

Daystar University
COM 835- Seminar on Applied Organizational Communication
Semester: August 2020

Day, Venue and Time: Tuesdays ,DAC 606 Time: 5.30- 8.30 p.m.

Course Facilitators: Prof Levi Obonyo & Dr. Leah Komen, PhD

Office: Our offices are at DAC 6TH Floor (Prof. Levi) & Research office (Dr. Komen)

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Course description

This seminar will enable students to understand the foundational and current research trends in the theories and practices of the lifeblood of all organizations: communication. The course covers the nexus between theory and practice, enhances students' critical thinking ability, develops their organizational diagnostic and analytical skills through the study of organizational processes and structures, enables them to carry out research on organizational communication and ultimately prescribes solutions to communication problems in organizations.

Expected Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Articulate ground theories and current research trends in organization Communication
2. Critique ongoing research in organizational communication
3. Design and execute research within the field of organizational communication.
4. Apply communication concepts, models, and theories using multiple perspectives.
5. Analyze research for its strengths and weaknesses.

Purpose of the course

This is a survey course designed to expose graduate students to organizational communication theory in practice. This course emphasizes the applied nature of organizational communication using foundational and current research in the field. Throughout the semester, we will also direct our attention to understanding relevant research designs and methodologies for studying communication in organizations.

Course procedure

This course is both *hands-on* and *student-focused*. Significant amounts of readings are required. Classroom lectures and discussions will be interspersed with peer learning and collaboration via group work, which may extend out of class.

1. Participants use class time to **process content** received outside of class and materials they have created themselves.
2. Throughout the semester, participants will be creating their grounded paradigm of moral philosophy and ethical theory. This is their major project for the course.
3. Students are expected to attend class sessions and be punctual.

Course Expectations:

- Punctual attendance of all class sessions. Students who miss more than 25% of classes will get a failing grade.
- Assignments should be submitted on time. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 10% per day up to three days. No assignment will be accepted after the 30% penalty mark.
- Plagiarism will result to an F grade. Please refer to the University's policy on plagiarized assignments and other forms of academic dishonesty.

Assessments

Part 1 Assessments By Dr. Komen (50%)

1. **A first academic paper (Paper 1) worth 20%** - This is an assignment in which you will identify one theory, explain its genesis, and relate it to Organizational Communication. **Deadline is 11:55pm on Tuesday, 6 October.** No extensions and no re-submissions will be permitted. Failure to submit will earn an F grade. Plagiarized material will attract a penalty, usually an F grade. Assignment must include references and in-text citations. No fewer than seven texts must be consulted. (must be between 4-5 pages, excluding references)
2. **A second academic paper (Paper 2) worth 20% - Discussion Leader:** You will give a brief overview of the readings (you can prepare a handout or power point as a guide) and facilitate discussion. You will need to send 2-3 critical questions per reading to the class and the instructions. These questions should be sent at least two days before the class meeting (i.e., by Friday). Each student is expected to have thought about the questions, and have points prepared for class discussion. Discussion leaders will lead the discussion, ask additional questions, and incorporate any additional activities, cases, or research they may have on the topic.
3. A third reflection paper (**worth 10%**). At the beginning of each class, one is assigned some reading materials, upon which he or she expected to examine, critique and share their interactions with the chosen piece in class. This assignment can be presented in whatever mode the student chooses eg. Power point presentation, debates, etc.

Part 2 Assessments: By Prof Levi Obonyo (50%)

Assignment 2a: Review of 3 academic Journal articles (20%)

Each student will review 2 journal articles in the area of Applied organizational Communication.

Criteria for selection of journal articles:

1. An academic peer reviewed journal
2. Must be situated within the field of applied organizational communication
3. Must have been cited more than 150 times
4. The journal must have applied a theory in the investigation/discussion

Review criteria

1. Provide summary of the article
2. Brief description of the research/data collection method
3. Identification and description of the theory used
4. Critique of the theory and its application in the article (Must include other academic journals or voices in the critique)

Submission format

1. 4-5 pages for each review/article
2. 1.5 spacing
3. Font: 12

Assessment 2b: Applied Organizational Communication paper (30%)

Option 1, Research Project

The final research project requires you to choose a specific topic relevant to organizational communication processes, research that topic incorporating sources (literature review), analyze the issue in a real world organization, and present your findings in an oral presentation. The final paper should be 10-15 pages, double spaced, using APA documentation style.

Identify an organizational communication concept that is particularly interesting to you and that you would like to learn more about. Potential topics include: change management, diversity, globalization, ethics, communication competence, organizational identification, job satisfaction, communication satisfaction, organizational culture, power, hegemony, recruitment, socialization, conflict, supervisor-subordinate communication, leadership, trust, feedback, peer and coworker communication, organizational teams, decision-making, communication technology in organizations.

Option 2, Case Study

Select a company or non-profit organization for study. You are to make contact with the organization with the goal of gaining adequate information to discuss your topic. Your case study should provide a rich description of the organization, its mission as well as its structure. Other topics you might discuss include: communication flow in the organization, power structure, how decisions are made, and the physical environment of the workplace. Make an analysis, in terms of the theoretical approaches discussed in class regarding how the organization functions.

Apply your research on the communication concept you selected to the organization. What do we learn about the concept by applying it to your sample organization? What do we learn about the organization by applying the organizational communication concept? What are the basic results of your study? Finally, offer a critique and propose a specific program

or course of action that you believe could potentially improve communication in the organization.

Finally, you'll present 10-15 minute oral presentation on the last day of class.

Course Outline

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
Week 1 Weeks 2 & 25/8/20 & (1/9/20)	1. Introduction 2. Topics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual Foundation • Key constructs. • Discourse Analysis, issues & concerns Dr. Leah Komen	Reading assignments: Jablin and Putnam ch. 1&2
Week 3/4 (8/9/20)	Theories & Methodological issues -Postmodernism -Postpositivism Dr. Leah Komen	May and Mumbych. 2 & 6
Week 5 (15/9/20)	The theories cont'd: -Social constructionism -Globalization Dr. Leah Komen	May and Mumbych. 3 & 10 Jablin and Putman ch. 10 Ist paper Due
Week 6 (22/9/20)	Critical theory Structuration Approach Dr. Leah Komen	May and Mumbych. 5 & 8
Week 7 (29/9/20)	Feminist Approaches to Organizational Communication Dr. Leah Komen	May and Mumbych. 7
Week 8 6/10/20	New media	Jablin & Putman, ch.14 2nd paper due-Dr.Komen
PART 2	LEADERSHIP IN ORGANIZATION	
Week 9 (3/10/20)	Discourses in organizations Prof. Obonyo	Jablin and Putman ch. 3
Week 10 (20/10/20)	Organizational culture (Organizations as cultures-cultures, subcultures and organization socialization)	Jablin and Putman ch.9 Dr. Komen's 2 nd paper due
Week 11 (27/10/20)	Internal & External environment -organizational identity	Review of 3 articles due

	-Globalizing organizational comm. -Linkages between Internal& external comm Prof. Obonyo	
Week 12 (13/11/20)	Communication networks Prof. Obonyo	Jablin and Putman ch. 12
Week 13 (20/11/20)	Emerging Concept/Trends: e-platforms and Organization communication Prof. Obonyo	
Week 14 (27/11/20)	Politics and power in organizations-(Power and control) Prof. Obonyo	Jablin and Putman ch. 14 &15
Week 15 (3/12/20)	Participation and decision-making Prof. Obonyo	Jablin and Putman ch. 17
Week 16 (10/12/20)	WRAP UP & Fina paper presentations Dr. Komen & Prof. Obonyo	Final Project due

Textbooks

Jablin, F.M., & Putman, L.L. (2004). The new handbook of organizational communication. New Delhi: Sage.

Jones, G. R. (2006). Organizational theory, design and change (5th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Reference Material for further Reading

Cheney, G., Christensen, L.T., Zorn, T.E., & Ganesh, S. (2003). *Organizational communication in the age of globalization: Issues, reflections, and practices*. Prospect Heights: Waveland.

Corman, S. R., & Poole, M.S. (2000). *Perspectives on organizational communication*. New York: Guilford.

Harris, T.E., & Nelson, M. D. (2008). *Applied organizational communication: Theory and practice in a global environment*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Hatch, M.J., & Cunliffe, A.L. (2006). *Organization theory: Modern, symbolic, and postmodern perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schein, E. H. (2004). *Organizational cultures and leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Shafritz, J. M., Ott, J.S., & Jang, Y.S. (2004). *Classics of organization theory*. New York: Wadsworth.

Classes

1. **Punctuality** is fundamental.
2. Active participation in class discussions is encouraged

Assignments and/or Course Work

1. **Plagiarism** is a serious offence. If detected in any form in course work and assignments, the following will apply:
 - a. In partial or non-serious cases (such as not citing whole word-for-word quotes), half the total possible marks of the assignment are duly struck off.
 - b. In serious cases (such as whole duplication of a paper), a zero policy will apply i.e., all offending assignments will be awarded a mark of zero.

Note: The level of seriousness referred to above is at the discretion of the lecturer. Appeals are certainly possible through the relevant channels

2. **Referencing:** APA System
3. Notwithstanding the above, **collaboration** in course work is certainly encouraged as this promotes team spirit and group synergy as long as originality is preserved.

Assignments:

You will be expected to write two papers. The first paper will broadly explore the foundational theories and the evolving theorization of applied organizational communication. You need to be as up to date as possible on this paper. The second paper will be applicational. You will identify at least three journal articles in the field applied organizational communication and evaluate them pointing out the lessons drawn from the review of these articles.

Breakdown of Assignments

Assignment	scores
1. Academic paper one	20
2. Discussion leader paper	20
3. Weekly reflections	10
4. Articles review	20
5. Final project	30
Total	100%