

Speech 70/Business 80- Fall 2009

Effective Organizational Communication

Instructor: Matt Abrahams

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Advisory: Speech 1 or 10 and English Writing 1A or English as a Second Language 5.

4 units of credit

Course Description

Effective Organizational Communication is a hands-on practical class that examines communication and reasoning in the context of effective group problem solving. Organizations are an integral part of our daily lives and much of our communication is within an organizational setting. In this course we will study concepts and theories relevant to organizational communication and apply these to communication issues and problems facing organizations. This course is intended to provide students with an understanding of strategic organizational communication -- the ability to analyze a situation, select appropriate communication strategies from a number of available options, and enact those strategies effectively.

I believe that true learning only occurs when everyone is involved and interested in the material presented. Our class will consist of a combination of lectures, discussions, group activities, projects, and presentations. Through constructive feedback, we will all have the opportunity to teach and help each other. I encourage you to use this course to explore and broaden your world view. Please, challenge yourself and explore issues that matter to you.

Course Objectives

Students will:

- (1) Examine, understand, and apply the basic theories and tenets of organizational communication.
- (2) Learn and apply organizational communication skills, such as problem solving, negotiation, cohesiveness building, and crisis communication.
- (3) Diagnose, evaluate and suggest improvement strategies for organizational communication.
- (4) Get practical experience so that they can become more effective communicators, listeners, and facilitators.
- (5) Assess how communication relates to success of and within organizations

Course Materials and Requirements

Texts:

Pocket Mentor: Running Meetings. Harvard Business School Press (2006).

Pocket Mentor: Giving Feedback. Harvard Business School Press (2006).

Pocket Mentor: Creating a Business Plan. Harvard Business School Press (2007).

Pocket Mentor: Negotiating Outcomes. Harvard Business School Press (2007).

Package of 4x6 notecards

Course Requirements

- (1) Regularly attend class, on time, with an inquisitive mind (see attendance policy).
- (2) Participate actively in class discussions and activities (see participation policy).
- (3) Complete, on time, the required reading, assignments, and presentations.
- (4) Purchase and bring with you to every class a copy of the course textbooks.
- (5) Check email address twice a week by 10PM on the night prior to class.

Policies

Please review these policies carefully and thoroughly. Failure to comply with them will adversely affect your grade and, perhaps, result in either removal from or automatic failure of this course.

Attendance Policy

Your attendance is essential in any Speech course that requires performance, participation and evaluation. One of the most valuable learning tools in a course like this one is the experience of observing others' presentations, evaluating them, and then applying what you have learned.

Absences are a very serious matter. By enrolling in this class, you are committing to attend promptly. Anything less than timely attendance (read: no tardies) will affect your participation grade and could result in removal from the class. Attendance will be taken first thing at every class meeting. Make-up exams and presentations will only be granted for verifiable excuses (e.g., a doctor's note for an illness). If you are going to miss a class or know that you will be late, you must notify me as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to get yourself caught up.

Participation Policy

Because this class is an experience-based, skills-focused course, your participation is critical. Your participation grade includes being prepared and adding constructively to the class. You are expected not only to write and deliver your best work, but to be an intelligent and constructively critical discussion participant and audience member.

Specifically, any absence during the first two weeks of class will result in being dropped from the course. Each absence after the first that does not have a legitimate excuse (e.g., doctor's note) will result in a loss of points from your participation grade in addition to the loss of points of any assignment due that day. Three absences will result in a loss of all participation points and possibly result in removal from class. More than two late arrivals will also result in a loss of participation points. Please do not ask if you can make up an assignment or turn one in late.

Participation includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Active, constructive involvement in discussions, activities, and group work
- On time and thorough completion of your assignments
- Staying focused on your work and tasks at hand
- Asking questions
- Fulfilling your commitments to your fellow students and me
- Turning off all pagers and cell phones during class time

Plagiarism and Cheating Policy

Simply stated: Don't. Academic dishonesty and cheating in any way will not be tolerated. To deter plagiarism (claiming others' ideas or words as one's own), most assignments written at home will be scanned by an anti-plagiarism software package. Additionally, cheating is grounds for immediate, automatic expulsion.

Assignments

We will cover six major units in class. Most units will consist of the same pattern of activities:

- Lecture/discussion
- Major deliverable
- Case studies
- Skills practice

Your graded assignments by unit will be as follows:

Unit	Assignments
Listening/Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee performance review • Action plan
Interviewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview • Resume • Thank you note • Self-review
Facilitating effective meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting agenda • Ground rules • Meeting preparation documents • Facilitation
Conflict management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dear Abby Assignment
Persuasion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plan
Strategic communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis Management Email

Quizzes

You will be required to take two, non-cumulative quizzes. These quizzes may be multiple-choice or short answer.

Case Studies

Beyond the assignments already detailed, we as a class will conduct case study reviews and jigsaw teaching. In this way, we will all learn from each other.

Grade Break Down

Quizzes	80 points	2 quizzes at 40 points each
Case Study	30 points	2 case studies at 15 points each
Employee performance review Action plan	30 points	
Interview Resume Thank you note Self-review	40 points	Interview = 20 points Resume = 10 points Thank you = 5 points Self-review = 5 points
Meeting agenda Ground rules Meeting preparation document Facilitation Facilitation Self-review	30 points	Meeting agenda & Ground rules = 5 points Meeting preparation document = 5 points Facilitation = 15 points Facilitation Self-review = 5 points
Business Plan	50 points	Business Plan document = 30 points Business Plan presentation = 20 points
Dear Abby letter	10 points	
Crisis management email	10 points	A+ = 100%; A = 99%-93%; A- = 92%-90%; B+ = 89%-88%;
Participation	20 points	B = 87%-83%; B- = 82%-80%; C+ = 79%-78%; C = 77%-70%;
Total	300 points	D+ = 69%-68%; D = 67%-63%; D- = 62%-60%; F = 59% or less

** I will round up to the .50. For example, a 89.50% becomes an A-. However, a 89.49% is a B+.

Class Schedule

Date	Topics	Reading	Assignment (Due Date)
Sept 21	Welcome and Orientation What Is an Organization: Networks and Culture?	Org web document	Print out material from web site http://faculty.deanza.fhda.edu/abrahams matt
Sept 23	Listening, Language & Feedback	GF 3-36	Three Things in Common (9/28)
Sept 28	Three Things in Common Guest speaker	GF 37-51	Employee performance review and Action plan (10/5)
Sept 30	Impression Management <u>Skills practice:</u> Feedback Role play Feedback delivery Assign Interview		Interview questions (10/7)
Oct 5	Interviewing Employee performance review and Action plan		
Oct 7	<u>Skills practice:</u> Interview questions Interview practice		Resume (10/12)
Oct 12	<u>Skills practice:</u> Resume Review Guest speaker		
Oct 14	Quiz #1 Gossip Jigsaw		
Oct 19	Interviews		Thank you note & Self-review (10/26)
Oct 21	Interviews		Thank you note & Self-review (10/26)
Oct 26	Planning and Running Effective Meetings Thank you note and Self-review	RM: 3-44	Meeting agenda, Ground rules, and Meeting preparation document (11/2) Facilitations (11/9)
Oct 28	<u>Skills practice:</u> Meeting preparation	RM: 45-72	
Nov 2	Conflict and Climate Meeting agenda, Ground rules, and Meeting preparation document	NO: 1-36	Dear Abby (11/18)
Nov 4	<u>Skills practice:</u> Conflict Management Team building activity creation	NO: 37-56	
Nov 9	Facilitations		Facilitation Self-Review (11/16)
Nov 11	Facilitations		Facilitation Self-Review (11/16)
Nov 16	Facilitation Self-Review Persuasion	CaBP: 3-27	Business Plan (12/2) Business Plan Presentation
Nov 18	Anatomy of a Business Plan Dear Abby	CaBP: 29-65	
Nov 23	Strategic Communication	"Made to Stick" web site	Crisis management email (12/7)
Nov 25	Holiday		
Nov 30	Business Plan Round Table <u>Skills practice:</u> Selling & Managing Upward		
Dec 2	<u>Skills practice:</u> Vision and Values Business Plan		

Dec 7	Quiz #2 Crisis management email		
FINAL	Business Plan Presentation		

Final: Wednesday, December 9th, 2009, 9:15am to 11:15am