495 Communication, Collaboration, Community: Capstone

231 Burnett Hall
9:30-10:20 Monday, Wednesday, Friday
Spring, 2016-2017

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Office hours: 10:30 – 11:30 MW or by appointment (Lee, Allen)
Department website: http://comm.unl.edu
Department office: 402-472-2069
Course website: canvas.unl.edu (Canvas)

Department Mission Statement

The mission of the faculty and students of the Department of Communication Studies is to examine human symbolic activity as it shapes and is shaped by relationships, institutions, technology, and culture. This work concerns the creation, analysis, and critique of messages ranging from face-to-face to digital media contexts. The department’s research and teaching devote particular attention to scholarly initiatives aimed at understanding and explaining the role of communication in (a) facilitating civic engagement, mediating public controversies, and organizing for social change, (b) constituting individual and family health, promoting healthy behaviors, and helping persons navigate relational challenges, and (c) creating, maintaining, and challenging personal, social, and community identity in a complex and diverse world.

Course Mission Statement

The department's research, teaching, and service devote particular attention to understanding the ways in which communication sustains and erodes collaboration within and among local, national, and global communities. Through course activities and the semester projects, students will integrate the diverse theories, concepts, and processes learned throughout the communication studies major to reflect upon and improve their scholarly, personal, and professional development.

This course satisfies ACE Outcome 10: "Generate a creative or scholarly product that requires broad knowledge, appropriate technical proficiency, information collection, synthesis, interpretation, presentation, and reflection." Course activities are designed to facilitate the development and completion of individual semester projects that integrate theories, concepts, and skills introduced in previous courses. Course readings, reflection activities, and discussions will explore and synthesize students’ understanding of the department commitment to communication, collaboration, and community.
The specific objectives of this course are:

a. To provide students with an opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired during their course of study in the major to individual projects.

b. To increase students’ ability to conduct communication research.

c. To enhance students’ ability to understand and critically evaluate pressing issues through a communicative perspective.

d. To increase awareness of professional opportunities and practical applications of the Communication Studies discipline.

Text


Readings and Reflections

Course readings are available on the course website.

1. Reflection 1: Work and Happiness.


2. Reflection 2: Thinking about Communication and Power


3. Reflection 3: Communication and Matters of Difference


4. Reflection 4: Communication and Research Methodology

   Readings: Various readings depending on your project. Selections will be posted on Blackboard.
5. **Reflection 5: Communication and Your Professional Life**

Readings: http://www.unl.edu/careers/resumes

**Course Requirements**

1. **Attendance and participation.** Participation has three components—preparation for class, faithful attendance, and meaningful contribution to class discussion (50 points).

2. **Discussion.** Rather than a traditional lecture/note-taking format, we will discuss the readings in a seminar-style format (i.e., group-based discussion). Therefore, you are expected to come to class having **thoroughly** read the assigned readings in a manner that allows you to engage in a critical discussion. You are expected to not only participate, but also be **proactive in generating discussion.** In reading the material, you should identify what you believe are the important concepts and ideas, develop thought-provoking discussion questions, identify any clarification questions, and develop propositions for which fellow students can respond. **We expect that you will develop a list of questions and propositions for each reading prior to class.** Participation in discussion will be evaluated as part of your final evaluation and we will **ask you to turn in your questions and propositions.**

3. **Introduction, Literature Review, and APA.** In this assignment students should demonstrate proficiency in applying APA standards of formatting, conducting academic literature searches, and writing advanced first drafts. First, students will be evaluated on their ability to format in-text and reference citations according to the APA guide assigned to the class (APA: The easy way). Second, students will be evaluated on their ability to perform thorough literature searches in communication journals and other humanities and social-science databases. Finally, students will be evaluated on their ability to synthesize their research into a well-organized literature review that will serve as part of the introduction to their final research projects. Students will receive two grades for this assignment. The first grade will be based on adherence to APA formatting rules as well as the thoroughness of the literature review. The second grade will be a preliminary/temporary grade of the introduction and literature review as a whole. This second grade will reflect our evaluation of the introduction and literature review as if it were the final product. We expect students to make revisions based on this preliminary grade to improve the overall quality of the final paper. (25 points).

4. **Reflections.** As a capstone course, you are expected to exit the class with an enhanced understanding of the Communication Studies discipline and the ways in which your coursework reflects the department commitment to **Communication, Collaboration, and Community.** To achieve this objective, you will complete guided reflections throughout the semester. For the three of the reflections, you will be asked to provide your perspective on a series of questions in a 3-5 page written response (typed, double-spaced). The essays are expected to reflect university-level writing quality. (25 each, 125 total points).

5. **Individual research project.** There are two options for the semester project in terms of the nature of the inquiry. You may choose to complete an empirical, data based study or a
critical rhetorical analysis. Each option requires you to demonstrate theoretical-conceptual knowledge, written and oral presentation proficiency, and analytical skills. In addition to the final written product, you will present your project in a “poster session” to an audience of faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. The written portion will count as 85% of your evaluation and the visual-oral presentation will count as 15% of your evaluation. You will receive detailed information on requirements for the individual projects as we progress through the semester. Regardless of the nature of your project, all work will be evaluated based on expectations for a senior, 400-level, capstone course. Remember that the appearance of your assignments signals the time and care in which they were prepared. All the material you turn in is expected to reflect university-level writing quality. Spelling, organizational, grammatical, and formatting errors will greatly reduce your final grade (60 poster, 340 paper, 400 total points).

In the semester schedule, we have built in two types of activities to facilitate completion of the capstone project:

- **Capstone Project Workshops.** Workshops will cover various topics related to your semester project. Some of the workshops will be significant for all students whereas others will be specific to one of the project options. For some of the workshops, you will be required to read sample articles, overview chapters, etc. These will be posted prior to the capstone workshop.

- **Individual Meetings.** We have designated various times throughout the semester for individual meetings. Unless we make prior arrangements, meetings should take place during the class periods or office hours during that week. The purpose of the individual meetings is to provide one-on-one, customized assistance on your project.

These activities are important in keeping you on track with your semester project.

**Grading scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>600-558</td>
<td>(93%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>557-540</td>
<td>(90%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>539-522</td>
<td>(87%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>521-498</td>
<td>(83%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>497-480</td>
<td>(80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>479-462</td>
<td>(77%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>461-438</td>
<td>(73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>437-420</td>
<td>(70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>419-402</td>
<td>(67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>401-378</td>
<td>(63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>377-360</td>
<td>(60%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>359-0</td>
<td>(50%)</td>
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</tbody>
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**Course Policies**

1. **Evaluation of student work:** A written evaluation will accompany graded work. If you disagree with your evaluation, feel free to come and speak with us. Please do this within a day or two of the time you receive your evaluation. We are not defensive about our grading and you should feel no apprehension about discussing the evaluation of your work. On occasion we have been persuaded to change a grade.
2. **Completion of assignments:** All major assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. The student will receive an **F** for the final course grade regardless of the quality of other work.

3. **Late work and excused absences:** Extensions will be granted only where the student is able to document special circumstances and provide the instructor with prior notification. All other work will be penalized one letter grade for every 24 hours past the due date.

4. **Checking grades:** Your grades will be posted on Blackboard. You may always check your grade by going to Blackboard, clicking “Tools,” and then clicking “Check Grade.”

5. **Passing grade:** You must receive at least a “C” for the course to count toward the major. By university rule, a “C-” is an insufficient grade to count toward completing the major.

6. **Academic misconduct:** Violations of academic integrity are very serious matters and will result in automatic failure of the class, and referral to the proper university officials. The work a student submits in a class is expected to be the student’s own work and must be completed for that particular class and assignment. Academic dishonesty includes: handing in another’s work or part of another’s work as your own, turning in one of your old papers for a current class, turning in the same or similar past or current paper for two different classes, presenting a group project as your work solely, purchasing or otherwise obtaining research or papers written by another and turning that work in as your own. Using unauthorized notes or other study aids or otherwise obtaining another’s answers for an examination also represents a breach of academic integrity. Sanctions are applied whether the violation was intentional or not. You must keep all your original data for projects (i.e. articles, questionnaires, interview audio tapes) and be prepared to present them to the professor when asked.

Plagiarism means intentionally or knowingly representing the words of ideas of another as one’s own. Plagiarism includes quoting or paraphrasing from other sources without acknowledging/citing the source of your information or presenting quoted material as your own words. You must be very clear about attribution of sources and you must know how to cite sources in a paper. Students who are unfamiliar with how to cite sources should purchase a style manual such as the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Claiming lack of knowledge about standards for writing is not an acceptable excuse for committing plagiarism. Come to a faculty member for help if you are at all unsure about any of these issues or seek help at the UNL Writing Assistance Center (472-8803, Andrews Hall 129). No one wants to see you have these kinds of problems with your work, so please start assignments early and seek help when you need it.

7. **Accommodations:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation
services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

**Due Dates**

1. Reflection 1: Vision of Your Professional Life (Speech)  
   F Jan 20, M Jan 23, W Jan 25

2. Introduction, Literature Review, and APA (Essay)  
   F Feb 17

3. Reflection 2: Thinking about Communication and Power (Essay)  
   F Feb 24

4. Reflection 3: Communication and Matters of Difference (Essay)  
   M Mar 13

5. Reflection 4: Communication and Research Methodology (Essay)  
   M Mar 31

6. Reflection 5: Communication and Your Professional Life (Résumé)  
   F Apr 14

7. Poster Session (Oral presentation)  
   W Apr 26

8. Final Research Manuscript (Essay)  
   F Apr 28

**Schedule**

*Week 1*

M Jan 9  
Introduction to the course. Assign Reflection 1

W Jan 11  
Overview of research project

F Jan 13  
Discussion Group 1: Work and happiness

*Week 2*

M Jan 16  
Martin Luther King Day. No class.

W Jan 18  
Discussion Group 2: Work and happiness

F Jan 20  
Student presentations: Vision of your professional life

*Week 3*

M Jan 23  
Student presentations: Vision of your professional life

W Jan 25  
Student presentations: Vision of your professional life
F Jan 27  Overview of capstone project (option 1): Empirical studies

Week 4

M Jan 30  Overview of capstone project (option 2): Criticism.
W Feb 1  Individual meeting 1
F Feb 3  Individual meeting 1

Week 5

M Feb 6  Individual meeting 1
W Feb 8  Capstone workshop: Search the literature/citation form. Assign Introduction, Literature Review, and APA assignment
F Feb 10  Capstone workshop: Search the literature/citation form

Week 6

M Feb 13  Capstone workshop: Search the literature/citation form
F Feb 17  Discussion Group 1: Thinking about Communication and Power
Due: Introduction, Literature Review, and APA assignment

Week 7

M Feb 20  Discussion Group 2: Thinking about Communication and Power
W Feb 22  Capstone workshop method: Empirical studies
F Feb 24  Capstone workshop method: Criticism. Assign Reflection 3
Due: Reflection 2 (Thinking about Communication and Power)

Week 8

M Feb 27  Discussion Group 1: Communication and Matters of Difference
W Mar 1  Discussion Group 2: Communication and Matters of Difference
F Mar 3  Discussion and assessment of undergraduate major
**Week 9**

M Mar 6  Capstone workshop on organizing the manuscript: Empirical studies  
Capstone workshop on organizing the manuscript: Criticism

W Mar 8  Individual meeting 2

F Mar 10  Individual meeting 2

**Week 10**

M Mar 13  Individual meeting 2  
**Due: Reflection 3** (Communication and Matters of Difference)

W Mar 15  Discussion Group 1: Communication and Research Methodology

F Mar 17  Discussion Group 2: Communication and Research Methodology  
Assign Reflection 4

**Week 11**

M Mar 20-24  Spring Break. No class.

**Week 12**

M Mar 27  Capstone workshop: Formatting

W Mar 29  Workshop: Data analysis (1)  
Workshop: Textual analysis (1)

F Mar 31  Workshop: Data Analysis (2)  
Workshop: Textual Analysis (2)  
**Due: Reflection 4** (Communication and Research Methodology)

**Week 13**

M Apr 3  Capstone workshop: Constructing and presenting the poster  
Assign Reflection 5

W Apr 5  Career Workshop: Composing the Résumé and Cover Letter  
Assign Reflection 5
F Apr 7  Career Workshop: Selling Communication Studies Degree I

Week 14

M Apr 10  Career Workshop: Selling Communication Studies Degree II
W Apr 12  Individual meeting 3
F Apr 14  Individual meeting 3
Due: Reflection 5 (Communication and Your Professional Life Résumé)

Week 15

M Apr 17  Individual meetings 3
W Apr 19  Individual meetings 3
F Apr 21  Open (makeup day)

Week 16

M Apr 24  Practice poster speech
W Apr 26  Formal poster session in City Union
   Posters are due
F Apr 28  Course evaluations.
   Final research manuscript is due.