

COMM 428: Organizational Communication

Spring 2017 (CRN 23262; 5 credits)

CF 224 ...Tue/Thurs 8:00am-9:50am

Professor: Dr. Rita Daniels

Email: Rita.Daniels@wwu.edu

Office Location: CF 277

Office Phone: (360) 650 6632

Office Hours: Tue/ Thurs 10:00 – 11:00am; Wed 9:00 – 11:00am

Also available by appointment

One word to describe the culture of my ideal workplace is

WWU Department of Communication Studies Mission Statement

“We teach Communication Studies that nurture inclusive civil discourse, critical thinking, and cooperative solutions in a diverse global community. We offer opportunities to develop strong communication skills within a challenging liberal arts program.”

Course Description

COMM 428 is a five credit-hour course that reviews current theory and research on organizational culture; the artifacts, values, and assumptions communicated by organizational members. This course will include instruction on the role that culture plays in organizations with special attention to the construction of culture through communication of organizational members, assimilation into organizational cultures, and the elements that comprise organizational cultures. This course will be taught in a discussion format. You will be expected to actively participate in all classroom discussions, activities, and assignments by keeping up with the readings. This is a WP (writing proficiency) course and requires each student to undergo several revision processes (peer revisions, writing center staff comments, and the professor’s review) of a paper before the final paper, which should be written in a professional and scholarly manner.

Learning Outcomes

- Examine the relationship between communication and culture
- Analyze the culture of an organization using the seven lenses from Keyton (2011)
- Develop and refine scholarly writing and research skills

Department Learning Outcomes

- Concepts: Students are able to apply communication concepts
- Methodology: Students are able to understand methods for generating knowledge
- Critical Thinking: Students are able to employ critical thinking skills
- Team Work: Students are able to work cooperatively in small groups
- Writing: Students are able to write proficiently at college level

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, we should be able to

- define organizational culture,
- differentiate among the objective, becoming, and grounded orientations to organizational culture,
- identify the role of power and emotion in organizational culture (GUR competency #11), and

- apply course content to assess the organizational culture of actual organizations using appropriate data collection tools (GUR competency #8).

Required & Recommended Texts

Required

Keyton, J. (2011). *Communication and organizational culture: A key to understanding work experiences* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sutton, R. I. (2007). *The asshole rule: Building a civilized workplace and surviving one that isn't*. New York, NY: Warner Business Books.

Recommended

Papa, M. J., Daniels, T. D., & Spiker, B. K. (2008). *Organizational communication: Perspectives and trends*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Course Policies

Credit-Hour/ Study Times: According to WWU policy, every credit hour of coursework should entail two additional hours of study time outside of class each week. As this is a five credit class, you should expect to spend an additional 10 hours outside of class reading, studying, and completing assignments. Five credit formula: 10 hours a week x 10 weeks in the quarter = 100 hours outside of class time per quarter. “Western Washington University has established the following credit load for undergraduate students: (a) the standard load per quarter for undergraduates is 15 credits...; (b) an employed student is expected to reduce his or her academic program and credit load accordingly” (WWU Catalog, 2007-2008, University Academic Policies, pp. 34-35).

Electronic/Technological Devices. Out of respect for everyone, no electronic or technological devices, including, but not limited to, laptop computers, Ipads, smart phones, electronic notebooks, Kindles, Ipods, cellular phones, and digital cameras are permitted in the classroom during class time except to take notes or for class-related purposes. If you are seen using any device for anything non-academic related, you will cease to use such device in class and this may result in grade penalties.

Recordings: Students are not allowed to record content discussed by Dr. Daniels or any aspect of the class in session without her written permission. Class materials may be reviewed on-line but should not be altered in any way.

Attendance and Participation. Student attendance in class is essential to learning. This is a discussion oriented class and your **attendance is mandatory at every class meeting**. You are responsible for signing the attendance sheet each class meeting. Signing in for another student is cheating. Arriving late to class or leaving early will prevent you from being considered present. If you are present in class but don't sign-in, you are considered absent. You are allotted two “free” absences. No need to notify me☺. Absences beyond two will cause you to forfeit five extra credit points for attendance. **Come to class prepared to discuss the course readings and other assignments. Please bring the readings/textbook with you to class as well as your insights, questions, and examples to share with the class.**

Classroom Conduct. We will maintain an open and democratic setting for our classroom by being considerate and supportive of each other. Our strategy to maintain this classroom climate is to keep up with the readings, listen to each other with an open mind, provide constructive and relevant feedback, and be respectful of diverse views and identities. I am committed to establishing and maintaining a classroom climate that is inclusive and respectful for all students. We will not tolerate discriminatory language.

Learning includes being able to voice a variety of perspectives, and I highly encourage classroom discussion. In this class, I expect all students to make their best efforts to pronounce one another's names correctly, and to respect one another's personal pronouns. If you have questions or concerns related to these expectations, please speak with me.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism.: I am deeply committed to integrity as a necessary principle of liberal education. This can only be truly achieved when we commit to integrity throughout all of our activities at the University, including our work, academics, and campus life. To this end, each of us has a responsibility to be fair and honest. Let us recognize that our actions reflect on each of us and on Western as a whole. As such, we honor integrity as vital to our community and the ideals of liberal education. Integrity is one of the main qualities of "a good person", one whose character is respected and admired. Plagiarism is presenting someone else's own work in whole or in part the argument, language, creations, conclusions, or scientific data of another without explicit acknowledgement. Examples include but are not limited to: (1) Using another person's written or spoken words. (2) Using information from a World Wide Web site, CD-ROM or other electronic sources. (3) Using statistics, graphs, charts and facts without acknowledging the source of the ideas. (4) Paraphrasing, which is using someone else's argument without acknowledging the source by imitating the argument using other words (Appendix D, WWU, Library, <http://www.library.wvu.edu/ref/plagiarism.html>). Students are required to use the APA 6th edition manual to make certain that she/he has not violated plagiarism rules for any written or oral assignment. If academic plagiarism occurs, the student will fail the assignment and the course.

Responsible Accommodation for Documented Disabilities. Reasonable accommodation for persons with documented disabilities should be established within the first week of class and arranged through Disability Resources for Students: telephone 650-3083; email drs@wwu.edu; and on the web at <http://www.wvu.edu/depts/drs/>."

Any additional policies will be distributed in class as needed.

Course Requirements

- 1 Exam
- 2 Response Papers (RP)
- Discussion Questions
- Talking Points
- In-Class Activities/Participation
- Organizational Culture Project (OCP) – group work

Exam. There will be one exam in this course worth **100 points**. This exam will be based on textbook material and other readings, lecture notes, in-class activities and discussions, and any supplemental information provided in the first three weeks of the quarter. It will feature a combination of multiple-choice, matching, true-false, and/or short answer/short essay items.

Response Papers. There will be two response papers in this course, each worth 20 points, for **a total of 40 points in the course**. By the end of week 3 (when we would have had a basic understanding for organizational culture), each student will find and email to me (if someone has already emailed your article to me, I will notify you), one research article (I will upload all articles in the designated column on CANVAS – under Modules) that examines the culture of an organization. You would write a response paper (no more than 2 double-spaced full pages with standard margin) to your selected article and another response paper to a colleague's selected article (a total of two response papers for each student by the end of the quarter). Be ready to present and discuss (20 minutes) your article and response paper.

In your response papers **DO NOT** just summarize (your summary of the article should not be more than 5 sentences) the article without taking a position or adding a unique analysis. You should make sure that your reactions are not simple agreement with the author(s), or even mere praise or criticism. Be clear about your rationale for your response, and draw on the article to provide specific support for your perspectives. Avoid superficial observations—dig/think deep☺

Use the following questions to help you think about responding to the articles. You don't have to discuss all (or any) of these, but think about them to help you write good papers and contribute meaningfully to class discussions.

- How does the article relate to the course topic, and to the other articles/materials discussed in class? Integrate ideas across papers.
- How does the article relate/contribute to the study of organizational culture? What do the author(s) assume about the topic?
- How might the article inform an intervention program or inform policy for an ideal organizational culture?
- You may critique or challenge an argument or methodology. Be sure to formulate your ideas in your own words to avoid plagiarism and its consequences.

RP submissions: Submit your RP1 as a response to the discussion thread entitled *Response papers* and RP2 as a response to the respective RP1. All RPs are due at 8:00am on assigned days.

Discussion Questions. There are five days scheduled for discussion of response papers to your original research article. **You should write a set of 2 thought provoking discussion questions** (generated from any of the articles selected for presentation for the day) **on the days when you do not write a response paper to your own chosen article** (i.e., original article). This means you will have four days to submit discussion questions. Your discussion questions should promote integration and interaction with the course materials. Be thoughtful with your questions, and use them to help show your understanding of the selected article(s) and other course materials. I would expect each question would actually take 2-3 sentences to clearly articulate and include thoughtful responses to your generated questions. Five points will be provided for each set of two discussion questions (5points * 4 sets of discussion questions for a **total of 20 points** in the class) that demonstrates a thoughtful analysis of the article(s) for the day. No points will be assigned for incomplete, superficial, or late questions. Type out your discussion questions/points and be ready to submit in class.

Talking Points. Our discussion of Sutton's (2007) *The no asshole rule: Building a civilized workplace and surviving one that isn't* will take place on CANVAS. There are seven chapters to this book. On the assigned scheduled due dates for Talking Points (which have been numbered on the course schedule per the chapter of the book), you will submit a 500-1000-word page limit write up known in this course as Talking Points (TP). Your TP should be an analysis of the assigned chapter (**DO NOT SUMMARIZE THE CHAPTER; I HAVE A COPY OF THE BOOK, THANK YOU**) and your take away. The aim of TPs is to test your understanding and appreciation of the issues or concepts discussed while giving you the opportunity to utilize your critical thinking skills. Each TP is worth 10 points for a **total of 70 points in the course**. For extra credit points, any thought-provoking response (at least 5 in total) to colleagues' TP (a day after the RP1 has been submitted) would attract 10 points based on the instructor's discretion. TPs are due at 11:59pm on assigned days.

In-Class Activities/Participation. During the course of the quarter, an interactive classroom culture will be cultivated where students will be expected to attend class each day and contribute to the progression of the class. It is the students' responsibility to fully participate and engage in these activities designed to

integrate course material and help apply course content useful for deeper understanding and learning. Please read the assigned chapter(s)/readings before you come to class. The activities may involve writing discussion questions about selected readings, engaging in activities, quizzes, and discussing and debriefing afterward. There is no make-up for these assignments. Students will also be graded for participation in class. In-Class Activities/Participation is worth **40 points**.

Organizational Culture Project (OCP). The OCP is a group project that will focus attention on one of the departments at Western Washington University and is worth **80 points**. This project allows students to expand their knowledge of the construction of organizational culture by using Keyton's (2011) cultural lenses to examine the processes of communicating and organizing that create the culture of the selected department. The written final project is worth 50 points and will be due during finals week. Further directions and rubric for the project will be distributed and discussed in class. Additionally, student groups will lead discussion (during the week assigned to their selected lens). Ten points will be assigned for each of the following tasks: correctly explain all important aspects of the article (2 pts), organize presentation clearly (1 pt), and express ideas clearly (verbally; 1 pts), provide a useful handout (2pt), create and share insightful, informed discussion questions (2 pts), and effectively facilitate class discussion (2 pts). Groups will also orally present their findings for 20 points.

Extra credit. Throughout the quarter, there may be extra credit opportunities. These opportunities will be offered to you per the professor's discretion. Please do not send me an email at the end of the quarter asking for a point or two for a grade boost (NB: I will not respond to such emails) because you would have gotten that boost already.

Late Assignment Policy. All assignments must be submitted on the due date, unless I instruct you differently. If you miss an exam, a quiz, or you do not submit a paper, you are not guaranteed an opportunity to make up those assignments. Late assignments attract 5 points for being late plus an additional 5 points for every day past the due date. For example, if an assignment is due on Monday and you submit it on Wednesday, you will lose 15 points (5 for being late in general + 10 for it being 2 days late). **No late work is accepted two days after the due date**. No exceptions

Grading Scale. This course is out of **350 POINTS total** (see individual point values for each assignment listed above). Your grade will be as follows:

333 and above = A	332 – 315 = A-	314 – 305 = B+	304 – 294 = B
293 – 280 = B-	279 – 270 = C+	269 – 259 = C	258 – 245 = C-
244 – 235 = D+	234 – 224 = D	223 – 210 = D-	209 and below = F

NB: This syllabus is subject to change. Changes, if any, will be announced in class. Students will be held responsible for all changes.

Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment
Week 1 3/28 3/30	Introduction to the course Review of Organizational Communication	Syllabus/CANVAS Keyton (2011) Ch. 1: pp. 11-16 Papa, Daniels, & Spiker (2008) Ch. 1: pp. 1-7
Week 2 4/4 4/6	Introduction to Organizational Culture Communication and Culture: A way to understand organizations	Keyton (2011) Ch. 1: pp. 16-34 Papa, Daniels, & Spiker (2008) Ch. 6: pp. 127-136 Keyton (2011) Ch. 2: pp. 40-53 Talking Point #1
Week 3 4/11 4/13	Approaches to understanding organizational culture Core Characteristics of Organizational Culture	Papa, Daniels, & Spiker (2008) Ch. 6: pp. 137-157 Submit group list and pledge for OCP Keyton (2011) Ch. 2: pp. 35-40 Complete sign-up sheet for RP presentation Talking Point #2
Week 4 4/18 4/20	Exam 1 review Exam 1	Come to class prepared for a review Talking Point #3 Email original article (for RP) to me Deadline for uploading research article
Week 5 4/25 4/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myths about Organizational Culture • Discussion of 3 response papers to original article Discussion of 5 response papers to original article	Keyton (2011) Ch. 2: pp. 69-76 Talking Point #4 Submit OCP outline
Week 6 5/2	Lenses for understanding Organizational Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of the Organizational Culture Construct 	Keyton (2011) Ch. 3: pp. 77-88

5/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lens of Symbolic Performance <p>Discussion of 5 response papers to original article</p>	Talking Point #5
Week 7 5/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lenses for understanding Organizational Culture: Narrative Reproduction Discussion of 3 response papers to original article 	Keyton (2011) Ch. 3: pp. 88-92
5/11	Lenses for understanding Organizational Culture: Management	Keyton (2011) Ch. 3: pp. 94-102 Papa, Daniels, & Spiker (2008) Ch. 10 Talking Point #6
Week 8 5/16	Lenses for understanding Organizational Culture: Textual Reproduction Discussion of 4 response papers to original article	Keyton (2011) Ch. 3: pp. 92-94 Complete sign-up (in class) sheet for OCP presentation Talking Point #7
5/18	Lenses for understanding Organizational Culture: Power & Politics	Keyton (2011) Ch. 3: pp. 102-113 Papa, Daniels, & Spiker (2008) Ch. 11 Draft 1 of OCP due
Week 9 5/23	Lenses for understanding Organizational Culture: Technology	Keyton (2011) Ch. 3: pp. 113-118 Papa, Daniels, & Spiker (2008) Ch. 7
5/25	Lenses for understanding Organizational Culture: Globalization	Keyton (2011) Ch. 3: pp. 118-124
Week 10 5/30	OCP Presentations	
6/1	Group workshop to work on final paper	
Week 11 6/6	Final OCP Paper due @ 11:59pm Pacific Time (Group leader should submit paper on CANVAS)	