

**COM 229: Foundations of Organizational Communication**  
**School of Communication**  
**Illinois State University**  
**Fall 2012**  
**MW 4:00p – 5:15p; 244 Schroeder**

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**Required Course Materials:**

1. Miller, K. (2009). *Organizational communication: Approaches and processes* (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
2. Online readings. See course schedule below.

**Recommended Course Materials:**

1. American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: APA.
2. Supplemental readings available online and/or in the library. See course schedule below.

**Course Objectives**

Often we take human communication for granted without making an effort to understand various communication perspectives and applications that combine to make communication flow more smoothly within organizational settings. This course deals with fundamental concepts and theories in organizational communication as well as the role of communication in organizations. The course is designed to enhance students' basic communication knowledge, understanding, and skills in an organization including introductory concepts of organizational communication. The course goal is to provide students with an informed understanding of the importance of effective communication relevant to their organizational experiences. This course examines theoretical and practical approaches to the study of organizational communication. The text presents theoretical approaches to the study of organizational communication and organizational communication processes. A mix of scholarly theory, research-based material, and practical application will be presented, accompanied by case studies and examples. Your

classroom experience will also include in-class lectures, readings, and activities such as case studies, research, small group work, discussions, exams, and quizzes.

### Course Objectives

1. To develop a working knowledge of the various designs and processes in organizational communication.
2. To identify relevant organizational communication concepts and fundamental theories.
3. To understand significant historical benchmarks, contributors, and notable research in the development of the discipline of organizational communication.
4. To demonstrate an understanding of the influence communication has on organizational productivity, relationships, culture, and employee satisfaction.
5. To develop a working understanding as a competent organizational communicator by applying concepts and practical skills of communication that may be useful in improving overall effectiveness and organizational behavior.
6. To transfer organizational communication knowledge to everyday organizational experience.

### Course Requirements

- Do all the readings listed in the syllabus.
- Attend all scheduled sessions.
- Engage and participate fully.
- Complete required assignments in timely and scholarly manners.

### Workload and Grading

<i>Grade Point (portion) Breakdown</i>	<i>Final Grade Assignment</i>
Exams: 350	A 900 - 1045
Papers: 350	B 800 - 899
Biweekly ReggieNet Quizzes: 140	C 700 - 799
Guerilla Assignment: 60	D 600 - 699
Classroom Participation: 100	F < 600
Extra credit opportunity: 50 (maximum)	
Total: 1000 (+45)	* I do not grade on a curve or round. I will give as many As, Bs etc as are earned.
Each of these assignments will be explained in more detail below.	

#### Exams (35%):

There will be two exams during the semester. The *first exam* (150 points) will cover all material covered up to that class session. This will include material from Chapters 1-7

(inclusive), classroom discussion, outside reading, and presentations. The *second exam* (200 points) will have two components. The first (and largest) component will cover material covered since the first exam—Chapters 8-14 (inclusive), class discussion, outside reading, and presentations). The first component will be worth 15% of your final grade. The second (and smaller) component of Exam 2 will be cumulative—any material covered during the semester is ‘fair game,’ with specific focus on broad concepts and theories discussed. The second component of Exam 2 is worth 5% of your final course grade. The format for each exam may include multiple-choice, true/false, matching, short answer, and essay format.

You *may* be able to schedule a make-up exam if you have a verifiable egregious excuse (e.g., written excuse from a doctor denoting emergency surgery). Family vacations, reunions, or avoidances; work schedules; entertaining out-of-town visitors; extracurricular activities; travel; etc. are not valid excuses. Alternate exams must be scheduled *before* the exam is administered as-scheduled, and are offered at the instructor’s discretion.

### Papers (35%)

*Traditional Observation Paper (250 points):* This will be a 3-5 page (not including cover and reference page; no abstract is needed) paper identifying the role(s) played in an organization, how members interact, and analysis & description of communicative flow, both official and unofficial, and other applications, specifically of the Classical, HR, Cultural, or Systems Paradigm(s) of organizations. During the first half of the semester, you will observe and reflect organizational communication as it exists in an actual organization. Your task will be to observe *at least* 1 communicative session of an organization. You will need to find time outside of class to observe a commercial (e.g., Chamber of Commerce group), governmental (e.g., City council), or non-profit (e.g., school board) organization at work. Then apply one (or more) theoretical lens to address processes you observe. Depth of analysis is preferable to breadth, and you should take time to: 1) identify the communicative element you’re addressing, 2) explain how you saw the element play out in your observation; and 3) connect that observation to the theory/idea—how does that element make the organization more or less effective? Please only describe the organization as needed to set up (i.e., contextualize and articulate) your theoretical application; you do not need to spend copious time describing the organization, its purpose, or structure unless it pertains to your observation/element. This paper is the only paper you will turn in as a hard copy, and is due at the start of the class session identified in the schedule.

*Whale Paper (100 points):* During one particular class meeting we will be discussing decision-making and critical thinking. To help facilitate this discussion, we will watch a brief video of a decision and its affects. You are to write a 2-3 page reflection paper on this video, integrating and applying material discussed in class to the case. Please use examples to illustrate concepts discussed—specifically those related to Chapter 8, but also integrating other course material/discussions as well. If you cite outside sources, remember to reference them appropriately.

### Biweekly ReggieNet Quizzes (14%):

There are seven online quizzes briefly reviewing previous weeks' content. They are designed to keep you up to pace with the course materials and facilitate discussion. You will be responsible for taking the quizzes over the assigned chapters prior to the in-class discussion approximately every other week (see schedule). Quizzes are available on ReggieNet, are available seven days preceding the due date, and each quiz is worth 20 points. Quizzes have a 30-minute time limit, which (along with due dates and times) is strictly enforced.

#### Guerilla Assignment: (6%)

One assignment this semester will ask each class member to take part in bringing organizational communication outside the classroom. Specific details of the assignment will be released as it approaches. It will involve a minimal investment of time beyond the classroom.

#### Classroom Participation (10%):

You begin with full credit for this assignment, and your points are yours to lose. Throughout the semester, class discussions and activities will seek to uncover greater meaning and application of the materials being discussed. To that end, you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the material—even if that is to simply ask questions to help you clarify and solidify your understanding on topics. Class members will randomly be called on to provide an answer to a question or report on a group activity; students not able to provide a scholarly (though not necessarily correct) response will lose 25 points. The course TA will keep track of student responses (and lack thereof). Students may be called upon in multiple sections or never at all—you should attend and be prepared to engage in a scholarly discussion every class. You may not reacquire lost participation points.

#### Extra Credit Opportunities:

There will be a few extra credit opportunities that may include research participation, speaker/colloquialism attendance, or bringing in course-related materials. The extra credit points will be added to the student's base score in final grading. There are no guarantees for extra credit, and it is each student's responsibility to be aware of and take advantage of such opportunities. Specific point values will be announced for each extra credit opportunity.

For research participation, in general, each 30 minutes of participation in an extra credit event that you can accomplish at home will earn you 5 points. Each 30 minutes of participation in an extra credit event that you need to come to a lab will earn you 10 points. For example, if you participate in a research study that requires you to spend an hour in a lab, you would likely earn 20 points. We will get evidence of participation and the time of participation from the researchers who administer the research studies at the conclusion of the semester; however, it is *your* responsibility to ensure the researchers have the necessary evidence of your participation at the time of the study. A maximum of 45 points can be earned from extra credit opportunities. After the last scheduled class session there will be no further opportunities for extra credit or to otherwise improve your grade.

## Course Policies

### Course Website:

All students enrolled in this course have access to the course website on ReggieNet (RN; <https://reggienet.illinoisstate.edu>). Important announcements, grades, and copies of assignments will be available through ReggieNet. On occasion, you may be asked to print a document from ReggieNet for use in course activities or readings.

### Course Communication:

**Before you decide to send an email inquiry, check the syllabus.** You are most likely to find answers there. **Please begin the subject line of your e-mail with “COM229: ” to ensure timely responses.** Appropriate e-mail will be replied to within 24 hours. The instructor does not regularly check office voice mail, so if a verbal conversation is preferred, it is best to call during scheduled office hours.

Course announcements will be made in class and via email messages to ISU email accounts. **It is your responsibility to check your ISU email on a regular basis.**

Unless explicitly stated otherwise, no paper submissions will be accepted. All assignments should be submitted electronically to ReggieNet, and it is your responsibility to confirm the attachment has been uploaded successfully before the due date and time. Only electronic documents in \*.doc, \*.docx, \*.pdf, \*.rtf, or \*.txt will be accepted. If you are using a Macintosh version of Microsoft Word, please be sure to save in either the \*.doc or the \*.docx format, as I am unable to open the default Apple-specific file format. No (re)submissions will be allowed after the due date for submission errors.

### Past Due Assignments:

In preparation for the rigor and responsibilities of the workforce, all assignments and work must be completed and turned in on-time. **NO LATE WORK IS ACCEPTED.** If you have a medical or family emergency which will prevent you from getting your work done, it is YOUR obligation to either arrange for alternate means of assignment submission (e.g., send it to class with a roommate or friend) or to communicate with Dr. Carr **BEFORE** the due date of the assignment to see if exceptions can be made. If your work is not turned in on time and you have not communicated with Dr. Carr prior to the due date, do **NOT** email the instructor with justifications. You will simply not receive credit for the assignment.

### Academic Honesty:

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to: disruption of classes, threatening an instructor or fellow student, giving or receiving unauthorized aid on examinations or the

assignment preparation, knowingly misrepresenting the source of any academic work, plagiarizing another's work, or acting dishonestly in research. All University Policies concerning academic misconduct will be upheld in this course (cf., ISU Code of Conduct at Community Rights and Responsibilities [<http://www.deanofstudents.ilstu.edu/crr/>]). Of particular concern in a course with written assignments is the issue of plagiarism. *Plagiarism* is defined "the appropriations or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work" (Webster's, 1989, p. 1100 *If you turn in an assignment that contains plagiarized material (other people's words or ideas which are not cited appropriately and/or which you implicitly or explicitly represent as your own), you will receive a zero point.* This is non-negotiable. If you are unclear about what constitutes either of these, please read the relevant sections of the ISU's [Code of Student Conduct](#), Chapter V, Section B. You may also find it helpful to read [http://integrity.ou.edu/files/nine\\_things\\_you\\_should\\_know.pdf](http://integrity.ou.edu/files/nine_things_you_should_know.pdf). Cite your sources accurately and consistently in both your oral and written assignments. Academic misconduct will not be tolerated and may result in a failing grade on the assignment or in the class, depending on the incident's severity.

You will do some great research and work in this course, so please credit your work accordingly. APA style is the format used by the Communication discipline, and is the required format for all assignments in this class. It is your responsibility to become familiar with APA style if you are not already. Using proper citations and references will ensure your work is not plagiarized. Your assignments and final paper may be checked in [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com) or other academic honesty software.

#### Courtesy to Fellow Students and Instructors:

The classroom is a community, and, as such, the instructor requires that all course members (including the instructor) must follow several basic guidelines:

**Cell Phones:** The instructor has a strict no mobile device policy (this includes pagers and PDAs, and smartphones) during class time. If you have a cell phone, be absolutely sure that it is turned *off*—not on vibrate during class. Anyone engaging in a phone discussion, text message, or has their mobile ring during class will be immediately asked to leave.

**Late Arrival:** There are sometimes unpredictable events prevent students from arriving to class on time for every class session. If this is the case, please be respectful of others, and enter the class as quietly as possible. However, repeated late arrivals are not acceptable, and you may be asked to look into taking the course a different semester that is more aligned with your scheduling requirements should repeated late arrivals occur.

**Departing Early:** It is extremely rude and disruptive to both fellow classmates and the instructor when students leave early. Class is scheduled at the same time every week—work, study sessions, sports practices and doctor appointments should be scheduled accordingly. If you know in advance that you are going to be forced to leave the class early, be absolutely sure that you take a seat as close to the exit as possible so that when you do leave, your departure will cause a minimum of disruption. You should also notify the instructor before class of your early departure.

**In-Class Talking:** It is extremely important that all students respect their peers (as well as the instructors) and refrain from any unnecessary, disruptive, and off-topic discussions during class. The instructor encourages an open environment in which everyone has a right to express their own opinions and ideas. However, everyone should be able to do so without having to talk over their peers in order to be heard.

**Electronic Devices:** Under no circumstances are students allowed to use portable music devices (MP3 players, iPhones, etc.) or portable video game systems (PSP, mobile phones, etc.) during class. Your first extra credit assignment is to bring Dr. Carr a Post-It Note with your first and last name, as well as your favourite music artist and album, written on it before the second class session on 8/22. You come to class to learn. If students are observed using portable music or gaming devices after the class has started, they will be asked to leave the class.

#### Unique Academic Needs:

If you have an academic need or learning disability that should be taken into account in either classroom activities or exams, please be sure that the proper documentation is delivered to the instructor in the first two weeks of the semester. Also, “any student needing to arrange reasonable accommodation for a documented disability should contact Disability Concerns at 350 Fell Hall, 438-5853 (voice), 438-8620 (TDD).”

#### Religious Observances:

It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays.

You may arrange to take an exam on an alternative date if the exam falls on a religious holy day. Let the instructor know in the first two weeks of the semester if any exam date falls on a religious holy day.

#### Course Adjustments:

Any aspect of this syllabus, including content and reading schedule, may be adjusted throughout the semester. Changes will be announced via class or ReggieNet. Students are responsible for checking ReggieNet for announcements at least twice weekly.

## Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings (To be completed prior the class listed)	Assignments (due before the start of class)
M 8/20	Introductions What is Organizational Communication?	Syllabus <a href="#">Wikipedia: Org. Comm.</a> (Sec. 2-4)	
8/22	Framing Org. Comm.	Miller, Ch. 1	
M 8/27	Classical Approaches	Miller, Ch. 2 (pp. 16 – 28)	
8/29		(pp. 28 –34)	<i>Quiz 1</i>
M 9/3	NO CLASS	LABOR DAY	
9/5	Human Relations Approaches	Miller, Ch. 3 (pp. 35 – 46)	
M 9/10		(pp. 46 – 56)	
9/12	Systems Approaches	Miller, Ch.4 (pp. 57 – 70)	<i>Quiz 2</i>
M 9/17		(pp. 70 – 76)	
9/19	Culture	Miller, Ch.5 (pp. 79 – 88)	
M 9/24		(pp. 88 – 98)	
9/26	Power & Control	Miller, Ch.6 (pp. 99 – 110)	<i>Quiz 3</i>
M 10/1		(pp. 110 – 119)	
10/3	Assimilation	Miller, Ch. 7 (pp. 120 – 134)	
M 10/8		(pp. 134 – 138)	
10/10		Grier & Tollison (1994) on RN	<i>Quiz 4</i>
M 10/15		<i>Exam 1 (Ch. 1-7)</i>	<i>Traditional Paper Due In-Class</i>
10/17	Decision-Making Processes	Miller, Ch.8 (pp. 139 – 147)	
M 10/22		(pp. 147 – 158)	
10/24	Conflict Management	Miller, Ch.9 (pp. 159 – 169)	
M 10/29		(pp. 169 – 178)	<i>Quiz 5</i>
10/31	Change	Miller, Ch.10 (pp. 179 – 187)	<i>Whale Paper Due</i>
M 11/5	Leadership	(pp. 187 – 196); Supplemental RN Readings on leadership styles & member roles	
11/7	Emotion	Miller, Ch.11 (pp. 197 – 204)	
M 11/12		(pp. 204 – 216)	
11/14	Diversity	Miller, Ch.12 (pp. 217 – 236)	<i>Quiz 6</i>
M 11/19	NO CLASS	THANKSGIVING	
11/21	NO CLASS	THANKSGIVING	



M 11/26	Technology	Miller, Ch. 13 (pp. 237 – 246)	
11/28		(pp. 247 – 256); Carr & Stefaniak (2012) on RN	
M 12/3		Baltes, Dickson, & Sherman, Bauer, & LaGanke (2002) on RN	
12/5	Future Trends	Miller, Ch.14 (pp. 257 – 273)	<i>Quiz 7</i>
R 12/13	<i>Final Exam Period 3:10p – 5:10p</i>	<i>Exam 2 (Chs. 8-14; Cumulative)</i>	