

**COM3125 (Section 23GC/12729): Organizational Communication, Fall 2021  
M, W & F, Period 4 (10:40-11:30am) in Rolfs Hall, room 207**

**Instructor:** Dr. Lisa Joniak Athearn

**Office:** 412 Rolfs Hall

**Office Hours:** Monday, Tuesday, & Wednesday, period 5 (11:45am-12:35pm) in person & via Zoom (<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/98528807935>)

**Phone:** 352-392-5421 (email is the fastest way to reach me)

**E-mail:** [joniakathearn@ufl.edu](mailto:joniakathearn@ufl.edu)

**Website:** <http://elearning.ufl.edu> (follow logon for e-learning in Canvas)

**Youtube:** [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLq\\_Bd341q2Jq1R36lrH6lPHZKoZW3pi1r](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLq_Bd341q2Jq1R36lrH6lPHZKoZW3pi1r)

**Course Description & Objectives:**

The purpose of this course is to explore the processes, practices and challenges of communicating among large groups of people, primarily in the work environment. With the increased reliance on social media and non-linear communication platforms, organizations have seen significant changes in the way they communicate both within its own team and with the public at large. We will examine organizational structures, patterns of communication, task and social roles, extrinsic influences and methods of producing intrinsic motivation and innovation.

The objectives for this course are:

1. Understand the importance and process of organizational communication
2. Identify and critically examine the theories of organizations
3. Understand the importance of culture in shaping communication within organizations
4. Critically analyze different organizational systems and communicate your findings
5. Engage in lively and informed discussions with each other and professionals across a wide variety of organizations.

**Required Text: Organizational Communication: foundations, Challenges & Misunderstandings**, 5th Edition (2021) by Modaff & Butler, Publisher: Cognella. You can purchase the textbook directly from the publisher at [store.cognella.com/23534](https://store.cognella.com/23534) or from UF's All Access (<https://bsd.ufl.edu/allaccess>). Please note that UF's All Access will charge you 20% more than buying directly from the publisher.

**Course Assignments:**

1. Attendance	100
2. Participation (discussions & quizzes)	150
3. Discussion Planning & Post	200
4. Discussion Leading	200
5. Cultural Comparison Presentation	

**OR**

Case Study Report	350
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>

**Scale for Final Grades:**

A	93-100%	930-1000 points
A-	90-92%	900-929
B+	87-89%	870-899
B	83-86%	830-869
B-	80-82%	800-829
C+	77-79%	770-799
C	73-76%	730-769
C-	70-72%	700-729
D+	67-69%	670-699
D	63-66%	630-669
D-	60-62%	600-629
E	0-59%	0-599

**Course Assignment Description:**

1. **Attendance & Participation (250 points):** Our class is meeting in person during our scheduled time (unless otherwise noted). Only three absences for whatever reason will

be allowed. Your participation grade will be reduced by 20 points for each absence beyond the three. An excused absence is possible with a note from clinic or doctor, a letter notification for a career interview, or a notification from Athletic department. Each unexcused absence will result in a 20 point reduction in the final grade. Excused absences are consistent with university policies in the undergraduate catalog and require appropriate documentation (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>). Students are responsible for signing the attendance book during class.

This class emphasizes the ability to integrate class materials into class discussion and assignments. It is imperative that you stay up to date on the assigned readings and ask questions in class discussions. Consistent and competent participation in class is essential to maintaining an acceptable grade in this course. **Exemplary participation** (90%-100%) includes initiating contributions to class discussions, insightful and constructive contributions, and excellent focus and listening to others in every class session. **Proficient participation** (80%-90%) includes mostly insightful contributions to class discourse, plus a sharp focus and attentive listening to others for most class sessions. **Developing participation** (70%-80%) includes contributing to classroom discussion at least half of the time, sometimes offering constructive comments with some signs of insight, but a general lack of focus and attention to others. **Unacceptable participation** (<70%) includes a lack of participation, uninformed comments to class discussion, lack of involvement in activities, constant lack of focus (e.g. distracted on phone) and poor listening to others.

In addition, we will have several guest speakers throughout the semester. Your active participation reflects positively on our class and the university. These guest speakers are opportunities for you to develop real world connections with future employers--utilize these days to the fullest.

2. **Discussion Pre-Planning (150pts) & Post (50pts) (200 points total):** You will work with a small team (3-4 people) to select and plan a topical discussion based on a chapter from our textbook. You will work with the professor and your team to identify relevant concepts and effective ways to communicate those concepts to the class. You will create a plan to integrate an interesting discussion with the class, centered on your topic. You will share your plan with the professor about one week prior to your discussion date. In addition, you will engage in a debrief (post) after your session to examine how your discussion went.
3. **Discussion Leading (200 points):** Working with your team, you will lead the discussion in class on a topical discussion based on a chapter from our textbook. Your team will communicate relevant concepts in a way that is engaging and interesting. It is your job to ensure that the relevant information is clearly communicated and that classroom engagement is present. Your group will create learning materials (e.g. PPT lecture) and distribute them to the class at least 2 days prior to your discussion.

Please note that you will pick either the Cultural Comparison Presentation OR the Case Study report, you will not complete both assignments. For planning purposes, you must indicate which assignment you choose by Friday, 11/5 (See Canvas assignment to report choice).

4. **Cultural Comparison Presentation (350 points):** You and a partner will select two organizations that compete for the same market (e.g. Dunkin Donuts & Starbucks or Target & Walmart). You will collect data from and about each organization (**both** primary and secondary data). Then, you will analyze how the two different organizations communicate. How does each organization create and support its culture through strategic communication? How does each group differentiate itself from its competitors? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each organization's communication? You will present your findings to the class in a formal, yet creative and engaging presentation.

Visual aids are required and handouts are helpful. Your presentation should be about 20-25 minutes in length.

5. **Case Study Report (350 points):** You will analyze the organizational communication presented through a fictional show (e.g. *The Office*, *30 Rock*, or *Parks & Rec*, etc.). You may pick any show you like, as long as you run it by the professor. You will write up a report as though you are a communication consultant who has come in to observe and provide professional guidance (really get into this...make the report professional, accurate and interesting). You will be given a list of topics you can discuss and must effectively evaluate at least four of those topics (See Canvas for more on the assignment). Be sure to provide episode numbers (and video links when possible) to help illustrate your observations. Case Study Reports are due on Wednesday, 12/8 via Canvas.

### **Course Expectations:**

1. All written assignments must be turned in via email or through Canvas assignments. Please proofread your work for clarity, accuracy, and relevance.
2. Papers and files for presentations are due on the same day as the presentation. You are expected to dress professionally on presentation days.
3. Attendance is necessary in this course. Only three absences for whatever reason will be allowed. Your Attendance & Participation grade will be reduced by 20 points for each absence beyond the three. An excused absence is possible with a note from clinic or doctor, a letter notification for a career interview, or a notification from the Athletic department or other UF department if the student is participating in a UF event.
4. Participation in class is expected. Please read expectations for participation above
5. Reading assignments must be met. All team members should contribute assignments.
6. Since you will be interacting with real world professionals it is important for you to recognize that your behavior and performance is not only a direct reflection on you, but also your class, the Dial Center and the University of Florida. I strongly encourage you to use the opportunities presented in this class to build your professional skills and connections. Make the most of this class and I promise you will see a high return on your investment.

**Attendance:** Our class is meeting in person during our scheduled time (unless otherwise noted). Class attendance is expected. Each unexcused absence will result in a 20 point reduction in the final grade. Excused absences are consistent with university policies in the undergraduate catalog (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>) and require appropriate documentation. Students are responsible for participating in chat roll call during class meetings.

**Class Demeanor:** Students are expected to behave according to the UF student code of conduct in their classes. This means treating their instructors and fellow classmates with respect. To ensure a positive learning environment, students should not: make complaints publicly (in front of other students); attack the instructor verbally, physically, or in written form; or express reactions in the classroom that would bring harm to other students. Failure to meet the UF code of conduct can impact a student's class participation grade or result in referral to the UF judicial office. Signing another student into class also violates the UF code of conduct. Class atmosphere can be made or broken by the approach that students take to the challenges of the course. Students that support others, show good humor in the face of obstacles, show

dedication in the face of setbacks, and show grace when others are not doing as well will help to create a positive communication climate.

**Accommodations:** Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester in order to allow us to provide the most effective support. Students with any accommodations should arrange a meeting with the instructor during the first week of class (and ideally before the end of drop/add) to discuss how we can work together to meet the students' needs and still adhere to the essential elements/functions of the course in regards to attendance and class participation.

**Course Evaluation:** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/> Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/> Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/publicresults/> .

**University Honesty Policy:** UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conducthonor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

### **Counseling and Wellness Center**

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

**Schedule of Topics:** Subject to change as noted in class or on Canvas. You are responsible for keeping up with all announcements and updates on Canvas. Chapter #s are from the 5th edition of the textbook, please note that the 5th edition is significantly different from older versions.

<b>Week # &amp; Dates</b>	<b>Topics Covered</b>	<b>Assignments &amp; Tasks Due</b>
<b>Week 1</b> Monday (8/23)	Course introduction & syllabus	Purchase book Take syllabus Quiz

Wednesday (8/25)	Team Building & Course Discussion	Read syllabus & thoroughly examine Canvas content
Friday (8/27)	Chapter 1 (Introduction)	Study Chapter 1 & Canvas content
<b>Week 2</b> Monday (8/30)	Chapter 2 (Classical Theories of Organizations)	Study Chapter 2 & Canvas content
Wednesday (9/1)	Assignment Discussion	Be ready to discuss ideas and ask questions about any assignment for course
Friday (9/3)	<b>Guest Speaker/Workshop</b>	Research speaker and organization prior to class
<b>Week 3</b> Monday (9/6)	<b>Labor Day-No Class</b>	
Wednesday (9/8)	Chapter 3 (Humanistic Theories of Organizations)	Study Chapter 3 & Canvas content
Friday (9/10)	<b>Guest Speaker/Workshop</b>	Research speaker and organization prior to class
<b>Week 4</b> Monday (9/13)	Chapter 4 (Systems Theory)	Study Chapter 4 & Canvas content
Wednesday (9/15)	Team Building & Chapter/Assignment Discussion	
Friday (9/17)	<b>Guest Speaker/Workshop</b>	Research speaker and organization prior to class
<b>Week 5</b> Monday (9/20)	Chapter 5 (Organizational Culture)	Study Chapter 5 & Canvas content
Wednesday (9/22)	<b>Discussion Planning Day</b>	We will be selecting Discussion Topics & Teams. Be familiar with Chapters 7-12
Friday (9/24)	Team Building & Chapter/Assignment Discussion	Be ready to discuss ideas and ask questions about any assignment for course

<b>Week # &amp; Dates</b>	<b>Topics Covered</b>	<b>Assignments &amp; Tasks Due</b>
<b>Week 6</b> Monday (9/27)	Chapter 6 (Critical Theory)	Study Chapter 6 & Canvas content
Wednesday (9/29)	Team Building & Chapter/Assignment Discussion	Be ready to discuss ideas and ask questions about any assignment for course
Friday (10/1)	<b>Discussion Planning: Chapter 7 (Realistic Recruitment)</b>	

		Chapter 7 Group meet with Dr. A. Be sure to have PPT & outline of discussion leading ready.
<b>Week 7</b> Monday (10/4)	<b>Discussion Planning:</b> Chapter 8 (Socialization of New Members)	Chapter 8 Group meets with Dr. A. Be sure to have PPT & outline of discussion leading ready.
Wednesday (10/6)	<b>Guest Speaker/Workshop</b>	Research speaker and organization prior to class
Friday (10/8)	<b>Homecoming-No class</b>	
<b>Week 8</b> Monday (10/11)	<b>Chapter 7 Discussion (Realistic Recruitment)</b>	Chapter 7 Group leads class
Wednesday (10/13)	<u>Discussion Planning &amp; Post:</u> <b>Post:</b> Chapter 7 (Realistic Recruitment) <b>Discussion Planning:</b> Chapter 9 (Supervisor-Subordinate Communication)	Chapter 7 & 9 Groups meet with Dr. A. <b>Post:</b> Have reflections ready. <b>Planning:</b> Be sure to have PPT & outline of discussion leading ready.
Friday (10/15)	<b>Guest Speaker/Workshop</b>	Research speaker and organization prior to class
<b>Week 9</b> Monday (10/18)	<b>Chapter 8 Discussion (Socialization of New Members)</b>	Chapter 8 Group leads class
Wednesday (10/20)	<u>Discussion Planning &amp; Post:</u> <b>Post:</b> Chapter 8 (Socialization) <b>Discussion Planning:</b> Chapter 10 (Peer & Coworker Communication)	Chapter 8 & 10 Groups meet with Dr. A. <b>Post:</b> Have reflections ready. <b>Planning:</b> Be sure to have PPT & outline of discussion leading ready.
Friday (10/22)	<b>Guest Speaker/Workshop</b>	Research speaker and organization prior to class

Week # & Dates	Topics Covered	Assignments & Tasks Due
<b>Week 10</b> Monday (10/25)  Wednesday (10/27)  Friday (10/29)	<b>Chapter 9 Discussion (Supervisor-Subordinate Communication)</b>  <u>Discussion Planning &amp; Post:</u> <b>Post:</b> Chapter Chapter 9 (Supervisor-Subordinate Communication) <b>Discussion Planning:</b> Chapter 11 (Organizational Teams)  <b>Cultural Comparison and/or Case Study Assignment Workshop/Discussion</b>	Chapter 9 Group leads class  Chapter 9 & 11 Groups meet with Dr. A. <b>Post:</b> Have reflections ready. <b>Planning:</b> Be sure to have PPT & outline of discussion leading ready.  Bring ideas for Cultural Comparison or Case Study Assignment
<b>Week 11</b> Monday (11/1)  Wednesday (11/3)  Friday (11/5)	<b>Chapter 10 Discussion (Peer &amp; Coworker Communication)</b>  <u>Discussion Planning &amp; Post:</u> <b>Post:</b> Chapter 10 (Peer & Coworker Communication) <b>Discussion Planning:</b> Chapter 12 (Leaders & Leadership)  <b>Guest Speaker/Workshop Assignment Selection Due</b>	Chapter 10 Group leads class  Chapter 10 & 12 Groups meet with Dr. A. <b>Post:</b> Have reflections ready. <b>Planning:</b> Be sure to have PPT & outline of discussion leading ready.  Research speaker and organization prior to class Select either Cultural Comparison or Case Study Assignment on Canvas
<b>Week 12</b> Monday (11/8)  Wednesday (11/10)  Friday (11/12)	<b>Chapter 11 Discussion (Organizational Teams)</b>  <b>Discussion Post:</b> Chapter 11 (Organizational Teams) <b>Cultural Comparison Presentation Workshop</b>  Day Off: Meditate, Exercise, Relax...whatever :)	Chapter 11 Group leads class  Chapter 11 Group meets with Dr. A. Have reflections ready. Open time to get help on Cultural Comparison presentation

Week # & Dates	Topics Covered	Assignments & Tasks Due
<p><b>Week 13</b> Monday (11/15)</p> <p>Wednesday (11/17)</p> <p>Friday (11/19)</p>	<p><b>Chapter 12 Discussion (Leaders &amp; Leadership)</b></p> <p><b>Discussion Post::</b> Chapter 12 (Leaders &amp; Leadership) <b>Cultural Comparison Presentation Workshop</b></p> <p>Cultural Comparison Presentations <b>Group 1</b></p>	<p>Chapter 12 Group leads class</p> <p>Chapter 12 Group meets with Dr. A. Have reflections ready. Open time to get help on Cultural Comparison presentation</p> <p>Group 1 gives their Cultural Comparison Presentations</p>
<p><b>Week 14</b> Monday (11/22), Wednesday (11/24) &amp; Friday (11/26)</p>	<p><b>Thanksgiving Break-No Class</b></p>	
<p><b>Week 15</b> Monday (11/29)</p> <p>Wednesday (12/1)</p> <p>Friday (12/3)</p>	<p>Cultural Comparison Presentations <b>Group 2</b></p> <p>Cultural Comparison Presentations <b>Group 3</b></p> <p>Cultural Comparison Presentations <b>Group 4</b></p>	<p>Group 2 gives their Cultural Comparison Presentations</p> <p>Group 3 gives their Cultural Comparison Presentations</p> <p>Group 4 gives their Cultural Comparison Presentations</p>
<p><b>Week 16</b> Monday (12/6)</p> <p>Wednesday (12/8)</p> <p>Friday (12/10)</p>	<p>Cultural Comparison Presentations <b>Group 5</b></p> <p><b>Make-up Day/Workshop</b></p> <p><b>Reading Day-No class</b></p>	<p>Group 5 gives their Cultural Comparison Presentations</p> <p><b>Case Study due via Canvas on Wednesday, 12/8.</b></p>