions to facilitate a class discussion on the topic and research. Questions should focus on the study, method and/or approach, and application of article’s findings to other organizational scenarios, etc.
• Time Limits: Individual presentations should be a minimum of 25 minutes and no longer than 30 minutes. Penalties will be given to presentations which run under or over the time limits.

Written Literature Review  20%
Students will select an organizational communication theory or theoretical approach that will be applied to the final case study project. Conduct research on the theory and prepare a written literature review (5-6 pp.).

Case Study Paper  25%
Students are to prepare a 10-12 page case study paper on a communication problem. The paper should incorporate theory and concepts discussed in your literature review. Potential topics include: change management, diversity, globalization, ethics, communication competence, organizational identification, job dissatisfaction, communication satisfaction, emotional labor, organizational culture, power, recruitment, socialization, identification, conflict, supervisor-subordinate communication, leadership, trust, feedback, peer and co-worker communication, organizational teams, decision-making, and new communication technologies in organizations.
Case Study Discussions  15%
Students will be assigned to discussion groups and participate in online case study
discussions. All group members are expected to actively participate in discussions on
Discussion Board. A written case study and discussion questions will be provided.

Class Participation  10%
It is expected students will attend all class meetings and come prepared to discuss
assigned readings, and actively participate in class discussions.

Writing Expectations
Papers must be typewritten, double-spaced with 1” margins, American Psychological
Association (APA) 4th edition style, and within the page limit. Grammar, spelling, and
other typographical errors can seriously compromise a grade. Effective organization
consisting of strong introductions and conclusions plus a well-structured body is
expected. Transitions and other connectives should be used to ensure a smoothly written
paper. See APA manual for guidelines and using different levels of headings.
COMM 581
Applied Organizational Communication

DATE
Friday
  -  Introductions
  -  Overview of course and assignments
  -  Introduction to Organizational Communication: Adopting a Perspective (Harris, CH. 1)

Friday
  -  Class Discussion:  An Overview of Management and Organizational Theories (Harris, CH. 3; Tompkins, 1992)
  -  Class Discussion:  Defining Applied Organizational Communication Research (students are expected to prepare a 1-page response to the following questions based on reading of articles):
     (1).What constitutes applied organizational communication research?
     (2).What is the value of applied communication research? (Cissna, 2000; Cragan & Shields, 1999; Frey, 2000; Keyton, 2000; Krone, 2005)

Saturday
  -  Class Discussion:  Dougherty & Smythe, 2004
  -  Group Research Presentation:  Organizational Culture
  -  Class Discussion:  Miller, 2006
  -  Group Research Presentation:  Critical Approaches
  -  Class Discussion:  Cheney, 1995
  -  Group Research Presentation:  Organizational Identification
  -  CASE STUDY:  “Inside Microsoft” and “Microsoft Revisited”
  -  Class Discussion:  Networks & Channels (Harris, CH. 6)

Saturday
  -  Class Discussion:  Interpersonal Communication (Harris, CH. 9; Jablin, 1995; Miller, 2002)
  -  Group Research Presentation:  Work Relationships
  -  Group Research Presentation:  Emotional Labor
- CASE STUDY: “The Indictment: A Superior-Subordinate Confrontation”

- Class Discussion: Small Group and Team Communication (Harris, CH. 10; Becker-Beck, 2005)

- Group Research Presentation: Teamwork and Communication

**Friday**

- Group Research Presentation: Climate (Goodell, 1992)

- Class Discussion: Effective Leadership in Organizations (Harris, CH. 11)

**Saturday**

- Group Research Presentation: Leadership

- Class Discussion: New Communication Technology (Harris, CH. 12)

- Group Research Presentation: New Communication Technology

**Case Study Discussions (Blackboard Learning System)**

CASE STUDY #1: “KCCB’s Missing Masterpiece”

CASE STUDY #2: “Disciplining a Teammate: Control in Self Managing Teams”

CASE STUDY #3: “Telemedicine in Kansas”

**Course Requirement Due Dates**

All assignments must be turned in via digital drop box through Blackboard Learning Center. If due date occurs on class meeting date, you should hand deliver (unless you are at extended site in which case you would submit via digital drop box).