COURSE SYLLABUS
Southeast Missouri State University

Department of Management and Marketing
Course No: UI301

COURSE TITLE: Managerial Communication Processes
Revision: Spring 2012

I. Catalog Description:

An examination and application of appropriate managerial communicative techniques for leading others to perform well in various organizational contexts. (3)

Interdisciplinary Nature of the Course:

This course approaches the study of oral communication skills critical to effective management where the primary goal is achieving productive outcomes through the efforts of individuals and groups. By drawing jointly from the theories and techniques of the disciplines of management and speech communication, a unified approach to effective leadership is attained. Effective communication techniques dealing with managerial responsibilities including goal setting; interviewing; creating and sustaining corporate culture; group leadership; report and presentation; and auditing the organization’s communication system are treated. Since the processes of management and of communication are irrevocably intertwined, this interdisciplinary focus is most relevant. Knowledge is integrated from University Studies Categories, Oral Expression and Social Systems.

II. Prerequisites:

SC105 or equivalent introductory oral communication course.

III. Objectives:

A. To promote understanding of the universality of management principles that might enable students to more easily adapt to organizational life. (Objective 9)

B. To provide knowledge of the manager’s job and the integral role of effective communication in attaining organizational goals. (Objective 6)

C. To acquaint students with the theory and skills necessary for effective managerial communication and the research and application opportunities to apply these principles to realistic contexts. (Objectives 3, 5, 8, 9)

D. To emphasize the ethical responsibilities that exist with regard to creating meaning through symbol usage. (Objectives 7, 9)

E. To provide the research and analysis opportunities which will acquaint students with realistic managerial communication contexts. (Objectives 1, 2, 3, 6)

F. To cultivate sensitivity to the employee/manager interpersonal experience within the organization and how its quality might be enhanced through communication. (Objectives 4, 7, 8)
IV. Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course the students will be able to:

A. locate and gather recent scholarly articles regarding a significant topic in communication and business and will report their findings and ideas in a well-written research paper. (Objectives 1, 3)

B. demonstrate critical thinking about an artifact that portrays team characteristics (e.g., “A League of Their Own” documentary) by identifying and describing four team characteristics illustrated therein that every manager would like to see in an organizational team and will explain how management can foster these team characteristics or attributes. (Objectives 2, 3)

C. discuss, precisely and comprehensively, the personal appraisal feedback interview and select and defend a well-formulated strategy for reducing anxiety for the evaluator and the “evaluate.” (Objectives 2, 3)

V. Expectations of Students:

Students are expected to complete assigned readings, participate in essay examinations, classroom exercises, discussions, cases, and role-plays. A research paper and an oral presentation are required for this course.

VI. Course Content:

A. Introduction to Managerial Communication
   1. What managers do
   2. Misconceptions about managerial communication
   3. Communicators create meaning
   4. Corporate Culture—Story, Ceremony, Metaphor, and Meaning

B. Media and Tools of the Manager-Communicator
   1. Tools to convey job-related information; tools to strengthen interpersonal relationships and organizational commitment

C. Influences upon Communication Climate
   1. Goal setting
   2. Reward systems
   3. Supportive and defensive behaviors
   4. Equity Theory
   5. Grapevine

D. Communication Process and Flow
   1. Communication Networks
   2. Organizational Structure
   3. Work Design
   4. Power and Communication Flow

E. The Practice of Managing by Communication
   1. Leadership and Power
   2. Group Communication Process
   3. Listening and Feedback
   4. Conflict Management
F. One to One Communication
   1. Interview Formats
   2. Questioning Techniques
   3. Giving Instructions, Evaluation and Motivation

G. Meetings, Conferences, and Small Group Problem Solving
   1. Group goals and types
   2. Group number, roles, and functions
   3. Group process
   4. Group conflict management

H. Oral Presentations and Briefings
   1. Research Procedures
   2. Organizational Formats
   3. Introductions, conclusions, transitions, and summaries
   4. Developing and supporting main points
   5. Handling audience questions

VII. Textbook:

VIII. Basis for Student Evaluation:

Students' grades will be determined by the following inputs:

A. Participation: This portion of the grade will be determined by active involvement in discussions, case analyses, class exercises and role-plays.

B. Unannounced Quizzes: Two unannounced quizzes over assigned readings may be expected.

C. Essay Exams: Essays will be evaluated upon content, thoroughness of response, depth of analysis, and evidence of critical thinking.

D. Research report and oral presentation: Students will be evaluated upon demonstrated ability to define and research a problem; synthesize and organize findings in both written and oral forms.

IX. Justification for Inclusion in the University Studies Program:

A. Objective One: Demonstrate the ability to locate and gather information.

   Emphasis: Significant emphasis is accorded this objective.

   Content: Students will be given instructions for researching and writing a term paper, as well as for making oral presentations. Emphasis will be placed upon using research indices, which will access both management and communication journals and books.

   Teaching Strategies: Lecture and discussion techniques will be used to prepare students for the experience of researching, writing, and presenting. Lecture and discussion are merely preliminary techniques for the experiential exercise of doing. Students must present a brief proposal with bibliography to be approved before writing the paper. This requirement assures that the chosen topic relates both to management and communication and that the bibliography reflects this interdisciplinary thrust.
Student Assignments: Students will propose a managerial/communication problem to be researched. Once approved, the student will research the problem and write the paper. Potential topics might be “Communication networking as a Technique for Acquiring Power,” “Communication Centrals and Isolates: Implications for Managers,” or “Creating Visions as a Means of Motivating.” Students will demonstrate ability to locate and gather information through the proposal and bibliography as well as through the referenced paper.

Evaluation of Student Performance: The student’s research paper will be evaluated for content. Content reveals whether the student was successful in locating relevant information.

B. Objective Two: Demonstrate capabilities for critical thinking, reasoning, and analyzing.

Emphasis: Significant emphasis is accorded this objective.

Content: Examples of topics covered in the course outline which lend themselves especially well to the attainment of the objective of fostering critical thinking, reasoning, and analysis are listed below.

Corporate Culture: (A on course outline) Corporate culture has been defined in management literature as “shared organization meaning.” Strong or “thick” culture (greatly shared) is desirable in organizations because employees are more highly socialized into the institution and commitment to the organization tends to be greater when meaning is shared. Students, however, should be shown how, through communication techniques, meaning (or culture) can be structured. For example, metaphor analysis of a culture would reveal how the use of metaphor positions one’s thinking so that individuals perceive certain things to the exclusion of other things. Meaning for individuals is manipulated. Students should come to see some important implications (from a critical standpoint as well as from a managerial point-of-view), of the notion of “creating meaning.”

Reward Systems: (C on course outline) Students will come to understand the motivational aspects of certain reward systems such as merit pay plans. In addition, through critical analysis, they will also understand potentially dysfunctional aspects such as the detrimental impact of individual competition upon the organization’s communication climate.

Power: (D on course outline) Power as a topic demands the use of analytical skills and critical thinking in its understanding. Students will not only examine communication techniques used in pursuit of organizational power, but also be able to recognize the roles of dependence and organizational critical contingencies in the determination of power. Students should be able to analyze situations for positive or negative faces of power and to support their analysis.

Teaching Strategies: Lecture will be utilized to present stimulating material which fosters critical thinking concerning managerial communication issues. Discussion will be guided by questions which insist that students see more than one perspective of an issue and that they begin to examine some of the assumptions inherent in their responses. Questions of this nature should promote one’s ability to reason and analyze. Case analysis should contribute to this objective as well, as students become more adept at distinguishing between symptoms, problems, causes, and solutions. Cases will be utilized in this course.

Student Assignments: Selected readings will be assigned which not only integrate management and communication, but which are provocative in viewing relevant issues from a critical standpoint. Assigned case studies will require of students both analytical skills and reasoning ability.

Evaluation of Student Performance: Student participation in discussions related to readings, cases, and lectures will be evaluated for logic, depth of analysis, and critical thinking. Student responses on essay exams will also be evaluated on strength of analysis and evidence of critical thinking.
C. Objective Three: Demonstrate effective communication skills.

Emphasis: Significant emphasis is accorded this objective. This course is directly concerned with the demonstration of effective communication skills particularly as they apply to the practice of management.

Content: There is little, if any, of the course content which does not relate in some way to the theory or practice of communicating effectively. From symbolic interaction in the creation of meaning to the influence of perceived equity upon communication climate; or to the practice of effectively conducting an exit interview; this course content focuses upon one’s ability to demonstrate effective communication skills as a practicing manager.

Teaching Strategies: Each of the teaching techniques used in this course has been carefully considered for its contribution to the attainment of objective three. Role-play is an important teaching technique utilized to attain this objective. As one example, role-play will be used in conjunction with lecture as opportunity for individuals to understand and to conduct a performance evaluation feed-back interview. Known to be one of the most sensitive tasks of the manager—evaluating the employee’s performance and discussing the performance in a face-to-face interview – the interview can motivate or demoralize the employee. Students will attempt to demonstrate effective communication in this situation. Case studies will be used to analyze managerial communication problems and to generate alternatives for their solution. The use of cases enables the student to understand what is, and what is not, effective communication. The use of a managerial group decision-making will allow students to demonstrate effective communication. As students evaluate their group process, they will critique the communication that occurred, as well as the quality of the solution to the managerial problem. Discussion will be utilized as a teaching strategy interspersed with each of the above. Finally, storytelling will be utilized as a technique to sharpen the students’ ability to understand what constitutes effective and ineffective managerial communication.

Student Assignments: Discussion of assigned readings, a written term paper, an oral presentation, and participation in classroom activities provide opportunities for students to demonstrate effective communication skills.

Evaluation of Student Performance: The student’s demonstrated ability to effectively communicate will be evaluated through classroom participation, the written research paper, and the oral presentation.

D. Objective Four: Demonstrate an understanding of human experiences and the ability to relate them to the present.

Emphasis: Significant emphasis is accorded this objective.

Content: One example of a course component which contributes student understanding of human experiences in light of the present is work design (D on the course outline). For example, students must understand that it is not possible to separate one’s work experience from one’s life experience. Satisfaction with work “spills over” into satisfaction with life. Students must come to critically consider work designed solely for efficiency and economies of scale. Students should understand, for example, the experience of work as depicted so well by Studs Terkel in *Working*:

> This book, being about work, is, by its very nature, about violence—to the spirit as well as to the body. It is about ulcers as well as accident, about shouting matches as well as fistfights, about nervous breakdowns as well as kicking the dog around. It is, above all (or beneath all) about daily humiliations. To survive the day is triumph enough for the walking wounded among the great many of us…

In addition, an important theme throughout the course that is introduced in A on the outline is “What kind of reality or experiences are being created by those in power by the way in which they communicate?” Does, for example, communication create for one the experience of being dependent...
and submissive, and demoralized? Or, does communication create the human experience of being inspired, of being encouraged, of being able to self-actualize through one’s work?

Teaching Strategies: Lecture and discussion concerning assigned readings will be the primary teaching strategies. The Socratic Method of questioning lends itself very well to an objective of this nature, and will be used.

Student Assignments: Selected readings support this objective. The purpose of the readings is to increase the depth of understanding concerning the diversity of human experiences in work and life.

Evaluation: Demonstration of the attainment of this objective will be evaluated through the essay examination.
E. Objective Five: Demonstrate an understanding of various cultures and their interrelationships.

Emphasis: Some emphasis is accorded this objective.

Teaching Strategies: Lecture and discussion will address as a continuous course sub-theme the reality that managerial communication is currently a global endeavor, and that one cannot ignore cultural differences that exist both within the organization and as part of the organization’s environment. Guest lecturers representing different cultures will be invited to the classroom.

Student Assignments: While not specifically required, various cultures and their interrelationships would provide very fertile ground for student research in the context of managerial communication.

F. Objective Six: Demonstrate the ability to integrate the breadth and diversity of knowledge and experience.

Emphasis: Significant emphasis is accorded this objective.

Content: Much of the subject matter of a management course derives from the disciplines of psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Examples of topic areas addressed in the course which have as their roots the above mentioned disciplines are motivation (psychology); studies of small group (psychology and sociology); and organizational culture (anthropology). Communication also draws from and contributes knowledge to these disciplines. In addition, communication is grounded in and contributes to philosophy, among other disciplines. These foundations, therefore, are reflected throughout the subject matter introduced in the course. The integration of this knowledge is imperative for the manager-communicator, and is the substantive material of the course.

Teaching Strategies: Many of the teaching strategies applied in this course support this objective. Among the teaching strategies proposed are the case method, experiential exercises, guest lecture, the Socratic Method, lecture, and discussion.

Student Assignments: All student assignments—readings, participation in class activities, a written term paper and an oral presentation—have been selected to promote the student’s ability to integrate knowledge and experience.

Evaluation: In class activities, essay examinations, and the term paper, students will be expected to integrate breadth and diversity of knowledge and experience.

G. Objective Seven: Develop the ability to make informed, intelligent value decisions.

Emphasis: Significant emphasis is accorded this objective.

Content: One of the significant aims of a liberal arts program is to provide learning experiences in which students can develop the ability to choose their personal values in an informed and intelligent manner. This is an objective of each component of this course. Throughout this course, effort is made to present management issues both from a managerial bias, as well as from critical perspectives. Communication is analyzed within these various perspectives. It is strongly felt that by understanding more than one way of interpreting topics and issues, one is better able to make informed value decisions.

Teaching Strategies: The lecture technique; discussion of readings which are provocative and fresh; and analysis of short cases which force students to make value judgments, to recognize them as such, and to support them in an intelligent manner will be used.

Student Assignments: Carefully selected readings and analyses of short cases should strengthen the student’s ability to make intelligent, informed, value decisions.
H. Objective Eight: Develop the ability to make informed, sensitive, aesthetic responses.

Emphasis: Considerable emphasis is accorded this objective.

Content: A good deal of the course addresses this university studies objective. It is addressed initially on the course outline (A) with regard to the notion of the creation of meaning through the exchange of symbols; that individuals have great responsibility to select symbols in such a way to be understood by others. Another example (A) demonstrates the way communication becomes forceful, memorable, and yet subtle through the use of story telling. Indeed many sensitive issues, yet issues which enable individuals to “make-sense” of their environment, may be approached by managers through story form. Certainly the ability to make informed, sensitive, responses is enhanced by the study of effective organizational interviews (F), and the study of interactional communication (G) such as communication within groups, and the means by which conflict is managed (G) within organizations. Even more directly this objective is addressed through the study and experience of oral presentation (H). The above listing provides example. It is not exhaustive. Other course topics provide a knowledge base that would improve the ability of the student to make informed, sensitive, aesthetic responses.

Teaching Strategies: The primary teaching strategies toward attainment of this objective would be lecture, discussion, and role-play. Student knowledge would be increased through lecture presentations and discussion of relevant assigned readings. Role-plays provide opportunities to experience situations that require informed, aesthetic, sensitive responses. Students may then critique one another’s communication efforts. Indeed, it will probably be possible to videotape various role-plays and let students begin to critique their own ability to make informed, sensitive, aesthetic responses.

I. Objective Nine: Demonstrate the ability to function responsibly in one’s natural, social, and political environment.

Emphasis: Significant emphasis is accorded this objective.

Content: Throughout this course emphasis is placed upon exercising responsible behavior in the role of manager-communicator. It is emphasized particularly in discussions on the creation of meaning (A on outline); in communicating with individuals (F) and groups (G); and with exercise of organizational power (D). Students must come to recognize that responsibility comes along with authority, and that their communication with others in the organizational setting must constitute responsible behavior. Functioning in a responsible way in one’s political environment is specifically addressed in conjunction with equal employment opportunity legislation which is presented with discussions of employment interviewing (F).

Teaching Strategies: The primary teaching strategies utilized to attain this objective will be discussion, short cases, and role-play. A “PAA” will also be used to foster the attainment of this objective. A “PAA” (personal application analysis) is a one-page written assignment in which students analyze what subject matter or concepts mean to them personally. This is an appropriate technique to utilize. It forces students to respond in a personal way to various issues.

Student Assignments: Selected readings, participation in classroom activities, and written “PAAs” (see above) will contribute to the attainment of this university studies objective.

X. Background

Teaching this course requires basic background/knowledge in the areas of management and speech communication.

XI. Class Size

The optimal class size for this course would be 30.
XII. Bibliography:


