

COM 598R, Sec. 008 – Fall 2008
Professor Victoria J. Gallagher
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Communication Consulting

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the art and methods of consulting particularly as applied to communication problems in organizational settings. It also provides students the opportunity to develop and/or refine training and facilitation skills and to link communication theory and research to organizational practice.

Course Objectives

Students completing the course shall:

1. Demonstrate understanding of the skills and techniques necessary to effective consulting;
2. Demonstrate understanding of typical organizational communication problems and the types of communication expertise necessary to address them;
3. Demonstrate proficiency in facilitating at least some of the following: training exercises, cases, simulations, games, and other active learning experiences;
4. Demonstrate understanding of how to evaluate consulting and training activities, identifying strengths and weaknesses (areas needing improvement).

Textbooks

Peter Block (2000). *Flawless Consulting: A Guide to Getting Your Expertise Used, 2nd Edition*. New York: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.

Sue DeWine (2001). *The Consultant's Craft: Improving Organizational Communication, 2nd Edition*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's Press.

Workbooks

Stephen S. Kaagan (1999). *Leadership Gamers: Experiential Learning for Organizational Development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Others on reserve – see bibliography

Course philosophy

This course is run as a seminar and thus the bulk of class time will be spent on discussion of course material, in-class exercises, and student-led presentations and discussions. Learning in a seminar format depends upon preparation and involvement by the students as well as the instructor. I see my role as that of interlocutor and guide, assisting and evaluating students who are well on their way to becoming independent learners and researchers.

Assignments

Discussion Leader (15%). For this assignment, 2-3 students will serve as *discussion leaders* for the afternoon's readings. On your afternoon to lead class, you are to begin with a 5-10 minute "ice breaker." Also, the discussion leaders should develop a handout for the rest of the class that summarizes the main points from the day's readings and raises important issues of discussion. At the end of the semester, each student will have a "notebook" of summarized ideas, techniques, and strategies to pull from in future consulting/training endeavors.

Report on Consulting Project (10%). Each student or group should prepare a 15-minute presentation in which you identify a group or organization and explain how and why the organization or group could benefit from communication training and/or consulting. Your presentation should incorporate materials from section IV of the DeWine book titled, "Correcting Communication Failures," in your analysis of the problem as well as relevant information from the Block book. This presentation will assist you in preparing the first part of your final project paper.

In-Class Training/Facilitation and Self-Evaluation (20%). For this assignment, your team will have the opportunity to prepare and lead a training exercise in-class. This assignment is based on the assumption that there is value in prospective trainers designing/selecting a training exercise (based upon their assessment of need), presenting information, and receiving feedback in-class before presenting in front of a client. In addition, this assignment assumes that observing, evaluating, and providing oral and written feedback for a variety of training styles is useful.

Final Project (40%). Each student or group of students will a) identify a group or organization that could benefit from communication training or consulting; b) develop a thorough outline for the training/facilitation/consulting program (including exercises, games, cases, lectures, etc. to be incorporated and a time line of events – full descriptions and/or copies of these should be included); c) develop an assessment/evaluation tool for measuring the success of the proposed training/consulting program; and d) provide a detailed description of the useful "take aways," i.e. the useful skills and/or tools that people who would

attend this training or consulting program would take away to their own lives and organizations. Finally, each student will write a reflection on the choices made for this project, providing relevant theoretical and research findings to explain/justify how and why they developed the program. The entire project will most likely end up being between 15-20 pages and is due on the afternoon of December 9, the final exam period for the class. Students will briefly present their projects from 6-9pm that evening.

Class Participation and Attendance (15%). Being present and actually participating are minimum requirements for a “B” level participation grade in this class. For any grade higher than that, your participation grade will depend on the quality of your contributions. Quality comments include: adding new insights to the readings, offering a different, unique, and relevant perspective on an issue, contributing to moving the discussion and analysis forward, extending rather than repeating the comments of others, and demonstrative reflective thinking.

Due to the nature of the course and the fact that we meet only twice a week, attendance at all class meetings is expected. However, if circumstances arise that make it impossible to attend class, you are granted one absence without penalty. For any unexcused absences beyond the allotted one, the professor reserves the right to significantly lower your grade. Per university regulations, excused absences must fall into one of two categories: 1) sanctioned anticipated situations and 2) document emergency situations. Anticipated situations (e.g., participating in official university functions, court attendance, religious observations, or military duty) **must be submitted in writing at the beginning of the semester or one week prior to the anticipated absence.** Emergency absences (e.g. student illness, injury, or death of immediate family member) **must be documented by Student Development or an attending physician** within one week following the emergency. Make-up work will be allowed only in situations where the absences are excused. If you miss class on a day you are scheduled to make an oral presentation, you will receive a zero for that assignment.

Please consult the following web page for further information on university attendance regulations:

http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/academic_policies/attend/reg.html

Evaluation

Discussion Leader	60 points
Report on Consulting Project	40 points
Training/Facilitation Project	80 points
Final Project	160 points
<u>Attendance and Participation</u>	<u>60 points</u>
Total	400 points

Academic Integrity: Strict standards of academic honesty will be enforced according to the University policy on academic integrity found in the Code of Student Conduct. I expect that a student's name on any test or assignment means that the student has neither given or received unauthorized aid and that the student's work contains appropriate citation of ideas and materials that are not his or her own. Consult the following website for further details:
<http://www.fis.ncsu.edu/ncsulegal/41.03-codeof.htm>.

ADA Statement: Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students **at the beginning of the semester**. Contact information is as follows: 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653,
http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/offices/affirm_action/dss/

Department Equity Statement: All persons, regardless of age, race, religion, gender, physical disability, or sexual orientation shall have equal opportunity without harassment in Department of Communication courses and programs. Any harassment should be reported immediately to either the classroom instructor or the department head.

Calendar of Topics and Assignments (The Professor reserves the right to make changes to this calendar – in consultation with the students – as dictated by class interests and needs).

Week 1

Aug 26 Introduction to course – work on teams and project sites/topics
Read: Block Chpts 1-3

Week 2

Sept 2 Consulting and Training/Facilitation
Read: DeWine Chpts 1-2

Week 3

Sept 9 Consulting vs. Communication Consulting
Read: DeWine chpt 3, Block chpts 4&7
Discussion Leaders:

Week 4

Sept 16 Needs Assessment and Diagnosis
Read: DeWine chpt 4 and Block chpts. 8-9
Discussion Leaders:

Week 5

Sept 23 Discovery and Data Analysis

Read: DeWine chpt. 5 and Block chpts. 10-12
Discussion Leaders:

Week 6
Sept 30

Strategies and Techniques for Engagement
Read: DeWine chpts. 6, 8, & 12 and Block, chpts. 15-17
Discussion Leaders:

Week 7
Oct 7

Evaluation
Read: DeWine chpts. 17-18 and Block chpt. 13-14
Discussion Leaders:

Week 8
Oct 14

Group Reports on Consulting Projects
Read Dewine chpts 9-16

Week 9
Oct 21

Guest Presentation – Consulting Skills on the Job

Week 10
Oct 28

In-Class Training/Facilitation

Week 11
Nov 4

In-Class Training/Facilitation

Week 12
Nov 11

Professional Development and Ethics
Read: DeWine chpt. 19-20 and Block, chpts. 18-19.

Week 13
Nov 18

Team Meetings and Consultations

Week 14
Nov 25

Course Wrap-up and Consultations

Week 15
Dec 2

Final Projects DUE – Final Project Presentations

Week 16
Dec 9

Debrief and Celebrate

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Discussion Leader Grading Form

Ice breaker is well-chosen and well-facilitated (directions are clear, debrief is informative and appropriate to material for the evening, exercise engages participants) _____(15)

Summary of readings is thoughtful and well-prepared _____(15)

Issues raised for discussion move discussion and analysis forward _____(15)

Materials/handouts are well-prepared and clear _____(15)

Total _____(60)

Comments:

COM 598R – Communication Consulting
Report on Consulting Project

Identifies a group or organization and explains how and why the organization or group could benefit from communication training or consulting _____(15)

Explains how the insights from the DeWine chapters may be put into practice in a consulting/training situation in analysis of the problem _____(10)

Provides summary of relevant data used to analyze the problem. _____(15)

Total _____(40)

Comments:

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Final Project Grading Form

Identifies a group or organization and explains how and why the organization or group could benefit from communication training or consulting _____(20)

Outline for the training or consulting program is complete and well developed _____(30)

Provides an appropriate assessment/evaluation tool for measuring the success of the proposed training/consulting program _____(30)

Provides a detailed description of the useful “take aways” _____(40)

Provides thoughtful/insightful rationale for choices including relevant theoretical and research findings. _____(40)

Total _____(160)

Comments: