

Syllabus
Comm 46091: Senior Seminar
T-TH; 4:45-6:00, Rm. D301
Spring 2003

Professor: Dr. Robyn E. Parker
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Walk-in Office hours: T&TH –
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.; T&TH --
6:00 – 6:30 p.m.;
W – 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Course Description

This is the capstone course for communication studies majors. It is designed to integrate the knowledge you've acquired thus far. Through course discussion and activities we hope to facilitate personal connections between the various classes you've been taking and how they inform your life. This course is discussion based. Each of us brings a wealth of communication knowledge into the classroom. Now it is time for us to explore the tracks of this major, and the courses that comprise them, as an integrated whole. Why have you been studying them? How have they prepared you for life upon commencement? What are the unique experiences and attributes you will bring to the world of work as a result of coursework? This course is designed to help you develop personal answers to these questions.

Course Objectives

- 1) To review and integrate aspects of major coursework, seeking to apply them.
- 2) To build skills for individual exploration of communication issues.
- 3) To encourage students to take charge of personal learning needs and processes.
- 4) To facilitate student collaborative learning in a larger environment—bringing personal knowledge/skills to a community.
- 5) To explore careers in communication and hone skills for seeking employment.
- 6) To further understanding of communication issues and how they influence human relations: personal and professional relationships, culture, business, politics...

Texts

Bolles, R. N. (2002). What color is your parachute? Berkley: Ten Speed Press.

Gills, A. M. & Lewis, S. M. (1996). Help wanted: An inexperienced job seekers' guide to career success. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Course Philosophy

Learning is a collaborative process. In a course like this, we depend upon our fellow classmates to provide a variety of perspectives for us to consider. Each of us brings a unique set of experiences and ideas to the class from which we can all benefit.

Therefore, it is crucial that everyone attend regularly having completed assigned activities and readings. Plan to offer questions and comments during each class session as this course is discussion based. Be prepared for disagreements and recognize them as an opportunity to further develop your own thinking about a particular issue. It is critical, however, that we respect differences of opinion and keep our discussion focused upon the issues rather than personalities.

Course Format

The first part of each class will be used for discussion of some of the many ways communication issues surface in the world in which we live. Each student is asked to look for the communicative elements of issues reported in the media, at work, in education, and in their relationships. Bring thoughts, news clippings, or questions to class with you.

The more structured portion of the class discussion/activities will center upon communicative topics of class choosing. Early in the semester we will decide upon the areas of communication research of most interest to members of the class. If appropriate, a set of readings may be compiled for further exploration of these topics. Each member of the class will be assigned a class session or two for which they will share responsibility for guiding the discussion. It is expected that outside research would be related to your senior thesis.

Course Expectations

- 1) Participate actively.
 - a. Attend regularly.
 - b. Arrive on time.
 - c. Be prepared to discuss the issues at hand.
 - d. Complete any assigned out-of-class activities prior to the designated class meeting.
 - e. Respect fellow student perspectives, even when you disagree.
- 2) Complete all evaluated activities on time, typed using APA style; spelling, grammar, and writing style count as much as content. Turn assignments in, in hard copy. Do not plan to email assignments. Assignments turned in after 5:00 p.m. on the date due will be reduced by one letter grade and will not be accepted if more than 7 days overdue.

Evaluated Activities

- 1) Senior Thesis: The senior thesis examines the history, values, ethics, and social perspectives of the discipline as it relates to a particular problem or issue. You will select the topic. You, as the communication expert, are to review the literature, synthesize and analyze the state of our present knowledge as it relates to this issue and propose areas warranting further study. You will turn in your thesis in two parts. The literature review will be

due shortly after midterm. Your corrections plus your synthesis/analysis and future directions for study will be due near the end of the term.

- 2) **Senior Portfolio:** Your portfolio is a formal collection of works that covers your collegiate career. It provides evidence, documentation, and best samples of your communication-related, creative endeavors. It can function as evidence of your learning and as a tool in your employment search. You will present your portfolio to KSU Communication Studies faculty at the annual Communication Career Day.
- 3) **Portfolio-based Employment Essay:** In the interest of structuring the search for answers to the questions posed as part of the course description, you will write a 3-5 page essay that describes how your portfolio demonstrates your expertise in communication. Ideally, it will contain the kind of arguments you will forward while networking, in your cover letters, and during interviews.

When preparing this essay, specify what someone reviewing your portfolio should take away as a result of reviewing it. You are making arguments (i.e., I understand the potential effects of organizational diversity and can facilitate successful interactions). Elements in your portfolio should provide evidence to your claim. Specify where such evidence is located. These “arguments” should center upon skills and capabilities needed in the career you plan to pursue upon graduation.

- 4) **Discussion participation and discussion leadership:** This is a basic responsibility of class members. Essentially your participation will be assessed as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. It is anticipated that your effort will be rewarded by increased learning, enhanced performance on other evaluated activities, a better class experience, and hopefully a sense of community that will persist beyond your enrollment in this course.

Grading

The evaluated activities are weighted in the following manner.

100 points	Senior thesis literature review
100 points	Complete senior thesis
150 points	Senior portfolio
50 points	Portfolio-based Employment essay

Failure to meet course expectations outlined in this syllabus will negatively affect course grades. Up to 50 points is at risk for unsatisfactory rating in discussion participation and discussion leadership. Hint: you can't participate if you don't attend class.

Grading Scale

Course grades are assigned according to the scale that follows. “A” grades are reserved for excellent performance.

360+ points	A
320-359 points	B
280-319 points	C
240–279 points	D
239 or fewer points	F

A grade of “C” or better (280 points) is required in this course to graduate.

Accommodation for Students with Documented Disabilities

In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please advise the professor ASAP. Students with disabilities must verify their eligibility through the Office of Student Disability Services (SDS) in the Michael Schwartz Student Services Center (330) 672-3391. If you have questions or concerns, please see the professor.

Student Services

There are a variety of support services available to students on the Kent State University campus. If you feel you are struggling with course assignments in this or other courses, please seek assistance from the professor or other support agency. From time to time, the professor may make a suggestion that students seek out a particular service. Please take such a suggestion as a gesture of support. All students are encouraged to utilize the Communication Instructional Research Lab in room D203 for assistance with assignments. It is manned throughout the semester by graduate assistants and select seniors.

Student Conduct

Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct as outlined in the University Policy Register available on-line (<http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/archive.asp?ChapterID=5>). Please pay particular attention to policy number 3342-3-07 regarding cheating and plagiarism (search word cheating).

Additional Course Policies

Student attendance will be tracked. Students are expected to attend class regularly. Standard attendance policies in organizations allow between 0 and 8 sick days per year. You are allowed 3 sick days this semester. It is recommended you only take them if you really need them. Should you experience a serious illness or injury, please

contact me as soon as possible so appropriate arrangements may be made. University approved field trips/athletic travel will be treated as excused absences, advanced notice to the professor is recommended. Students missing more than three classes will see points deducted from their final grade—you can't participate in the discussion if you are not in class.

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the course outline as dictated by student learning needs. If changes in assignments are indicated, an in-class discussion will be conducted about the proposed changes and their implementation. If changes to the course schedule are required, students will be alerted as soon as possible.

Proposed Semester Activity Schedule

Week	Date	Subject
1	1/14 - 1/16	Course introduction
2	1/21- 1/23	Thesis and Portfolios Unpacked
3	1/28- 1/30	Exploring careers in communication Thesis topic due
4	2/4- 2/6	Job hunting: bring resume to class
5	2/11- 2/13	Issues in communication
6	2/18- 2/20	Issues in communication Discussion leaders
7	2/25- 2/27	Connecting issues to the world of work Discussion leaders
8	3/4- 3/6	Portfolio/thesis work Career
9	3/11- 3/13	Issues in Communication Discussion leaders
10	3/18- 3/20	Issues in communication Senior thesis literature review due

Spring Break!!!!!!!!!!!!!! 3/24-3/30

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| 11 | 4/1-
4/3 | Issues in communication
Discussion leaders |
| 12 | 4/8-
4/10 | Portfolio-based Employment Essay due in class
Senior portfolio to be delivered to Career Day—Attendance
required |
| 13 | 4/15-
4/17 | Career Day in review
Issues in communication |
| 14 | 4/22-
4/24 | Senior Thesis Due
No class; ECA |
| 15 | 4/29-
5/1 | Thesis discussions
Celebrating our successes |