Creating Communication Pathways: Designing, Developing and Teaching

a new course in Communication at Snow College

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Final Capstone Project

Master of Arts of Professional Communication

Southern Utah University
Signature Page

I certify that I have read this thesis and that, in my opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a project for the degree of Master of Arts in Professional Communication.

Matt H. Barton

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Abstract

An Introductory Communication course was created and taught using high impact teaching practices, including group collaboration, student reflections, class discussion and activities. These practices were implemented by using immediacy and strategic classroom design. The use of these practices created high student engagement and positive student evaluations. Challenges in teaching the course did exist, namely, trying to cover too much content while still engaging in multiple high impact learning practices. Future courses should be taught by focusing on primary cornerstone theories of communication and reducing course content by half. Immediacy and classroom design were highly effective and both practices will continue to assist students in engaging in class discussion.

*Keywords:* high impact learning practices, immediacy, collaboration, strategic classroom design
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Creating Communication Pathways: Designing, Developing and Teaching
a new course in Communication at Snow College

Introduction

In an increasingly digital and interconnected world, requirements for modern college graduates are evolving at a rapid pace (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2017). Mediated communication has become a primary means of social interaction. Digital natives “are wired differently than previous generations” (McBurnett, 2018, p. 22). Students in classrooms are more likely to be glued to their phones than interacting with classmates (Roberts, Yaya, & Manolis, 2014). This trend creates a challenging new teaching environment for communication educators who understand that teaching face-to-face communication skills is more important than ever. These changes are requiring educators to seek engaging pedagogy methods to teach traditional skills to the twenty first century digital learner (National Communication Association, 2018, National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2017).

Snow College, a two-year school in the state of Utah, is no exception. The Snow College Communication department is in the process of strengthening their communication program to better prepare students to transfer directly into Communication Bachelor’s Programs, but is currently lacking an Introductory Communication course to allow for complete articulation. To guarantee students do not miss important prerequisite courses for Bachelor’s programs Snow College needs to develop an Introduction to Communication (COMM 1010) course that effectively teaches the skills students will need once they transfer.

To teach the new course effectively, high impact teaching practices designed to be impactful to the twenty first century learner need to be implemented. By using high impact teaching practices and increasing teacher immediacy, the goal of this project was to design,
create and teach an introductory course that will become part of the Snow College Communication core curriculum beginning the Fall 2018 semester.

**Literature Review**

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (2014) defines high impact teaching practices (HILP) as active learning practices that place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy and collaborative learning. HILP practices provide valuable educational experiences for students and if practiced enough can lead to students becoming lifetime learners (Kuh, 2008).

Communication courses are tailor made to serve as high impact learning experiences. Practices such as delivering presentations, project collaboration and developing communication skills within the community are frequently part of communication teaching curriculum and meet HILP requirements under current Utah System of Higher Education Guidelines (USHE, 2018). By focusing on the areas of HILP and then reviewing the effective teaching practices of classroom design, immediacy and outcome-based learning, this literature review will outline the research used to create a high impact education experience for the new Introduction to Communications (COMM 1010) course at Snow College.

**High Impact Learning**

Kuh, (2008) defined high impact learning practices (HILP) as teaching experiences that reinforce student engagement, deepen learning and assist students in gaining personal development outcomes. “High impact activities provide students with opportunities to have increased interactions with faculty and peers over an extended period of time” (Soria & Johnson, 2017, p. 102). HILP practices require students to expound upon ideas and engage in meaningful discussions with professors and classmates. These interactions teach students how to apply
knowledge both in and outside of the classroom in deep and meaningful ways. (Kilgo et al., 2015).

Theories and practices taught in communication provide students with knowledge and skills that not only add to the information they glean in other general education courses, but also assist students in making connections between interdisciplinary fields. It is not enough to teach students communication concepts; communication instructors must teach students how to apply those concepts in their everyday lives. Communication instructors teach skills that help students improve individual communication, which in turn, helps improve nearly all aspects of a student’s life (Kidd, Parry-Giles, Beebe & Mello, 2016). Communication Instructors are required to be actively engaged in the meaningful course discussions and willingly assist students to apply that knowledge outside of the classroom in deep and meaningful ways.

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (2018) recommends that all students have at least one high impact educational experience within the first year of a student’s higher education experience. A COMM 1010 course, would help meet AAC&U recommendations and ensure Snow College communication majors would have all of the courses required to articulate to a four-year university. Though there are ten high impact learning practices identified by AAC&U, this course was designed to follow Kilgo, Sheets and Pascarella’s (2015) recommendation that undergraduate research in the form of project based collaborative learning was particularly impactful.

**Collaborative learning**

Project-based collaborative learning enables students to build learning processes that improve problem-solving and critical thinking skills (Aydin, Atalay and Goksu, 2018). Student centered learning practices can be effective in conceptual understanding and create opportunities
for students to collaborate (Jardine, Levin, Quimby & Cooke, 2017). Project-based collaboration creates enough motivation for students to positively affect their academic performance. Learning through group projects can “be used as motivation enhancing activities” (Aydin, Atalay and Goksu, 2018, pg. 236). Though students don’t always enjoy collaborative work, active engagement helps students better engage and apply concepts across disciplines (Jardine, Levin, Quimby & Cooke, 2017).

There are many benefits to group work including, enhancing students sense of involvement, encouraging students to learn from each other’s ideas and developing social skills which are essential in the professional world (Elliott & Reynolds, 2014). Collaborative learning can be “profoundly effective” and though team-based learning is labor intensive the learning outcomes are worth the effort (Harde, 2015, p. 12).

Undergraduate groups involved in project-based learning benefitted from critical and creative thinking collaboration and improved their communication skills (Chamberlain & Mendoza, 2017). Cooperative groups promote interdependence which positively emphasizes the importance of interpersonal skills, face-to-face communication and individual accountability (Cox, 2015). Collaborative group work is ideal for communication courses.

Students and instructors benefit from group work (Batty & Sinclair, 2014). Group learning improves classroom instruction by providing “a tool for instruction, a source of emotional support” and helps establish collective responsibility (Higgins & Eden 2015, p. 95).

Self-directed and action learning may offer students enormous insights into managing themselves and managing others, but these are by no means easy, comfortable experiences. We have become increasingly aware of the great amounts of support and guidance that these forms of learning require (Gabriel & Griffiths, 2008, p. 517).
Students tend to stick with problems and concepts in collaborative work that they would likely abandon when working alone. This forces students to “confront alternate conceptions” which happens most effectively during group collaboration (Cox, 2015, p. 30). Students are more likely to remain involved in study and retain what is learned when information is shared collaboratively.

In is important to note that for groups to be most effective, individual accountability is necessary. Though grading and evaluation may be enough for a few students to work effectively in groups, many individuals will not express full commitment to group work unless an element of individual accountability is present. (Cox, 2015; Harde, 2015; Jassawalla, Sashittal and Malshe, 2010). Accountability comes in many forms and can include grades, individual student evaluations and peer pressure (LeJune, 2003). When designing a course with collaborative project assignments it is important to create methods of accountability that go beyond group interdependence. It is important for students to feel their team is stable. Stable groups tend to discourage “social loafing” (Harde, 2015, p. 12). Instructors should initiate, guide and reflect on the group activities with adequate debriefing sessions to help maintain group effectiveness (Elliot & Reynolds, 2014).

Teacher Immediacy

Collaborative project-based learning is an effective educational method, but it is not enough to keep students engaged in a course. Rocca (2008) reported the major reasons students do not participate in class is “because of their personal fears of feeling inadequate in front of others” (p. 23). Even when teacher expectations are high, students are more likely to participate in class if they perceive their instructor generally cares about them. Students are more compliant, have higher motivation, are more likely to attend class and participate when teachers are
immediate with students and have a greater affect for them. Teacher immediacy can assist students in improving self-concept and encouraging student participation by creating a welcome environment where students feel comfortable and included (Sibii, 2010).

Goodboy, Weber & Bolkan (2009) defined immediacy as the positive interaction that happens when people are “drawn towards people they like, evaluate highly and prefer” (p. 4). When teachers practiced immediacy in the classroom student’s scores were significantly greater (Goodboy, Weber & Bolkan, 2009).

Students and teachers should become “co-teachers” and create a learning environment where students can build relationships with each other and the professor. Discourse through formal and informal discussions engage the students in meaningful conversation that can lead to a shift in the frame of reference and assist in helping students to gain a “more accurate and compelling understanding of the world” (Wawrzynski and Baldwin, 2014 p. 55). Students should be motivated to learn and engage in the educational process by participating in activities and assignments, co-construct knowledge and engage in positive interactions with their instructor (Tahir, Ikram, Economos, Morote, & Inserra, 2017). Professors must be willing to establish relationships with students and validate student perspectives (Khandelwal, 2009). A willingness to validate student perspectives may also involve considering how the modern student learns (Tahir et al., 2017).

Behaviors such as personal examples, moving around the classroom, initiating conversations with students, before and after class, referring to students by name, employing humor and using inclusive pronouns are all methods to increase immediacy (Wilson & Locker, 2008; Cook, 2008). However, the practices must be used with other pedagogy methods to create best learning practices and a positive learning environment (Wilson & Locker, 2008).
When creating immediacy, it is important for teachers to create a connection with students without crossing important boundaries or losing control of the classroom. Being perceived as “soft” in the classroom can lead to students attempting to assert control over the “weak” teacher. Effective immediacy does not allow for a “slippery slope” of behaviors and draws “clear lines in the sand” (Sibii 2010, p. 538). This is accomplished when the teacher maintains a friendliness in class and a sincere connection with students while maintaining clear classroom guidelines and boundaries through objective grading practices and strict adherence to classroom policies (Goodboy & Meyers, 2009).

**Classroom Design**

In order to create an optimal environment for immediacy, the instructor must be able to effectively practice verbal and non-verbal immediacy skills. Traditional classroom design does not allow for an instructor to actively engage with the entire class. Students who sit in the front of the classroom see greater benefits (Loftin, Davis & Harten, 2010). A non-traditional classroom design can establish an effective flow where the instructor can move and interact with students with ease.

McBurnett (2018) found that one of the greatest challenges facing teachers was the issue of classroom design. Digital natives learn in an environment very different from their predecessors and teachers need to practice flexibility and creativity in creating a rich learning environment. He identified ten teaching and design practices that maximize learning by better utilizing space, technology, outdoor spaces and flexible furniture configurations to assist students and teachers in an effective learning environment.

His suggested tips to create a better learning space include: welcoming students at the beginning of class to let them know that the instructor is aware of them individually, using a
variety of teaching methods to keep students engaged and taking students out of the classroom to allow learning to happen outside in real world environments. He also recommends using flexible and moveable furniture that is organized in small group configurations. And he encouraged incorporating games to develop social skills. McBurnett argues that using such strategies will strengthen learning and create a more collaborative environment where students will learn in more meaningful and impactful ways. One of the greatest advantages to creating a more fluid classroom design is an increase in encouraging effective teaching practices through teacher immediacy that can help improve course outcomes.

**Outcome based learning**

It can be difficult to measure the effectiveness of high impact educational practices. Outcome based learning can act as an effective assessment tool to determine the effectiveness of teaching methods (Wells, 2016). Outcomes established by the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE, 2005), can be utilized to measure whether learning practices developed for the curriculum are effective and whether they should be employed when teaching COMM 1010 in the future. This course plans to focus on the following three outcomes: 1.) Communicate more effectively in interpersonal interactions, 2.) Develop or increase skills in oral presentations 3.) write effectively within the Humanities discipline to analyze and form critical judgments.

The research is clear. High impact learning practices are an effective means to help students learn. However, these practices alone are not enough. HILP’s are only as effective as the instructor who uses them. Combining said practices with high immediacy behaviors can increase student interest and learning outcomes. The standard method for measuring student success is through the use of outcome-based learning. Three outcomes suggested by USHE will be used in creating this course.
This project will create a course using high impact teaching practices including project based collaborative learning, classroom design, immediacy and outcome-based learning measures. At the completion of this project, Snow College will finally have a much-needed COMM 1010 course. The department will be able to use the course as a recruitment tool to draw undeclared students into a communication major and prepare declared communication majors for transfer into four-year institutions. By primarily using the face-to-face methods listed above it is my intent to create a communication course that increases the communication knowledge and skills digital native students need to compete in a rapidly changing world.

Method

For this capstone project, an Introduction to Communication course was created. Course development involved a four month process of passing the suggested course syllabus through Snow College’s Curriculum and General Education committees, creating a master syllabus, selecting and adopting a textbook and creating the course materials—lecture, activities, assignments, exams and a canvas course to accompany the course content.

Course Design

The first step in creating the COMM 1010 course was to determine what was required to make the course similar both in content and rigor to others around the state. After studying catalog syllabi from Southern Utah University, University of Utah, Utah State University and Weber State University, it was determined that the main body of courses focused on at least five different areas of communication content in Intra-personal, Interpersonal, Intercultural, Organizational and Public Speaking communication.

Selection and Textbook Adoption. After course approval, ten textbooks were reviewed to determine which Communication textbook would meet both the requirements of the HU GE
and COMM 1010 courses taught at other state institutions. Communication in Everyday Life (Duck, & McMahan, 3rd Edition, 2017) was selected. Its well balanced coverage of the communication areas including intrapersonal, interpersonal, intercultural, group, organizational, mass media and public speaking made it the ideal choice for the course.

**Reading Requirements.** Chapter readings from the textbook, *Communication in Everyday life* (Duck & McMahan, 2017), were assigned weekly (see Appendix Figure A.2). Select readings from Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave* (trans., 2017), Aristotle’s *Art of Rhetoric* (trans., 1992), Kenneth Burke’s *Grammar of Motives* (1969), Saussure’s *Course in General linguistics* (1916), Goffman’s, *The Presentational Self in Everyday Life* (1956) and Covey’s, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (1989), were also assigned to corresponding chapters. Content was then added from additional textbook chapter readings, selected videos and famous speeches to meet the requirements of the Humanities division and pass through the General Education Board.

**Course Content.** The three-credit hour course was designed to meet three days per week, in 50-minute scheduled blocks. Content focused on a chapter per week for twelve weeks with three additional weeks to allow for student presentations, class activities and a public speaking workshop. See Appendix Figure A.1 for the syllabus. Class time was designed to create a balance of lecture, discussion and class activities. Because of the high impact focus of the course, special emphasis was given to in-class collaborative projects, engaged class discussions, student led chapter mentoring, strategic class activities and lecture. A canvas course was created to accompany all course materials. All assignments, slide presentations, reading modules and exams were made easily accessible through the course. Appendix D provides a sampling of canvas materials.
**Reading Modules.** Each week consisted of a reading module, quiz, and supplemental videos to be viewed outside of designated class time to support class discussion. Because of the large amount of content available in each chapter, lectures were focused on primary communication theory and class discussions about the applicability of the theories for communication in everyday life. The text focus leaned heavily toward the relational context of communication so special emphasis was placed on creating questions for class discussion that would encourage students to consider how the theories applied personally and then allowed time to discuss different communication strategies that can be used to improve the different forms of communication discussed.

**Lecture Presentations.** Slide presentations (appendix figure B.1) were created to accompany each chapter (appendix figure B.2). Content on the slide presentations consisted of large images with limited text covering only key points. Discussion questions and embedded internet hyperlinks were added to support class content. By the use of images instead of large quantities of text, slides were designed to encourage discussion and avoid disengaged lecture (Bowen, 2012).

**Course Assignments.** Course work included five response papers, a group presentation, ten reading quizzes, two exams, two individual speech presentations, a media fast, a peer evaluation and a Rhetorical Analysis to be used as a signature assignment for assessment.

**Response papers.** Response assignments were designed to support discourse and reflection through experience with intellectual and practical skills through “living-learning experiences”. Wawrzynski and Balwin (2014) wrote that such reflections “can help students to question long-held beliefs and unexamined assumptions in the light of new experiences and alternative viewpoints that may enrich their comprehension of complex issues” (p. 56).
Written response assignments were designed to include options students could select to practice communication strategies and learn individual communication concepts in the real-world environment. Students recorded what was accomplished then wrote a two-page response detailing the experience. The intent of the written assignments was to assist students in making connections between course concepts and theory and how they are used in their everyday lives. See appendix B.4 for an example.

Rhetorical Analysis and Presentation. Students were required to select a published media artifact, select a perspective (theory), examine their artifact based on that perspective and evaluate what that artifact reflects about culture and humanity. Artifacts needed to be published in some form and accessible through public means (see table 3 for an example of the rubric).

Students were then required to write a 6-10 page paper analysis. They first submitted the paper as a rough draft, submitted a final paper, and created a 6-minute speech presentation. The papers and presentation were then used for assessment purposes to determine if course outcomes were met.

Collaborative Learning

Group Presentations. Students were pre-assigned to a group and given one type of non-verbal communication as a topic to teach the class. Groups were required to research and become proficient in the assigned topic then create a twenty-minute lecture to teach the class. Each lecture was required to include, content from the assigned chapter, new research learned, a brief class activity and discussion.

Each group was required to assign leadership responsibilities based on three different categorical needs of groups discussed in lecture and reading. Each group assigned Task, Procedural and Maintenance/Relational leaders (Duck & McMahan, 2015) that took turns acting
as facilitators within the group.

Students perform better in groups when there is transparency and a high level of accountability (Jassawalla, Sashittal, & Malshe, 2010). Students were also required to delegate responsibilities within the group and encouraged to avoid micromanagement. Each group reported at the time of presentation, what responsibilities were assigned to each group member and how those assignments were accomplished. At the completion of the assignment students were required to grade group members on a forty-point scale.

The instructor acted as supervisor for the groups and worked to help guide and reflect on group work while allowing students to make all group decisions and leadership assignments. This supervision took place in a class debriefing after group presentations. Each group was allowed to report on both the effectiveness of the groups as well as areas that could use improvement. Students were also graded using an in-class evaluation for the presentation. Students then participated in a verbal evaluation of the group assignment.

Class Activities

Each module was designed to include two in-class activities, one extended activity lasting 20 to 30 minutes with a debriefing afterwards and one brief five to ten minute activity designed to allow students to work in groups followed by a discussion of content learned from the activity. Each activity was designed to support class lectures and discussion and to encourage students to construct new knowledge and frame their worlds through a relational communication perspective.

Weekly class activities were designed around effective teaching practices, specifically to help students feel engaged, incorporate content from the class and participate in class discussions. Activities were also designed to create deep learning. Special focus was placed on
class debriefing where students were able to share what they learned from the class activities. Examples of class activities can be found in the Appendix B Figure B.3.

Classroom Design

Because digital natives learn differently than their predecessors, McBurnett’s (2018) strategies were employed to create a flexible learning environment designed to encourage creativity, collaboration and greater teacher student immediacy.

The classroom is lined with 15 movable dry erase boards. Though the computer and projector do face a designated “front”, I rearranged the tables and chairs out of the traditional classroom into six groupings with 4-6 chairs per table. The groups faced each other instead of the front of the room and a wide space was placed in the center of the room that allowed movement between the tables. This way I could stand at any point in the room during discussion, encouraging students to each have an experience in “front” of the instructor.

Teacher Immediacy

To increase immediacy, I would arrive in class ten minutes early and spend time engaging in conversation with students as they arrived. Student names were memorized within the first week of class and students were heavily encouraged to know all of the names of their classmates. Introductory presentations and class activities were assigned to further encourage students to get to know each other.

During class discussions I moved around the classroom to encourage full class participation and would call on students when asking discussion-based questions instead of asking for volunteers. Students were required to remove all technology from their desks and heavy emphasis was placed on class discussion. To ensure students were engaged in class, they were not allowed to use their phones or other methods of mediated communication unless it was
used as part of a class activity. Any student using their phone during class time was given an unexcused absence for the day. All unexcused absences counted against the student’s individual grade.

**Assessments**

Four assessments were used throughout the semester to determine the effectiveness of the course, learning objectives, effectiveness of immediacy and classroom design and student outcome success. Student writing ability was assessed using criteria outlined by the Snow College Communication department. As shown in table 4 the assessment was designed to determine student knowledge and abilities using criteria on an 8-point scale. In order for students to pass the course they must meet a benchmark of 4 on the Rhetorical Analysis signature assignment.

**Peer Faculty Evaluation.** A Communication Faculty member was invited to attend class and review my performance. The faculty member observed one class period and studied teacher immediacy, course content and discussion. The evaluator wrote an evaluation, available in appendix C Figure C.2, discussed course content and design with me afterwards.

**Student/Instructor Evaluation.** A written instructor evaluation was distributed on week 10 of the semester to students (N=22) enrolled in the course during regularly scheduled class time. Participation was voluntary and did not count toward the student’s grade. Students were asked to fill out a questionnaire that included 28 Likert scale questions items, (a) a nine-item measure examining teacher immediacy, (b) a ten-item measure examining skills and concepts learned in the course and a (c) nine-item measure evaluating student satisfaction with the course and (d) two open-ended questions that asked the student’s general opinion about the course and suggestions for improvement. The immediacy portion of the evaluation was based on Rocca’s
(2008) evaluations for teaching immediacy and questions based on the teaching evaluations distributed to students at Snow College at the end of each semester. Evaluations, available in appendix C figure C.1, were distributed and collected in class by a student proctor to maintain student anonymity and delivered to the instructor after completion.

Students also participated in an oral evaluation at the completion of the collaborative projects. Students were asked about practices involving collaborative group work, class room design and assignments. This evaluation was done in a casual class discussion allowing students to comment and build upon the comments of others. Answers were recorded immediately after the discussion.

**Course Design Summary.** Using the HILP strategies of collaborative group work, class activities and written work, the course was designed to create an impactful educational experience. Immediacy and strategic classroom design were also incorporated to create meaningful course content. Three assessments were implemented and a signature course assignment was created to measure the success of this COMM 1010 Introductory Communication course.

**Evaluation, Outcomes and Adjustments**

I found that implementing high impact learning practices, immediacy and strategic classroom design to be highly effective methods for teaching an introduction to communication course. Immediacy, in particular, had a powerful effect on teaching practices and created an environment where students were engaged in the learning process and were eager to participate in discussion and class activities.

**Evaluation**

**Student Evaluations.** Student assessments of the course were positive. Of the 24
students enrolled in the course, 22 participated in a course evaluation. On a five-point Likert scale, students reported overall satisfaction with the instructor and would recommend her to other students (M = 4.95, SD = .213). Students reported that the instructor used high levels of immediate teaching behaviors (M = 4.16, SD = 0.60) including respect for students (M = 4.90, SD = .294), genuine concern (M = 4.81, SD = .394) and engaging teaching methods (M = 4.72, SD = .455). Students reported course effectiveness (M = 3.37, SD = 0.25) and strongly agreed (M = 4.73, SD = 0.23) the teacher practiced positive teaching behaviors. See Tables 1 and 2 for more detail.

When asked what worked well in the course, students expressed high satisfaction with the course and the instructor. They enjoyed course content and class structure. They found the discussions interesting and engaging. One student reported in course evaluations that “everything worked well, I’m always excited to come to class.” Another wrote, “course material is interesting and the instructor makes the class fun!” And a third stated, “The material is super interesting, the professor gets everybody involved in whatever we are talking about.”

Fifteen of the 24 students enrolled in the course, reported registering for communication courses in the coming spring semester because of the experience they had in COMM 1010. This illustrates that an introduction to communication course can serve as a recruiting tool to draw students into the communication major and students generally had a positive experience in the course.

In a verbal assessment of the group project, students reported that collaborative work was effective and expressed appreciation for having the groups preselected instead of being required to choose group mates. According to students preselection made the group assignments less stressful and enjoyed working in their individual groups.
However, students also expressed a desire to include more group work, including giving students the opportunity to work with other members of the class. Harde (2015) reported collaborative projects are most effective when the group work continues throughout the semester so it may be beneficial in the future to have students work on multiple assignments as a group as opposed to one major project. One student reported, “I like the environment created from the beginning. It took a couple of classes for the students to open up, but once we got used to things, the whole class opened up and discussions became more personal.”

**Peer Faculty Evaluation.** The course was evaluated by associate professor, Malynda Bjerregaard during the 13th week of the semester. She evaluated a lecture and course discussion on effective delivery skills for Public speaking. In appendix C figure C.2 she writes that she found the lecture to be highly effective. She reported that the instructor commanded use of the room as well as the students. The lecture was engaging and students clearly felt at ease and willing to participate in engaged and lively course discussion.

She found slides and lecture materials useful and reported that the minimal use of slides consisting largely of examples and images helped engage students in discussion and create higher interest in the lecture. She reported non-verbals of the instructor as engaging and that ideas were introduced in such a way to create the desire for listeners to want to learn more.

She suggested that class activities could have a more structured debriefing afterwards to assist students in creating real world connections with course content. She also recommended adjusting standards slightly for a COMM 1010 course. She suggested that though standards should be high, students should also feel such standards are attainable. However, she also reported that teacher immediacy with the students created high levels of accessibility with the lecture content.
Outcomes

**Strategic Classroom Design.** Placing tables into small groups instead of the traditional classroom setting was initially unsettling for students at first. Many of the 24 students exhibited uncertain non-verbal behaviors about the unique seating arrangement. Some students paused at the door to study the seating arrangement before making a seating selection. It appeared as if the table groupings encouraged students to make seating choices more carefully.

As students arrived I made a point to wander from table to table and make introductions. This behavior was intended to create a feeling of engagement and immediacy. Students developed a friendly demeanor with each other. In the oral evaluation, students reported enjoying the classroom design and felt closer to their tablemates than in other courses. However, students were encouraged to rotate through different tables throughout the rest of the semester. The table arrangement made it far easier to move around the room than in a traditional design and made it much easier to engage in immediacy behaviors.

**Teacher Immediacy.** Of all of the strategic design behaviors, teacher immediacy appeared to be the most effective. As illustrated above, students reported high levels of teacher immediacy (Table 1). This created high student engagement and lively course discussions. Though I was accustomed to teaching in a more traditional classroom design, the results of flexible design were so effective, I plan to teach most of my courses in the future in small group table formation.

I tried to engage in as many immediacy behaviors as possible throughout the semester. Following recommendations listed above, I arrived to class early and made sure I had ample time to converse with students before class. I learned names of students early in the semester, setting a goal to know them all by the first week of class. I would wander amongst the tables and engage
in light conversation. I allowed students to call me by my first name and tried to always call students by name during discussions instead of waiting for volunteers. I also shared class appropriate personal examples and employed humor when appropriate which helped create engaged class discussions.

I moved around the room, trying to never pin myself to the “front” of the classroom. And I focused on open non-verbals including body orientation, positive body movement, friendly facial expressions and inclusive pronouns.

High levels of immediacy presented a few challenges. Such behaviors created a bond with students that led a few class members to believe that they were allowed to complain about course work or assignment due dates. One goal of immediacy is to reduce challenge behaviors (Goodboy and Meyers, 2009). However, two students tested teacher-student boundaries by creating an assumption that teacher friendliness equated to teacher weakness. I maintained control of the course by calling out students for disruptive behaviors and avoided being too casual or overly friendly. It is not known if challenge behaviors were directly linked to the levels of immediacy in the course or that these few students were unaware of behavioral standards in higher education.

**Course Design.** As far as actual course design content flowed well overall. Students actively engaged in lively discussion. If a particular topic was being discussed, class time was better served by allowing students to discuss strategies from course content and experience instead of running through a series of slides. The peer faculty evaluation supported this observation. The use of images (instead of text) on slides increased student engagement and encouraged students to practice effective note taking by writing what they deemed most important as opposed to what was listed. It required me to know the material very well to allow
for flexibility in classroom discussion. Previous teaching experience made this possible, as did high impact learning practices, such as collaborative learning and class activities. A new or inexperienced teacher may find such a format challenging. Challenges in future classes may be resolved by slimming down course content and narrowing the focus of each module to ensure ample time to cover course content.

There were challenges covering such a broad range of communication topics. The discussion format and time intensive class activities made for engaged class discussions, but made it difficult to maintain a designated schedule. Lectures, slide presentations and activities needed to be shortened on several occasions to ensure a broad coverage of topics. In the future, it would be effective to focus on select cornerstone theories in each area of communication and eliminate a portion of the bulleted ideas covered in the text.

Class activities. Class activities were high points of the semester. Students reported enjoying the break from discussion and requested that more activities be incorporated in future course work. These activities generally led to lively discussions and greater closeness amongst classmates. Class activities varied in levels of success. Most were successful. A few, such as Plato’s Allegory of the Cave, required a rearrangement of the room, paper clip chains, a darkened room and a large variety of media. It was difficult to implement in the 50-minute time frame.

In the future, class activities may be better served by using a slightly different format. It may be more effective to begin by discussing theory, participating in the activity, and then have a class debriefing that discusses the application of the theory to the activity. A refined structure will assist in making connections to how the theory and activity apply in life.

Learning Outcomes. Students enrolled in COMM 1010 (N = 24) met required
benchmarks (M = 4.87) on an eight-point scale using the critical thinking assessment rubric designated by Snow College Communication Department. Students were able to use critical thinking skills through written work. According to assignment details in canvas, the high score was an eight and the low (when removing zero scores) was a two. Students, on average, logically tied ideas to a range of information. They used sources to providing some interpretation and evaluation, but could use some improvement in developing coherent analysis or synthesis. In order to better determine improvement throughout the semester, in the future, this assessment should also be used to evaluate an earlier assessment to establish a baseline for student abilities.

**Adjustments**

The number of requirements of this humanities course proved to be the greatest challenge of this project. An introduction to communication course should be designed as an introductory course (NCA, 2018) and be accessible to incoming first semester freshman. Finding a balance between academic rigor and attainable success is a challenge. Requiring too much from students too soon in their academic career can become a stumbling block to further academic achievement. Instead of encouraging lifelong learning, stringent requirements can potentially discourage new students and give them the belief that they lack the skills to continue in higher education (Campbell, Dortch & Burt, 2018).

In future semesters, the course will focus on less content, continued immediacy and an increase in class collaboration. More time and attention will be given to communication theory while maintaining effective course discussion and accessibility for incoming freshmen.

Finding a balance between course content, class activities, discussion and fulfilling accreditation requirements is the greatest challenge to teaching the course in the future. For spring semester, I will attempt to narrow down the amount of content covered, focus on
cornerstone communication theories and reduce my lecture content by around 40 percent. I will then reassess the class to ensure that course content covers not only reading content, but has a stronger focus on cornerstone communication theories and well planned class discussions.

Conclusion

In the fall of 2018, an Introduction to Communications course was created for Snow College. The course will better serve the needs of students transferring into four-year communication programs by simplifying articulation.

The course was taught using high impact teaching practices, with a strong emphasis on group collaboration, student reflections, class discussion and activities. These practices were implemented by using high levels of teaching immediacy and strategic classroom design. The use of these practices created a course with high student engagement and positive student evaluations. The class structure created an environment that engaged students in learning communication skills and grew to serve as a recruiting tool for students into other communication courses.

Challenges in teaching the course did exist, namely, trying to cover too much content in the 15-week time span while still engaging in multiple high impact learning practices. Future courses should be taught by focusing on primary cornerstone theories of communication and reducing course content by half. Immediacy and classroom design were highly effective and both practices will continue to assist students in engaging in class discussion.

High impact learning practices such as collaborative work, class activities and reflective written work help create a positive learning environment but these practices alone are not enough. Students should feel engaged with their instructors and feel comfortable enough to participate in class. As this project illustrates, the world of higher education may be changing,
but student needs for face-to-face interaction through teacher immediacy and strategic classroom design remain as important as ever.
References


Table 1

*Results of Student Instructor Evaluation*

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<tr>
<th>Level of Agreement on 5pt scale</th>
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<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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<td>Gained Useful Skills</td>
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Results of Student Course Evaluation

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<td>Learning interpersonal skills</td>
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Table 3

Rubric for Rhetorical Analysis Signature Assignment

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<td>5 pages, with cover and reference pages in addition to proper APA</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>formatting, grammar, spelling and word usage, clarity and mastery of</td>
<td>Full Marks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language.</td>
<td>0 pts No Marks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulately answered questions regarding truth and how they related to</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>human thought and experience.</td>
<td>Full Marks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clearly identified cultural traditions presented in the media texts and</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>illustrated connections to the present.</td>
<td>Full Marks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulately demonstrated how media texts influence the writer’s life</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and culture and how the writer’s life and culture influences media.</td>
<td>Full Marks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Provided quality evidence and ability to use textual support for</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interpretation and analysis including three credible source citations.</td>
<td>Full Marks</td>
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### Table 4

**Rubric for Rhetorical Analysis Signature Assignment – Outcome Assessment**

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<td><strong>Critical Thinking in Interpersonal Communication:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusions and related outcomes are logical and reflect student informed evaluation</td>
<td>4 pts Conclusion is logically tied to information and some related outcomes and student informed evaluations are identified.</td>
<td>3 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>4 pts Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis.</td>
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<td><strong>Total Points: 8</strong></td>
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Appendix A

Course Syllabus and Schedules

Figure A.1 - Course Syllabus

COMM 1010—INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

Instructor: Kristi Stevens Phone: Redacted
Office: Redacted Email: Redacted
Office Hours: M/W 1:30 - 3:30 Credit hours: 3
T/R 3:30 - 4:30


Course Description:

COMM 1010 combines communication concepts and skills with dual goals of helping you to understand basic communication principles and improve oral communication skills. This introductory course investigates communication theories and how to use these theories in practical application. Emphasis is placed on individual improvement in communication settings including intrapersonal, interpersonal, computer mediated, small group, public speaking and mass media. This course examines how human communication affects individual perceptions, cultural traditions and human philosophy.

Course Outcomes:

- Communicate more effectively in interpersonal interactions
- Explore communication theory and ethics
- Deal effectively with conflict and utilize conflict strategies that are productive
- Develop or increase skills in oral presentations
- Listen actively and employ critical thinking skills to create meaningful dialogue
- Decipher verbal and nonverbal cues through which relational messages are often sent
- Explore a variety of philosophical and theoretical questions about human thought and experience.
- Gain a greater understanding of how knowledge is created through the study of language systems, literature and/or philosophy.
- Gain a greater understanding of cultural tradition within a historical context, make connections with the present and consider the future.
- Write effectively within the Humanities discipline to analyze and form critical judgements.
Content:
The following topics will be covered in class:
- Characteristics of competent communication
- Intercultural components of communication
- Perception and self concept development
- Presentation skills including: delivery, research, organization, assessment, visual aids, audience analysis and communication apprehension
- Intercultural components of communication
- Functions of nonverbal communication
- Importance of effective listening
- Relational Dynamics including communication in close relationships
- Gender Issues
- Engaging in effective conflict resolution
- Research project writing, referencing and study analysis

Instructor Policies:

Plagiarism & Academic Dishonesty:
Plagiarism is considered: (1) Presenting as one’s own work as the ideas, representations or words of another person without customary and proper acknowledgement; (2) Submitting as assignment purporting to be the student’s original work, which had been wholly or partly created by another person. PLAGIARISM, CHEATING or ACADEMIC DISHONESTY IN ANY FORM WILL RESULT IN FAILURE OF THE COURSE. Ignorance of what constitutes dishonesty is no excuse. Any incidents of this act will be reported to the Dean of Fine Arts immediately.

Attendance:
Because communication involves listening, evaluating, writing, and speaking, you are expected to attend ALL Class meetings. Part of your grade will be calculated by class participation points. These will only be awarded to students in attendance. When Absences do occur they are divided in two categories: excused and unexcused.

Excused absences are those taken for school related activities or circumstances, such as a medical emergency, that are beyond the student’s control. AN EXCUSED ABSENCES MUST BE JUSTIFIED TO THE INSTRUCTOR BEFOREHAND. Students must make up any homework, exams or speeches missed during the absence within ONE class period of your return. It is your responsibility to contact the instructor to arrange to make up missed work.

Unexcused absences are never reported to the instructor. They are taken when the student simply chooses not to be in class. STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO MAKE UP ANY WORK RESULTING FROM AN UNEXCUSED ABSENCE. If you have any doubt as to what is or is not excused, please check with me before skipping. Using technology in class (such as texting, surfing the web or social media without permission) will be considered an unexcused absence and will be reflected in your attendance.
Regular class attendance is expected of every student. A failing grade of "UW" (Unofficial Withdrawal) may be submitted by the instructor if a student ceases to attend or complete assigned coursework. To avoid the punitive impact of a "UW," it is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw from a course by submitting a "Change of Program" form no later than the tenth week of the semester. See the current catalog for more details.

Late Arrivals and Early Departures:
Class begins promptly, please be on time. In the event of an emergency and you must arrive late on an assigned presentation day, please do not enter the room until you hear applause so as to not interrupt your classmates giving their presentation. Please be prompt on the day of your own presentation. STUDENTS ARRIVING LATE WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO DELIVER THEIR SPEECH PRESENTATIONS.

Respect the classroom environment:
- Be tolerant of other students ideas and experience
- Turn off cell phones
- Avoid Academic Dishonesty in all forms (See Plagiarism & Academic Dishonesty)
- Any student who may need to miss class for school sponsored activities, including athletes, must provide me a schedule by the second week of school.
- All written work must be handed in on the day the assignment is due to receive credit.
- Other late assignments will be accepted until the next scheduled class period for half credit.
- No assignments will be accepted after the next scheduled class date.
- All written work must be typed, proofread and well organized in order to receive credit.

Time Policy:
You have a 30 second grace period on each presentation. After that, 5 points will be deducted from the score for each 30 second interval (over or under) that is surpassed. For example, if 95% presentation runs 15 seconds overtime, the score will be reduced to a 90% etc.

Restrictions:
You MUST GIVE THE PRESENTATION ON THE DAY ASSIGNED. If you choose to give it late, the following policy applies:

1. You may give the presentation the next class period ONLY if there is time!
2. You will lose 10 points for each class period that you are late!

NO PRESENTATIONS WILL BE GIVEN AFTER THE DESIGNATED PRESENTATION DAYS.
NO EXAMS WILL BE ADMINISTERED AFTER THE DESIGNATED TEST DAYS.

American with Disabilities Act:
Snow College is committed to policies of equal opportunity in employment and educational programs, and to allow all persons access to college programs regardless of sex, age, color, religion, national origin,

Students with medical, psychological, learning and other disabilities desiring accommodations or services under ADA must contact the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC). The ARC determines eligibility for and authorizes the provision of these accommodations and services for the college. For assistance, please contact the Accessibility Services Coordinator.

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy (FERPA):**

It is a federal violation for a faculty member to discuss your academic record with anyone except an appropriate college official. If your parents or any other person wishes to discuss your academic performance, you must provide me with written permission.

**Grading and Evaluation:**

Grades are determined on a point/percentage basis. **1130 points** are possible in the course.

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<tr>
<th>Presentations</th>
<th>Written/Class Assignments</th>
<th>Exams</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>30 Rhetorical Analysis Rough draft</td>
<td>100 Midterm 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>60 Rhetorical Analysis Final</td>
<td>100 Final 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer evaluation</td>
<td>40 5 Written Response Papers 200</td>
<td>200 Quizzes 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical Speech</td>
<td>100 40 points a paper</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab Attendance</td>
<td>Media Fast 50</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>25 Attendance/Participation 100</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>25</td>
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</table>

**No Extra Credit will be provided so prepare your assignments accordingly.**
Grading Breakdown:

- A  (94-100%)
- B  (83-86%)
- C  (73-76%)
- D  (63-66%)
- A- (90-93%)
- B- (80-82%)
- C- (70-72%)
- D- (60-62%)
- B+ (87-89%)
- C+ (77-79%)
- D+ (67-69%)
- F  (0-59%)

Prepared Assignments:

Response Papers:
Throughout the semester you will be asked to write two-three page response papers analyzing different aspects of communication concepts we discuss in class. Some will take the form of social experiments and others will challenge you to assess your own communication and personality styles. You will be required to turn in 5 papers by the scheduled due dates.

Individual assignments and requirements are available on Canvas.

Media Fast:
For twenty-four hours turn off all access to your cell phone, internet, television, computer games and head phones. If you must communicate through media you may make a phone call. During the twenty-four hour media fast do not text or message. Please do not view any television, movies, video games etc. If you listen to music or an audio file make sure to do so openly, do not use earphones or any other devise that will isolate you from your outside world.

Instead of using the media for entertainment find positive activities that will help you engage with your surrounding world. Use your voice to communicate with friends, family and associates. Use this time to make eye contact, meet other people and deepen your connections with the people around you.

Write a one to two page paper describing your experience. Be honest. How dependent are you on media use? What impact do you believe media has in your life? All papers will be double spaced, typed, no larger that 12 pt. font with one inch margins.

Lab Attendance:
Please attend the speech lab twice during the semester—once for an individual speech and once for the group presentations. The lab is located in the Lucy Philips Building room 204. Have a lab tutor assist you in preparing your speeches before your presentation date. Please submit your lab worksheet, with your first and last name and the name of your lab tutor, to the instructor before the last day of regularly scheduled classes for the semester.

Group Presentation:
For this research project you will be assigned to a group. Your group be assigned a form of non-verbal communication. This project will require investigating prior research on the topic and create new knowledge through original analysis, surveys, interviews, and observations.
You must do original research for this project. There are several straightforward ways you can gather research including: Using online resources, interviews, observations, and surveys.

**Interviews:**
Interviewing experts in the field to build your knowledge base can be helpful. You can also use interviews to discover how people feel about the concept you are researching. Before you conduct your interview make sure to think carefully about what you wish to accomplish. Knowing your questions in advance will help you determine whom to interview and what to look for. General guidelines for interviews:

- Decide what you want or need to know and who best can provide that to you.
- Schedule each interview in advance, and let the person know why you are conducting the interview.
- Plan your questions in advance. Write down a few questions and have few more in mind. Listen carefully so you can follow up on key points.
- Come prepared with a notebook and pencil. If you want to record the interview make sure to ask for permission in advance.

**Observations:**
Observations can be a valuable source of data. For example, if you are researching proxemics (how people use space and distance), observe what happens when people greet each other on campus. Some guidelines to keep in mind:

- Choose a place where you can observe with the least intrusion. The less people wonder about what you are doing the better.
- Carry a notebook and write extensive field notes. Get down as much information as you can and worry about analyzing it later.
- Record the date, exactly where you were, when you arrived and left and important details like the number of people, etc.

**Surveys:**
Surveys can often provide insight about how people communicate. A good survey can provide important information that will be helpful for your research. General guidelines include:

- Write a few specific questions. Make sure they are clear and unambiguous—people will fill out your survey quickly, make sure your questions are clear and effective so your results aren’t meaningless.
- Decide whom and how many people you will need to survey. Make sure that you don’t just survey your friends, try to get a random sampling of a variety of people.
- There are different ways to interpret your survey. Be sure you can interpret your results.
After you have gathered your research you will prepare a 10-12 minute group presentation to present to the class. This multi-media presentation will be your opportunity to teach the class about your form of non-verbal communication. You will explain your topic and describe what you discovered. You may include up to five minutes of a class activities to illustrate what you have learned. Each member of the group should participate equally in this presentation. You will be graded on style, content and presentation. You must turn in a hard copy outline of your presentation to me in class before you present. Failure to do so will impact the grade of the entire group! Please use visual aids. These can be charts, graphs, posters, overheads, video clips, PowerPoint presentations etc.

The presentation style may take the form of a symposium, panel discussion, or any creative means in which each group member presents a balanced part of the information. Your information should be useful, interesting and exciting to learn about. Please be sure that the presentation is well organized with the best possible delivery skills.

Group presentations will be graded by both the instructor and your group mates. The presentation is worth 60 points. This will be graded by the instructor. Each member of the group will receive the same grade for the presentation based on organization, content, research, delivery, creativity and unity. Preliminary group work will be graded by group members. This enables the group to determine how evenly work was distributed among members. You will grade individual members on a 40 point scale. For all members you will distribute points as you choose. Please be fair in grading. If one member did more work than another, grade accordingly. Group members will not know how points were distributed.

**Time Limit: 10 - 12 minutes**  **Bibliography: required**  **Outline : required**

**Rhetorical Analysis:**
We have read, discussed, and researched a variety of communication mediums throughout the semester including literature, videos, music, film, commercial ad campaigns, social media messages, speeches, podcasts and interviews.

Choose one published communication artifact such as a song, television show, video game, film, ad campaign, podcast, speech, etc. and analyze it's significance.

Please try to think critically about the nature of your artifact and how it influences and impacts individuals, culture and society as a whole. Please examine ways in which this artifact influences your life and in turn, how your life potentially influences communication.

Analyze the elements of communication that are used by selecting one of the communication theories we have discussed throughout the semester (ex: Goffman's Impression Management, Kenneth Burke's Pentad, Plato's Allegory of the Cave, etc.)
So for your paper: you will need to follow the following four steps (1) Select a text (artifact) that you feel has hidden messages (subtext), (2) describe the artifact in detail, (3) examine the text (artifact) through your selected communication theory (ex. Goffman's Impression Management), describe and interpret the hidden messages and answer the questions posed below then(4) evaluate potential implications the text (artifact) has on various audiences.

Using your selected artifact to answer the following questions:

Why do we believe certain things are true and other things are not? Does society, as a whole, have an inability to accurately distinguish truths? What role does media and literature play in defining truth? How do we discern reality from entertainment? There are traditions, literary works, art, media productions, and texts that are handed down from generation to generation. Each generation leaves a creative legacy, the sum of its ideas and achievements in that specific media era. What legacy has your chosen media left for generations? Now consider cultural assumptions including moral, ethical, political, and religious views. Has your chosen media influenced these views?

So for example, how does your artifact show truth? Is it distinguished or hidden. What traditions handed down from generation to generation appear in your artifact? What legacy does your artifact leave for future generations (legacies aren't always good)? What cultural assumptions does your artifact make and how does that impact human perspective? Etc.

You will write a 6-page paper in essay format, using APA as a style guide. You will need a title page, introduction, then each of the 4 steps listed above. You do not need an abstract. It should be double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, and typed preferably in 12-point font. The 6 pages do not include cover or reference page (which are also required). Include 3 scholarly sources and at least 6 sources total to add credibility to your writing.

-Information on APA can be found [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01)

-This needs to be submitted to Turnitin submission. This is an academic plagiarism checker program. When you are submitting this on canvas and you click on "this is my own work" you are submitting it in to the program. Please make sure you are under 12 percent similarity.

Rhetorical Analysis Speech Presentation:
After you have completed your rhetorical analysis you will present your findings in a 4-5 minute speech presentation. Using the public speaking concepts discussed in class, introduce your artifact to the class (you may use up to one-minute of video, music, or images that represent your selected artifact) and explain significance.

Please try to think critically about the nature of your artifact and how it influences and impacts individuals, culture and society as a whole. Please examine ways in which this artifact
influences your life and in turn, how your life potentially influences communication. Show any hidden meanings in your selected artifact. What role does your artifact play in defining truth? Does it reveal or hide reality? What legacy has your chosen artifact left for generations? Now consider cultural assumptions including moral, ethical, political, and religious views. Has your chosen media influenced these views?

So for example, how does your artifact reflect truth? Is it distinguished or hidden? What traditions handed down from generation to generation appear in your artifact? What legacy does your artifact leave for future generations (legacies aren't always good)? What cultural assumptions does your artifact make and how does that impact human perspective? Etc.

This presentation should not be a dry recitation of your paper but a fun, creative speech that will be fun and meaningful to your classmates. Please include visual aids, proper speaking attire and confident presentation techniques including, clear organization, proper use of non-verbals, vocal control etc.

**Time Limit: 4-6 minutes**  
**Bibliography: to be included with paper**  
**Outline: Required**
**Figure A. 2 - Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC / READING</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS / EXAMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td>CHAPTER 1- INTRO TO COMMUNICATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 22</td>
<td>Intro to course</td>
<td>Syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 24</td>
<td>Intro to Communication</td>
<td>Read Module 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td>Intro to Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 29</td>
<td>Intro to Communication (Transactional Model)</td>
<td>Quiz 1 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 31</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Read Module 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td>NO CLASS - LABOR DAY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 5</td>
<td>Introduction Presentations/Group A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 7</td>
<td>Introduction Presentations/Group B</td>
<td>Paper 1 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
<td>CHAPTER 3 - IDENTITY &amp; PERCEPTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 10</td>
<td>Identity and Perception</td>
<td>Quiz 2 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 12</td>
<td>Perception</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 14</td>
<td>Perception</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 5</strong></td>
<td>CHAPTER 6 - CULTURE &amp; COMMUNICATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 17</td>
<td>Culture and Comm.</td>
<td>Read Module 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 19</td>
<td>Culture and Comm.</td>
<td>Quiz 3 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 21</td>
<td>Culture and Conflict</td>
<td>Paper 2 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
<td>CHAPTER 10 - GROUP COMMUNICATION</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Sep. 24</td>
<td>Group Comm.</td>
<td>Read Module 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 26</td>
<td>Group Comm.</td>
<td>Quiz 4 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep. 28</td>
<td>Group Comm. (Assign Groups)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 7</strong></td>
<td>CHAPTER 4 - LANGUAGE</td>
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<td>Oct. 1</td>
<td>Verbal Communication</td>
<td>Read Module 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 3</td>
<td>Verbal Communication</td>
<td>Quiz 5 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 5</td>
<td>Non-verbal Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 8</strong></td>
<td>CHAPTER 5 - NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 8</td>
<td>Non-verbal Communication</td>
<td>Read Module 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 10</td>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
<td>Quiz 6 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 12</td>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
<td>Paper 3 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 9</strong></td>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
<td>Read Module 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 15</td>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
<td></td>
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CREATING COMMUNICATION PATHWAYS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 17</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Quiz 7 Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 19</td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS - FALL BREAK</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 10</strong></td>
<td><strong>SOCIAL MEDIA</strong></td>
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<td>Oct. 22</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Read Module 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 24</td>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>Quiz 8 Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 26</td>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>Paper 4 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 10</strong></td>
<td><strong>MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 29</td>
<td>Media and Technology - (Allegory of the Cave)</td>
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<td>Oct. 31</td>
<td>Media and Technology</td>
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<td>Nov. 2</td>
<td>Media and Technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 11</strong></td>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 8 - PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 5</td>
<td>Personal Relationships</td>
<td>Read Modules 9 &amp; 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 7</td>
<td>Personal Relationships</td>
<td>Quiz 9 Due (covers modules 9 &amp; 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 9</td>
<td>Personal Relationships</td>
<td>Media Fast Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 12</strong></td>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 9 - FAMILY COMMUNICATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 12</td>
<td>Family Communication</td>
<td>Rhetorical Analysis due.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 14</td>
<td>Family Communication</td>
<td>Read Module 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 16</td>
<td>Comm. in the Workplace</td>
<td>Quiz 10 Due (Covers module 11)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 13</strong></td>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 11 - COMM. IN THE WORKPLACE</strong></td>
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<td>Nov. 19</td>
<td>Comm. in the Workplace</td>
<td>Chapter 10 Quiz Due</td>
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<td>Nov. 21 - 23</td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING BREAK</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Week 14</strong></td>
<td><strong>RHETORIC - PUBLIC SPEAKING</strong></td>
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<td>Nov. 26</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Readings Module 12</td>
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<td>Nov. 28</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
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<td>Nov. 30</td>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>Paper 5 Due</td>
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<td><strong>Week 15</strong></td>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 12 - MANAGING CONFLICT</strong></td>
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<td>Dec. 3</td>
<td>Speech Presentations</td>
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<td>Dec. 5</td>
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<td>Dec. 7</td>
<td>Speech Presentations</td>
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<td><strong>Week 16</strong></td>
<td><strong>FINAL - THURSDAY, DEC. 13, 12:00- 2:00 p.m.</strong></td>
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<td>Dec. 10</td>
<td>Speech Presentations</td>
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**Appendix B**

Course Content

Figure B.1 - Slide Presentation Example from Lecture on Perception
Figure B.1.a

Figure B.1.b
Figure B.1.c

HOW WE SEE THE WORLD IS HOW WE INTERACT IN IT.

Figure B.1.d

WHAT DO YOU SEE?
Figure B.1.e

**THIS IS WATER**

Figure B.1.f

**PERCEPTION-FOUR STEP PROCESS TO ASSIGN MEANING**

- Selection
- Organization
- Interpretation
- Negotiation
Figure B.2 - Class Lecture

Perception

Perception is one of the most impactful elements of identity and our ability to communicate with the outside world. (Figure B.1.a)

Show image in nature. (Figure B.1.b) Discuss different aspects each person identifies in the image.

Some students may notice the trail. Others may notice the greenery. Still others may wonder where the trail leads. Some may see the image as warm, while others may see it as damp.

Ask the class how they would feel if we were to go on a class trip to this place.

Do they anticipate enjoying the experience?

How we see the world is how we interact within it. (Figure B.1.c)

Lead class discussion on how we can all be exposed to the same stimuli but have very different experiences.

Illustrate how two people can view the same image and see very different things by showing video of dancing girl. (Figure B.1.d)

Video can be accessed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rb1CZfUumDI

Our ability to see outside of our perception helps us better communicate and function in the world.

Show excerpt from David Foster Wallace commencement speech, “This is Water.” (Figure B.1.e)

(Explain how everything we understand about ourselves is shaped by our perception of ourselves and the perceptions of others.)

Can you think of examples of how your own perceptions and the perceptions of others have impacted how you view yourself?

All perceptions are based on relational and cultural understandings.
Perception is a four-step process. (Figure B.1.f)

- Selecting
- Organizing
- Interpreting
- Evaluating/Negotiating

Selection - Receiving stimuli and choosing where to focus attention.

- Selective Exposure - More likely to expose self to that which supports your beliefs, values and attitudes.
- Selective Perception - More likely to perceive and focus on things that support your beliefs, values and attitudes.
- Selective Retention - More likely to recall things that support your beliefs, values and attitudes.

Organizing - Observations are selectively chosen and then organized in ways that allow you to retrieve them when necessary.

- Your organization of information functions like an Interpretive pair of glasses. You use these glasses to “channelize” expectations of events which become behaviors.
- Can you think examples of how organized expectations can shape behavior?

Interpretation - Assigning meaning to the information organized.

- We use this knowledge to adjust how we see our world. The more we focus on organizing particular information, the more our anticipated behaviors become ingrained. This can lead us into a rut.
- How have you observed people falling into ruts because of ingrained anticipated behaviors?

Evaluating/Negotiation - All of the information we have gathered is evaluated and negotiated with the perceptions of others to negotiate an shared reality.

---

**Class Activity - Perception Exercise (Figure B.3)**
Figure B.3 - Class Activity

**Perception Exercise.** After students arrive in class invite them to study a series of questions then using the questions. Then using the questions as a guide, invite them to leave the classroom and wander campus for 30 minutes. After the 30 minutes ask them to return and to report their answers.

Write each question at the top of a dry erase board lining the walls of the room. As each student returns, assign them a different colored dry erase marker and invite them to write their answers on the board under the corresponding question. Questions used in the exercise include:

- What do you see?
- What are you drawn to look at?
- What interests you?
- Do you see anything that draws you to want to see more?
- What are you feeling?
- How do your feelings impact what you are feeling?
- How does that cause you to interpret your experience?
- How would you share this experience with the class?

Using the four steps of the perception process, debrief the students. Ask them to notice varied individual responses. Though each student is allotted the same amount of time, and is limited on where they can go, perception shapes each students experience differently.
Please select one of the following three options:

**Option 1, Group Membership**

Make a list of the ways in which you indicate your membership in different groups through the medium used for each. Don’t forget that groups can include gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and many more subtle kinds of membership. And don’t forget that the medium is the means through which a message is conveyed: sound, sight, smartphones, text messages, social networking sites, a note placed on someone’s windshield, smoke signals, and more. The purpose of this exercise is for you to list as many possible ways in which you indicate your membership in these different groups *through the various media you use to communicate with others in your life*. Though you are creating a list, please report your findings in a two-page essay format.

**Option 2, Communication Interactions**

For a full day, take notes on every interaction you have with a family member or your significant other. Come to class after doing so and be prepared to note which communication interactions were highly exciting and stimulating and which were routine and failed to spark excitement. Did you have more exciting or more routine communication interactions? Why do you think this was the case? Write a one to two page paper describing your findings.
Option 3, *Walk a mile in another person's shoes:*

Walk a mile in another person's shoes. Find a person or a role that is foreign to you and try to become that person for a day. Be creative. Here are some possible examples.

- Try to take on a role of one of your family members for a day (mother, father, brother, etc.). Try to do everything your family member does for the entire day. Fulfill their responsibility and role to the best of your ability.

- Literally walk a mile in someone else's shoes or clothing or hairstyle for a day. For example, if you are a male would you be willing to wear a skirt for the day or heals? A woman, basketball shorts? How does that shape your perception?

- Spend the day in someone else's profession. Ask a local employer if he/she will let you shadow them for a day.

Write a two page paper describing your experience and what you learned about perception.”
Appendix C

Assessments and Evaluations

Figure C.1 - Student Class/Instructor Evaluation

Below are a series of descriptions of the things some teachers have been observed doing in some classes. Please respond to the items in terms of this course. For each item please indicated how often your instructor in this class engaged in these behaviors using the following scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gestures while talking to the class</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses monotone/dull voice when talking to the class</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frowns at the class while talking</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a very tense body position while talking to the class</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moves around the classroom while teaching</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks at board or notes while talking to the class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a very relaxed body position while talking to the class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frowns at individual students in the class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses a variety of vocal expressions when talking to the class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates behaviors that should be avoided.
Below are a series of descriptions about course content. Please respond to what you have learned so far in this course. For each item please indicated how effectively you feel you are learning these skills and concepts in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not effective</th>
<th>Mildly Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Moderately Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_____ This course is teaching me to communicate in interpersonal interactions.

_____ I am learning communication theory and ethics.

_____ This course is teaching me how to deal with conflict and utilize conflict strategies.

_____ This course is helping me develop oral presentation skills.

_____ This course is teaching me to listen actively and employ critical thinking skills to create meaningful dialogue.

_____ This course is teaching me how to decipher verbal and nonverbal cues through relational messages that are sent.

_____ This course is teaching me about a variety of philosophical and theoretical questions about human thought and perception.

_____ This course is helping me gain a greater understanding of how language systems and knowledge are created.

_____ This course is teaching me about cultural traditions.
This course is teaching me how to write effectively.

Please respond to the items in terms of this course. For each item please indicated how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This course is challenging me intellectually

The instructor shows respect for student’s comments and questions

The instructor provides helpful feedback for my work

The instructor displays genuine concern for students and learning

The instructor uses teaching methods that are engaging and helpful.

You are satisfied with what you are learning in class.

The skills and knowledge you are gaining is useful

You would recommend this instructor to other students

You would recommend this course to other students
Figure C.2 – Peer Faculty Evaluation

Peer Review
Colleague Classroom Observation Report

Instructor: Kristi Stevens
Class: Introduction to Communications (HU)
Number of students present: 21

Overall observations: Kristi appears well prepared for class by beginning with reminders, assignment details, and answering questions. She operates class with a professional demeanor that is coupled with apparent immediacy. Kristi appeared to be accessible to student feedback and includes good natured joking with her audience, which shows a level of comfortability. She knows each student’s name and they appeared to have built relationships with her and with each other.

The room setup that Kristi taught in allows for a teaching orientation at the front of the room as well as the back. Kristi expertly used both spaces to create interest throughout her lecture and had activities planned to keep each student’s attention. It was observed that her students understood note taking and how to critically listen. The PowerPoint slides Kristi used were simple pictures or short phrases, showing an expert understanding of good lecture visual aids. The fact that her class could write notes of merit without the added language on the slides to direct them shows her professional ability with teaching.

Students appeared engaged throughout the class and seemed comfortable asking questions, engaging in good-natured banter, and participating in the day’s activities to help further processing.

The instructor’s major strengths: Kristi appears to be a dynamic teacher. She is talented as a presenter and includes delivery elements which command attention. In addition, she models the behavior she talks about in her class and communicates naturally and freely with each of her students, encouraging warmth and engagement. She prepares fun, engaging activities to help further processing and critical thinking. Kristi appears to offer challenging assignments that are coupled with intense instructor feedback, thus ensuring all students feel they will have the help needed to be successful.

My suggestions to the instructor for improvement: Part of Kristi’s lecture dealt with clothing requirements for public speaking. One suggestion might be to start with a general approach to what would be advised for an average college classroom and then build up to what the very best clothing options could be if they so choose. Beginning with the very best first and then ending with what might be acceptable if they don’t have access to the very best might make some disadvantaged students uncomfortable.
Appendix D

Canvas Content Samples

Figure D.1

![Canvas Home Page](image)

Figure D.2

![Lectures Page](image)
Figure D.3

Readings

Chapter Presentation Menu:

Week 1-5
- Readings - Week 1
- Presentation
- Readings - Week 2
- Presentation
- Readings - Week 3
- Presentation

Week 6-10
- Readings - Week 6
- Presentation
- Readings - Week 7
- Presentation
- Readings - Week 8
- Presentation

Week 11-15
- Readings - Week 11
- Presentation
- Readings - Week 12
- Presentation
- Readings - Week 13
- Presentation

Readings

IDENTITY AND PERCEPTION

Chapter 3 - Identities, Perceptions and Communication—Communication in Everyday Life. Duck and Mcmahon -
Introduction - Erving Goffman - The Presentational Self in Everyday Life

Erving Goffman and the Performed Self

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People—Part One/Paradigms and Principles, Covey