

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON CLEAR LAKE - SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

**Organizational Communication – MGMT 3313
Course Syllabus, Spring 2015
Section 01 W 7:00 to 9:50 PM (Bayou, Room 1213)**

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|
| Professor | Dr. T.A. Voelker | |  |
| Contact Information | Office: Bayou 3321, Office 18 Phone: (281) 283-3134 Email: Voelker@uhcl.edu | <u>UHCL EMAIL RECOMMENDED</u> or phone calls during posted office hours only. Please do not email me via Blackboard. | |
| Office Hours | TBD | | |

This Class Emphasizes
Communication
 Connections
 Concepts
 Creativity

General Course Information

Applied Critical Thinking Statement

This course has been authorized by UHCL as an Applied Critical Thinking (ACT) Course which means that in addition to learning about the specified course content, students will be engaged with some or all of the Elements of Thought and Universal Intellectual Standards of critical thinking. The objective of an ACT course is to develop the student’s ability to become skilled at analysis and evaluation by applying a set of intellectual tools that may be effectively used across all disciplines (as well as to the student’s personal life). Based on the Foundation for Critical Thinking (<http://www.criticalthinking.org/>), critical thinking involves thinking for a purpose, asking questions, using information, applying concepts, drawing inferences and conclusions, identifying assumptions, anticipating implications and consequences, and recognizing points of view. The Universal Intellectual Standards that are applied to these Elements of Thought of critical thinking in order to develop Intellectual Traits include *clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance, and fairness.*

Required Books

The thinkers guide to analytic thinking. Linda Elder and Richard Paul. ISBN 978-0-944583197 [~\$5]

Show Me the Numbers: Designing Tables and Graphs to Enlighten. Stephen Few. ISBN 978-0-970601971 [~\$30]

Influence: the Psychology of Persuasion. Robert Cialdini. ISBN 978-0-061241895 [~\$10]

Nonverbal Communication: Science and Applications. David Matsumoto, Mark Frank, and Hyisung Hwang. ISBN: 978-1412999304 [~\$34]

All books should be available through the Barnes and Noble bookstore on campus as well as through Amazon.com.

Course Description

(catalog) A study of theories and practices in organizational communication, dissemination of information in organizational settings, effectiveness, relative costs and feedback potential.

This course is an elective management course. It serves as a general elective for all business majors and additionally can be used as a designated elective for several concentrations available to B.S. Management majors.

The central question of this course is '*how do we communicate more effectively?*'

Communication is the process of achieving shared meaning and it mediates every organizational function. Your skill at communication determines much of your effectiveness as a manager or leader. This course explores both the sending and receiving aspects of communication in written, verbal, non-verbal, and graphic forms. In this course, we will use critical thinking as a framework for improving communication.

Effective communication requires critical thinking. Critical thinking enables the communicator to focus on the purpose of the message, helps in identification of the relevant issues and questions to discuss, makes use of significant and precise information, and logically applies relevant concepts to assist in the understanding of the message. Skilled critical thinkers think inferentially, constructing and deconstructing logical arguments. Critical thinking helps us recognize the implications of communication, both on ourselves and on others.

Fundamental Concepts

1. **Shared Meaning** – in communication, we strive to achieve shared meaning. Shared meaning implies that both the sender and receiver of a message interpret it in a similar manner. While shared meaning might involve persuading a receiver to adopt the meaning of the sender, in general it simply means that the receiver is aware of and understands the message the way the sender intended it.
2. **Signal and Noise** – unfortunately, there are many obstacles to shared meaning. In general, along with the message we send (the signal), many other things interfere with the successful delivery (noise). Noise comes from the sender themselves (unskilled communication), from the environment surrounding the communication, and from the receiver (inattentive, unprepared, or unskilled listening).
3. **Medium and Message** – our choice of communication always involves a message (the thing we communicate) and a medium (the channel through which we send the message). There is a principle of congruence between medium and message – some types of information are best sent through specific channels. Identifying the right medium and the right way to deliver your message helps to remove noise from the communication.

Student Learning Objectives (SLO)

Students will -

SLO1 – *clearly, precisely* and *accurately* explain the **purpose** of specific communication.

SLO 2 – recognize *relevant* **questions and issues** related to a specific communication and *logically* explain their *significance*.

SLO3 – *clearly* and *precisely* describe communication **concepts** and evidence the ability to apply *relevant* communication **concepts**.

SLO4 – identify and *accurately* explain *significant* **information** contained within communication and demonstrate the ability to *precisely* and *logically* present significant **information** in your own communication.

SLO5 – **infer** *fair* **conclusions** of communication and demonstrate an ability to explain the *logic* of that conclusion.

Instructional Methodology

This course strives for applied and reflective learning, emphasizing discussion and reflective writing instead of lecturing and note-taking. Throughout the course you will be asked to explain or describe phenomenon in your own words, using your own voice (e.g. not simply repeating the readings). Additionally, you will regularly be asked to apply what you have studied. How would (or should) a manager use this knowledge?

For this method of instruction to work effectively, you must have read and thought about all assigned material prior to the class. A good rule of thumb is to spend as much time analyzing and preparing the material as you do reading it.

Grading and Deliverables

| Weight | Item |
|--------|---|
| | Readings |
| 20% | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Weekly critical analysis (10 for 1%)Weekly class participation (10 for 1%) |
| 20% | Debates participant (2 @ 10%) |
| 20% | Infographics (4 @ 5%) |
| 20% | Group Video (5-10 minutes) |
| 20% | Final Exam |

Assignments

Weekly Critical Analysis (SLO 1-5) – Students will prepare a critical analysis of each week’s readings. This will follow the “logic of an article” format presented in the **Thinkers Guide to Analytic Thinking** booklet (see pg. 30-31 for an example). This analysis requires an assessment of each element of thought (**purpose, questions and issues**, assumptions, information, **concepts**, points of view, inferences and conclusions, and **implications**) with emphasis on the bolded elements.

While it is acceptable to include short, quoted segments, your communication skills only improve if you practice them. To that end, this analysis should be your thoughts on the readings and not simply repeating segments of the material.

We will discuss the critical analysis at the beginning of each class meeting. Expect to spend 30-45 minutes working through each of the eight elements for each assigned reading. The instructor will moderate this session and students will share, expand upon, and question each other's answers.

Weekly Class Participation (SLO 1-5) – There are two primary activities which will alternate weekly throughout the semester.

In *Five Figures*, the class will be split into five groups, with each group assigned a single figure. Groups will be given 15-20 minutes to work through the logic of the figure with specific emphasis on the five elements associated with learning objectives for the course (purpose, issues, information, concepts, and conclusions). After this, each group will take 3-5 minutes to explain their figure to the rest of the class.

In *Dissect a TED Talk*, the class will watch a selected video. Following the video, the instructor will break the class into small groups (2-3 people) and ask each group to work through the logic of the video with specific emphasis on the five elements associated with course learning objectives (purpose, issues, information, concepts, and conclusions). After this, the instructor will moderate the class on a discussion of the video.

Each of the break-out groups will have a turn-in activity sheet. Participation in your break-out group and resulting class discussion will be tracked for participatory grading.

Debates (SLO 2, 3 and 4) – Students will be assigned to a 2 or 3-person debate team and each team will be assigned two debate dates. Debates are scheduled across the semester, typically with two debates scheduled in a given week. The first debate covers a trivial topic while the second debate addresses a more significant issue. Teams will be assigned a specific position for each debate, be it the superiority of one position (trivial topics) or for or against (significant topics).

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>3-person teams (9 minutes) [1] - Opening Statement (1 minute) Organize Thoughts (1 minutes) [2] - Rebuttal (1 minute) [2] - Opening Statement (1 minute) Organize Thoughts (1 minutes) [1] - Rebuttal (1 minute) Organize Thoughts (1 minutes) [2] - Rejoinder and Conclusion (1 minute) [1] - Rejoinder and Conclusion (1 minute)</p> | <p>2-person teams (9 minutes) [1] - Opening Statement (1 minute) Organize Thoughts (1 minutes) [2] - Rebuttal (1 minute) [1] - Rejoinder (30 seconds) [2] - Opening Statement (1 minute) Organize Thoughts (1 minutes) [1] - Rebuttal (1 minute) [2] - Rejoinder (30 seconds) Organize Thoughts (1 minutes) [2] - Conclusion (30 seconds) [1] - Conclusion (30 seconds)</p> |
|---|---|

In the weeks preceding the debate, student groups should divide themselves by roles. Three-person teams should have one person prepare an opening statement, one person present the rebuttal to the opposing opening (which should include original arguments as well as responses to the other team's opening statement), and one person prepare the rejoinder (which responds

to the rebuttal) and conclusion. Two person teams should have one person deliver the opening and closing while the other person prepares the rebuttal and rejoinder. Students should not occupy the same role in each of their two debates.

- Opening Statement – establishes the main points and evidence
- Rebuttal – to refute by evidence or argument (opposes alternate opening statement)
- Rejoinder – an answer to a reply (response to the rebuttal)
- Conclusion – integrates all segments into a final argument

Students not participating in the debate will take on the role of raters. Half of the raters will score the effectiveness of presented arguments while the other half will evaluate the non-verbal communication of the debaters.

Argument evaluations will identify effective arguments of logic (logos), arguments of emotion (pathos), and arguments of ethics or values (ethos). Non-verbal communication assessments will include observations of effective paralanguage as well as head, eye, and body language. Following each debate, observers will provide feedback to debaters on the most effective techniques used.

While this assignment is delivered in a group, the instructor's evaluation will be individual and grading will be individual. The instructor will evaluate the quality of the arguments presented and the non-verbal communication of each debater with the grade split evenly between these two elements.

Infographics (SLO 2-5) – Roughly every third week, students will be required to prepare and deliver an infographic covering an assigned topic. For each topic, students will be presented with a repository of information. Each student must decide upon an issue of importance, determine the relevant information associated with that issue, apply concepts of data visualization to organize the information, and present the issue in a way that reasonable conclusions may be inferred.

The infographic must include a data visualization (table, graph, or figure) of the student's creation and be accompanied by an explanation of no more than 300 words. Students will be evaluated on the learning objectives associated with issues, information, concepts, and conclusions. An example of the rubric used in determining whether the communication was excellent, good, or insufficient can be found on pages 43-52 of the **Thinkers Guide to Analytic Thinking**. Standards used to evaluate the graphic will be based upon information presented in the **Show Me the Numbers** book.

The grade for this assignment will inform your overall evaluation for mastery of the student learning objectives and communication skills. An equivalent grade of an "A" (93% or higher) is excellent, a B- to A- (80% to less than 93%) is good, and anything less is insufficient.

Group Video (SLO 1-5) – This is a group activity with groups assigned around Spring Break. The project requires the creation of a video which will be presented to the class during our last class meeting. Videos must be 5-10 minutes in length and must provide information, explanation, or instruction on a topic relevant to business.

Relevant examples include a topic from one of your classes (“how to conduct a break-even analysis”), information related to an emerging technology (“finding international suppliers using Alibaba”), or information of economic or cultural importance (“trends in workforce participation”).

Should students choose to present information of economic or cultural importance, it is useful to consider covering enough of a time-frame so that the video isn’t immediately out of date at its date of presentation. For example, last week’s unemployment numbers is meaningless a week or two later. Employment numbers over the course of the great recession or during the recovery from the great recession are more interesting and long-lasting.

The video should be created and edited using video-editing software such as Camtasia, Windows Movie Maker, AVS Video Editor, iMovie, Corel Video Studio Pro, Cyberlink PowerDirector or other similar software. Please be aware that many of these video packages have a free trial period (30-days is typical) or have deep discounts for student purchase. Tutorial videos for most of these are available on Youtube. The instructor can provide some advice using Camtasia, but not necessarily for other software packages.

Special Instructions

1. Your video should begin with a title that clearly indicates the topic and that the video is created as an assignment for credit in MGMT 3313, Sp15 at UHCL.
2. While there are no established professional styles for citation within a video, good scholarship suggests that you attempt to provide credit for your sources. In general, this involves a call-out or pop-up in-video to state the source (do not use a link) at the time it is used. Additionally, your ending credits should include an organized bibliography of your call-out citations.
3. At the end of the video, each student in the group should introduce themselves and clearly explain what parts of the project they were involved in. Groups should monitor this section to assure that no individual makes exaggerated claims. This piece does not count as part of the 5-10 minute required runtime for your video.

It is recommended that you shoot this video in a creative way. *Voice over lectures* are one effective technique. Consider examples of best practices in instructional videos (see KahnAcademy videos on Youtube) or other similar videos. *Animated videos* are another interesting option. You might wish to use an Animation program (GoAnimate is free and other similar programs exist). You might also consider a role-play or acted out video using a camcorder. There are likely other approaches which would be reasonable as well, consult with the instructor if you are unable to decide on an approach. Ultimately, make sure your video provides meaningful information in an entertaining manner.

Final Exam (SLO 2-5) – The final exam will use a short-essay format. The exam consists of four to five questions, answers for each are expected to be 2/3 to one-page in length. Questions will be directly tied to the student learning outcomes, with specific emphasis on explaining and applying course concepts, recognizing and interpreting information, and drawing meaningful conclusions. Students should draw from assigned readings, class activities, and course deliverables in the preparation of their answers. The test is open-book and open-note and

students are allowed to use a dictionary or thesaurus (one will be provided at the front of the class).

An example of the rubric used in determining whether the communication was excellent, good, or insufficient can be found on pages 43-52 of the **Thinkers Guide to Analytic Thinking**. Standards used to evaluate the graphic will be based upon information presented in the **Show Me the Numbers** book.

The grade for this assignment will inform your overall evaluation for mastery of the student learning objectives and communication skills. An equivalent grade of an "A" (93% or higher) is excellent, a B- to A- (80% to less than 93%) is good, and anything less is insufficient.

Grading

| Total Points | Letter Grade | Total Points | Letter Grade |
|------------------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|
| 93.0+ | A | 73.0 to less than 77.0 | C |
| 90.0 to less than 93.0 | A- | 70.0 to less than 73.0 | C- |
| 87.0 to less than 90.0 | B+ | 67.0 to less than 70.0 | D+ |
| 83.0 to less than 87.0 | B | 63.0 to less than 67.0 | D |
| 80.0 to less than 83.0 | B- | 60.0 to less than 63.0 | D- |
| 77.0 to less than 80.0 | C+ | Less than 60.0 | F |

Policy Statements

Academic Honesty

The Academic Honesty Policy at UHCL (found in the University of Houston-Clear Lake Catalog) states:

Academic honesty is the cornerstone of the academic integrity of the university. It is the foundation upon which the student builds personal integrity and establishes a standard of personal behavior.

Because honesty and integrity are such important factors in the professional community, you should be aware that failure to perform within the bounds of these ethical standards is sufficient grounds to receive a grade of "F" in this course. The Honesty Code of UHCL states "I will be honest in all my academic activities and will not tolerate dishonesty." To demonstrate awareness with the academic honesty policies, students are required to submit a statement of ethical intent at the start of the semester.

Academic Accommodations

If you will require special academic accommodations under the Americans with Disability Act, Section 504, or other state or federal law, please contact the Disability Services Office at (281) 283-2626.

Important Dates – Spring 2015

- TBD FIRST DAY OF CLASSES
- TBD ONLINE GRADUATION APPLICATION AVAILABLE (ENDS 24-SEP)
- TBD LATE APPLICATIONS FOR GRADUATION (ENDS 24-OCT)
- TBD DROP DATE
- TBD FINAL CLASS ACTIVITIES
- TBD COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY FOR SUMMER AND FALL 2014
- TBD GRADES AVAILABLE IN E-SERVICES

Late Work Notice

Late work will not be accepted. NO EXCEPTIONS!!!!

Incompletes

Only in the event of a documented emergency will an extension be granted. Further, students must be passing the course – in good standing – at the time of the extension.

Syllabus Statement - 6 Drop Rule

6 Drop Rule Limitation - Students who entered college for the first time in Fall 2007 or later should be aware of the course drop limitation imposed by the Texas Legislature. Dropping this or any other course between the first day of class and the census date for the semester/session does not affect your 6 drop rule count. Dropping a course between the census date and the last day to drop a class for the semester/session will count as one of your 6 permitted drops. You should take this into consideration before dropping this or any other course. Visit www.uhcl.edu/records for more information on the 6 drop rule and the census date information for the semester/session.

Schedule and Timetable

It will be solely the responsibility of the student to be aware of due dates. Please review the schedule included in this syllabus for details.

| Week (Date) | Readings (Includes writing) | Class Activity | Other Deliverables |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 21-Jan | Syllabus | Syllabus | N/A |
| 28-Jan | Elder and Paul (all) | The Best Stats 5 Figures | |
| 4-Feb | Few (ch. 3 and ch. 4) | 5-Figures Debate 1 and 2 | |
| 11-Feb | Few (ch. 5 and ch. 6) | Workforce Crisis | Infographic: UHCL Enrollment |
| 18-Feb | Few (ch 7 and 13) | 5-Figures Debate 3 and 4 | |
| 25-Feb | Few (ch 8 and ch 9) | Body Language Debate 5 and 6 | |
| 4-Mar | Matsumoto (ch 1 and 2) | 5-Figures | Infographic: Census Bureau |
| 11-Mar | Matsumoto (Ch 3 and 4) | Spot a Liar Debate 10 and 11 | |
| 18-Mar | Spring Break | Spring Break | Spring Break |
| 25-Mar | Matsumoto (Ch 12 and 13) | 5-Figures Debate 12 and 13 | |
| 1-Apr | Matsumoto (Ch 5 and 14) | Fiction: Memory | Infographic: Employment |
| 8-Apr | Cialdini (ch 2 and 3) | 5-Figures Debate 14 and 15 | |
| 15-Apr | Cialdini (ch 4 and 5) | Optical Illusions | |
| 22-Apr | Cialdini (ch 6 and 7) | 5-Figures | Infographic: Kickstarter |
| 29-Apr | | Group Videos | |
| 6-May | Finals | | |

Debates

| | |
|--|---|
| Trivial 1 Playstation 3 vs. Xbox One 2 Dominos vs. Papa Johns 3 Coke vs. Pepsi 4 Football (American) vs. Futbol (Soccer) 5 Summer Olympics vs. Winter Olympics 6 Android vs. iPhone | Significant 10 Net Neutrality (pro vs. con) 11 Single Payer Healthcare (pro vs. con) 12 Free (government paid) college education (pro vs. con) 13 Municipality provided broadband (pro vs. con) 14 Drones (domestic use) (pro vs. con) 15 Value Added Tax vs. Corporate Income Tax |
|--|---|