MGP 268 – Management Communications

Winter term, 2009  Barry Miller, Vis. Asst. Prof.

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Description

In this course, students will learn, practice, and improve communications skills and apply them in a practical manner in standard management situations such as interviewing, oral presentation, group leadership, and decision making.

Students will develop skills in, and orchestrate the processes of, creating and presenting persuasive speeches, interviewing and feedback, cross-cultural communication, interpersonal and group dynamics, and collaborative work-group projects.

Students also will improve the drafting and editing of business documents. We will draft, edit, and format several categories of documents, will analyze documents from students’ workplaces, and will develop and draft an argumentative research report.

The form of the course is experiential workshops built around the text material and the interpersonal, intra- and inter-group, and organizational demands inherent in management. Students will draw on the knowledge and experience gained in the workplace, and they will apply in the most practical ways the concepts and exercises in the
course, in order to deal with current communication issues and problems, thereby adding to their expertise as managers and co-workers.

**Objectives**

**Upon successful completion of the course, you will be able to:**

1. Describe communication theory, identify common misconceptions about communication patterns, and develop a flexible communication style for both cooperative and adversarial conditions in the workplace.
2. Understand and apply a variety of interpersonal communication skills.
3. Attain successful outcomes more readily, using verbal and non-verbal cues and techniques, including active listening, feedback, and perception checking.
4. Overcome perceptual barriers in routine interpersonal interactions and formal presentations, and deliver such presentations more persuasively and confidently.
5. Lead group discussions and develop group projects as a presenter and participant.
6. Structure the text of documents effectively, focusing on the reader’s requirements.
7. Draft documents with effective style, tone, voice, mood, conciseness, and transition.
8. Augment awareness of and develop techniques to approach a multi-cultural workforce, as well as gender differences and international business protocols.

**Texts**

Instructor’s custom text: supplementary materials and exercises  

**Requirements**

Class attendance is mandatory; students will compose and discuss drafts of assignments and work closely together in groups during class on projects and presentations. Communication techniques will be demonstrated and practiced in a group workshop setting. We will also view and critique several videos on communication skills. The final grade for the course will include a significant participation component.

There will be several written assignments, done both in class and for homework, including process analysis, speech outlines, several letter and memorandum formats, journal reports, interview report, group project report, and research report. Most assignments will be a page or less in length, and all of them should be carefully proofread. Accurate punctuation, spelling, word choice, paragraphing, and sentence structure will comprise 25% of the grade for each assignment.
**Code of Ethics Disclosure**
All students in the course are governed by the University of California’s standards of ethical conduct for students, in particular the sections on academic conduct and integrity. These sections set forth the responsibilities of students and faculty to maintain a spirit of academic honesty and integrity at U.C. Davis. It is essential that students are aware of this code of conduct and the disciplinary actions that may be taken in the event of a violation. Details may be obtained from the GSM Associate Dean or the Office of Judicial Affairs.

Students in this class must abide by the course-specific policies regarding participation, collaboration, and reliance on the work of others, as referred to in this syllabus and discussed by the instructor in class.

**Grading**
The final course grade will be based on class participation, the final group project, journal reports, speeches and outlines, homework assignments, quizzes, letters/memos, interview/feedback reports, and term paper. The assignments will be weighted as follows:

- Class participation: 20%
- Speeches/outlines: 20%
- Writing assignments: 20%
- Group project: 20%
- Homework/journal: 10%
- Quizzes: 10%

**Instructor**
Barry Miller is a Visiting Assistant Professor in the U.C. Davis Graduate School of Management. He is also a Senior Adjunct Professor of Management and English at Golden Gate University. He holds a B.A. in International Relations from UCLA and a J.D. from Hastings College of the Law. He has taught English, communications, business law, negotiation, management, and arts for 34 years and has been a communications consultant for 23 years.

**Schedule**
Week 1: Adler, Chapters 1-2
(1/7) Introduction/Objectives/Assignments/Group project discussion
Communication theory
Perception checking, I-messages
Journal reports
Discussion of speeches and outlines

Week 2: Adler, Chapters 3-4, 6-7 (pp. 194-197)
(1/14) Listening/feedback/non-verbal communication
Interpersonal and cross-cultural relationships
Interview exercise
Journal reports
Quiz--Chapter 1

Week 3: Adler, Chapters 5, 8, 10-13; Kolin, Chapters 8-10
(1/21) Practicing interviewing, feedback, interpersonal skills
Gender-based issues in the workplace
Journal reports
Quiz--Chapter 2

Week 4: Adler, Chapters 10-13; Kolin, Chapters 2-4
(1/28) Discussion of speech topics, group projects
Document discussion and practice: conciseness, mood, voice, punctuation, number usage
Due: Cross-cultural paper, feedback form on gender-based issues
Quiz--Chapter 3
Journal reports

Week 5: Kolin, Chapter 5
(2/4) Quiz--Chapter 4
Journal reports
Due: outline of group project report
Development of group projects
Journal reports

Week 6: Group dynamics and dealing with difficult co-workers
(2/11) Document discussion and practice: negative messages, tone, persuasion, transition, structure, memoranda, email
Quiz--Chapter 5
Journal reports

Week 7: Speeches
(2/18) Journal reports

Week 8: Workshop on resumes, cover letters, followup letters
(2/25) Journal reports

Week 9: Speeches
(3/4) Journal reports

Week 10: Group project reports and presentations due
(3/11) Course evaluation