

COMST 214 (Section XU)
PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION
 Communication Studies Program
 Spring 2017 Course Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name: Julie Snyder-Yuly

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Phone: 515-294-3181 (this does not ring to my desk by the main office, but they can usually reach me)

Office: 2271 Gilman Hall

Office Hours: Wednesdays/Thursdays 10:00-11:30 a.m. (or by appointment)

COURSE PURPOSE and OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course is to develop your knowledge of communication theory and competence in organizational settings, with a particular emphasis on interpersonal skill development, team and meeting facilitation, informational interviewing, and team presentations and self-assessment. The **specific learning objectives** of this course include:

- Understand of the role of communication in professional contexts.
- Increase competence in the development and maintenance of professional relationships, including listening, networking, and conflict management.
- Increase understanding and appreciation of cultural differences.
- Increase competence in working as a group or team.
- Increase competence when interviewing, both as an interviewee and as an interviewer.
- Develop professional presentations as an individual and a group.
- Conduct self-assessments of one's professional communication skills and suggest ways to improve

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Due to the nature of an online course, it is very important that you stay on top of your readings in this class as this material will inform your discussion posts and writing assignments and help your performance on the presentations.

Textbook and Additional Readings

Adler, R.B., & Elmhorst, J.M. (2013). *Communicating at work: Principles and practices for business and the professions (11th edition)*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Additional readings/articles listed on the course schedule will be posted on Blackboard.

BlackBoard

If you are enrolled in the course, you should have access to the course on Blackboard. Copies of the syllabus, assignment instruction sheets, additional readings, and grades will be available through this site. You should check BlackBoard daily throughout the semester. I will ONLY be using BlackBoard a means of posting course content, grading your assignments, and communicating with you about course-related information. Please do not submit assignments through email or expect emails from me on course content or changes. It is your responsibility to check BlackBoard on a regular basis and stay up to date on your readings and assignments via this channel.

Word Processing Software

With exception of weekly discussion posts (which should be typed directly into the text boxes on the discussion

board), all assignments must be completed using Microsoft Word (I do not have access to any other word processing program). Additionally, all assignments must be typed, double spaced, with 1 inch margins, and 12 point Times New Roman font. When necessary, you should include a title page and/or reference page that follows APA format. For APA help, you may see the APA Manual or visit: <http://www.stylewizard.com/>.

Video Equipment

You will complete two presentations that must be videotaped and uploaded to Cybox over the course of the semester. You can use personal video equipment (e.g., video cameras, tablets, phones) or rent equipment (for free) from ITS. Information regarding the video equipment rental can be found at the following website: <http://www.it.iastate.edu/services/laptops>. You can also reserve a room on campus to use for videotaping your presentation. When videotaping your presentations, be sure to practice using the equipment before recording your final presentation and be sure you (and any other co-presenters), as well as any visual aids you use, are within the camera frame (so I can see them when watching/grading your presentations). You are expected to remain in front of the camera the entire time you present. The purpose of this exercise is for you to receive feedback on your presentation skills.

EXPECTATIONS and ASSIGNMENTS

Due to the online nature of this course, you **MUST** be willing to do the following:

- Have basic computer, Word processing, and Internet skills. If you are not already familiar with the BlackBoard, you should familiarize yourself during the first week of classes.
- Have access to a stable internet connection AT ALL TIMES (i.e., when engaged in course content, completing activities, submitting assignments, and completing exams).
- Regularly check BlackBoard for announcements, to download new material, to participate in online discussions, submit writing assignments, and complete exams.
- Contact ITS (515-294-4000) with technical problems related to the course or your student account, your Internet provider for technical problems related to your Internet connection, and your computer manufacturer for technical problems related to your computer. Contact me with technical problems only when they are prolonged for more than 48 hours and prevent you from participating in/meeting deadlines for the class.
- Communicate with me via BlackBoard whenever you have questions, comments, or concerns related to the course. I typically check emails multiple times throughout the day. However, because I must be away from my computer some days due to meetings and other teaching responsibilities, please allow 12-24 hours for a response (especially on the weekends). I will notify the class if I will be away from the office/computer for an extended period of time.
- Budget adequate time to read the course readings/lectures and complete all assignment by their due dates. Although face-to-face courses also require good time management skills and self-motivation, online courses are unique in that they expect you to take on the responsibility of staying up to date with all lessons and assignments.
- Correctly post discussions to the discussion boards and attach/upload writing assignments to the assignment submission drop box (not “copy-and-pasted” as a text submission). I will not accept assignments that are emailed to me under any circumstances.
- Hold me accountable to my seven day turn-around on graded discussions, exams, and written assignments. Just as I expect you to adhere to the policies outlined herein, you have a right to expect timely feedback. If you ever feel as if you are not getting prompt and useful feedback on your assignments, please let me know.
- Wait 24 hours (but no more than 7 days) to contact me regarding your dissatisfaction with a grade you received. If you believe that you received a lower grade than you earned, you must set up an appointment with me and bring evidence to illustrate why you think your paper/project deserves a higher score. Feel free to speak with me any time about ways to improve your performance in the course. I strongly suggest

you do not wait until the end of the semester to discuss strategies for improvement.

- Critically reflect on, expand on, and apply the course concepts/theories while reading and completing weekly activities.
- Extend the utmost respect to one another, me, and to ideas and opinions that are different from your own.

Throughout this course, you will have the opportunity to earn **400 points** based on your discussion board activity, four short writing assignments, one group project, and one individual presentation. These assignments are described below.

Discussion Board Activity (150 points)

In order to facilitate your participation in this class, you will be required to engage in weekly discussion board activities for every week of the course, except during Spring Break and Finals Week. These discussion forums can be found on BlackBoard under WEEKLY DISCUSSIONS and will be worth **10 points each**.

Your participation will be evaluated in terms of both the quantity and quality of the following: (a) **your original posts** (i.e., one original post per week), (b) **your responses to your peers' posts** (i.e., one response per week), and (c) **your reading of the posts** (i.e., read all posts every week). I have access to all of this information via BlackBoard. Discussion prompts will be provided to you (on the course schedule at the end of this syllabus and on BlackBoard) in order to guide your **original posts, which are due by Friday of each week**. Your original posts will be worth a 7 of the total 10 points. Your comments on your **peers' posts, which are due by Sunday of each week**, should be relevant, add value to and advance the discussion, and contribute to your and your peers' learning in the course. Comments such as "I agree" or "ditto" are not considered value-added participation and will not receive the 3 remaining points. Therefore, when you agree or disagree with a comment, you must state and support your position (with substantive explanations and evidence from course readings/material or your personal experiences). Please be aware that you will also be graded on proper etiquette for posting/communicating on an online message board—so be respectful and courteous to both me and your peers in this forum.

As this is the predominant manner in which we will have class discussions, you should treat this discussion board activity as a class participation grade and aim to be active, engaged, and thoughtful when posting, commenting, and replying. Keep in mind that only reading a few posts each week and not contributing substantive posts/comments/replies is not considered active, engaged, and thoughtful participation and your grade will reflect that. **No late discussion posts/responses will be accepted under any circumstance!**

Self-Assessment Papers (100 points)

You will write four papers assessing your professional skills and abilities in the topic areas discussed. The papers are graded on 1) how well you answer the assigned questions, and 2) how well you identify and apply material from the text and lecture. Papers should be approximately **2 pages** in length and must be submitted **as attachments** (i.e., not as a text submission) via Blackboard under SELF-ASSESSMENT PAPERS. Below are the specific prompts that should guide your self-assessment papers this semester. **No late papers will be accepted under any circumstance!**

Communication Self-Assessment Paper (25 points)—Due Friday, February 3: The purpose of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to consider your own professional communication skills at the onset of the course. As we progress through the first five chapters in the text, consider your own communication skills as they might be assessed in a professional context. If you work outside of class, this is your context; if you do not work outside of class, assume your interactions with your classmates and faculty is your professional context. Be sure to reference your text book and document appropriately as you write this assignment. Discuss these areas in your paper:

1. In your own words, define "professional communication" and describe the professional ethic you embrace in your professional communication.
2. What is your current assessment of your professional communication skills (use the first five chapters to guide your assessment)?

3. Label five skills of professional communication you feel need improvement and how you will go about making those changes throughout this semester? Also, label five skills you possess that are already strong and how you will maintain those areas throughout this semester?
4. Complete an action plan for yourself. Provide a detailed plan (with specific dates) on how you will improve each of the above skills and maintain each of your strong skills. Be as specific as possible, including possible deadlines for yourself for these improvements.

Interviewing Self-Assessment Paper (25 points)—Due Friday, February 24: The purpose of this assignment is to allow you an opportunity to consider your interviewing skills. You must have your mock interview and your interview for your group project complete before writing this paper. Discuss these areas in your paper:

1. As an interviewer: Consider your comfort level in interviewing individuals. Do you have confidence in yourself to be an interviewer? How successful was your interview for your group project? What areas do you need to work on to be a successful interviewer? What feedback did you receive about your interviewing skills?
2. As an interviewee: Consider your comfort level in being interviewed. Do you have confidence in yourself when being interviewed? How many professional interviews have you had? Were they successful? How can you improve?
3. Complete an action plan for improving your interview skills, both as an interviewer and an interviewee. Be as specific as possible, including possible deadlines for yourself for these improvements.

Leadership Self-Assessment Paper (25 points)—Due Friday, March 24: The purpose of this assignment is for you to assess your leadership skills. You must lead one of your team meetings before completing this assignment.

1. Assess of your team and leadership skills. Reference a time when you were a member of a work team, either at a job or in the academic setting. What type of role did you take on within the group? Did you complete the task the team needed you to complete? What improvements can you make to become a more successful team member for future teams?
2. Have you ever had the opportunity to lead a meeting outside this class; in this class? How successful were you as the meeting leader? What was your comfort level? What do you need to work on for future meetings to improve this skill?
3. Complete an action plan for yourself. Provide a detailed plan (with specific dates) on how you will improve each of the above skills. Be as specific as possible, including possible deadlines for yourself for these improvements.

Presentation Self-Assessment Paper (25 points)—Due Friday, April 14: This assignment is designed for you to assess your presentation skills. As we progress through chapters 10 through 13, you should consider what goes into developing a presentation, the visual support needed for presentations, the different facets of delivering presentations and the different reasons for presentations. You should also review both your individual and group presentation before completing this paper. Discuss these areas in your paper:

1. Consider your comfort level with presenting and your ability to present. What are at least three of your strengths and three of your weaknesses in preparing for a presentation and actually presenting? What are at least three of your strengths and three of your weaknesses when actually presenting? What did you learn about your presentation skills after giving your individual and group presentation?
2. What is your action plan for improving on your weaknesses now that this course is complete? Be as specific as possible, explaining how you will improve these skills between now and the time you graduate or begin your career.
3. Assess your group presentation. How do you feel your group did overall? Rate your group presentation compared to the other groups in the class. Also, rate yourself as a group member and as a presenter.

Individual Presentation (25 points)

You will prepare an individual presentation on workplace communication. This presentation must be based on a research article about workplace communication (published in a scholarly journal). The presentation can also include concepts from class or experiences from your workplace. The presentation should be **8 – 10 minutes** in length. Professional dress is expected, and professional visual aids are strongly encouraged. Presentations will be videotaped and shared with me via Cybox by **Friday, April 28** at 11:59 p.m. CST. Please refer to the separate instruction sheet on the INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATION tab in BlackBoard for more details about the requirements and grading rubric for this assignment. **No late presentations will be accepted under any circumstance!**

Group Project & Presentation (125 points)

The purpose of this assignment is to deepen your understanding of course content and hone your leadership and group communication skills. You and four other classmates will identify one aspect of professional communication and investigate the importance of this area in a professional context. You may select a specific profession or a professional communication skill or a combination of the two. Each group will use a minimum of two scholarly journals and two professional articles, as well as develop an interview protocol and have each member conduct an interview to gather additional information about your area of investigation. The same protocol can be used by the entire group, if the group wants to compare and contrast answers, or the protocol can vary, if the group wants to glean different information from the interviews. Your group will create and videotape a team presentation in which you reveal your findings from your interviews, research and professional articles. This video must be shared with me via Cybox. You will also individually assess your work as a team and individual group members. Team creation will begin the third week of classes. Each team will be provided with a collaboration room on Blackboard in which you can choose to meet online the ability to collaborate, communicate, and share documents in one forum. Please refer to the separate instruction sheet on the GROUP PROJECT tab in BlackBoard for more details about the requirements and grading rubric for this assignment. All materials for this project must be submitted via Blackboard by the Wednesday of Finals Week (**May 3**). **No late projects will be accepted under any circumstance!**

Late Assignments

All assignments must be submitted via BlackBoard on the assigned date via the attachment function (i.e., not copied and pasted as a text submission). I understand that, in life, problems come up: computers shut down, Internet connects fail, jump drives get broken, etc. However, it is your responsibility to take care of these issues well in advance so that you can still meet the deadlines for this class. **As such, I will not accept any late assignments!!**

Assignment Formatting

Except for weekly discussion activity, all assignments must be typed, double spaced, with 1 inch margins, and 12 point Times New Roman font. When necessary, you should include a cover page and/or reference list that follows APA format (6th edition). For APA help, you may see the APA Manual or visit:

<http://www.stylewizard.com/>

Grading System and Scale

This course is out of **400 total points**. The following is a break-down of the grading system for the semester. For each assignment, you will be provided specific details concerning grading criteria. I do not diverge from the grade breakdown below, so be sure to calculate your final grade based on this chart (i.e., not on percentages or criteria used in other classes).

| Assignment | Points Possible |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Weekly Discussion Activity (15 x 10) | 150 |
| Self-Assessment Papers (4 x 25) | 100 |
| Individual Presentation | 25 |
| Group Project & Presentation | 125 |
| TOTAL POINTS | 400 |

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|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| A = 400 – 388 | B+ = 371 – 348 | C+ = 320 – 308 | D+ = 279 - 268 | |
| A- = 387 - 372 | B = 347 – 332 | C = 307 - 292 | D = 267- 252 | F = 239 - 0 |
| | B- = 331 – 320 | C- = 291 – 280 | D- = 251 - 240 | |

NEED HELP? HAVE QUESTIONS?

I **strongly** encourage you to email me (or, if you're on campus, stop by my office hours) throughout the semester to discuss course material, assignment requirements, your grades, or other issues that arise. Do not ever feel as if you are bothering me by communicating with me too frequently. I truly care about your success in this course and here at ISU. It is best to get help early instead of waiting until the last week of the semester to panic about your grade.

Note: The course syllabus is a contract of policies. If you do not withdraw from the class, it is assumed that you have read through this entire document and agree to adhere to these policies.

FALL 2015 COURSE SCHEDULE

Module 1: Introduction to Professional Communication

WEEK 1 (JANUARY 9 -15)

Read Chapter 1: Communicating at Work (in your textbook)

Post Weekly Discussion Post #1: Introductions

Your post must be completed by Friday, January 13 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Your peer response and reading of all posts must be completed by Sunday, January 15 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

Due Email me to confirm you have read and understood the syllabus or if you have questions about (for an extra point) it by **Friday, January 13 at 11:59 p.m. CST** and familiarize yourself with the content and functionality of BlackBoard before next week.

WEEK 2 (JANUARY 16-22)

Read Chapter 3: Listening (in your textbook)

Post Weekly Discussion Post #2: Effective Listening at Work

Your original post must be completed by Friday, January 20 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Your peer response and reading of all posts must be completed by Sunday, January 22 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

WEEK 3 (JANUARY 23-29)

Read Chapter 4: Verbal & Nonverbal Messages (in your textbook)

Post Weekly Discussion Post #3: Nonverbal Immediacy

Your original post must be completed by Friday, January 27 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Your peer response and reading of all posts must be completed by Sunday, January 29 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

Due If you have classmates you would like to work with for the group project, please submit a request to me by Friday. If you do not wish to request team members, I will randomly assign you to a team.

Module 2: Entering the Workplace

WEEK 4 (JANUARY 30 – FEBRUARY 5)

Read Chapter 6: Principles of Interviewing (in your textbook)

Post Weekly Discussion Post #4: Job Search

Your original post must be completed by Friday, February 3 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Your peer response and reading of all posts must be completed by Sunday, February 5 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

Due CST **Communication Self-Assessment Paper must be submitted by Friday, February 3 at 11:59 p.m. CST**

WEEK 5 (FEBRUARY 6 - 12)

Read Marks & Harold (2011) Who Asks and Who Receives in Salary Negotiation, pp. 371- 394 (available on BlackBoard)

Post Weekly Discussion Post #5: The Gender Wage Gap & Salary Negotiations

Your original post must be completed by Friday, February 10 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Your peer response and reading of all posts must be completed by Sunday, February 12 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

**** On February 8 the People to People and the Business, Industry and Technology and Career and Internship Fairs will be held from 12 pm to 5 pm in Scheman and 12 – 6 pm in Hilton. If you are in town*

that day, I strongly encourage you to attend, visit with some prospective employers, and showcase your fabulous interviewing and communication skills. More information about the career fairs is available at this link: <https://careers.las.iastate.edu/find-a-job/career-fairs/>***

Module 3: Developing Relationships in the Workplace

WEEK 6 (FEBRUARY 13-19)

Read Chapter 2: Communication, Culture, & Work (in your textbook)

Post Weekly Discussion Post #6: Colorblind vs. Multiculturalism
Your original post must be completed by Friday, February 17 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Your peer response and reading of all posts must be completed by Sunday, February 19 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

*** I will be out of town from Feb. 14-21 for a conference and dissertation defense. As such, I will not have office hours or be available to talk. However, I will have my computer with me and will respond as quickly as possible to emails, although it will be probably longer than normal. Grading will probably be slower around this time, but I will work to get it caught up.

WEEK 7 (FEBRUARY 20-26)

Read Quintanilla & Wahl (2014), Chapter 6: Interpersonal Communication at Work (available on BlackBoard)

Post Weekly Discussion Post #7: Workplace Romances
Your original post must be completed by Friday, February 24 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Your peer response and reading of all posts must be completed by Sunday, February 26 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

Due **Interviewing Self-Assessment Paper due by Friday, February 24 at 11:59 p.m. CST**

WEEK 8 (FEBRUARY 27 – MARCH 5)

Read Chapter 5: Interpersonal Strategies & Skills (in your textbook)

Post Weekly Discussion Post #8: Difficult Issue
Your original post must be completed by Friday, March 3 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Your peer response and reading of all posts must be completed by Sunday, March 5 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

Module 4: Leadership & Groups in the Workplace

WEEK 9 (MARCH 6 - 12)

Read Chapter 7: Leading & Working in Teams

Post Weekly Discussion Post #9: Power and Influence
Your original post must be completed by Friday, March 10 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Your peer response and reading of all posts must be completed by Sunday, March 12 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

SPRING BREAK (MARCH 13-17)

ENJOY YOUR WEEK OFF!

WEEK 10 (MARCH 20 – 26)

Read Scott (2013) article on virtual workgroups (available on BlackBoard)

Post Weekly Discussion Post #10: Improve Your Team
Your original post must be completed by Friday, March 24 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Your peer response and reading of all posts must be completed by Sunday, March 26 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

Due: Leadership Self-Assessment Paper due by March 24 at 11:59 p.m. CST

Module 5: Meeting & Presenting in the Workplace

WEEK 11 (MARCH 27 – APRIL 2)

Read Chapter 8: Effective Meetings

Post Weekly Discussion Post #11: Groupthink

Your original post must be completed by Friday, March 31 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Your peer response and reading of all posts must be completed by Sunday, April 2 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

WEEK 12 (APRIL 3 - 9)

Read Chapter 9: Developing & Organizing the Presentation (in your textbook)
Chapter 10: Verbal & Visual Support in Presentation (in your textbook)

Post Weekly Discussion Post #12: Instructional Presentation

Your original post must be completed by Friday, April 7 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Your peer response and reading of all posts must be completed by Sunday, April 9 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

WEEK 13 (APRIL 10 - 16)

Read Chapter 11: Delivering the Presentation
Chapter 12: Types of Business Presentations (in your textbook)

Post Weekly Discussion Post #13: Who Said it Best?

Your original post must be completed by Friday, April 14 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Your peer response and reading of all posts must be completed by Sunday, April 16 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

Due Workplace Communication Presentation due by Friday, April 14 at 11:59 p.m. CST

Module 6: Surviving the Workplace

WEEK 14 (APRIL 17 - 23)

Read Quintanilla & Wahl (2014) Chapter 8: Technology in the Workplace (available on BlackBoard)

Post Weekly Discussion Post #14: Employee Surveillance

Your original post must be completed by Friday, April 21 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Your peer response and reading of all posts must be completed by Sunday, April 23 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

WEEK 15 (APRIL 24 - 30)

Read Quintanilla & Wahl (2014) Chapter 14: Work-Life Balance (available on BlackBoard)

Post Weekly Discussion Post #15: Balance for single people

Your original post must be completed by Friday, December 11 at 11:59 p.m. CST. Your peer response and reading of all posts must be completed by Sunday, December 13 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

Due Presentation Self-Assessment Paper due by Friday, April 28 at 11:59 p.m. CST

FINALS WEEK (MAY 1 - 5)

Due Group Project & Presentation Due—all materials must be submitted by Wednesday, May 3 at 11:59 p.m.

*****This syllabus is tentative and subject to revision*****