COMMUNICATION IN ORGANIZATIONS
SPRING 2013
MWF 12 – 12:50 p.m.
OCNR 130

Instructor: Kellie Smith
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Office & Office Phone: BH 366  ph: 825-5750
Office Hours M & W 1-4 p.m. and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES: The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the basic skills, principles, and contexts of communication in business and professional settings but combining public speaking with aspects of communication ethics and organizational, small group, and interpersonal communication. Students will learn practical skills via presentations, research, resumes, interviews, meetings, and professional writing grounded in communication theory. In addition to the content presented and discussed in class, students will use the class discussion forum on Blackboard to post their own reflections on the course content as assigned.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, students will be able to

- Identify key terms and major communication theories relevant to the study of business and professional communication;
- Create a resume to enhance individual career and/or educational marketability;
- Use effective interviewing skills and techniques;
- Apply theory in order to effectively communicate as both a team member and as a leader;
- Assess the performance of team members based on clearly defined objectives and present that assessment in an honest, yet constructive manner;
- Successfully integrate communication and research skills to create a professional presentation; and
- Produce an effective corporate profile.

REQUIRED TEXT
Quintanilla, K. & Wahl, S. (2013). Business and professional communication: KEYS for workplace excellence. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. This text will provide the beginning of our in-class discussions and will be supplemented with other materials the instructor will present. Students are required to read the text assignments prior to class (see schedule).

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION: Discussions of material in the text – professor and students; presentation of additional material – professor and students; in-class activities (involves some group work) – students; out-of-class activities (some group work) – students; exams – instructor and students; in-class presentations – students and instructor; online discussion posts via Blackboard- students; and written papers – students and instructor. This course requires students to make presentations in front of the class.

METHOD OF EVALUATION: The instructor will grade most exams, activities, presentations, papers. Students will be given criteria that will be used to grade student presentations and will be asked to assess fellow classmates’ work. All assignments and information below shows how each assignment fits into the final grade for the course. Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor to discuss grades on assignments as grades are given and not wait until the end of the semester.

DROPPING A COURSE: I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.
**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Exams:**
Students will be graded on 2 examinations with each covering approximately ½ of the text and course material. The exams will be objective (true/false and multiple choice) and subjective (short essay and list) and are worth 200 points each.

**Individual Research Presentation:**
Each student will prepare a 5-10 minute presentation that provides an in-depth overview of a scholarly journal article or research study on a topic or theory pertaining to the course material. The schedule for these presentations will be determined at the beginning of the semester. Because of the relevance of each presentation to the daily lecture, make up presentations will not be allowed.

**Individual Case Study Presentations:**
You will be assigned a topic area such as listening, leadership or work-life balance. You will then research an organization, preferably a well-known company that has shown excellence in this area. For the profile you will provide background information on the organization and evidence to support your claim that the organization has shown excellence.

**Team Presentation (15%)**
You will be randomly assigned to a team consisting of 4-6 members. As a team you will develop a procedure for recording policies, including division of labor and attendance. Your team will present on a topic related to communication excellence in the business and professional context. During the planning phase your team will assess the problem/situation, select a topic, develop a plan of action, and take any needed steps in preparation for the implementation phase. The implementation phase will include giving an oral presentation (30 minutes) based on your research.

**Memos (5%)**
You will write a performance appraisal of your fellow teammates. Specifically, you will write a memo in which you appraise your teammates' performance as both leaders and team members. All discussions must be tied to the theories and concepts covered in this course. Specific examples must be cited; therefore, you should keep a log of group meetings and progress.

Each memo should include the following.

A. Describe and evaluate contributions. Be specific. Make certain to focus the evaluation on communication excellence.

B. Identify an area(s) for performance improvement. Then make suggestions for improvement based on what you have learned about communication this semester.

C. Your financial officer has informed you that each person can receive up to $100 in bonus salary. In the concluding paragraph assign the bonus amount. The amount must be justified by the content of the performance appraisal.

**Peer Evaluation Average (5%)**
The bonus score you receive from your teammates will be averaged together and that score will become 5% of his or her final grade in this course.

**GRADE CALCULATION:**

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Two examinations</td>
<td>400 total points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Research Presentation</td>
<td>150 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Case Study Presentation</td>
<td>150 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>150 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cover letter, resume, interview</td>
<td>50 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memos</td>
<td>50 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Evaluation Average</td>
<td>50 points</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000 points</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Grade Calculation</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60%</td>
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ATTENDANCE POLICY: According to the TAMUCC Undergraduate Catalog, “Students are held responsible for attending class.” Students who attend this class will be rewarded with grade points for in-class activities (worth 100 points) and online discussion assignments (worth 150 points). These two components together essentially account for 25% of your final grade! Students who miss class will not have the opportunity to engage in these important assignments.

There will be no make-ups on any assignments (including exams, presentations and papers) except for students with university-approved absences and medical excuses from a doctor. These students will have opportunities to make-up missed work, but it is the student’s responsibility to see the instructor.

STUDENTS ARE ALLOWED THREE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES WITHOUT PENALTY. Students with more than three unexcused absences will lose one percentage point off their final grade average for every unexcused absence beyond the third.

For example, at the end of the course, Pat has earned 910 points, or a 91% average in the class. However, Pat had four unexcused absences during the semester and missed two of the online discussion assignments (which count toward Pat’s attendance). Therefore, Pat has a total of SIX unexcused absences, which is three beyond the allowed. Pat will lose 3 percentage points off the final grade, resulting in an 88%. Unexcused absences will affect your grade!

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Students unaware of the university’s statement on academic honesty should review it in the Undergraduate Catalog or Student Handbook. Examples of academic dishonesty and plagiarism are using someone else’s ideas and not giving them credit; presenting a paper or speech that is not originally yours; handing in assignments that are not originally yours; presenting “facts” or lifting ideas from sources without crediting the source; presenting falsified opinions and figures; cheating on an exam; or not participating in group activities, but taking credit for the product. If you are uncertain as to what actions constitute plagiarism or dishonesty, please ask your professor. Students who violate the code of honesty in this class will receive a “0” on that assignment. Any student receiving more than one “0” for academic dishonesty or plagiarism will fail the course. Note: All violations of the academic honesty are reported to the dean and Office of Students Affairs who maintain documentation of such offenses for at least 5 years.

GRADE APPEALS: As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is on the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University RulesWeb site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Students Affairs.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: As professors and students, we all want to treat each other with respect. Examples of being disrespectful are talking on a cell phone or text messaging during class; playing games on a computer or answering email; reading assignments for other courses; interrupting students or the professor; talking when someone else is talking (student or professor); walking into the room and disrupting a student when they are speaking; being overly argumentative in class with another student or professor; and using inappropriate language in class. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. If you arrive late for class and we are hearing student presentations, please remain outside and enter when the student/s have finished.

BLACKBOARD ACCESS: Some class items will be posted on Blackboard and students should know how to use it. If you have difficulty, call the university’s Help Desk at 825-2825 or long distance 866-353-2491.
**EQUITY STATEMENT:** All persons, regardless of gender, age, class, race, ethnicity, religion, physical disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, nationality, etc., shall have equal opportunity without harassment in this class. Any problems with or questions about harassment can be discussed confidentially with your professor or department chair.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Driftwood 101.

**RETURNING VETERAN:** If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services Office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**ACADEMIC ADVISING:** TAMUCC colleges require that students meet with an academic advisor as soon as they declare a major in the college. The advisor will work with the student to set-up a degree plan and in the College of Liberal Arts must be signed by the student, major department faculty mentor, and department chair. CLA’s Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E and can be reached at 825-3466.