

COM 450 - Organizational Communication
The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication
Fall 2024 | Section 74746
Mondays and Wednesdays 3:00PM – 4:15PM | BAC 324

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Office: N/A (Stuffer Hall closed)

Student Hours: Mondays 11:00AM-1:00PM
(or by appointment)

Zoom address: <https://asu.zoom.us/j/3286313305>

Review this syllabus carefully. By remaining enrolled in the course, you have accepted the conditions of the course. The requirements and expectations indicated in this syllabus are non-negotiable. Withdraw from the course immediately if any aspects of the course are not acceptable to you.

Course Description

Students learn to navigate a range of organizational contexts where professional achievement requires an in-depth understanding of human communication and the ability to apply communicative competencies to both virtual and in-person interactions. This course reviews the key constructs and theories of organizational communication to expand students' knowledge of the relationships between communicative interactions and various organizational dynamics, which will subsequently enable them to better grasp the changing nature of work.

Importantly, this class takes a critical approach: Students will be encouraged and guided to process a set of critical communication capacities to interrogate our relationship to work and organizational life. Every week, the course materials and class discussions will help students challenge their commonsense understandings of the world of work and organizations. Students will be challenged to revisit their existing knowledge of organizations (or the processes of organizing) by adopting a structural perspective that focuses on the issues of power, relations, and differences. To be successful in this class, students will need to stay abreast of current cases and examples relevant to contemporary organizational phenomena and analyze them drawing on critical organizational communication theories.

Gold Designation

This course fulfills the ASU Social and Behavioral Sciences General Studies requirement. Students completing a Social and Behavioral Sciences course will be able to:

- ◆ Utilize behavioral or social science approaches, qualitative or quantitative, to examine aspects of human experiences or explain social or behavioral phenomena.
- ◆ Describe the strengths and limitations of behavioral or social science methods in predicting or understanding human behavior.
- ◆ Communicate coherent arguments using evidence drawn from qualitative or quantitative sources.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- ◆ Define organizational communication from a critical perspective
- ◆ Demonstrate their in-depth understanding of the history of organizational communication theories
- ◆ Explain how power and resistance operate in organizations
- ◆ Critically examine the organizational implications of culture/difference, leadership/followership, meanings/identity, and technology use/affordances
- ◆ Critically analyze the patterns of communicative interactions that affect our organizational life

♦ Apply critical organizational communication theories to current issues and phenomena in organizations to imagine positive changes and alternatives

Required Text:

Mumby, D. K., & Kuhn, T. R. (2019). *Organizational communication: A critical introduction* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Additional required readings will be posted on Canvas.

Exams and Assignments

Exams (300 points)

You will have a Midterm Exam (150 points) and a Final Exam (150 points), both taken in class. Exams cover all class materials, including the required readings, lectures, and class discussions. Exams will include multiple-choice and true-false questions. The Final Exam is NOT cumulative.

LATE ARRIVALS TO EXAMS: No students will be permitted to take an exam if they arrive late to the exam and any other students, having seen or finished the exam, have left the room. Parking trouble or other transportation problems are NOT acceptable excuses. Be sure to arrive on campus well before the start of class. Late students will receive a zero for the exam.

Short Paper (100 points)

This course has one paper assignment in which students will have a chance to reflect on the changing nature of contemporary work and organizing. Students will choose one out of the two following topics below.

For this paper, you will interview a full-time employee who has work experiences of 3 years or more. Your interviewee can be your team manager, co-worker, relative, or someone that you have wanted to contact to learn more about your future job. (Avoid interviewing your immediate family member.) You can select one of the two following topics, along with suggested interview questions. Your interview must cover the suggested interview questions; however, you are welcome to include your own additional questions. In the paper, you should include in-depth discussions on at least three theoretical concepts from the course materials. Make sure to elaborate on the concepts before applying them to your interview case. You must include specifics regarding the interview, such as work hours, company name, job role, organizational tenure, day-to-day routines. For this assignment, please include the interview transcript at the back of your paper as an appendix. More details will be provided in class.

- Option 1: Managing a multicultural workforce

Globalization has made a profound impact on the nature, meaning, and changes of organization and organizing. As organizations increasingly hire diverse groups of people, contemporary workers are likely to collaborate with people from different social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. What is the impact of a multicultural work environment on organizational life? Focus on the following questions during your interview:

Question 1. Please describe the extent to which your work environment is “diverse” or “global.”

What are the benefits and challenges of working in a diverse team/organization?

Question 2. How have you addressed the challenges associated with workplace diversity? Have you ever received a diversity training or anything equivalent? Do you think it was effective or helpful? If so, why? (If not, what kinds of programs or skills would you suggest?)

- Option 2: Social media and organizational communication

Social media use is prevalent not only in interpersonal contexts but also in organizational contexts. Many organizations utilize social media to communicate with their customers (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat) or implement internal/proprietary social media to facilitate coordination and collaboration among employees (e.g., Slack, Yammer). How does the adoption of social media at work affect contemporary workers’ day-to-day work, work-life balance, or knowledge-sharing patterns? Focus on the following questions during your interview:

Question 1. What kinds of social media have you used for your job? What are the benefits and challenges of using social media for your work?

Question 2. Has your organization provided with any official “social media policy” or “social media training”? If so, what have you learned from those programs, and to what degree was it effective or helpful? (If not, what kinds of policies or skills would you suggest?)

In this class, all papers must conform to the standards of scholarly writing: 1” margins, doubled-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, and APA standard citations, if applicable. Poor grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure will negatively impact the final grade. The length of this paper should be between 750 and 850 words.

Online Discussion (100 points)

You will be responsible for regular postings to the course “Current Organizational Issues” discussion board. There will be two rounds of online discussion. Please refer to the course schedule for the due dates. (For each round, 1 original post and 5 response posts must be completed to be considered for full credit.)

- ♦ Online Discussion Posts (up to 25 points per post – 50 points in total):

Throughout the semester, you will be responsible for starting 2 discussion threads to which other class members will respond. The purpose of these posts is to start a discussion about current events/cases related to weekly topics. You can choose any weeks throughout the semester up to twice, and you should pick a popular press article (published over the past two years) that describes a case relevant to the course materials, preferably in the selected week. You are strongly recommended to stay abreast of recent media articles and current organizational issues throughout the semester. I will also share many relevant articles in class and online.

Your post should include the following: a quick summary of the topic and source (include a hyperlink to the article instead of posting its full text), application of one or two concepts from the course materials (along with a reference to course materials), your own opinion about the chosen topic, and questions for the class. Each post should be about 300-500 words. A reference list is required. Use the 7th APA citation style.

- ♦ Response Posts (up to 5 points per response – 50 points in total):

Students will be also responsible for a minimum total of 10 substantive responses to others’ posts over the course of the semester (5 response posts for each online discussion assignment). To achieve maximum points, responses should be substantive and present original views about the topic (e.g., challenging others’ opinions or claims, expanding discussions by providing other examples). Each response should be about 100-150 words. Responses such as “I agree,” or “That’s interesting” are NOT considered substantive.

Organizational Consulting Proposal (100 points)

In this primary assignment for the course, students will act as a “consultant,” who is an expert in the selected domain and hence provide consulting to an organization (either for-profit or non-profit). Throughout the semester, students will choose a recent case (for the past three years) that shows a critical organizational issue (either positive or negative) that requires external consulting. For example, students can find an interesting case regarding (but not limited to): public relations or marketing failure, changes in brand images, cultural conflicts among different groups or generations, organizational injustice, building inclusive culture, rapid increase in turnover, facilitating creativity, building workers’ resilience and wellbeing, contributing to a local community, and reaching out to global consumers. In this 4-page proposal (excluding references), students will write the following: (a) a brief organizational profile, (b) an in-depth analysis of an organizational issue that demands more attention (“what is the issue?”: either a positive issue that needs to be further supported or a negative issue that needs to be resolved), (c) the criticality of the issue for the organization (“why does it matter?”), and (d) a brief proposal for future directions and solutions (“what is to be done?”). Students must include and cite at least two theoretical concepts from the course materials.

Organizational Consulting Proposal Elevator Pitch (50 points)

In this hypothetical elevator pitch, students will present the critical organizational issue that they identified analyzed “in front of the top management of the selected organization.” In this scenario, students somehow got a chance to directly interact with the top management (e.g., within an elevator, at a party, at a charity event, or during the internship) to show what they can offer. Students are supposed to convince the top management so that they actually hire students to conduct consulting work for them. Students are not allowed to use any visual aids but just do a 3-minute pitch through which students deliver the core problem at hand, the importance of the problem, and the possible solutions.

Organizational Consulting Report (100 points)

Building on the consulting proposal, students will further develop their ideas for future directions and articulate their solutions, along with anticipated outcomes. To address the selected issue, students are supposed to propose three action plans drawing on the organizational communication scholarship and their own data analysis. In other words, students should offer “evidence-based” solutions, explicitly citing the course materials and the organizational communication literature. In this report, students must cite at least two scholarly journal articles, in addition to citing at least two theoretical concepts from the course materials. Students will revise and expand the proposal; and in turn, they will add an advanced section on their specific proposals (“what the organization should do”). The final consulting report (including the proposal) should be between 8 and 9 pages (excluding references). No title page or abstract is needed.

Organizational Consulting Executive Summary (50 points)

In this hypothetical business meeting, “consultants” will present their “solutions” drawing on their research and analysis. In this 5-minute speech, students will focus primarily on their solutions, followed by their solutions’ benefits and anticipated outcomes. Students are allowed to use visual aids or handouts if they want (optional). In their speech, students must offer scholarly evidence to support their arguments and proposals. Their speech also must cite at least two scholarly journal articles and two theoretical concepts from the course materials.

Course Grades

Exams and Assignments:

• Online Discussion	100 points
• Exam 1	150 points
• Exam 2	150 points
• Short Paper	100 points
• Consulting Proposal	100 points
• Consulting Elevator Pitch	50 points
• Consulting Report	100 points
• Consulting Executive Summary	50 points
• Negative Attendance Points	NO LIMIT
TOTAL	800 points

<u>Grade:</u>	<u>Point Total:</u>
A+	792 - 800
A	744 - 791
A-	720 - 743
B+	696 - 719
B	664 - 695
B-	640 - 663
C+	616 - 639
C	560 - 615
D	480 - 559
E	0 – 479

Course Policies

Inclusive Classroom:

We want to use the correct gender pronouns, nicknames, and pronunciations for every student. To ensure we do, we will invest some time in learning about each other in the beginning of the course. Additionally, throughout the semester, do not hesitate to correct the teaching team or each other so that we all address each other in ways that match our identities.

Attendance:

Attendance will be taken during every class period. You are expected to be in class, to be on time, and to be well prepared. Each absence will result in a 5-point deduction from your final points total. 3 times of tardiness (or leaving early) will be counted as 1 absence.

The exception to this is if you provide official documentation proving a legitimate reason for missing class:

- If you are too ill to come to class to take an exam or participate in your group presentation, you must have a signed (and dated) document from your doctor saying you had to miss the exam/presentation (on that particular day) because of your illness.
- If you miss class because of the death of a loved one, you must provide proof as requested by your professor.
- If you will miss class because of the observance of a religious holiday, please let me know at least a week in advance.
- If you are active in University-sponsored events (athletic teams, debate, etc.) you must supply the appropriate school-provided documentation.

I reserve the right to determine what qualifies as a legitimate reason for missing class and/or as acceptable documentation.

Please note that group presentations must be given on the assigned dates. If a student is late or absent, the group must still make the presentation. Additionally, being absent on a day that an assignment is due does NOT mean you can turn the assignment in late. Exams are given only on the assigned dates. If you are absent on an exam day without any prior notice, you will not be able to make-up the exam.

Canvas:

To succeed in this course, it is essential that you have regular and reliable online access to Canvas, that you become familiar with and able to use the Canvas system, and that you regularly (i.e., daily) check the Announcements in the Canvas course shell. (Announcements are in chronological order and appear when you open the course site.)

Gradebook: Your class grade will be registered on the Canvas course shell. You will utilize the gradebook to

verify that you have correctly submitted a paper via TurnItIn.

TurnItIn: ALL written assignments will be submitted through TurnItIn by 11 p.m. on the due date posted on the syllabus.

NOTE: “Computer problems” do not excuse late work. It is your responsibility to make sure that your computer is compatible with Canvas and prepare for your submission in advance, in anticipation of technical problems, including University-based problems. Do not wait until the last minute!

Writing Requirements:

The required format for all papers is .doc, or .docx. (NOT .pdf or other file extensions). If you use the SAVE AS feature to change the file type, be sure to check the document before you submit it. All papers should be typed in black 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced and have one-inch margins. Any citations must be formatted in APA (American Psychological Association) style.

You are expected to write at a collegiate level using Standard English (consider grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure). If English is not your native language, please take your papers to the ASU writing center before the papers are submitted for final grading. You can find information about the writing center by visiting <https://tutoring.asu.edu/writing-centers>. Papers submitted with excessive grammar and spelling errors will receive 0 points. I reserve the right to determine what constitutes “excessive.”

Grading will be based on:

1. meeting ALL of the defined requirements
2. clarity of expression
3. quality of reasoning (logical, coherent, specific)
4. mechanics (good writing, spelling, grammar, APA style, proper formatting)

Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism is intentionally or unintentionally using another’s work (including wording, phrases, or original ideas) without giving the person proper credit. This includes representing anyone else’s words as your own. Exact words can be used ONLY in direct quotes, clearly presented as such. In general, however, please avoid using direct quotes. Try to paraphrase.

Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, or allowing another student to copy your work, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Importantly, the use of generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT) for writing assignments is NOT permitted. Using AI tools to generate content will be considered a violation of the Academic Integrity Policies. If you have turned the work in for another class, it is considered self-plagiarism and violates University policy. Even within this course, each assignment must be a new paper; you should not duplicate material across assignments.

Professors who find compelling evidence of academic dishonesty will actively pursue one or more of the following actions: Assigning a grade of XE (“failure through academic dishonesty”) to the student, advocating the suspension or expulsion of the student from the College, and/or referring the student to Student Judicial Affairs. If a student who is charged with academic dishonesty is found to be in violation, then one or more of these disciplinary actions will be taken. For further information, please read the Student Academic Integrity policy and the code of conduct for Arizona State University: <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>

Any academic dishonesty in this course will result in failure of the course, and could also lead to disciplinary action by the college or university.

Submission Policy:

Work needs to be submitted to TurnItIn by the due date. Deadline for all online assignments is **11:59 PM** on

the due date. Computer and/or system problems do NOT excuse late work or missed quizzes. Penalties (10% deduction for each 24 hours) will apply to all late work unless advance arrangements have been made with the professor.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you need technical assistance, it is available via the Canvas “Help” icon located on the left-hand navigation menu and phone and live chat support are available 24/7 at <http://contact.asu.edu>. ASU Tech Studios provide a variety of walk-in support services on all ASU campuses: <https://uto.asu.edu/services/campus-it-resources/techstudio>. To learn the basics, refer to the Student Guide: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701> and the Canvas Glossary: <http://links.asu.edu/student-canvas-glossary>.

Student Conduct:

The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication strives for a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. In a communication class, it is especially important that we...

1. display respect for all members of the classroom – including the professor and students;
2. pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities;
3. avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, surfing the internet, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.); and
4. avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom.

This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, it represents examples of the types of things that can have a dramatic impact on the class environment. Your final grade may be reduced each time you engage in these sorts of behaviors.

Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other members of the class. A professor may withdraw a student from a course when the student’s behavior disrupts the educational process under USI 201-10 (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi201-10.html>). This includes students who are verbally or physically aggressive towards the professor or another student before, during, or after class. As noted in this document, “An instructor may withdraw a student from a course with a mark of ‘W’ or ‘E’ when the student’s behavior disrupts the educational process. Disruptive classroom behavior for this purpose is defined by the instructor.” In cases where disruptive behavior does not warrant removal from class, at the professor’s discretion a student’s final grade will be lowered by 25% instead. Students are required to adhere to the behavior standards listed in the Arizona Board of Regents Policy Manual Chapter V – Campus and Student Affairs: Code of Conduct (<http://students.asu.edu/srr/code>) as well as the ACD 125: Computer, Internet, and Electronics Communications (<http://asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd125.html>).

Title IX policies:

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at:

<http://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs/students>

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>, is available if you wish discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

Accessibility:

Students needing accommodations in this course due to disabilities must be registered with the Student

Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services (SAILS) before requesting accommodations. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester, as I will be more than willing to make the necessary arrangements. The SAILS website has a host of useful information including how you can request accommodation services. (<https://coass.asu.edu/accessibility>) They can also be contacted at 480-965-1234 (voice)/480-965-9000 (TDD). You can also email them at: Student.Accessibility@asu.edu

Technology Use in the Classroom:

No mobile phones are allowed in class unless I give you temporary permission, per each circumstance. You will be asked to leave class if you are using your phone during our short time together.

Contacting the Professor:

I aim to be easily accessible to you in a variety of contexts, including face-to-face or email (which is the best way to contact me). At the same time, I also ask that you make use of the teaching materials available in the syllabus and on Canvas. These materials were designed to answer many questions, so please check them before approaching me. Contacting me at the last moment does not shift your responsibility for completing an assignment. And please do not expect a response “A.S.A.P.” simply because you waited until the last moment.

Please allow up to 48 hours for a response to any correspondence. If a response has not been provided to you within 48 hours, please contact again.

When sending an email use professional language and include the following:

- Subject line that includes COM 450 and the reason why you contact me
- Proper salutation and terms of address
- Sign with your full name

Course Schedule

The schedule is tentative and subject to change at the professor's discretion. Additional readings, papers, or quizzes can be assigned. You are responsible for staying up-to-date on the course schedule.

Note. Absences on presentation days result in a double deduction of the attendance points.

Date	Content	Due
8/26	Introductions to the class and one another - No Readings. ☺	
8/28	Studying Organizations Critically - Ch. 1	
9/2	Labor Day - No class.	
9/4	Developing a Critical Approach to Organizational Communication - Ch. 2	
9/9	Fordism and Organizational Communication - Ch. 3	
9/11	Organizations as Communication Systems - Ch. 4	
9/16	Organizations as Communication Systems - Ch. 4	
9/18	Communication, Culture, and Organizing - Ch. 5	Short Paper by 9/18
9/23	Communication, Culture, and Organizing - Ch. 5	
9/25	Post-Fordism and Organizational Communication - Ch. 6	
9/30	Post-Fordism and Organizational Communication - Ch. 6	
10/2	Elevator Pitch	Proposal by 10/2
10/7	Elevator Pitch	
10/9	Midterm Exam	
10/14	Fall Break - No class.	Discussion 1 by 10/14
10/16	Power and Resistance at Work - Ch. 7	
10/21	Communicating Gender at Work - Ch. 8	
10/23	Communicating Gender at Work - Ch. 8	
10/28	Communicating Difference at Work - Ch. 9	
10/30	Communicating Difference at Work - Ch. 9	
11/4	Branding, Work, and Consumption - Ch. 10	
11/6	Leadership Communication in the New Workplace - Ch. 11	

11/11	Veterans Day - No class.	
11/13	Leadership Communication in the New Workplace - Ch. 11	
11/18	Information and Communication Technologies in/at Work - Ch. 12	
11/20	Globalization and Corporate Social Responsibility - Ch. 13	
11/25	Meaningful Work and Personal Identity - Ch. 14	Discussion 2 by 11/25
11/27	Consulting Report Presentation	
12/2	Consulting Report Presentation	
12/4	Consulting Report Presentation	Consulting Report by 12/4

* *The course schedule is tentative and subject to change.*

* *The final exam date and time will be later scheduled by the university.*