

COM 388: Communication Studies Senior Capstone**Section 001 & 002 • 9:00 – 10:50am • M/W • CVA 149****IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

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****** This course will be co-instructed. Both sections of COM 388 will meet at the same time, in the same room, and have the same course requirements.***

COURSE MATERIALS

- Access to classroom Canvas page
- A working ISU email account that you check regularly. **For class related questions & information please use the Canvas email.**

All course materials are available in Canvas (that includes media, Zoom, and additional readings). Online material will be available free to you. Most course content will be in PDF, Word, and PPT, which should work for either PC or Mac. To view or print some of the documents, you will need either Microsoft PowerPoint or PowerPoint Viewer software installed on your computer. If you don't have either, the "Viewer" product is available free from the Microsoft Download Center website.

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of this class is to synthesize learning outcomes from your communication studies major and prepare you for your professional career or graduate studies. According to the undergraduate catalog, “students will synthesize coursework and communication experiences into transferable theory, skills, and applications via a senior project and portfolio.” Specifically, we will synthesize your skills, knowledge, attitude, and learning as you prepare a research paper, professional portfolio, and journal. I will work to be a career coach and consultant with you as you prepare to start your post-college journey. Thus, we designed this course to meet the following objectives:

1. To reflect and own students’ attitudes and values regarding personal and professional readiness and standards regarding the transition from classroom to career.
2. To provide students an opportunity to clarify and articulate their area of specialization within the communication discipline.
3. To develop students’ understanding of the connection among communication theory, application, and research via an original paper reflecting on what you have learned.
4. To assess students’ communication competency and content knowledge across the curriculum of their communication studies major.
5. To produce a career portfolio with materials suitable for presentation to prospective employers.

PROFESSIONALISM:

Learning is maximized by reading, note-taking, critical listening, and cognitive engagement. Professionalism includes actively listening to others' opinions viewpoints and working together in a spirit of cooperation. We are a team of soon-to-be alumni working together to improve and learn so that we find career success. Use of any electronic device should not interfere with your ability to pay complete attention or become a distraction to classmates, guest speakers, or myself. Soon, you will be a working professional so anything that would reflect poorly on you or make an unfavorable impression should be avoided in here, as you need to make the transition from student to professional now.

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT:

There is a great place on campus if you need some assistance with study skills and writing. For workshops, tutoring, or coaching, check out <http://ucollege.illinoisstate.edu>.

FINAL GRADE ALLOCATION:

<i>Senior Praxis Paper</i>	<i>Professional Career Portfolio</i>	<i>Learning Journal</i>	<i>Activities</i>
100 points	100 points	50 points	50 points
33%	33%	17%	17%

EVALUATION:

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 300

The grading scale is a standard ten percentage point scale:

90 - 100% = A; 80% - 89% = B; 70% - 79% = C; 60 - 69% = D; below 60% = F

In this course, simply doing an assignment does not result in an "A." Failure to follow directions or meet criteria will result in a loss of points. Students should note the definition of each letter grade:

"A" is reserved for work that is exceptional

"B" is reserved for work that is above average

"C" is reserved for work that is average (meets all criteria)

"D" is reserved for work that is below average

"F" is reserved for work that is failing, late, or not submitted for evaluation

Please be aware of the fact that a "bad" grade is not a reflection upon you as a person or student. A lower grade is merely a challenge to do better. I would be doing you a huge disservice if I did not expect you to live up to your fullest potential.

COURSE POLICIES:***ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY***

Students must be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy in the *Code of Student Conduct*. All ideas are to be appropriately cited when borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Inadequate citation, unauthorized and unacknowledged

collaboration, and/or the presentation of someone else's work constitutes plagiarism. Students found to commit intentional acts of dishonesty (including falsifying evidence or plagiarizing a written assignment) will receive a failing grade in the course and be referred for appropriate disciplinary action through Community Rights and Responsibilities. I view reporting academic dishonesty as my professional responsibility and do not hesitate to enforce consequences.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Professional Career Portfolio (100 points)

Your portfolio should include at least two resumes, a curriculum vitae (if considering graduate school), several cover letter templates, list of at least five professional references and their contact information, selected samples of work, job listings and job search research (locations, organizations, careers, networking contacts), interviewing materials and research, and an online portfolio (such as a LinkedIn profile). Your portfolio must be professional and error-free. Since most of the materials included in your portfolio will be used in your job search, you should capitalize on this opportunity to make these materials the best that they can be. In many ways, this assignment should be one of your most important priorities this semester. Submit this assignment on Canvas in one collection or as a series of documents.

2. Senior Capstone Praxis Project (100 points)

This short (3-5 pages) paper should relate to your area of interest. (i.e., interpersonal communication, organizational and leadership communication, or political communication). Explain your understanding of ONE prominent communication theory or concept then apply it within a specific work context. Describe a communication theory or concept in practice. How does this "framework" inform your understanding of communication in a workplace situation? We will talk about this in class.

3. Activities (50 points)

Networking Interview (10 points): Identify an individual that may have relevant experience for you. Reach out and do an interview (F2F, phone, Zoom). Submit a one-two page summary discussing major takeaways. Basically, your paper should have 1) an introduction describing who you talked with and why you talked with them, 2) a body/section that provides the most memorable points or major takeaways from your conversation and explain why the points are meaningful to you, and 3) a conclusion that summarizes and indicates what you will do with the "advice" as you move forward with your job search. Please be prepared to discuss your findings or major takeaways in class. Some of the questions you can ask include, 1) what experiences led you to this job? 2) What do you like/dislike the about your job? 3) What do you do? 4) What did you study in school that was relevant? and 5) anything else that will provide you with information about that job, career, or organization.

Your Story (10 points): Develop at least four stories about yourself that will demonstrate your skill set, experiences, and competencies when an interviewer asks you about yourself (STAR).

Career COM-petency Program (10 points): Attend either the January, February, or

March workshop:

- Monday, January 22nd, 1:00 – 2:00pm, Fell 275A: What You Believe Matters: Understanding & Addressing Microaggressions with Angell Howard
- Thursday, February 15th, 2:00 – 3:00pm, Fell 446: Think Outside of the Box: How to Use Your COM Degree with Paige Honegger
- Friday, March 1st, 10:00 – 11:00am, Fell 275A: Maximize Your Resume & Interviewing Skills with Eric Hoss

The Book (10 points): What do you need in a catch-all book to help prepare you for this transition?

International Job Application (10 points): You will need to identify a job outside of the United States and do the appropriate preparation including how this country's culture might prove different from ours and influence the job and job application process.

4. **Reading, Contacts & Learning Journal (50 points)**

Your journal should cover all required reading material, course content, lectures, discussions, and guest speakers. We are not trying to create busy work. This is an opportunity for you to be **INTENTIONAL**. For each required reading, journal your thoughts, reflections, and notes in a manner that demonstrates you have read and thought critically about its implications for you. Seek out memorable passages and ideas in the readings and identify ways the readings resonate with you. Also, document your thoughts, reflections, and notes on course lectures, discussions, and guest speakers. Take an idea and argue with it, agree with it, or illustrate it while identifying concerns that still linger in your mind by challenging or questioning key contentions from course materials and other courses you have taken throughout your major. Format is not as vital with this assignment as is content and honesty. Journals do not need to be well-edited essays, but rather reflect notes you make to yourself about ideas you are learning, connections between course materials and your interests, and ideas you hope to return to long after this class is finished. The more complete your journal and the more seriously you undertake weekly contributions to it, the better you will fare on this assignment. Keep up with this journal twice weekly and it will be both easy for and useful to you; do not expect to do whole journals in one or two sittings and perform well on the assignment. We are not making you take an exam over the required readings or other course material, so treat this as your opportunity to prove you have mastered the readings and course content. Bring your journal to class and use the perspectives within as fodder for class discussions.

ATTENDANCE

Please be prepared to discuss the daily readings. Be engaged. Perfect attendance is expected, because by enrolling in this course you have made a commitment to being present during all class meetings. Being absent deprives you of valuable discussions and information. Historically, there has been a strong correlation between absences and grades; the more class time that students miss, the lower the grades they tend to earn. Missing more than 2 class periods will result in a 5% deduction from your overall course grade for each additional unexcused absence.

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY BEREAVEMENT POLICY

If a student experiences a death of an immediate family member or relative as defined below, the student will be excused from class for funeral leave, subsequent bereavement, and/or travel considerations. The student will provide appropriate documentation and arrange to complete missed classroom work as soon as possible according to the process outlined below.

Upon notification of the absence and proper documentation, each faculty member shall excuse the student from class according to this policy and provide an opportunity to complete missed exams, quizzes, and other required work. Ultimately, the student is responsible for all material covered in class and must work with each individual professor as soon as they return to complete any required work. Details can be found at the following website: <http://policy.illinoisstate.edu/students/2-1-27.shtml>

LATE WORK AND INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY:

All assignments are expected at the beginning of class on the due date. An automatic 10% of the points possible will be deducted from late assignments, with an additional 10% deducted for each 24 hours the assignment is late. If these penalties seem steep, please consider that in eight more weeks you will likely be in a position where late work is not accepted at all. In the case of documented university excused absences, assignments should be completed *prior* to the absence. As a rule, incomplete grades will not be given.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Life at college can get very complicated. According to recent research, nearly 40% of college students are at-risk for developing generalized anxiety disorder and are less likely to seek help for it compared to other mental health issues. Students also sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience depression, and struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. However, many of these issues can be effectively addressed with a little help. Student Counseling Services (SCS) helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. Student Counseling Services is staffed by experienced, professional psychologists and counselors, who are attuned to the needs of college students. The services are FREE and completely confidential. Find out more at Counseling.IllinoisState.edu or by calling (309) 438-3655.

STUDENT ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATION SERVICES (SAAS)

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit the website at StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu.

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DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT DUE
<u>Week 1</u> Wednesday, January 17 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course introduction & syllabus • ACTIVITY: What do you value? • What is your education worth? • How are you spending your time? 	Check Canvas for readings
<u>Week 2</u> Monday, January 22 nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTIVITY: Bring a sixty-second version of what you want to be when you grow up. What are you doing about it? What do you need to do before graduation to get there? Written & ready for oral presentation. • Read & be prepared to discuss the readings. Take notes & seek out memorable passages and ideas and identify ways the readings resonate with you. • Bring a recent copy/draft of your resume. 	Check Canvas for readings
Wednesday, January 24 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTIVITY: Bring a copy of a job description that interests you • Explain and defend a Communication Studies major • How to read journal articles • APA overview • Comparing academic to popular press coverage of research • Data-based decision-making 	Check Canvas for readings
<u>Week 3</u> Monday, January 29 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job application process, job postings and search engines • Internships • Resumes and curriculum vitae's, cover letters, reference lists and letters • Emotions during the job search • Discuss paper topics & select for project (consider interest areas) • Order your ISU business cards 	Check Canvas for readings
Wednesday, January 31 st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal branding • Locating sources for papers • Work habits and productivity • Audience expectations during guest 	Check Canvas for readings

	speakers	
Week 4 Monday, February 5 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The power of networking & alumni networking • ACTIVITY: Contact an ISU CS alum and do a short interview • Professional behavior in the workplace • Privilege and professionalism 	Check Canvas for readings Networking Interview Assignment
Wednesday, February 7 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying fit of applicant to position and organization • GUEST SPEAKER • Predicting success • What is GRIT? • ACTIVITY: Identify a job somewhere outside of the U.S. and compare/contrast. Bring in the job description. 	Check Canvas for readings
Week 5 Monday, February 12 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GUEST SPEAKER • ACTIVITY: Describe your favorite theory • Civic engagement, community, and service 	Check Canvas for readings Your Story Assignment
Wednesday, February 14 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GUEST SPEAKER • Researching and scouting employers • CEB Communications Leadership Council handout • STAR 	Check Canvas for readings
Week 6 Monday, February 19 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GUEST SPEAKER • Interviewing preparation, practice, and performance • Interview formats (phone, video, in-person) • Interviewing dos and don'ts 	Check Canvas for readings The Book Assignment
Wednesday, February 21 st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTIVITY: Mock interviews 	Check Canvas for readings
Week 7 Monday, February 26 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GUEST SPEAKER • Social media and CMC in the workplace • Telecommuting • Listen to NPR story on bell curve and outliers 	Check Canvas for readings International Job Application Assignment

Wednesday, February 28 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTIVITY: Research presentations • Discuss Senior Praxis paper • Discuss and implement STAR 	Check Canvas for readings
Week 8 Monday, March 4 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GUEST SPEAKER • Negotiating salaries, bonuses, and conditions • Benefit packages, insurance, and retirement • Researching real estate, community, cost of living, and schools • Research pool participation reminder 	Career COM-petency Assignment
Wednesday, March 6 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTIVITY: Tell us one of your four stories • Course evaluations • Synthesis and feedback 	Reading Journal Senior Praxis Project Career Portfolio (Due Friday, March 8 th)

*****The above schedule, procedures and policies in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. Instructors will notify students in a timely manner of all changes related to the course schedule. In addition, the instructor reserves the right to handle situations with students on a case-by-case basis.**