

**Syllabus – Communication 691: Survey of Organizational Communication
Spring, 2015, Monday, 3:00 – 5:45 p.m.**

Professor Katherine Miller

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:00 – 2:30

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Course Description

This course is designed to provide an introduction to theory and research in organizational communication in terms of historical roots, metatheoretical commitments, conceptual and theoretical approaches, and contemporary research. The first half of the course will be devoted to a consideration of the organizational communication discipline in terms of history, metatheory and methodology, and important conceptual and theoretical approaches to understanding organizing and organizations. The second half of the course will be devoted to discussions of a range of contemporary research on specific topics that are currently of great interest to organizational communication scholars through the presentation of workshops designed by students. Throughout this semester, we will emphasize the work of *communication* scholars and publications within *communication* journals. Just my own small effort to deal with the discipline's chronic academic trade deficit. ☺

Evaluation

The major project for evaluation in the course will be a project due at the end of the semester. The specific format of that project (literature review, research proposal, empirical research, creative work, performance) will be determined on an individual basis. It is anticipated that you will begin work on these projects at midway through the semester (or sooner), and you will be encouraged to develop several ideas for possible papers that can be discussed and critiqued in class.

Second, you will also write a book review of a recently published scholarly or popular press book relevant to organizational communication. The review will be prepared by first writing an extended "summary with opinion" of the book for my review (probably about 10 pages). After I review this project, you will then prepare a review suitable for submission to a journal (typically 750-1500 words).

Third, the second half of the term will consist of two "workshops" per week. Each workshop will be led by one student (with assistance from another). Students will be able to choose topics of interest to their own work for these workshops.

Finally, I anticipate active participation: in class discussions and in a Facebook group. There are typically 4-5 readings (journal articles or chapters) for each week in the first portion of the course. Class will involve a close examination of these pieces, and it is essential that students read critically before class and engage each other – and the material – during class. I'll have lots of "talking points" to contribute, but graduate courses don't work well without engagement in the material and each other. Second, there will also be a Facebook group set up for the class. Margaret and I will pose questions for ongoing discussion on the group page and post things of interest in current media. You should check out the page regularly and contribute with comments, related links, or additional posts.

The specific breakdown for points in the course is as follows:

Book Review Part One – Due February 24	50 points
Major Project “Ideas Document” – Due March 9	25 points
Book Review Part Two – Due April 14	50 points
Workshop Preparation and Execution – Various Dates	50 points
Major Project – Due May 8	125 points
Participation – Ongoing	50 points

Class Policies and Procedures (with liberal borrowing from Sarah Tracy)

Norms of Civility

Let’s create an oasis of civility in this class by: arriving on time and staying for the entire class period, keeping an alert and enthusiastic presence, paying attention to course material rather than other distractions, listening supportively and attentively—speaking one at a time and helping others stay focused. To help create this environment, students should not: arrive late, leave early, sleep, use a phone or lap-top for non-course activities, eat odiferous or noisy food, or carry on side conversations. Many of us are irresistibly drawn to our hand-held devices. If this is the case for you, make it invisible—put it away and turn off the buzzer, beeper and vibrator.

Academic Integrity

Assignments with integrity are written at the graduate level, with clear and appropriate organization, full sentence structure, grammar and spelling. When referring to material from the text, class notes, or any other source (including Internet webpages), using quotation marks and appropriate citation is ethically and stylistically required.

Students are warned against cheating or plagiarizing on any assignment or exam, large or small. Plagiarizing includes copying from other students, past coursework, the Internet, the text, or other published sources without proper citation. It also includes excessive “help” or “editing” on assignments from others. While it is appropriate that several graduate school papers overlap in conceptual focus, your course assignments should be original work devised for this class. If you plan on using material prepared for a different course, please consult with me regarding appropriateness.

Unique Academic Needs

Students with unique academic needs who desire special accommodations should document their needs with ASU’s disability resource center (<http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/lab/>) and contact me in the first couple sessions to discuss options.

Absences, Due Dates, Late or Incomplete Work

Assignments will be marked down up to 20% each day late. All coursework must be completed in order to pass the class. Incompletes are available to students who: 1) have finished more than half the coursework and 2) experience serious illness or personal emergency.

Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
1/13	The field of Organizational Communication in context	Clair, 1999 Bullis, 2005 Corman, 2005 Miller, 2005 Kuhn, 2005
1/20	Metatheory and method at the turn of the century and now	Cheney, 2000 Corman, 2000 Miller, 2000 Mumby, 2000 Deetz & Eger, 2014
1/27	Network and Relational Approaches	Contractor & Shumate, 2014 Poole, 2014 Sias, 2014
2/3	Agency, Structure, and Institution	Poole & McPhee, 2005 Scott, Corman, & Cheney, 1998 McPhee, Poole, & Iverson, 2014 Lammers & Garcia, 2014
2/10	Constitution and Discourse	McPhee, Poole, & Iverson, 2014 Bisel, 2010 Brumans, Cooren, Robichaud, & Taylor, 2014 Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004
2/17	Workshop Example from Margaret	TBA
2/24	Power & Resistance	Cheney & Barker, 1994 Deetz, 2005 Mumby, 2014 Zoller, 2014
3/3	Feminism and Difference	Mumby & Putnam, 1992 Ashcraft, 2005 Ashcraft, 2014 Parker, 2014
3/17	Big Questions, Discussion of Projects	
3/24 - 4/28	Workshops (2 per day; 75 minutes each)	

References

- Ashcraft, K.L. (2005). Feminist organizational communication studies: Engaging gender in public and private. In S. May & D.K. Mumby (Eds.), *Engaging organizational communication theory and research* (pp. 141-169). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ashcraft, K.L. (2014). Feminist theory. In L. L. Putnam and D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 127-150). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Barker, J., & Cheney, G. (1994). The concept and practices of discipline in organizational life. *Communication Monographs*, 61, 20-43.
- Bisel, R. S. (2010). A communication ontology of organization? A description, history, and critique of CCO theories for organization science. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 24, 124-131.
- Brummans, B.H.J.M., Cooren, F., Robichoud, D., Taylor, J.R. (2014). Approaches to the communicative constitution of organizations. In L. L. Putnam and D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 173-194). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bullis, C. (2005). From productivity servant to foundation to connection: One history of organizational communication. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 18, 595-603.
- Cheney, G. (2000). Interpreting interpretive research: Toward perspectivism without relativism. In S.R. Corman and M.S. Poole (Eds.), *Perspectives on organizational communication: Finding common ground* (pp. 17-45). New York: Guilford.
- Clair, R. P. (1999). Standing still in an ancient field: A contemporary look at the organizational communication discipline. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 13, 283-293.
- Contractor, N., & Shumate, M. (Forthcoming). Communication networks. In new *Handbook of Organizational Communication*.
- Corman, S.R. (2000). The need for common ground. In S.R. Corman and M.S. Poole (Eds.), *Perspectives on organizational communication: Finding common ground* (pp. 3-13). New York: Guilford.
- Corman, S.R. (2005). Growing up in turbulent times. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 18, 604-611.
- Deetz, S. (2005). Critical theory. In S. May & D.K. Mumby (Eds.), *Engaging organizational communication theory and research* (pp. 85-111). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Deetz, S. A., & Eger, E. K. (2014). Developing a metatheoretical perspective for organizational communication studies. In L. L. Putnam and D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 27-48). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fairhurst, G. T., & Putnam, L. L. (2004). Organizations as discursive constructions. *Communication Theory*, 14, 5-26.

Kuhn, T. (2005). The institutionalization of Alta in organizational communication studies. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 18, 618-627.

Lammers, J.C., & Garcia, M.A. (2014). Institutional theory. In L. L. Putnam and D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 195-216). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McPhee, R. D., Poole, M. S., & Iverson, J. (2014). Structuration theory. In L. L. Putnam and D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 75-100). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miller, K.I. (2000). Common ground from the post-positivist perspective: From "straw person" argument to collaborative coexistence. In S.R. Corman and M.S. Poole (Eds.), *Perspectives on organizational communication: Finding common ground* (pp. 46-67). New York: Guilford.

Miller, K.I. (2005). A stroll down memory lane (in flip flops). *Management Communication Quarterly*, 18, 612-617.

Mumby, D.K. (2000). Common ground from the critical perspective: Overcoming binary oppositions. In S.R. Corman and M.S. Poole (Eds.), *Perspectives on organizational communication: Finding common ground* (pp. 68-86). New York: Guilford.

Mumby, D.K. (2014). Critical theory and postmodernism. In L. L. Putnam and D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 101-126). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mumby, D.K., & Putnam, L.L. (1992). The politics of emotion: A feminist reading of bounded rationality. *Academy of Management Review*, 17, 465-486.

Parker, P.S. (2014). Difference and organizing. In L. L. Putnam and D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 619-642). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Poole, M. S. (2014). Systems theory. In L. L. Putnam and D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 49-74). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Poole, M.S., & McPhee, R.D. (2005). Structuration theory. In S. May & D.K. Mumby (Eds.), *Engaging organizational communication theory and research* (pp. 171-196). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Scott, C., Corman, S., & Cheney, G. (1998). Development of a structural model of identification in the organization. *Communication Theory*, 8, 298-336.

Shumate, M., & Contractor, N.S. (2014). Emergence of multidimensional social networks. In L. L. Putnam and D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 449-474). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sias, P. (2014). Workplace relationships. In L. L. Putnam and D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 375-400). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Zoller, H. M. (2014). Power and resistance in organizational communication. In L. L. Putnam and D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 595-618). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Final Paper Assignment

For the final paper, you have a lot of latitude in terms of the specific nature of the project. Possibilities include a literature review, a research proposal, a report on ongoing research, a case study that could be used for pedagogical purposes, a performance piece that embodies organizational communication issues, a relevant narrative or autoethnography ... you get the idea – there are lots of options. The only requirements are that: (1) it is relevant to organizational communication; (2) it is of a scope that we both agree is appropriate for a cumulative project in a semester course; (3) it is a project that would be of interest to others in the subdiscipline of organizational communication (think something that could find a home somewhere at an NCA conference); and (4) that it is not duplicative of work you're doing for another class (though I appreciate that there can be some overlap in projects).

With this wide range of possibilities, then, it's hard to lay out specific requirements for the project. Instead, I anticipate that the details of your projects will be negotiated with me and with input from other members of the seminar. To that end, you are being asked to think about what you want to do for this project and prepare an "ideas document" that will be due by noon on Monday, March 9 (the first day of spring break). This ideas document does not to be really long (1-3 pages, I would guess) but should describe your ideas for the project – or perhaps ideas for several projects if you can't decide exactly what you want to do. I will then distribute these documents to everyone in the class, and we will all read all of the ideas documents for discussion the first Tuesday after break (March 17). Following our discussion that afternoon, everyone should have a better idea of their projects and additional details can be developed in negotiation with me.

Book Report Assignment

For this assignment, you are asked to choose a contemporary book on a topic that would be of interest to organizational communication scholars and/or practitioners. You can choose either a scholarly book (edited or original) or a book designed for a more general audience. Be sure the book is current (hopefully published in the last year or two) and something of clear relevance to a broadly construed definition of organizational communication. Please have your book selection approved by me early in the semester.

The assignment itself is to be completed in two parts. The first part is a not-too-formal summary of the book and your own thoughts and commentary. I'd like you to see this as a draft in which you think through what the book offers and the insights you have about this book for an audience of organizational communication scholars and/or practitioners. I would anticipate this portion of the assignment to be about 10 pages, and it is due on February 24.

The second portion of the assignment is to take these notes and ideas and distill them into a book review that would be appropriate for submission to a journal or for a blog post. I would encourage you to look around for relevant journals and check on submission requirements. These vary, but the reviews are typically expected to be quite succinct (e.g., 750-1500 words). You can target a specific journal's requirements or write a more general review that could be submitted to a variety of outlets. If you do not target a specific journal outlet, my requirement is that the review be limited to 1,000 words, and you can either consider the review as something you'd want to do for a journal submission or for a blog post. After I've read the first part of the assignment, I can help you with suggestions regarding the direction of this more succinct review. The second part of the book review assignment is due on April 14.

As you work on the two parts of this assignment, you should be cognizant of what I'll be looking for in each segment. For Part One, I'll be looking for both the quality of the summary and the insight you bring to the book. For Part Two, I'll be looking at the choices you've made in homing in on key aspects of the book for review and, especially, at the quality of writing.

Workshop Assignment

During the second half of the semester, each of you will be in charge of presenting a 75-minute “workshop” on a topic of relevance to contemporary research and practice in organizational communication. You will have the freedom to design the workshop in the way you feel will best introduce others to the topic you choose – work to make the format as participative and involving as possible. Though you have great flexibility here, I would like you to be sure that each workshop included 1-2 required readings that will familiarize others with the topic (though not in an exhaustive way – i.e., no giant literature reviews). You should also provide a “takeaway” list of relevant readings so if others wish to follow up later on the topic, they have the resources to do so. Below are some possible workshop ideas – these can be adapted to your own interests in a variety of ways or you can run with something completely different. There will be ample opportunity for you to discuss possibilities with me and Margaret before you get started.

Contemporary Research Issues

Bullying	Knowledge Work
Career Trajectories	Leadership
Compassion in the Workplace	Materiality
Conflict	Organizational Change
Coworker Interaction	Organizational Emotion
Diversity Management	Sensemaking
Embodiment	Socialization
Generational Issues	Teamwork
Globalization	Technology and Wired Organizations
Identification	Telework
Interorganizational Networks	Work/Life Balance

Contexts of Organizational Communication

“Collared” Work	Health Care Organizations
Community Organizing	Nonprofit Organizations
Educational Institutions	Religious Organizations
Government and Bureaucracy	Volunteerism

Methodological Approaches

Archival Research	Mixed Methods
Engaged Research Techniques	Organizational Ethnography
Historical Approaches	Participatory Action Research