

COM 388

Senior Capstone: Communication Studies – Fall 2019

Classroom: Fell 148

Dates & Times: Monday & Wednesday 9:00 - 10:50 a.m.

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Office: Fell Hall 464

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 2:00 to 3:00; Thursday 10:00 to 11:00; or by appointment.

Required Readings:

Required readings are available on the course ReggieNet website free of charge.

Course Description and Objectives:

The purpose of this class is to synthesize the 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 course work and communication experiences into transferable theory, skills, and applications via a senior project and portfolio.” Specifically, we will synthesize your skills, knowledge, and learning as you prepare a research paper and professional portfolio. Thus, I designed this course to meet the following objectives:

1. To provide students an opportunity to clarify and articulate their area of specialization within the communication discipline.
2. To develop students’ understanding of the connection among communication theory, application, and research via an in-depth original scholarly project.
3. To assess students’ written communication competency and content knowledge across the curriculum of their communication studies major.
4. To reflect and own students’ attitudes and values regarding personal and professional readiness and standards regarding the transition from classroom to career.
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. I will try to be on time for class. I hope you try as well. If you are running late, please make an effort to join us for class. 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.

“We all require and want respect: man or woman, black or white, [poor or rich]. It’s our basic human right.” (Aretha Franklin)

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>.

Special Needs: Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services (SAAS) at 350 Fell Hall, 438-5853 (voice), 438-8620 (TDD).

Mental Health Resources: Life at college can get very complicated. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience anxiety or depression, 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.

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.

Attendance Policy:

Come to class prepared to discuss the daily readings. 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.

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.

Assignments:

1) **Career Professional Portfolio:**

Your *Career Professional Portfolio* should include at least two resumes, a curriculum vitae, at least three 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, organizations, careers, networking contacts), interviewing materials and research, and an online portfolio (such as a LinkedIn profile). Your portfolio must be professional and completely 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, so get started on it early and plan to submit it before the deadline. Submit this assignment to my ReggieNet email in a series of Word documents.

2) **Activities:**

Network Interview: Identify an individual that may have relevant experience for you. Reach out and do an interview. Submit a one-page summary.

Mock Interviews (tentatively): This will be done with a group of senior professionals. More information coming.

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

Job Application (International): 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.

- 3) **Senior Capstone Praxis Project:** This short paper should relate to your area of interest (i.e., interpersonal communication, organizational and leadership communication, or political communication). Apply your understanding of at least one prominent communication theory to application within a specific work context. We will talk about this in class. You can also schedule an appointment to meet with me during office hours or other available times early in the semester to discuss your paper (3-5 pages).
- 4) **Reading and Learning Journal:** Your *Reading and Learning Journal* should cover all required reading material, course content, lectures and discussions, and guest speakers. 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 journal in one or two sittings and perform well on the assignment. I am 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. Submit this assignment to my ReggieNet email in a Word document. You can submit multiple versions of the assignment. You can also do your journaling on a weekly or daily basis in bullet or paragraph form.

Course Assignments and Grades:

The grading scale is as follows: A= 100-90%; B= 89-80%; C= 79-70%; D= 69-60%; F= 59% and below. Percentages will be calculated based on points earned from:

	<u>Points Possible/Your Points</u>
Senior Praxis paper	100 / _____
Career Professional Portfolio	100 / _____
Reading and Learning Journal	50 / _____
Activities (networking interview, job App., & mock interview)	50 / _____
Extra Credit opportunities	5 / _____
Research Pool Participation (The pool is at: https://sites.google.com/site/ilstusocstudies/)	
Total	300 / _____

Tentative Schedule [Fall 2019]

Week 1	Topic	Assignments Due
	*Introduction to Course and Syllabus *Philosophy and Purpose of the Course * Activity -Values! Would you rather?!!!!??? What do you value? What do you want? What do you need? What is my education worth? **Even though this might be one of your last semesters of college for most of you, you need to finish with an appropriate amount of energy!	Readings will change! Check the folders with the readings for the class date!
NO CLASS Wednesday, August 21st.	*Activity: For Monday, August 26th. 1) For an in-class presentation, 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. 2) Read & be prepared to discuss the readings. Take notes & seek out memorable passages and ideas in the readings and identify ways the readings resonate with you. 3) Bring a recent copy/draft of your resume.	Check the folders with the readings for the class date!
Week 2	Topic	Assignments Due
	*Activity: Bring a copy of a job description that you might interest you. *Explaining and defending a Communication Studies major *How to read Journal Articles *APA overview *Comparing Academic to Popular Press Coverage of Research *Data-based decision-making *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 the folders with the readings for the class date!
	*Personal Branding *Locating sources for papers *Work habits and productivity *Audience expectations during guest speakers	Check the folders with the readings for the class date!
Week 3	Topic	Assignments Due
NO CLASS Monday, September 2	*The power of Networking & Alumni Networking * Activity: Contact an ISU CS alum and do short interview. *Professional behavior in the workplace.	Check the folders with the readings for the class date!
	*Guest Speaker: *Identifying fit of applicant to position and organization	Check the folders with the readings for the class date!
Week 4	Topic	Assignments Due
	*Guest Speaker: *Predicting success	Check the folders with the readings for

	*What is GRIT? * Activity: Job Application-Identify a job somewhere outside of the U.S. and compare/contrast. Bring in the job description.	the class date!
Week 5	Topic	Assignments Due
	* <i>Guest Speaker:</i> * <i>Guest Speaker:</i> * Activity: Theory Talk-describe your favorite theory.	Check the folders with the readings for the class date!
	* <i>Guest Speaker:</i> *Researching and scouting the employers *CEB Communications Leadership Council [Hiring the Modern Communicator: Behavioral Interview Guide] Hand out! *Talk STAR!	Check the folders with the readings for the class date!
Week 6	Topic	Assignments Due
	* <i>Guest Speaker:</i> * <i>Guest Speaker:</i> *Interviewing preparation, practice, and performance *Interview formats (phone, video, on site) *Interviewing do's and don'ts * Activity:	Check the folders with the readings for the class date!
	* Activity: Mock Interviews with Senior Professionals?	Check the folders with the readings for the class date!
Week 7	Topic	Assignments Due
	* <i>Guest Speaker:</i> *Social media and CMC in the workplace *Telecommuting *Listen to NPR story on Bell Curve and Outliers	Check the folders with the readings for the class date!
	* Activity: Research Presentations-discuss Praxis/Senior Capstone Paper *Discuss and implement STAR!	*** Senior Capstone Paper due Monday, October 7th!
Week 8	Topic	Assignments Due
	*Negotiating salaries, bonuses, and conditions *Benefit packages, Insurance, and Retirement *Researching Real Estate, Community, Cost of Living, and Schools *Research Pool Participation reminder * <i>Guest Speaker</i>	Check the folders with the readings for the class date!
Last day of class Wednesday, October 9 th	* Activity: Tell us one of your four stories! *Course Evaluations (bring #2 pencil) *Synthesis and feedback <div style="text-align: center;"> END OF CLASS! Keep working </div>	*** Reading and Learning Journal due Friday, October 11th. *** Career Portfolio due no later than Friday, November 29th.