

**Communication 3170: Introduction to Organizational Communication
Fall 2003
Wednesdays, 2:00-5:00 p.m., in OSH 238**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:00-4:00, and by appointment

Course Philosophy and Objectives:

This is designed as a first course in the area of organizational communication. The course offers a fairly comprehensive survey of concepts and principles related to a communication-based perspective on work and organizational life. Just as the textbook is organized around important issues and topics (such as change, leadership, and ethics), so will be our classroom experience. The five themes of this course (as explained in the textbook) are:

- The "disciplinarity" and multi-disciplinarity of organizational communication
- The internationalization and multi-culturalism of organizational life
- The interdependence of internal and external forms of organizational communication
- The unity of theory and practice
- Critical thinking about organizational messages

After completing this course, students will have a basic understanding of the range of communication phenomena in contemporary organizations and will have some useful analytical tools for describing, critiquing and improving organizational communication.

Format:

We will use a creative combination of lectures, discussions, debates, exercises, cases, and guest speakers. Your active participation is essential to the success of this course!

We will learn a lot and have fun doing it. *You will leave the course thinking about work, organizations, and communication differently and more deeply than before.*

Required Readings:

There is one required textbook and one supplementary text. The required text is: Cheney, G., Christensen, L. T., Zorn, T. E., Jr., & Ganesh, S. (2004). *Organizational communication in an age of globalization: Issues, reflections, practices*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press. You should buy this book.

The supplementary text (with cases and short articles) is:

Frost, P. J., Mitchell, V. F., & Nord, W. R. (1997). *Organizational reality: Reports from the firing line*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. It is recommended but not required that you buy this book.

I will distribute relevant handouts and short articles mostly on line.

Formal and Graded Assignments (see critique forms on line):

- "Two-Thirds Term" Exam (multiple choice, true/false, and short essay): 100 Points
- Case Analysis Paper (theory applied to case of your choice; 7-8 double-spaced pages): 100 Points
- Group Project and Presentation (in groups of 4-6; on topic related to one of the chapters in the text; using "inside" and outside references; with a detailed outline): 100 Points

Grading (with +'s and -'s to be determined at the end of the semester):

270-300=A 240-269=B 210-239=C 180-209=D Below 180=Failing

Policies:

Active engagement is essential to the success of this course; therefore, consistent attendance is required. Each student is permitted *one excused and one unexcused absence*; after that, *10 points* will be deducted for each day missed. Late assignments are strongly discouraged; *10 points* will be lost for each day past an announced deadline, except in emergency circumstances. Plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty will result in an automatic zero for the relevant assignment as well as the notification of relevant UofU administrators. (Please see University and departmental policies on these matters.)

Tentative Schedule:

Week 1, August 20~ Introduction and Orientation; Read Cheney et al.--Preface and ch. 1;
Class Exercise: Critical Communication Incident

Week 2, August 27~ Structure; Read ch. 2; Bring an organizational chart to class; Class Exercise

Week 3, September 3~ Rationality; Read ch. 3; see film clips from "Modern Times" and "Brazil"

Week 4, September 10~ Culture; Read ch. 4; see film clips from "Office Space" and "Startup.Com"

Week 5: September 17~ Identity; Read ch. 5; Bring a print or TV ad to class;
Guest Speaker: Katie Sullivan

Week 6, September 24~ Relationships & Networks; Read ch. 6; Network Exercises

Week 7, October 1~ Leadership; Read Ch. 7; Exercise: Analyze Great Speeches;
Case Analysis Paper topic due (read ahead—ch. 15)

Week 8, October 8~ Participation; Read ch. 8; see segments from team training videos

Week 9, October 15~ Power; Read ch. 9: see film clips from "Network" and "Boiler Room"

Week 10, October 22~ Conflict; Read ch. 10; guest speaker: TBA; **Case Analysis Paper due**

Week 11, October 29~ Change; Read ch. 11; Exercise; **Review for Exam**

Week 12: November 5~ Technology, Read ch. 12, Visit Websites; Guest Speaker: Dan Lair

Week 13: November 12~ Globalization, Read ch. 13; See part of PBS special;
In-class Exam (60 minutes)

Week 14, November 19~ Ethics; Read ch. 14; See film clips from "Wall Street" and "Quiz Show"

Week 15, November 26~ Thanksgiving Holiday; **No Formal Class Meeting**—Library Day

Week 16: December 3~ Analysis of Communication; Reread ch. 15; **All Group Presentations (20 minutes each)**

Finals Week: Class activity to be announced