

Professional Communication Development (Spring 2018)

COMS 4385.01 3 credit hours
Dan Rather Room 312 T/H 12:30 – 1:50 PM
Professor: Terri Jagers
Office Location: Dan Rather Bldg. 322-D
Telephone: 936-294-4318 E-mail: tej003@shsu.edu

Required Course Texts

Witherspoon, Patricia (1997) *Communicating Leadership: An Organizational Perspective*. Pearson.
Elmore, T. (2010). *Habitudes: The Art of Self-Leadership*. Atlanta, GA: Poet Gardener.
Elmore, T. (2010). *Habitudes: The Art of Connection with Others*. Atlanta, GA: Poet Gardener.
Elmore, T. (2010). *Habitudes: The Art of Leading Others*. Atlanta, GA: Poet Gardner.

Course Description

This course will strengthen and develop soft communication skills required to successfully enter today's job market. A focus on communication ethics and leadership will be presented through the lens of Organizational Communication case studies. Each student will be assigned to work with a community leader throughout the semester who will provide individual assessments and feedback regarding your soft communication skills.

This course deals with the emerging issue voiced as a concern among employers today; the lack of interpersonal and soft communication skills of young adults trying to enter the job market. Employers have identified the 'i-Y Generation,' with their social command center at their fingertips, as dependent on their iPhone, iPads, iPods, texting/tweeting, and Facebook to the extent that they have not matured in emotional intelligence levels of previous generations.

Course Policies

1. **Attendance.** Instruction in this course is lecture and participation based, therefore regular attendance is required. All students start with an attendance grade of 100 points. You are allowed to miss **3 class hours (TTH 2 absences)** without penalty and all absences after that will result in a ten point deduction from the attendance grade. Students missing **six or more class hours** will receive an "F" in the course. Students will not be dropped from the course due to absences; therefore you are responsible for attending or dropping. **I do not accept excuses!** You are allowed to miss 3 class hours without penalty, use them wisely. (Meaning, on your fourth class hour absence points will be deducted because you have already used your 3 "free" class hour absences.) If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what work you missed (either from another student or myself) and complete all assignments by the due date. You are responsible for signing the class attendance sheet for each class session. Your signature becomes official documentation that you were in class; if you do not sign-in you will be considered absent!

You will be considered absent if you do not attend the entire class period. That is, staying for only half of the class, or coming in 15 minutes before the end of class, or consistently coming 5-10 minutes late does not mean that you attended class. Two tardies will count as one absence. (This pattern continues in increments of two.) Students sleeping during class will be considered absent.

Note: An undetermined number of unannounced quizzes may be used to encourage attendance. These quizzes will be given at the beginning of the class period and there will be no make-up quizzes for late students.

2. **Final Examination.** You must be on time. Students more than 15 minutes late will not be allowed to take the exam.

3. **NO late assignments will be accepted.** You are responsible for turning in assignments on time. Keep up with the course activities and due dates to ensure you do not miss a deadline.

ALL assignments must be typed. Failure to type assignments will result in a significant point deduction.

4. **Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is defined as “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work” (Dictionary.com). All work must be the original composition of each student. Although you must use outside sources, you must cite them appropriately. Plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment. Assignments will be checked for plagiarism by *any and all means available*, including electronic checking services (i.e. Turnitin.com). The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

5. **Americans with Disabilities Act.** If you are a qualified student with a disability seeking accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to self-identify with the Committee for Continuing Assistance for Disabled Students at 294-1720.

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

6. **Religious Holidays.** Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

7. **Classroom Visitors.** Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. It is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

8. **IDEA System.** Students are asked to complete an IDEA evaluation of the course and the instructor at the end of the semester. Participation is voluntary.

9. **Classroom conduct.** Free discussion, inquiry, and expression are encouraged in this class. Classroom behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of students to benefit from the instruction is not acceptable. Examples may include routinely entering class late or departing early; use of mobile phones, or other electronic devices; texting; repeatedly talking in class without being recognized; talking while others are speaking or arguing in a way that is perceived as *Acrossing the civility line*®. In the event of a situation where a student legitimately needs to carry a beeper/phone to class, prior approval of the instructor is required.

Students are expected to read and abide by all rules and policies in the SHSU Student Handbook. The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/documents/2016-2018%20Student%20Guidelines.pdf>

Assignments and Requirements

You must complete and be prepared to discuss all assigned readings by the date indicated on the syllabus. Also, you must submit assignments by the beginning of the class session on designated due dates.

Your course grade will be based upon the following:

Course Participation and Attendance 20% (200 points)
Quizzes 10% (100 points)
Final Exam 10% (100 points)
Group Communication Development Assignments 10% (100 points)
Professional Presentation/Results 10% (100 points)
Soft Communication Skills 10% (100 points)
Professional Panel Participation 10% (100)
Reflection Papers 20% (200 points)

| Point Scale | Letter Grade |
|-------------|--------------|
| 900 – 1000 | = A |
| 800 – 899 | = B |
| 700 – 799 | = C |
| 600 – 699 | = D |
| Below 600 | = F |

Course Participation and Attendance (20%, 200 points): Active student participation is imperative to maximize the learning potential of this course. Therefore, you should attend each class. Please inform me if you are not able to come to class, and we can negotiate whether or not and how you might receive partial credit.

You should always be prepared to participate fully in class. Grading criteria for participation include the following behaviors: preparedness; active listening skills; offers thoughtful comments and responses; asks thoughtful questions; allows and invites others to speak; solicits feedback; responds well to feedback; demonstrates cumulative learning; and, shows initiative.

Group Communication Development Assignments (10%, 100 points) Every student will be assigned a small group in which they will work with throughout the course. They will be charged to develop a professional action plan and proposal that will lead to presenting that plan/proposal to a local business for review and assessment. Points for these assignments will be determined based on peer evaluations, plan/proposal difficulty and final product for presentation. Resulting from commitment and participation, each member of the group may not receive the same grade.

Professional Presentation/Results (10%, 100 points) Points will be determined based on the professional assessment completed by the organization's point of contact and the results for each small group's proposal and presentation. Based on commitment and participation, each member of the group may not receive the same grade.

Soft Communication Skills (10% 100 points) Each student will be evaluated on their soft communication skills throughout the semester by both their executive mentor as well as their course instructor. The evaluations include verbal and non-verbal skills including written, oral presentation, work ethic, first impression, eye contact, attire, response to criticism, and leadership skills.

Professional Panel Participation (10% 100 points) A number of community leaders/executives will contribute to our class by meeting with individual students and collectively attending a soft skill panel discussion open to all SHSU students. Marketing and hosting this campus wide event requires professional oral, written, and soft skills. Each student will be assessed based on their participation and effectiveness in all three areas of communication.

Reflection Papers: Each student is required to present two reflections papers. *Details forthcoming (20%, 2@100 points each)*

Instructor's Notes

My office is in the Communication building room 322-D. If there is something you do not understand or need help with please come see me. I encourage you to make an appointment even if it is during office hours because I may step out of my office for a few minutes. I am in my office more than the posted office hours, if you need to see me at another time please make an appointment.

My office hours are tentatively scheduled as:

Tues/Thurs: 11:00 AM – 12:20 PM

Tues/Thurs: 2:00 PM – 3:20 PM

My Spring 2018 teaching schedule is:

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| COMS 1361.04 | Tues/Thurs | 9:30 – 10:50 AM | Room 320 |
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| COMS 2385.01 | Tues/Thurs | 12:30 – 1:50 PM | Room 312 |
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| COMS 1361.14 | Tues/Thurs | 3:30 – 4:50 PM | Room 326 |
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| COMS 4378.01 | INTERNSHIPS OFF AND ONSITE | | |
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This syllabus and the assignments may change during the course of the semester at the discretion of the Professor. Continuation of enrollment in this course indicates acceptance of the terms and requirements of this syllabus.

www.shsu.edu/syllabus