Communication 406.501
Professional Communication
Fall 2019
Online

Communication Studies Program
Department of Languages, Cultures, and Communication
Stephen F. Austin State University

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Class Times: TR 12:15-1:30; online
Professor Spradley is available at other times for appointment. Please schedule appointments through her SFASU email. Do not use D2L email or phone to schedule appointments.

Course Information

Course Materials:
- Purchase or check out books for book reports related to: the specified profession you intend to pursue and biography of someone that you admire. The books must be pre-approved by your instructor via email.
- Each student will have to dress professionally for the face-to-face or Skype interview. This may require the purchase of a few pieces of clothing or arranging in advance to check out clothing from the Interview Closet with Center for Career and Professional Development on campus (located Rusk Building, 3rd floor).

Course Description: Designed to give students an insight into professional communication, illustrated with examples from a broad range of business and professional settings. Prerequisite: advanced standing.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes
- Demonstrate understanding and application of cover letter, portfolio development, and resume writing.
- Demonstrate understanding and application of employment interviewing including verbal and nonverbal behaviors consistent with professional communication competencies.
- Demonstrate understanding and application of job appraisal interviewing including verbal and nonverbal behaviors consistent with professional communication competencies.
- Demonstrate understanding and application of effective presentations in professional contexts.
Communication Studies Program Learning Outcomes

Objective 1—Theory Knowledge: Students majoring in Communication Studies should display comprehension of major communication theories.

Objective 2—Theory Application: Students majoring in Communication Studies will apply the major theories in the field to communicate effectively in a variety of settings.

Objective 3—Research Methods: Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to use and demonstrate understanding of appropriate methodology in critical, humanistic, or social scientific paradigms in examining research questions in communication.

Objective 4—Diversity and Freedom of Expression: Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to recognize the central role of diversity and freedom of expression in a global community.

Objective 5—Constitutive Nature of Communication: Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the constitutive nature of communication, which includes forces that enable and constrain communication such as technology, ethics, and organizational life.

Objective 6—Higher Order Thinking: Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to demonstrate oral and written competence in logical and critical thinking.

Course Adaptations
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Grade Withheld Policy (Semester Grades A-54)
http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/semester_grds.asp

II. Withheld Grades
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Governing Policies
The following policies will apply toward decorum in online posts.
1. ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR: Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

*Unprofessional behavior includes but is not limited to talking while instructor/speaker is presenting, texting during presentations, sleeping during class, and using abusive, profane language/gestures.

3. Academic Integrity:
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

4. Attendance Policy: Students are expected to regularly log in to keep up with course content, announcements, and assignments/quizzes/discussions.

5. Makeup Work Policy: No late work is acceptable. Deadlines for coursework are posted in advance, and it is the responsibility of each student to complete his/her work and submit it either early or on time. The University recognizes three types of documented excuses that may permit a student to make up work: 1) University Sponsored Event, 2) unavoidable emergency, and 3) personal illness. Your instructor will not hear or recognize oral excuses for missed course material. Your instructor is the
exclusive decision maker on approving or denying an excused absence request in order to make up work in the class. Acceptable documentation includes: doctor/medical paperwork, written acknowledgement of participation in a university sponsored event, notification disseminated from the Judicial Office, and family emergency records. Acceptable documentation of an absence to make up coursework must be turned into the professor **within one week of returning to class. No exceptions will be made.**

**Evaluation:** Grades will be determined by: Written work, presentations, and attendance.

**COURSE POINTS:** You may earn up to **1000 points** total. Your chance to earn your grade ends when the semester ends. No grades will be **bumped** up at the end of the semester regardless of how **borderline** the grade is perceived to be. There are no opportunities for extra credit outside of that which is offered to every student enrolled in the course. To calculate your grade at any time in the course, add up your earned course points and divide them by the possible course points at that point in the semester. That gives you an average. The following indicates which letter grades correspond to earned points:

- 1000 – 900 points A
- 899 – 800 points B
- 799 – 700 points C
- 699 – 600 points D
- 599 and less F

**Class Discussions:** 200 points
You are assigned discussion posts within modules. Original posts should be thorough, address the prompt, be supported with research/readings, well-written, and include references. Replies to 5 peers are required for each post.

**Book Reports:** 200 points
First, one book written book report will be completed in order to build your personal knowledge about success in your future profession. You must get your book approved by your instructor. The book report will be formatted in APA style and be no more and no less than 4 complete pages of content (use Times New Roman font, 12 font, 1 inch margins). This does not include the title page, abstract page, nor the reference page. The report should begin with an introductory paragraph about your chosen professional path followed by several summative paragraphs with exemplary quotes from the book. The book report is NOT simply a summary of each chapter or unit of the book. Instead, the report should include additional research about the profession (i.e. Dept. of Labor statistics on average salaries, professional organizations’ description of job responsibilities, etc…). The final paragraph should detail the utility of the information, specifically how you plan to use this information. Your grade will be assessed using a rubric based on formatting, grammar and writing style, composition, support, research, APA style, clarity, and personalization. Submit as an attachment to D2L dropbox.
Second, another book report will be completed about a biography of someone you admire. Often the character and accomplishments of a mentor-like figure can inspire and help shape the professional identity that you aspire to. You must get your book approved by your instructor. The book report will be formatted in APA style and be no more and no less than 4 complete pages of content (use Times New Roman font, 12 font, 1 inch margins). This does not include the title page, abstract page, nor the reference page. The report should begin with an introductory paragraph explaining who the person is and why you selected to read and complete a book report about him(er). Next, the following paragraphs should highlight aspects of the person’s life including his(er) character, life experiences, accomplishments, etc… that you find personally motivating. Please do NOT simply give a life history of the person. The final paragraph should detail how this biography shapes the type of professional you aspire to be. Your grade will be assessed using a rubric based on formatting, grammar and writing style, composition, support, research, APA style, clarity, and personalization. Submit as an attachment to D2L dropbox.

Book Report 1: 100 points
Book Report 2: 100 points

Cover Letter and Resume: 100 points
You will be assessing your career interests and goals in this course. This process is ongoing, but you will need to articulate specific job types, organizations, and skill-sets that are central to your future professional outlook. The development of a cover letter and resume is intended to facilitate the transition from college to a professional career. Additionally, this assignment prepares you to attend job fairs and network with professionals. Submit a copy of your cover letter and resume. Include a copy or link to a job position announcement. Formatting should be consistent with cover letter writing and resume writing. The cover letter and resume will be assessed based on completeness, formatting, customization for the position, grammar, and writing style.

Interview Guide: 50 points
Students will individually select, edit, and generate a set of 15 interview questions to use in the development of an interview guide. The interview guide should list the question followed by the response the student would give in the interview. Responses must be thorough, specific, provide examples, and make explicit transferable skills. The formula is: 1) provide a clear answer, 2) give an example from personal experience to illustrate/substantiate, and 3) explain how the experience/skill is transferrable to the specific job. The interview guide will be assessed based on: completeness, question quality, response specificity, use of examples in responses, personalization of responses, evidence of transferrable skills, professionalism, and grammar/spelling. The interview guide is worth 50 points and submitted via D2L dropbox.
Interview: 100 points

Second, students will be conducting mock employment interviews. Students will email the instructor at espradley@sfasu.edu to set up a face-to-face, Vroom or Skype interview. Interviews will be 10 minutes per student including: greeting, abbreviated Q & A session, and closing. Your grade will be assessed using a rubric evaluating your verbal and nonverbal delivery and content development of questions and answers compatible with professional communication.

Professional Communication Presentation: 100 points

You will work individually develop a presentation (format is your choice) that includes the development of listener resources. The topic of the presentation must relate to a concept of professional success and communication competency in the workplace. You will need to creatively introduce the subject, define key terms, explain what research studies have concluded about the topic, use examples that are relevant to young professionals, and develop a set of best practices for the topic.

To develop the presentation content, student must use an equal mix of academic journal articles and popular press publications. Students must submit the following:

- An outline of presentation content must contain: introduction, body, conclusion, and APA style reference list (follow the outline template provided by your instructor). Make sure to include 2-4 journal articles of studies conducted about the topic and 2-4 popular press articles/books about the professional application of the topic.
- The presentation can be developed in different ways, but it must include the student speaking. For example, a video of the presentation can be created and edited using iMovie to add titles and insert slides with content. Or, a voice over can be recorded as the student shows the slides of the presentation. Just remember with using PowerPoint or Prezi to avoid lots of text. Keep text simple and short. Instead, use smartart graphics, charts, graphs, and pictures.
- Listener resources are what you would provide an audience while they listen to you or as additional resources after the presentation. For example, I often get a listening guide for webinars that I attend with fill in the blanks for presentation content and additional readings if I am interested in learning more. The listener resources must contain: key ideas/definitions related to the topic (with APA citations), best practices, and additional resources. These packets could use a program like publisher (Microsoft) or pages (Mac) with templates to create an attractive looking handout.

Your grade will be assessed using a rubric based on listener resource development, aesthetics of visuals, completeness of resources, quality of research, use of oral and written citations, relevancy to audience, engaging
illustrations/examples, practicality of best practices, knowledge/proficiency of topic, speaking competencies, and professionalism.

**Exams/Quizzes:** 200 points
You will complete quizzes and a final exam in the course that synthesize what you have learned from modules and assigned readings.

**Reflection Paper:** 50 points
At the end of the semester, you will submit a reflection paper about how you will integrate specific concepts and skills learned through the course to move forward to accomplish your professional goals. You must cite peer-reviewed journal articles to flesh out explanations and applications of the concepts selected for the paper. The paper should be in APA style and will be assessed based on content, research, personalization, grammar, punctuation, and APA style.