

SPCM 570 Instructional Communication Theory and Practice

Spring, 2011: On-line, 3 credits

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Office Hours: T/Th 11:00am-12:30pm

Course Overview

Required Texts:

1. Chesebro, J. L., & McCroskey, J.C. (2002). *Communication for teachers*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
2. Mottet, T. & Richmond, V. P. (2005) *Handbook of instructional communication: Rhetorical and relational perspectives*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
3. Course readings available as PDF files through electronic reserve (see attached reading list for article titles)

Description: An examination of communication theory and research in instructional contexts, designed for current or prospective K-12 educators.

Learning Objectives:

This course will engage knowledge-based objectives, value/attitude objectives, and skill-based objectives.

Students will:

- ✚ know significant authors, theories, and methodologies relevant to creating knowledge in instructional communication
- ✚ know dominant research in varied areas of instructional communication
- ✚ appreciate the breadth and interdisciplinary nature of research in instructional theory
- ✚ assess the value of research in instructional communication, particularly in the field of communication studies
- ✚ appreciate the complexity of varied dynamics in instructional contexts
- ✚ critique existing theory in ways that uncover its nature
- ✚ apply ideas presented in readings and discussion to instruct colleagues in what is being learned
- ✚ use theory to reflect in experiences in instructional environments as a learner and teacher
- ✚ identify personal philosophical positions regarding the nature of, purpose of, and processes of instruction in various contexts
- ✚ examine and synthesize pedagogical and communication theory so as to better meet the communication needs of students
- ✚ understand and practice communication skills in instructional settings for the development and maintenance of an environment/relationships conducive to student/teacher interaction and learning

Course Policies

Academic Honesty

Learning requires commitment and honesty. To achieve the best possible learning experience, students must complete all of the assignments in the course on their own. If students fail to complete their own work, they are cheating themselves out of their education and are committing plagiarism. Plagiarism or otherwise failing to meet the University's Academic Integrity Policy will result in the initiation of the University's Procedures for Dealing with Academic Dishonesty. Specifically, the following academic penalties will be applied:

- **First Violation:** The student receives zero credit for the paper, exam, quiz, homework, etc., in which the incident of academic dishonesty occurred. Where the incident involves a graded assignment normally subject to a drop option, the student may not exercise that option.
- **Second Violation:** The student receives a failing grade for the class.

Assignment Form

All assignments are due on the assigned due date. Papers must be typed using a 12 point font, double spaced, with pages numbered. Pay particular attention to form (grammar, punctuation, spelling, and general appearance) as well as to the content.

- Projects and assignments will be submitted through RamCT as electronic files or through the online course tools (quizzes, etc.)
- Assignments will not be accepted by the instructor via email. All assignments related to class must be posted in the RamCT course in order to be graded.
- This class uses a traditional A-F grading system, with A representing excellent work, B representing above average work, C designating average work, D designating below average work, and F indicating failure by a student.

E-mail Procedure

All e-mail sent to the instructor for this course should contain the following in the subject line: Course Name and Number, Your Name, Short Description of your question. Please refrain from sending out e-mails to large groups of recipients as to be respectful of others. Sending e-mail that violates the rules mentioned above can result in disciplinary action taken by the school.

Grading Scale

Grades will be distributed according to the following scale:

92-100%: A	90-91%: A-	88-89%: B+	82-87%: B
80-81%: B-	78-79%: C+	70-77%: C	68-69%: D+
60-67%: D	59% and below: F		

Grade Explanation/Dispute

If a student would like to dispute an assignment grade the following steps must be taken. First, the student is required to wait 24 hours before discussing the grade. This allows the student time to review instructor comments, reflect on the assignment objective, and contemplate overall

work quality. Then, the student needs to provide, in writing, an explanation for the grade dispute. The explanation should include evidence explaining the grade dispute. Finally, the instructor will make a decision regarding the grade after a 48 hour waiting period.

Late Work

All assignments for the week must be completed by the date posted in the syllabus. No late discussion posts will be graded. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with the instructor about extreme circumstances or questions concerning the assignment and their due dates.

Online Etiquette

A majority of class time is spent sharing opinions and sharing information. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to communicate with courtesy and professionalism. Professional Courtesy includes respecting others' opinions, being courteous and respectful, and working together in the spirit of cooperation. Sexist, heterosexist, and racist language should not be used when communicating in the course. Discussions and assignments will be graded on quality and professionalism.

Participation Policy

It is expected that you participate in weekly discussion forums and illustrate your comprehension of course readings, videos, and activities.

Course Requirements, Evaluation, & Assignments

Weekly reading logs posted on Ram-CT – 30%

As a response to weekly readings, you will be required to make one posting per week (more than 24 hours in advance of our class “meeting”) that demonstrates your interaction with the assigned readings and cultivates some form of discussion among your colleagues. Postings may be written as a brief essay, a series of questions, or an integration of summary and responses to the readings. Though they need not be written in formal “essay” format, they should be written coherently, using appropriate voice, and integrating textual evidence from the readings so as to a) demonstrate your completion of readings, and b) provide concrete references for your colleagues. (15%)

You will also be required to respond to your colleagues’ postings on a weekly basis. I will track your participation by assessing not only the quantity of responses, but the quality and depth of responses as well. (15%)

Semester project – 30%

Propose a project that creates a tie between instructional communication and your professional and personal interests and goals. Submit a written proposal indicating your choice by _____ and provide enough information that I can understand and approve your selection and the topic or research question that will be addressed in the project. (proposal = 5% of grade, project = 25% of grade)

Project ideas could include some of the following:

-A “state of the art” paper on a topic or communication variable related to instructional communication. The review of literature should be exhaustive and the analysis thorough. Paper should lead to a specific conclusion about what we know and understand about the topic or variable and directions for further study.

-A prospectus (proposal) for a research study related to communication within an instructional setting that you could turn into an article, convention paper, or eventual thesis. This prospectus would include all aspects up to the actual collection of data.

-A service-learning project that involves volunteer hours within an instructional setting in which you can apply and reflect upon some of the variable discussed through our course.

Create a unit of readings – 20%

Each student will create his/her own unit of readings related to instructional communication.

The reading unit must contain a minimum of five scholarly research studies/articles/readings pertinent to some aspect of instructional communication. Avoid selecting the first articles you find when accessing research databases and instead, probe deeper into readings that could be organized around a theme or have a particular use for your professional and academic interests.

The unit should contain an introduction page that a) rationalizes why the readings were selected, b) explains the order in which they are to be read, and c) provides a statement justifying which reading you believe to be most beneficial. Additionally, provide a reference page (APA format) that succinctly lists all the articles in your unit with correct bibliographic entries. Submit your reading list, introduction page, and APA reference page, and I will post them for your colleagues’ use and may integrate them into future courses!

Praxis “notebook” – 10%

This notebook will be a means for you to summarize course concepts (in your own words), catalog and reflect upon your teaching/leadership/management experiences, and link those experiences to course content through thoughtful application of course concepts and knowledge. Think of this as a personal “journal” where you apply what you are reading, discussing, and learning to the instructional contexts of your personal and professional life.

You will write five 2-4 page entries over the course of the quarter and may turn them in as a hard copy to my office on requested due dates, or submit them on-line. I will respond to your praxis notebooks on a personal basis.

Presentation/Self-Evaluation of Class Meeting – 10%

Using whatever technological means are available to you, record yourself leading some facet of an instructional “event” for a minimum of thirty minutes. Upon completion of the recording, view yourself and complete the self-evaluation form located on our course web page.

This exercise will allow you to gain invaluable experience integrating some of the theories and concepts from our course in “real-world” instructional environments.

Course Schedule of Learning Modules

Module 1: Pre-Assessment

- 1a. Course Introductions/Personal introductions
- 1b. What is instructional communication? Definitions, overviews, getting to know relevant literature and theory in instructional communication.
- 1c. What does it mean to utilize instructional communication effectively?

Module 2: Preparing for Instruction

- 2a. Instructional contexts as cultures
- 2b. Learning styles, students as “audience”
- 2c. Student motivation and content relevancy
- 2d. Instructional communication dynamics:
 - clarity, use of humor, fear, non-verbal communication, use of power, affinity-seeking strategies
- 2e. Teacher immediacy – research and application

Module 3: Instructional Communication Models

- 3a. Instructional Models and Interactions with Instructional Communication
- 3b. The lecture
- 3c. Facilitating discussion
- 3d. Facilitating modes of collaborative learning
- 3e. Technology, instructional communication, and learning

Module 4: Student and instructor “misbehavior”

Module 5: Understanding diversity dynamics in instructional environments

- 5a. Gender and instructional communication
- 5b. Cultural diversity in the classroom

Module 6: Postscript: Why we teach

Additional Readings Available Through Electronic Reserve

Andersen, J., Nussbaum, J., Pecchioni, L., & Grant, J. (1999). Interaction skills in instructional settings. In A. Vangelisti, J. Daly & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Teaching communication: Theory, research, and methods* (2nd ed.) (pp. 359-374). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

- Anderson, P., & Anderson, J. (1982). Nonverbal immediacy in instruction. In L.L. Barker (Ed.), *Communication in the classroom: Original essays* (pp. 98-102). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Darling, A. L. (1990). Instructional models. In A. Vangelisti, J. Daly & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Teaching communication: Theory, research, and methods* (2nd ed.) (pp. 267-278). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Frederick, P. (1981). The dreaded discussion: Ten ways to start. *Improving College and University Teaching*, 29, 109 – 114.
- Morreale, S. & Pearson, J. (2008). Why communication education is important: The centrality of the discipline in the 21st century. *Communication Education*, 57, 224-240.
- Nyquist, J. D. (1988). Instructional discussion. In D. Goldsmith, C. Logan, & M. Winch (Eds.), *Instructor's Manual for Together: Communication Interpersonally* (pp. 117-126). New York: Random House.
- Weaver, R., Cottrell, H.W. (1987). Lecturing: Essential communication strategies. In M.G. Weimer (Ed.), *Teaching large classes well* (pp. 57-69). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.