COMM 4380:
Senior Seminar in Communication Studies

Instructor: Dr. Kelly Quintanilla
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Director, School of Arts, Media & Communication
Professor, Communication

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Office Hours: By Appointment; Daily

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course serves as the capstone for the Communication Studies track. It offers students opportunities to synthesize information learned in other Communication courses and demonstrate abilities to think critically, conduct independent research linked to appropriate communication theories, create individual and collaborative projects that demonstrate effective use of communication strategies, and present written and oral work at an advanced level. Prerequisite: COMM 1307, 1370, 3310, and Senior rank.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving abilities;
- Create written & oral work that demonstrate effective use of communication strategies;
- Understand communication theories and apply them in analyzing communication interactions and texts;
- Identify issues in communication ethics

Additionally, students will be able to:

- Articulate connections across courses in the communication curriculum; and
- Understand the process for applying to graduate school and professional positions
COURSE POLICIES:

Attendance: You are expected to attend all scheduled meetings of this course. Attendance will be taken at every scheduled class meeting. Any absences will result in deductions of 1% points per absence from your total points at the end of the semester and excessive absences will result in course failure.

Late Work: Late work will only be accepted with prior approval. Failure to turn in work on the assigned date will result in a 50% reduction in the possible grade for the assignment.

Scholastic Dishonesty Statement: Plagiarism is considered serious academic misconduct. All assignments presented should be the work of the student enrolled in the course. Proper documentation should be made of materials cited from all sources. Instructors determining that a student has plagiarized will assign a failing grade for that assignment and may elect to pursue disciplinary proceedings against the student. It is the responsibility of students and instructors to help maintain scholastic integrity at the University by refusing to participate in or tolerate scholastic dishonesty. Commission of any of the following acts shall constitute scholastic dishonesty. This listing is not exclusive of any other acts that may reasonably be said to constitute scholastic dishonesty: acquiring or providing information for any assigned work or examination from any unauthorized source; informing any person or persons of the contents of any examination prior to the time the examination is given in subsequent sections of the course or as a makeup; plagiarism; submission of a paper or project that is substantially the same for two courses unless expressly authorized by the instructor to do so.

Equity Statement: All persons, regardless of gender, age, class, race, ethnicity, religion, physical disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, etc. shall have equal opportunity without harassment in this class. Any problems with or questions about harassment can be discussed confidentially with the professor or the department chair.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class, must notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide documentation of his/her disability to the Director of Assistant Director of Disability Services who may be reached at 825-5816 or CCH 116.

Advising Statement: The College of Liberal Arts requires students meet with an academic advisor. The academic advisor will review the degree plan you have developed in consultation with your faculty advisor and graduate committee. The Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E; your academic advisor, Rachelle Stanley, can be reached at 825-3466.
GRADING:

Graduate School Assignment 5 points
Resume and Cover Letter Assignment 5 points
Paper Proposal/Draft 5 points
Speech Outline and Visual Aids 5 points
Analysis Paper 40 points
Analysis Presentation 40 points

Grading Scale:

90 – 100 points A
89 – 80 points B
79 – 70 points C
69 – 60 points D
59 or fewer points F

GRADE APPEALS PROCESS:

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Graduate School Assignment: (5 points)

To give you an understanding of career planning, you will research graduate programs that support your future career goals. Additionally, you will be required to write a reflection/summary of this experience. Due: February 12th

Resume and Cover Letter Assignment: (5 points)

You will find a job posting to which you would like to apply, research the position and develop a resume and cover letter. You will then set an appointment with Career Services to review your resume and cover letter. This assignment is credit/no credit. Due: Finals Week
Analysis Project Overview

For this project you will assume the role of a communication researcher/consultant. You will first identify a communication problem in an organization to which you all belong, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. You will then conduct an in depth analysis of the problem and develop recommendations for improvement. Your research project will result in both a paper and a presentation and must incorporate the application of communication theory and the discussion of relevant ethic issues.

Paper Proposal: (5 points)

For the first part of this assignment, you will be required to answer a series of questions about the organization’s communication problem, which will include a draft of one section of the paper. For the second part of this assignment, you will answer a series of questions about your recommendations and provide your bibliography.

Due: Part 1: February 19th; Part 2: March 5

Analysis Paper: (40 points)

As noted above you will assume the role of a communication consultant. You will first identify a communication problem at TAMUCC. You will then conduct an in depth analysis of the problem and develop recommendations for improvement. Both the analysis and the recommendations must be based on the application of communication theories. For this assignment you must incorporate a minimum of two areas of communication study and a minimum of 4 theories. For example, you might include leadership and interpersonal communication or intercultural and small group communication. Finally, your project must address the ethic implications related to the problem you are analyzing and/or the solution you are proposing. The final paper must 8 pages, double spaced, 12 point font. Due: March 26th

Speech Outline and Visual Aids (5 points)

You will be required to submit a detailed outline of your research presentation (NOT a manuscript) along with any supporting visual aids. Due: April 2nd

Presentation: (40 points)

After completing your analysis paper, you will develop a presentation that will provide an overview of the problem and clearly explain the solution. This must be designed as a speech. You should NOT read your paper. This presentation is expected to be professional. Professional quality visual aids and a conversational delivery style are required. The presentation must be between 10-15 minutes. Due: Assigned Date between April 7th through May 5th
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

January 22: Course Overview

January 27 & 29: Next Steps with a Communication Degree: Graduate School

February 3 & 5: Analysis Project
Understanding the role of a Consultant
Defining the communication problem
Considering the Ethic Implications

February 10 & 12: Application of theory to analyze the problem
Application of theory to develop recommendations
Graduate School Assignment DUE

February 17 & 19: The role of the literature review
Proposal, Part 1 DUE

February 24 & 26: Writing Workshop

March 3 & 5: Writing Workshop
Proposal, Part 2 DUE

SPRING BREAK

March 17 & 19: Next Steps with a Communication Degree: Employment

March 24 & 26: Presenting like a Professional
Analysis Paper DUE

March 31 & April 2: Public Speaking Workshop
Speech Outlines & Visual Aids DUE

April 7 & 9: Presentations

April 14 & 16: Presentations

April 21 & 23: Presentations

April 28 & 30: Presentations

May 5th: Presentations

FINALS WEEK: Course Wrap Up
Resume & Cover Letter Assignment DUE
# Criteria for Analysis Paper Evaluation

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<th>Content</th>
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<th>5</th>
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<td>Applies communication theories</td>
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<td>Argument is very coherent</td>
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<td>Argument is not at all coherent</td>
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<td>Uses evidence very well to support claims</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Did not use evidence to support claims at all</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very clear evidence of critical thinking</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>No evident of critical thinking</td>
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<td>Does not clearly state thesis</td>
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<td>Not at all good paper</td>
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<td>Does not clearly state thesis</td>
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## Criteria for Analysis Presentation Evaluation

### Introduction:
1. **Did the speaker capture the attention of the audience?**
   - Captured attention very well 5 4 3 2 1
   - Did not capture attention at all

2. **Did the speaker make his/her objective and purpose clear?**
   - Very clear 5 4 3 2 1
   - Not clear at all

### Content:
3. **Was the topic well researched?**
   - Well researched 5 4 3 2 1
   - Not at all well researched

4. **Did the speaker use a variety of supporting materials to present their ideas?**
   - Used sufficient variety
   - Of supporting materials 5 4 3 2 1
   - Did not use sufficient variety
   - Of supporting materials

5. **Were sources cited appropriately?**
   - Sources cited appropriately 5 4 3 2 1
   - Sources not cited

6. **Did the visual aids support the speaker’s ideas?**
   - Very clear support 5 4 3 2 1
   - Not at all clear support

7. **Did the speaker appear knowledgeable about the topic?**
   - Very knowledgeable 5 4 3 2 1
   - Not at all knowledgeable

### Organization:
8. **Was the material well organized?**
   - Very well organized 5 4 3 2 1
   - Not organized at all

9. **Did the speaker use transitions to help audience members follow the organization?**
   - Used transitions well 5 4 3 2 1
   - Did not use transitions

### Conclusion:
10. **Did the speaker summarize the main point of the presentation?**
    - Very good summary 5 4 3 2 1
    - No summary at all

11. **Did the speaker provide closure and leave a lasting impression?**
    - Very good closure 5 4 3 2 1
    - No closure at all
Delivery:
12. Did the speaker use appropriate volume?
   Very appropriate volume 5 4 3 2 1 Volume not at all appropriate

13. Did the speaker present the material at a rate that was appropriate for the information and audience?
   Very appropriate rate 5 4 3 2 1 Rate not at all appropriate

14. Did the speaker make good eye contact with all audience members?
   Very good eye contact 5 4 3 2 1 Not good eye contact at all

15. Did the speaker use appropriate gestures, movement, and posture (e.g. did not distract)?
   Appropriate body movement 5 4 3 2 1 Body movement not appropriate

16. Did the speaker incorporate visual aids appropriately during delivery of the presentation?
   Very good use of visual aids 5 4 3 2 1 Not good use of visual aids at all

17. Did the speaker use notes appropriately (e.g. did not rely too heavily on notes or slides)?
   Good use of notes/slides 5 4 3 2 1 Relied too heavily on notes/slides

18. Was the speaker engaging?
   Very engaging 5 4 3 2 1 Not at all engaging

Overall Impression
19. How would you rate the presentation overall?
   Very good presentation 5 4 3 2 1 Not good at all