Communication technologies in organizations

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This graduate seminar is designed to survey theory and research that focuses upon communication technology as it relates to organizational communication. The course draws from extant literature to examine factors that influence the use of communication technology, organizational members' use of technologies, and outcomes of selection and use. This is a research-focused course, which means that the ultimate objective is to provide the student with knowledge of current research in the field and the ability to conduct original research to further our understanding of relevant topics.

Course Objectives

Students who satisfactorily complete the requirements of this graduate seminar will be able to:

• Confidently discuss the key theories, processes, and constructs that are relevant to the study of communication technologies in organizations
• Critically read, analyze, and interpret theoretical and empirical research in this domain of inquiry
• Locate, summarize, analyze, and integrate research and theory to address a chosen topic that focuses upon communication, technology, and organizing

Required Materials

Reading packet: The course reading packet consists of a set of published book chapters and journal articles. The articles vary in their focus with some consisting of theoretical research, literature reviews, or empirical studies. All of the articles can be accessed on the course D2L website. The assigned articles and citation information are available in the weekly schedule (at the end of the syllabus). Please do not print hard copies of the articles—bring laptops/tablets to class for viewing the articles and taking notes.

Organizational Communication Textbook: Students should acquire any undergraduate organizational communication textbook written by someone within the communication discipline (not "Business Communication" or "Business and Professional Speaking"). Pretty much anything published after 2010 will do. There will not be any required reading from this book, but it may be a useful reference to clarify central organizational communication concepts.

UWM Email Account: Students should have an active UWM email account and regularly check email. If another email address is preferred, set the UWM account to forward email to the alternate address. Email from the instructor will only be sent to students' UWM email accounts.

D2L Access: Materials for the course are available from the Desire2Learn course management system. As mentioned above, all reading and descriptions of class assignments will be available in that forum which is at: http://d2l.uwm.edu.

Assignments

There are three categories of assignments, summarized below. Detailed guidelines for each assignment are available on the course website.

Research Project [450 pts]: All students must complete a research project that will be developed in three stages. First, early in the term, students will (in consultation with the instructor) write a research plan that summarizes the objectives and potential benefits of their research project, a timeline for the completion of tasks, and a brief list of initial sources used to form a basis for the research idea (3 pages; worth 50 points). Second, near the middle of the semester, students will submit the first half of their research project (worth 200 points), which is usually a summary of research literature in the selected topic area. Third, a completed project (200 points) will be due on the last class day of the semester and will include all completed portions of the proposed project and a presentation (delivered during finals week).

Framing Papers [2 x 50 pts = 100 pts]: The framing papers are brief, 3-page documents that are accompanied by a brief, in-class presentation. The objective for these papers is to

1 Correspondence by email at eriktimm@uwm.edu. Office hours (NWQ B 4574) on Monday afternoon from 3:00 - 6:00pm and by appointment.

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write a concise argument explaining how you would present and or integrate communication technologies and the theories that are used to describe, explain, predict, and control. More detail about the topics for the papers will be provided in class. The first framing paper is due during the second week of the semester, so it will be explained on the first night of class. The second is due during the seventh week.

Class Facilitation/Participation/Notes [2 x 100 pts = 200 pts]: During one of the first few class periods, students will be assigned to facilitate discussion of the articles from the reading packet. Facilitation duties consist of posting discussion questions 48 hours before the start of a class period, optionally writing a one-page handout (posted online or sent via email), delivering a brief oral summary of the article’s main ideas (about 3 minutes), and then leadership of a 30-minute class discussion.

Approximate Hour Requirements: Table 3 provides estimated hour allocations for completing the course. Please be aware that actual hour allotments may vary from student to student.

Attendance Policy: Students should be present for the entirety of each class period. If it is necessary to miss class, please contact the instructor prior to missing class. This is necessary because there are a variety of in-class exercises and I need to know who will/will not be present each class. If two or more classes are missed, 20 points will be deducted from the participation grade for each missed class over two. If more than three classes are missed, I will recommend dropping the class and retaking it during a future semester.

Late Work: Late work will not be accepted. All assignments must be completed and uploaded to the D2L dropbox by 6:30pm on the date at which they are due. After that, the work will not be accepted (see “Late work,” below). All uploaded documents should be in either a .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pages format.

Academic Misconduct: Cheating on exams and plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University. See: http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm

Course Policies
Grading: The point breakdown for each of the assignments is found in Table 1. There are 750 points possible in this course. At the end of the semester, total points will be divided by points possible. This value will be used to determine the final percentage grade. Letter grades will be assigned to percentages according to values in Table 2.

Late Work: Late work will not be accepted. All assignments must be completed and uploaded to the D2L dropbox by 6:30pm on the date at which they are due.

Classroom Technology Use: This course will comply with the Department of Communication’s policy addressing the “Appropriate Use of Personal Technology Devices in the Classroom.” Substantial or repeatedly disregard for the items described in the policy will result in deductions from the participation grade. A document describing the policy is available at: http://goo.gl/48TN5R

I encourage you to bring your laptops and tablet computers to class to review assigned reading, taking notes, and so forth. I also understand that, on occasion, you might glance at your email and/or a Twitter feed, and so forth. Please keep this to a minimum, though. As an instructor, it can be frustrating to see 12 students who are looking at their inbox and (either intentionally or accidentally) avoiding eye contact with one another.

Religious Observances: Students will be allowed to complete examinations or other requirements that are missed because of a religious observance. Please contact the instructor prior to the observance to make arrangements. See: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/$1.5.htm

Military Duty: The course will comply with university policies regarding military duty. See:http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm

Participation by Students with Disabilities: If you need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of

this course, please contact me. Students with VISA's from the Accessibility Resource Center should provide the VISA at the start of the semester. See: http://uwm.edu/arc/

Incomplete Policy: An incomplete is seldom given in this course. If a problem arises that will prevent you from completing class requirements, contact the instructor immediately. To be considered eligible for an incomplete, you must provide written, verifiable, and acceptable proof that an incomplete is justified. Again, it is highly unlikely that an incomplete will be given in this course. See: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf

Complaint Procedures: Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. See: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S49.7.htm

Grade Appeal Procedures: A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School. See: http://uwm.edu/communication/wp-content/uploads/sites/150/2014/11/grievance_policy.pdf and http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S49.7.htm

Discriminatory Conduct: Discriminatory conduct, such as sexual harassment, is reprehensible and will not be tolerated by the University. It subverts the mission of the university and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well being of students, faculty, and staff. The University will not tolerate behavior between or among members of the University community that creates an unacceptable working environment. See: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf

Syllabus Changes: In the event of changes to this syllabus, you will be informed in advance. Please regularly check the course web page and attend class to be aware of any modifications that are made.


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### Table 4: Weekly Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week, Date, and Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 1: OCTs, Introduction and Fundamental Concepts</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 1/27 Intro and Overview</td>
<td>Syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 2/3 History and General Usage Patterns (Framing Paper 1 Due)</td>
<td>Cunningham (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 2/10 Theories 1</td>
<td>Dahl &amp; Lengel (1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 2/17 Theories 2 (Research Plan Due)</td>
<td>Dosi (1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 2: Selected Theories for the Study of OCTs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 3/10 Process, sequence, similarity, development, delay (Framing Paper 2 Due)</td>
<td>Cameron &amp; Webster (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 3/24 Organizational and Group Socialization (Midterm Project Due)</td>
<td>Neeleman &amp; Baskett (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 3/31 Groups and Decision Making</td>
<td>Rains (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 4/7 Conflict and Negotiation</td>
<td>Rosette, Brett, Barsness, &amp; Lytle (2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 4/14 Anonymity, Surveillance, Privacy</td>
<td>Venkatash &amp; Davis (2000)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 3: Organizational Processes and OCTs</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14 4/28 Education</td>
<td>Elfring &amp; Treadwell (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 5/5 Class Selected Reading (Final Project Due)</td>
<td>Students will select an article for the class to read and discuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 5/12 Research Presentations</td>
<td>Brief presentations by all class members to summarize and discuss semester research projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References

Week 2: History and General Usage Patterns


Week 3: Theories 1


Week 4: Theories 2


Week 5: Theories 3


Week 6: Theories 4


Week 7: Process, Sequence, Simultaneity, Development, Delay


Week 8: Spring Break
Week 9: Organizational and Group Socialization


Week 10: Groups and Decision Making


Week 11: Conflict and Negotiation


Week 12: Anonymity, Surveillance, and Privacy


Week 13: Customer Service


Week 14: Education


Week 15: Class-Selected Articles (TBA)

2 Class members will select an article that has not been included in the assigned reading but should have been. What are the topics that we haven't covered and that you see as important? Identify an article, submit it to the D2L dropbox by 4/28, present the article in class, and facilitate a brief discussion.