"Live as if you were to die tomorrow; learn as if you were to live forever."
(Mahatma Gandhi)

Course Description
Whether or not you give it much thought, you are surrounded by organizations. Your daily life involves encounters with schools, businesses, churches, health care systems and governments. What’s more, these same organizations are created, maintained, transformed and in some cases, destroyed by communication. The purpose of this course is to increase your awareness of communication processes central to organizing and to develop new vocabularies and skills for working with organizational communication. Your participation in the course should help you better understand how organizational communication contributes to the overall quality of work life and the role of communication in creating and working well with the challenges of organizational life.

Course Objectives
By semester’s end, you will be able to:
1. Explain various approaches to organization and their implications for a variety of communication processes;
2. Apply course concepts to better understand and work with a variety of organizational communication challenges, and
3. Draw upon knowledge of organizational communication to better understand and if necessary, negotiate the conditions of your work life.

Required Reading

A small set of additional required readings are posted to CANVAS.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Read/Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/21</td>
<td>Introduction to course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/23</td>
<td>The Challenge of Organizational Communication</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/28</td>
<td>Classical Approaches</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/30</td>
<td>Classical Approaches</td>
<td>Activity: Re-creating Classical Approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/4</td>
<td>Human Relations &amp; Resources</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 3</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>*Due: Organizational Fact Sheet (submitted individually)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>QUIZ #1: Chapters 1, 2, 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/11</td>
<td>Systems Theory</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 4, pp. 60-71</td>
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<td>9/13</td>
<td>Systems Theory</td>
<td>READ: “The Staff Breakdown” Case (posted to CANVAS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>Cultural Approaches</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 4, pp. 71-81</td>
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<td>9/20</td>
<td>Cultural Approaches</td>
<td>PREPARE: “The Cultural Tale of Two Shuttles”, pp. 79-81</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/25</td>
<td>Constitutive Approaches</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 5, pp. 82-89</td>
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<td>VIEW: Communicative Constitution of Organizations with Matt Koschmann</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/27</td>
<td>Constitutive Approaches</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 5, pp. 90-98</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/2</td>
<td>Critical Approaches</td>
<td>READ: Chapter 6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
10/4  **Critical Approaches**  
VIEW: Clips from “Office Space” and “Modern Times”  
QUIZ #2: Chapters 4, 5, 6

10/9 **Socialization Processes**  
READ: Chapter 7

10/11 **Socialization Processes**  
READ: Chapter 7

10/16 **No Class – Fall Break!**

10/18 **Conflict Management Processes**  
READ: Chapter 9  
PREPARE: “Bob’s Dilemma” Case (posted to CANVAS)

10/23 **Conflict Management Processes**  
PREPARE: “The Problem with Teamwork” case, pp. 174-175

10/25 **Emotion Processes in the Workplace**  
READ: Chapter 11

10/30 **Emotion Processes in the Workplace**  
READ: Chapter 11

11/1 **Organizational Diversity Processes**  
READ: Chapter 12

11/6 Annual Meeting of the National Communication Association  
Class does not meet

11/8 NCA Meeting  
Class does not meet

11/13 **Organizational Diversity Processes**  
READ: Chapter 12

11/15 **QUIZ #3: Chapters 7, 9, 11, 12**
Mission of the Communication Studies Department
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 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 Requirements & Assignments
Quizzes (150 points)
You will be required to complete three 50-point quizzes each of which is designed to assess your understanding of course concepts. Each quiz will consist of 10 three-point multiple-choice items and one 20-point essay question. You are allowed one page of notes to guide your response to the essay questions. I am providing the essay questions in advance and they include:

Quiz 1: Rachel was excited to begin her new job at Acme Metal Products. After about six weeks on the job, though, she grew impatient with the organization’s everyday use of classical management principles. Now unhappy, she decides to look for a new job in an organization that adopts more of a human resources approach. Select three concepts from classical theory and discuss how each would help explain her unhappiness with the first job. Then, select three concepts from human relations/resources theory and explain how each would offer Rachel hope for a more positive work experience.


**Quiz 2:** Tim’s greatest fear about entering the world of paid work following graduation is that he will find himself stuck in a dead-end job without the opportunity to grow and develop. Drawing on systems, cultural, constitutive and critical approaches to organizational communication discuss four different ways (one idea from each approach) in which his fear could be communicatively addressed and overcome.

**Quiz 3:** Imagine that you are writing a letter of application to an employer. Explain to him or her how your knowledge of these four organizational communication processes (i.e., socialization, emotion, conflict, diversity) would be of benefit to the organization.

**Paper Assignment (175 total points)**
Working first as individuals and then in pairs, you will be asked to draw upon course concepts to develop an assessment of a local organization’s communication effectiveness from two of the following three perspectives: classical, human relations/resources, systems. Each of you will submit an organizational fact sheet that describes an organization you have enough access to that you could develop a credible assessment of its communication effectiveness. Then, working in pairs, you will conduct interviews with organizational members in order to learn more about how well the organization operates according to classical, human relations/resources and/or systems approaches.

**Organizational Fact Sheet** (25 points) – As an individual, identify a local organization that you have access to and would be interesting to learn more about. Complete a “fact sheet” about the organization that includes: its official name, a description of its purpose/mission, a description of how it goes about accomplishing its purpose/mission, a description of its leadership, a description of what’s at stake if this organization succeed or fails, a description of how much access you have to organizational members, and the name of a contact person and his/her contact information. See the assignment sheet on p. 9. (Papers are due in class on Tuesday, September 4)

**Organizational Communication Assessment Paper** (150 points) – Develop interview questions that will help you learn more about how well the organization operates according to two of the following approaches: classical, human relations/resources, systems. Conduct interviews with organizational members to help you learn more about how they experience the organization’s effectiveness along these lines and their thoughts on how the organization’s communication could be improved. Present a summary of what you’ve learned and your recommendations for how the organization could improve its communication. See the more detailed assignment sheet on p. 10. (Papers are due in class on Thursday, December 6.)

**Organizational Communication Conversation** (50 points)
You can earn as many as 50 points for your work leading an “organizational communication conversation” in class. This requires you to select a current organizational situation that has important implications for people and organizations. Briefly present the situation to the class, draw some connections with course concepts and pose two-three questions to stimulate class-wide conversation related to the issue. See the more detailed assignment sheet on p. 11.

**Attendance & Participation** (25 points)
The quality of your participation makes a significant difference in how you and your classmates experience this course. To encourage your participation, you can earn as many as 25 points for attending class and regularly participating in class discussions. Among other behaviors,
meaningful participation includes posing questions about course materials, asking each other questions, responding to each other’s questions, raising questions about organizational communication based on your own work experience, and drawing connections between current organizational happenings and course ideas.

Workload
The reading and assignments for this course are consistent with the workload recommended for a 300-level course. You can expect to work approximately two hours outside of class for every hour that you are in class.

Point Summary
You may keep track of earned points here:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Possible points</th>
<th>Earned points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quiz #1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz #3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Fact Sheet</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Communication</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>OrgCom Conversation</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>_______</strong></td>
<td><strong>_______</strong></td>
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<td><strong>(400 possible)</strong></td>
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Course Policies

Class Climate
While I do lecture nearly each day, I also value and seek to develop a class climate that welcomes and respects your participation. Please respect each other and everyone’s learning experience by turning off the ringer on your cell phone, paying attention to others’ contributions and making your own contributions to class discussion. Behaviors such as arriving late or leaving early, texting, sleeping during class, or carrying on conversations with your neighbors during class-wide discussions fail to support a climate of learning and may adversely affect your participation points.

Attendance Policy
I expect you to attend class consistently, to be on time, and stay throughout the entire period. Tardiness or missed classes will be reflected in participation points. Repeated absences will likely result in weaker performance on the assignments as requirements frequently are discussed further in class. Our in-class sessions are designed to complement course readings and to further develop your understanding of key concepts. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get class notes and assignments from a trusted classmate. If you have additional questions, please contact me.
Excused Absences
Excused absences include university-affiliated activities with prior notification, a documented emergency, or an illness verified in writing by a health care provider. These notes do not need to state the specifics of your emergency situation or illness, but should state that you are not well enough to attend class. If an emergency arises and you know in advance that you will not be making it to class on an assignment due date, please contact me as soon as possible. If a presentation is not made on the assigned day it will receive a grade of zero.

Policy on Written Work
Unless otherwise noted, all written assignments should be submitted in paper form in class on the day they are due. Documents should be word-processed in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. All work should be spell-checked and grammatically correct. All citations should be documented using the most recent guidelines for citing research outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA). If you are accustomed to writing within the guidelines of another established style, please let me know.

Late Assignments
In order to treat individual students and the entire class fairly, late work will not be accepted without penalty. Accepting late work without penalty indirectly devalues other students’ grades and the potential sacrifices they may have made to submit their work on time. In addition, each student in the class likely could produce stronger work if he or she had been given extra time to complete the assignment. An assignment is considered late if it is not presented in hard copy form in class on the day it is due. Depending on the circumstances and the assignment, you may have the opportunity to turn in work late for a penalty (usually a 10% point deduction for every 24 hours the assignment is overdue). Please contact me first to see if I will accept the assignment late. If so, we will agree to a process for turning it in.

Make-up Work
Make-up work and alternative accommodations for full credit will only be allowed for students who seek permission prior to an absence and/or provide documentation of extenuating circumstances. If you are unable to attend class on the day a quiz is scheduled, you must notify me at least 24 hours in advance. A single make-up exam will be offered during finals week.

Technology Use
Please turn off cell phones while present in class. If you choose to use your laptop during class, keep in mind that using them for reasons other than note taking is distracting to those sitting near and behind you.

Pass/No Pass Option
If you have elected the pass/no pass option in this course, you must receive at least a grade of “C” in order to pass. A grade of “C” also is needed for this course to count toward a major in Communication Studies.

Academic Dishonesty & Student Misconduct
The Department of Communication Studies is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity. The Department adopts the campus definition of academic dishonesty in the Student Code of Conduct (Article 3, Section B-1) including cheating, fabrication or falsification,
plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), abuse of academic materials, complicity in academic dishonesty, falsifying grade reports, impermissible collaboration, and misrepresentation. The instructors will meet with the student and if they determine that academic dishonesty or misconduct has occurred, the instructor will prepare a written account and file a “Misconduct Referral Form” with the Office of the Dean of Students. The full “Academic Dishonesty and Student Misconduct” policy is linked to the Communication Studies Department’s website: https://comm.unl.edu/forms-and-policies.

Grading & Grade Appeals
If you have a concern about a grade you have received on an assignment, the first step is to register your concern with me. If your concern is not resolved, you may continue your appeal following the process detailed in The Department of Communication Studies “Grading and Grade Appeals” policy document linked to the department’s website: https://comm.unl.edu/forms-and-policies.

Students with Special Needs
I encourage students with special needs to contact me for a confidential discussion of your individual needs for academic accommodation as determined by Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). This includes students with mental health disabilities like depression and anxiety. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska to provide individualized accommodations 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 Office, 232 Canfield Administration, 472-3787.

Total Points and Final Grades

It is possible to earn a total of 400 points in this class. The grading scale is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Minimum Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>98 – 100%</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93-97</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87 – 89</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 – 82</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77 – 79</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 72</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67 – 69</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 62</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less than 60</td>
<td>239</td>
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Enjoy the course!
COMM 386
Introduction to Organizational Communication

Organizational Fact Sheet Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to survey the connections students have with local organizations that could serve as sites for your organizational communication assessment papers. You will present these papers in class on the due date. This will allow us to identify organizations you have in common or organizations that might serve as the best sites for assessment. Shortly after your paper presentations, you will pair up with another student in class to conduct an organizational communication assessment and to write your final paper. Toward that end this assignment requires you to provide:

1. The official name of the organization
2. A statement of the organization’s purpose and/or mission
3. A description of how it goes about accomplishing its purpose/mission
4. A description of the organization’s leadership
5. A description of what is at stake if the organization succeeds or fails
6. A description of how much access you would have to allow interviews with members
7. Name, address, phone, e-mail address of contact person

Papers should be about two pages in length (typed, double-spaced) and are due in class on Tuesday, September 4.
Organizational Communication Assessment Paper

The purpose of this assignment is to gain practice thinking about and understanding the challenges of organizational communication from more than one perspective. Toward that end, you and your partner will develop a series of questions designed to learn more about a local organization using concepts from two of the first three approaches to organizations studied during the first part of the semester. The final paper should include the following:

1. A creative and professional title page
2. An introduction that states the paper’s purpose and a preview of what follows (about ½ page)
3. A rationale for what can be gained by using two approaches to understand this organization and its communication challenges (about ½ page)
4. A brief description of the organization and what it seeks to accomplish (about ½ page)
5. A brief overview of the two approaches you’ve chosen to work with (about ½ page)
6. A description of the process you followed to collect your “data” and a list of the questions you asked to learn more about how each of the two approaches you selected operate in this organization. (about 1-1 ½ pages)
7. An analysis of how concepts from your first approach figure in to the organization’s communication and challenges. (about 3 pages)
8. An analysis of how concepts from the second approach figure in to this organization’s communication and challenges. (about 3 pages)
9. A comparison of how well each of these approaches explains the organization’s communication and challenges. (about 1 page)
10. Your suggestions for how this organization’s communication could be improved using ideas from both approaches. (about 2 pages)
11. A conclusion explaining what you’ve learned about organizational communication because of your work on this paper. (about ½ page)
12. Attach a list of references that include the Miller textbook, any supplemental readings you drew from and/or sources related to the organization.

13. **Last, attach a statement detailing each partner’s contribution to the paper and each partner’s assessment of the quality of each other’s contribution.**

The text of your papers (minus the title page, references and attachments) should be between 12-13 pages in length (typed, double-spaced) and are due in class Thursday, December 6.
OC Conversation Assignment

This assignment requires you to lead a class-wide conversation related to a current event where an organization made a controversial decision or acted in a way that provoked or responded to a public controversy. The organization could be a church, a corporation, a government agency, a non-profit organization, a local organization, a national organization, a global organization. The possibilities are nearly endless. But, select an organizational situation you find interesting and important. You will have approximately 10 minutes to lead a conversation guided by three slides that include:

1. Slide 1 – A clear enough overview of the situation so that students can engage your discussion questions in meaningful way
2. Slide 2 - connections with course concepts, preferably from that day’s or the previous day’s readings
3. Slide 3 – Two-three discussion questions/conversation starters

Submit a paper copy of your slides in class the day you lead your conversation.