

COM 330: Organizational Communication Online
Summer 2009 (6/1-7/11)

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Accessibility Statement: *If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of AccessAbility Services at 465-0189 as soon as possible. Please note that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from the Office of AccessAbility Services.*

Course Description:

Communication is central to the proper functioning of an organization and to the achievement of goals. Communication, in its various forms--verbal, and non-verbal--constitutes the foundation for interaction between the organization, its stakeholders and its environment. In this class, we will explore five fundamental perspectives regarding organizational communication – the classical, humanistic, systems, cultural and critical approaches – and apply those theoretical frameworks to everyday activities occurring in real world organizations. In addition, we will look at the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and its communication strategies We will learn and apply communication, management, and leadership skills through individual postings, group projects, and case analyses.

Course Structure:

This is a cohort-based course, meaning that you will work with the same group of students who will begin and end the class at the same time. Obviously, this is necessary in order to create the working groups. We will learn and apply communication, management, and leadership skills through individual postings, group projects, and case analysis This course IS NOT a self-paced one. It has a duration of 6 weeks approximately with a weekly agenda of activities, including readings and assignments, that will have to be performed during the scheduled week. There will be cut-off dates and times for posting and assignments. In addition, there will be “synchronous” component in the form of chat or videoconferencing, or online discussions. Synchronous means that you will be required to be available online at some specific times. Schedules for synchronous activities will be provided at the beginning of the second week of class.

Weekly Workflow:

For the purposes of this course the class week begins on Monday at 12:01 AM Eastern time and ends on Sunday at 11:59 PM. In the “content” section of the course website you will find folders for each of the six week’s activities. You are responsible for completing weekly activities by Sundays at the end of each week.

Learning Objectives

1. Accurately describe key elements of the following theories: classical management, human relations, human resources and critical.

2. Accurately describe key element of the following processes: assimilation, organizational decision-making, conflict management, change and leadership, organizational diversity, and technological.
3. Identify communication problems in a specific organizational setting,
4. create a solution to an organizational communication problem.

Specific topics objectives are listed in your textbook at the beginning of each chapter.

Required Text: Katherine Miller. Organizational Communication: Approaches and Processes. Belmont CA: Wadsworth Publishing. Fourth Edition (2006).
 Instructor will provide additional readings

Grades *Grades will be determined on the basis of the following:*

Type	% Weight
4 Exams	20
2 Case Studies	20
4 Individual Postings	20
2 weekly "Response" Postings	10
CSR Group Project	10
Research Paper	20
Total	100

Final Grade Equivalency

Percent	100-94	93-90	89-87	86-84	83-80	79-77	76-74	73-70	69-67	66-64	63-60
Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-

Assignments Guidelines:

Exams (20%): There will be four (3) quizzes throughout the course at the end of weeks 1, 3 and 5. Each of these quizzes will weight 5% of final grade. Quizzes are comprehensive, meaning they cover all chapters seen. Quizzes will have multiple-choice and short answer questions.

Case Studies (20%): There will be a total of two (2) assignments in this area. Case studies will be taken from the book. You will read, analyze and answer the case analysis question posted for each case study. Your paper should be 3 to 4-page long. Use of relevant theories from textbook chapters is mandatory. Your analysis must:

- demonstrate an understanding of the of appropriate conceptual frameworks by fully explaining the arguments and terminology.
- illustrate the relevance of the issue to the course by applying relevant theoretical concepts.

Case studies will be graded based on the following criteria:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Clarity and accuracy of the analysis | 0 1 2 |
| 2. Application of relevant concepts and theories | 0 1 2 |
| 3. Quality of writing | 0 1 2 |
| 4. Overall evaluation | 0 1 2 3 4 |

Individual Postings (20%): You are required to place four (4) postings of at least 300 words each — not including the statement of the problem or description of the issue—. Two of them will be answers to questions posed by the instructors and two of them will be a critical analysis of an issue selected by the student from a topic, assigned by the instructor. For issues selected by students, it is recommended that you use a “real-life” experience and use concepts and theories from your readings to conduct your analysis. The real life experience can be taken from a story in the news, a journal or magazine, or from your experiences (cite sources).

Weekly “Response” Postings (10%). you must also post at least two thoughtful responses each week: One to one of your classmates’ postings and one to a video or article link provided by instructor. Instructor will also assign classmates’ readings for each student. Critique to postings must be relevant, very respectful, and must provide constructive criticism. There is no limit on the number of words or pages. However, the response must be logical and have coherent arguments.

Discussion Tool: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Group Project (10%)

To be done during week 5. Detailed instructions will be provided in due time.

Final Paper (20%):

Your final paper must address one of the areas of study in class concerning communication processes in one particular organization. As the subject of your study you may use your own organization or an organization in a sector of your preference (educational, governmental, religious, financial, social, indigenous, NGOs, etc.). Paper should be from 4 to 6 pages long not including works cited or bibliography. Be aware that length of paper is not as important as quality of paper. On the other hand, do not try to make it as short as possible for reasons other than conciseness and clarity of arguments and ideas. Please read the following guidelines and adhere to them.

Final Paper Guidelines:

1. The objective is to critically analyze a communication issue (problem) in an organization and advance arguments or propose solutions that are grounded in course discussions and materials.
2. In your first paragraph provide a clear thesis statement or statement of the problem.
3. Following the first paragraph should be an introductory section that includes literature review and background (see assigned readings).
4. Briefly introduce the firm (organization) by providing information about (a) nature and sector, (b) structure, (c) vision, mission, products or services offered and what market (local, national, international, etc.), (d) If possible illustrate with examples the issues that are the subject of your analysis. (This section should be accomplished in no more than half page).
5. What are the communication issues or processes that you would change in order to make the organization more efficient.

6. Under what theoretical perspective would be best to conduct your analysis and why?
7. Are your conclusions grounded in theoretical concepts studied in the course?

The final paper will be graded based on the following criteria:

1. Clarity of thesis statement or statement of the problem.	0	1	2	3	4				
Significance and appropriateness to the concerns of the course.									
2. Quality of writing.	0	1	2	3	4				
3. References/review of literature.	0	1	2	3	4				
Appropriateness and scope of works cited.									
Use of APA style.									
4. Overall Evaluation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Academic Honesty & Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is a very serious offense. Eastern, and in general the CSU system has strict rules against academic dishonesty. Please visit the following link to read ECSU's policies, definitions, and procedures: <http://nutmeg.easternct.edu/judicialaffairs/academicmisconduct/definitions.htm>

Below are two excerpts from this page:

- *Academic honesty means doing one's own work and giving proper credit to others whose work and thought are drawn upon. It is the responsibility of each student to become familiar with what constitutes academic dishonesty and plagiarism, and to avoid all forms of cheating and plagiarism*
- *The CSUS Code of Conduct, Policies, Procedures, & Statements, defines academic misconduct as including, but not limited to, providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for academic evaluation, including papers, projects, and examinations (cheating); and presenting as one's own, the ideas or words of another person or persons for academic evaluation without proper acknowledgment (plagiarism).*

I will enforce these policies. Any student that I determine has engaged in academic dishonesty will be assigned an "F" for the course. I am willing to be flexible but will not tolerate or condone academic dishonesty.

Although you may discuss course issues with classmates, your exams, projects and assignments must be done individually unless it is a group project. In summary, make sure that the work that you submit as part of the course work IS YOUR OWN.

Technical Requirements for using Blackboard Vista 4.x

The following are the minimal system requirements which the Personal Computer that you will be using **must** comply with in order to use Blackboard Vista 4.x successfully:

Operating Systems: Microsoft Windows XP/Vista, Mac OS 10.4.x or Higher (performance is good on 10.5.x and Safari 3.04), Linux is not currently supported

Browsers:

Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.5 SP2 or Higher

Netscape 7.0, 7.1, 7.2

Firefox 2 (version 3 is currently in testing mode)

Browser Settings:

Add https://*.csus.ct.edu to the trusted Sites (steps appended below – for Internet Explorer).

JavaScript must be Enabled (Execute Browser Check to test)

Java must be Enabled (Execute Browser Check to test)

Cookies Enabled (Execute Browser Check to test)

Browser Check:

To make sure that your browser meets the course requirements for Blackboard Vista, please execute the Browser Check from the login page. Steps are:

- ý Visit <http://www.easternct.edu/portal>
- ý Click on the Vista Login link
- ý Click on the Vista 4 Login Link
- ý Click on the Check Browser button

If you encountered any issues highlighted by the Browser Check results, please be sure to follow the step-by-step solutions at the following URL: <http://www.webct.com/tuneup>

Additionally, you may find more information by visiting our Knowledge Base at the following URL:

<http://kb.easternct.edu/display/4/kb/faq/index.asp?tab=faq&kbid=1&onekb=1>

You may also contact Eastern's Blackboard Vista Support at cit@easternct.edu. Please indicate the course that you are taken when requesting support. Please do not forget to make sure to keep your Eastern Technology Account password active (this is the same as your email account for Eastern. It is recommended that you check your Eastern email often.)

If you want to review possible account issues, please visit the following URL:

<http://kb.easternct.edu/al/12/1/article.asp?aid=1016&tab=search&bt=4>.

Tips & Troubleshooting:

For tips and troubleshooting assistance, please visit

http://www.webct.com/tuneup/viewpage?name=tuneup_browser_troubleshoot

Calendar

MODULE 1: Global Issues, Diversity and Organizational Communication			
Week #	Topic	Readings/Activities	Assignment Due /Activities
1 Monday 6/1 to Sunday 6/7	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice using discussion boards and becoming familiar with the platform tools. • Overview of Course Content 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Post “ Tell Me About Yourself” 2. Post 1: Discussion question from book. Instructor will assign question number to each student. 3. Two response postings 4. Exam # 1
	Chapter 1: The Challenge of Corporate & Organizational Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globalization • Terrorism & War • Global Warming 	
	Chapter 12: Organizational Diversity Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women & Minorities • The Multicultural Organization 	
MODULE 2: Approaches & Trends in Organizations			
Week #	Topic	Readings/Activities	Assignment Due / Activities
2 Monday 6/8 to Sunday 6/14	Chapter 2: The Classical Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The machine Metaphor • Classical Management Theory: Henri Fayol • Bureaucracy Theory: Max Weber • Scientific Management Theory: Frederick Taylor. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Post 2: critical analysis: The machine metaphor and Diego Rivera murals (pictures posted) 2. Two response postings 3. Individual Case Study 1: Charting the Changing Nature of Work
	Chapter 14: The Chaging Landscape of Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Global Workspace • The Era of Shifting Identity • The Service Economy 	
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MODULE 3: Human Relations & Conflict Management			
Week #	Topic	Readings/Activities	Assignment Due / Activities
3 Monday 6/15 to Sunday 6/21	Chapter 3: Human Relations and Human Resources Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Classical Theories to Human Relations • Impetus for the Human Resources Approach • Communication in Human Relations and resources: The “What and How” 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Post 3: Discussion question from book. Instructor will assign question number to each student. 2. Two response posts 3. Exam # 2 4. Assign Research Paper
	Chapter 9:: Conflict Management Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptualizing Conflict Process • Managing 	

		Organizational Conflict <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors Influencing the Conflict Management Process 	
MODULE 4: System, Cultural and Critical Approaches			
Week #	Topic	Readings/Activities	Assignment Due / Activities
4 Monday 6/22 to Sunday 6/28	Chapter 4: Systems Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Systems Metaphor • Three Systems Theories Methods for Studying Organizational Systems 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Post 4: Real-Life experience.. 2. Two response posts 3. Individual Case Study 2: Choose one from Chapters 4,5,6
	Chapter 5: Cultural Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescriptive Views of Culture • Alternative Approaches to Culture • Schein's Model of Organizational Culture Methods for Studying Organizational Culture 	
	Chapter 6: Critical Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical approaches • Two Critical approaches In Communication: Concertice Control and Feminism • CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility 	
MODULE 5: Decision-Making, Change and Leadership Processes			
Week #	Topic	Readings/Activities	Assignment Due / Activities
5 Monday 6/29 to Sunday 7/5	Chapter 8: Decision-Making Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models of Decision Making Process • Small-Group Decision Making • Participation in Decision making 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CSR group project 2. Final Paper outline 3. Exam # 3
	Chapter 10: Organizational Change & Leadership Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Change Process • Organizational Leadership 	
MODULE 6: ICTs in Organizations			
Week #	Topic	Readings/Activities	Assignment Due / Activities
6 Monday 7/6 to Sunday 7/12	Chapter 13: Technological Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of Organizational Communication Technology • Theories of Communication Media Usage • Effects of Organizationbal Communication Technology 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exam # 4 2. Final Paper