

CMGT-505: Communication in Work Settings

Professor: Dr. Colleen M. Keough

Email: keough@usc.edu

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

Communication in Work Settings contributes to your MCM degree program through:

1. Topics examining organizational communication, primarily at the micro-level of human interaction.
2. Applied research activities enabling you to analyze the interpersonal dynamics of your current work environment.
3. Foundational opportunities to explore questions that you may use later in creating and executing your capstone project or CMGT-597 project.

Equal emphasis is placed on theoretical understanding and practical application. A strong theoretical foundation is required to ensure that decisions about communication practices are based on sound research rather than popularized myths; that is, how is a concept studied by academicians, and why do we want to build/test theories about the concept? Concomitantly, how is the concept treated by practitioners and consultants? Your current and future employers are counting on you to be able to collect and evaluate the most recent research about topics they are concerned about.

Week 00: Introduction to Communication in Work Settings.

- May 08–14

Week 01: Foundations of Organizational Communication

- May 15–21

Week 02: Organizational Culture I: Organizational Culture Perspectives

- May 22–28

Week 03: Organizational Culture II: More than Description, the Analysis of Organizational Culture

- May 29–June 04

Week 04: Socialization and Organizational Entry

- June 05–11

Week 05: Socialization and Organizational Transitions

- June 12–18

Week 06: Capstone Project Proposal and Annotated Bibliography Due

- June 19–25

Week 07: Listening and Feedback

- June 19–July 02

Week 08: Delegation

- July 03–09

Week 09: Dissent in Organizations

- July 10–16

Week 10: Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Relationships

- July 17–23

Week 11: The Communication of Emotion

- July 24–30

Week 12: When Bad Things Happen to Good People I: Destructive Organizational Relationships

- July 31–August 06

Week 13: When Bad Things Happen to Good People II: Bullying

- August 07–13

Week 14: Conclusion and Capstone Project Presentations

- August 14–20

Learning Objectives

Topics have been selected because of their importance in shaping how people communicate with each other in organizations and how communication impacts organizational outcomes such as productivity, satisfaction, innovation, and competitiveness. That is, the topics will help you understand how your performance is positively or negatively affected by your communication encounters.

- Identify the behaviors and artifacts of distinct organizational cultures/subcultures.
- Review and assess the value of applied materials for your potential audiences.
- Delegate (or receive delegation) in a manner that enables the production of high quality, cost effective products.
- Provide information to newcomers to facilitate their organizational entry.
- Identify destructive workplace behaviors and know the intervention options available in one's organization.

Textbooks and Materials

- **Books:**
 - Kramer, M. W. (2010). *Organizational socialization: Joining and leaving organizations*. Malden, MA: Polity.
- **Articles:**
 - Articles are posted within the weekly Instructional Materials within this course. Any articles from *Harvard Business Review* must be obtained through USC Library by the student.
- **Other Materials:**
 - Webcam and microphone for presentations.

Sessions and Days of the Week

The course is divided into 14 weeks. Due dates for assignments and discussions are stated in day numbers. Day 1 is Wednesday, the first day of the beginning of each weekly session.

Day 1	Wednesday
Day 2	Thursday
Day 3	Friday
Day 4	Saturday
Day 5	Sunday
Day 6	Monday
Day 7	Tuesday

Assignments are due no later than **11:55 p.m. in the Pacific Time zone** on the day that is stated in the assignments section.

Grading Policy

Course Components

Component	Percentage of Final Grade
Capstone Project	70%
Discussion Posts	15%
In-Practice Activities and What a Freebie! (5 items at 3% each)	15%
Total Percentage	100%

Projects/Papers

This course has a variety of assignments that integrate organizational communication theory and application.

Capstone Project (70%)

The capstone project is broken into four elements: annotated bibliography, literature review paper, application paper/video/website/etc., and presentation. The elements are due throughout the semester.

Discussion Posts (15%)

Weekly discussion posts require you to comment on reading assignments.

In-Practice Activities and What a Freebie! (5 assignments at 3% each)

The in-practice activities require you to apply course readings to your organizational experiences in the upcoming week.

The What a Freebie! activity requires you to summarize a free research report from a consulting firm. The deliverable can be submitted in written form by Week 4, or it can be delivered orally in one of the Live Sessions dedicated to What a Freebie! Presentation.

Capstone Project and Presentation (70%)

Your capstone project should demonstrate a graduate-level understanding of the theoretical/methodological aspects of your chosen topic. If the final product is a written document, the length will be 25 to 30 pages. In some cases, the final product will take other forms, such as video, a website, training materials/games, or the like. Because the capstone project represents the culmination of your graduate degree, you need to create something that is original and useful.

Part 1: Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of “My Topic” (35% of total Capstone Project grade)

Part 1 has two components:

- I. Project Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (5%). Due Week 6.
 - The project proposal describes both the theoretical framework and the applied component for your chosen topic. This short proposal is one to two pages in length. In describing your project, consider addressing the following:
 - How is the topic appropriate for a graduate-level project in an organizational communication course?
 - Why is the topic relevant/important for your future profession?
 - How can the topic be presented in an applied component?
 - An annotated bibliography entry is the article’s citation (APA style, 6th ed.) followed by a summary of the article. The summary is a few sentences, or about a paragraph, in length. Do not use the abstract for the article as the annotation because this would constitute plagiarism. Annotations can be single spaced with a double space between the citation and the annotation. Put the annotation entries in alphabetical order. Do not number the entries. It is allowable, and recommended, that the annotation include a sentence or two about how this article will contribute to your project.
 - The annotated bibliography requires a minimum of 10 articles; **at least eight articles must be from academic communication journals. Most articles should have been published within the past five years.** It is allowable/expected that some older, “classic” articles will be included, because this demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the topic and its development.
- II. Capstone Project: State of the Art Literature Review (30%). Due Week 10.
 - Write a state-of-the-art literature review for your topic. At a minimum, you will need 20 articles. **At least half of the required articles must be from academic communication journals, and most of the articles must have been published within the past five years.** Follow APA format for writing the literature review and citations. A common length of the literature review is 15 to 20 pages.
 - After the literature review, include a short section (one to two pages), titled “Relevance for Capstone Project—Applied Component,” where you explain the applied component section of the capstone project. In this section, you can describe what you intend to do in the Applied Component and how the theoretical materials will be used. The style of this section is more informal, and you can write in the first person (“I plan to . . .” or “My boss wants me to create . . .” and the like).

Part 2: Application Component and Presentation (35% of total Capstone Project Grade)

- I. Capstone Project Application Component (30%)
 The second part of your capstone project directs an applied focus to the topic. Why would a future employer care about your chosen topic? The format/medium of Part 2 does not have to be a written paper. Part 2 must be integrated with Part 1 in an appropriate manner. The application component paper and presentation are due Week 14. Create a short presentation explaining the capstone project and how it should be used. There is no standard grading rubric because these projects are customized.
- II. Capstone Project Presentation (5%)
 In conjunction with your Application Component Paper, complete a three- to five-minute presentation explaining the applied component of your project. With this short time limit, you will need to be succinct and to the point. You may use VoiceThread, Screencast-O-Matic, Prezi, or any other tool of your choice to create and share the presentation. The presentation will be graded as part of the Application Component assignment.

Capstone Project Grading Rubric

Capstone Project Part 1: State of the Art Literature Review				
Grade	General Quality	Literature Review	Analysis/ Discussion/ Future Research	Writing/ Bibliography
A	Excellent work. Project demonstrates original thought and analysis. Information goes beyond what was discussed in class or readings. Ideas are clearly presented. Paper is well written. Paper conforms to APA style guide.	Literature review is thorough and contains a sufficient number of references. References are from the appropriate time period and quality publications. The literature is summarized in the project and integrated with common themes. Transitions between sections link articles together. Areas of literature in need of development are noted as appropriate.	Project is analytical and critical, not descriptive. Project offers unique critiques of past literature and interviewee comments; original insight about the topic.	Papers conform to APA style manual. They are written in active voice, preferably present tense. There is an absence of wordy, awkward, and run-on sentences. Spelling and grammar errors are almost nonexistent.
A-	Nearly excellent work, but lacking "excellence" in some elements.	(same as above)	(same as above)	(same as above)

B+	Very good work. Project has a competent and accurate description of research, theories, and applications. Some analysis is present. Writing is acceptable for a graduate course.	The literature review contains a series of article summaries. There is a sufficient number of references and from the appropriate time period.	Content may be analytical, but no attempt is made to offer unique critiques of past literature and current findings.	The paper conforms to APA style manual. Writing is at times very clear but other times very wordy. Spelling and grammar errors are minimal. There is minimal use of headings and internal transitions.
B	Good work. Project is descriptive rather than analytical. Writing is acceptable for a graduate course.	(same as above)	(same as above)	(same as above)
B-	Project meets only minimum requirements. In general, project is descriptive rather than analytical. Some theoretical concepts may be applied incorrectly. Writing does not meet graduate-level standards.	Insufficient number or quality of articles. Literature review contains a series of article summaries, but no attempt is made to link them in a meaningful way.	Information is strictly descriptive. There is very little, if any, integration of literature review with findings.	A bibliography is included, but it does not follow a standard model. Writing is wordy, and there is an excessive use of prepositional phrases. Spelling and grammar errors are common. Ideas are not clearly expressed. There is a lack of headings and internal transitions.
C+ or lower	Minimum requirements are not met. Writing is unacceptable for a graduate course.	(same as above)	(same as above)	(same as above)

What a Freebie! Assignments (3% each)

This assignment is an online scavenger hunt. You will be surprised at the availability of high quality, applied research-based reports published online. You will also be dismayed at the amount of poor quality, fallacy-infected material out there. We are interested only in good stuff, so find at least one item (hereafter called “The Freebie”) to share with your CMGT-505 peers.

Hint: Check out the websites of top-level consulting organizations.

For this assignment, you may choose one of the following options:

1. Write a two-page summary/analysis highlighting the major contributions, as well as limitations, of the Freebie.
2. Present your summary/analysis/limitation during a Live Session dedicated to “What a Freebie” reports. The oral presentations will be about three to five minutes.

What a Freebie! Rubric	
Scoring	Criteria
93–100 points	The Freebie is high quality. It is based on solid research. The summary and analysis are clear. Any of your peers could take the information into his/her boss and say, “Hey look at this, and it is FREE!”
90–92.9 points	The Freebie is very good to excellent. It is based on solid research. A summary is included, and the information is clear, though not compelling. You would want to do some edits before sharing this with an executive.
83–89.9 points	The Freebie is good. It is not immediately obvious that the document is based on quality research. A summary is included, and the information is clear, though not compelling. You would want to do some edits before sharing this with an executive.
80–82.9 points	The Freebie is of questionable value, but the summary is well written/presented. Or, the Freebie is of adequate quality and the summary is not well written/presented. View this Freebie as an example of an academic exercise in finding research online.
70–79.9 points	The Freebie is of low quality. The information is not based on quality research. Writing/presentation is not acceptable for a graduate course.
69 or lower points	There are major deficiencies in this Freebie report and/or its summary. It is not considered a passing project.

Discussion Posts (15%)

To promote active thinking and collaboration among class members, there will be regular discussion boards throughout the course. These will span a variety of topics and will encourage debate, constructive criticism, and synthesizing ideas.

Discussion posts require forethought and insight. **Discussion posts must be posted on time for them to be graded.**

Criterion	Exemplary 4 points	Satisfactory 3 points	Meets Minimum Requirements 2 points	Inadequate 0–1 point
INITIAL POST				
Relevance	Exceptional application of course content or real experience to address key issues, questions, or problems related to the text and the discussion activity.	The post directly addresses key issues, questions, or problems related to the text and the discussion activity. The post applies course concepts well, connecting them to actual activity.	The post addresses key issues, questions, or problems related to the text and the discussion activity, but in some cases only indirectly or obliquely. It does not always apply course concepts fully.	The post does not directly address the question or problem posed by the discussion activity
Insight	The post offers original and thoughtful insight, analysis, or observation demonstrating in-depth knowledge of concepts and ideas pertaining to the discussion topic.	The post offers original or thoughtful insight, analysis, or observation that demonstrates a strong grasp of concepts and ideas pertaining to the discussion topic.	The post offers some insight, analysis, or observation to the topic but may not demonstrate a full understanding or knowledge of concepts and ideas pertaining to the discussion topic.	The post does not offer any significant insight, analysis, or observation related to the topic. No knowledge or understanding is demonstrated regarding concepts and ideas pertaining to the discussion topic.
Support	The post supports all claims with the strongest possible rational argument and evidence.	The post supports all claims and opinions with either rational argument or evidence.	The post generally supports claims and opinions with evidence or argument but may leave some gaps where unsupported opinions still appear.	The post does not support its claims with either evidence or argument. The post contains largely unsupported opinion.
Responses				
Number of Responses	The responses significantly exceed the required number for the discussion activity.	The responses slightly exceed the required number for the discussion activity.	The responses fulfill the minimum required number for the discussion activity.	The responses do not meet the number required for the discussion activity.
Substance of Responses	The responses offer exceptional insight and elaboration that promote a more sophisticated examination of the discussion activity.	The responses offer either an extension or an elaboration of the original post that fosters further thinking, reflection, or response on the discussion topic.	The responses generally offer some insight either by extending the point of the original post or by offering an alternate point of view, but they may not encourage further thought or reflection on the discussion topic as much as they possibly could.	The responses do not offer any new insight either by extending the position of the original post or by providing an alternate point of view. Or the post is disrespectful or dismissive of other students' posts.

Grade Ranges

Grade	Range
A	93.0% or higher
A-	90.0%-92.9%
B+	87.0%-89.9%
B	83.0%-86.9%
B-	80.0%-82.9%
C+	77.0%-79.9%
C	73.0%-76.9%
C-	70.0%-72.9%
D	60.0%-69.9%
F	59.9% or lower

Paper Guidelines

- All documents should be in Microsoft Word format.
- Make sure you keep a copy of all submitted papers.
- Please ensure that each paper is written in APA style. Refer to the APA manual (6th edition).
- All page length requirements are for double-spaced pages, with 1-inch margins, in 12-point Times New Roman font.
- Typos and spelling errors are unforgivable at this level and reflect poorly on you.

Lateness

- Discussion posts **submitted late will not be graded.**
- Graded assignments: All assignments are expected to be submitted on time. However, family emergencies or crises at work may occasionally make it impossible to do so. In such cases, late assignments will be accepted within 48 hours of the original due date. Please provide advance notice to the professor explaining your need for an extension. Assignments submitted late with no notice will be graded down one letter grade.

Live Sessions

Live Sessions will be used to discuss upcoming assignment submissions and address questions about weekly content.

Live Sessions will be hosted via Zoom. For instructions on joining a meeting via Zoom, please refer to the [Join a Meeting with Zoom video](#) (closed-captioning is available, if needed). Please refer to Instructor Announcements for Live Session information.

Group Work

This course has a single group work assignment. The group for this assignment will be randomly assigned. You can find grouping information by navigating to the main course page and selecting Roster in My Tools.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism—presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words—is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating

University Standards,” <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems

Student Counseling Services (SCS): (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

<https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP): (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance: (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class.

<https://equity.usc.edu/>

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions need to be reported to allow for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

Student Support & Advocacy: (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student, such as personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

Diversity at USC

Tabs for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students. <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute*, <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.

If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information*, <http://emergency.usc.edu>, will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Moodle, Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Library Access

As a USC student, you have access to all the library resources, and the Annenberg Librarian, Chimene Tucker (cetucker@usc.edu), is available to assist you with any inquiry you may have. http://www.usc.edu/libraries/services/remote_user_services/

Course Director Information



Colleen M. Keough, Ph.D. teaches courses in organizational communication, conflict management, communication evaluation, management employee communication, group and team communication, and presentational skills.

Her academic research interests include communication in alternative dispute resolution and negotiation, organizational culture, and organizational development.

Dr. Keough is interested in engaged scholarship that integrates theoretical research and practical application, and she draws on her past industry experience as she works with academics to identify practitioner-oriented research projects. She is a past winner of the W. Charles Redding Dissertation Award from the International Communication Association's Organizational Communication Division. (W. Charles Redding is also a USC alumnus.)

Dr. Keough has served as a volunteer facilitator with the Los Angeles City Attorney's Dispute Resolution office working on community issues through the "Days of Dialogue" program.

Within her community, Dr. Keough served on the South Pasadena Animal Commission, and when possible, she spends the New Year's holiday season working on the South Pasadena Rose Parade float.

Dr. Keough has served on the Board of Directors of the American Spaniel Club and is a judge for AKC tracking tests. She and her cocker spaniels compete in various dog sports and have earned AKC titles/championships in conformation, agility, obedience, rally, and tracking. Not limited to athletic competitions, Dr. Keough's cockers have appeared in a Ralph Lauren ad and on the reality show *America's Next Top Model*.

Technical Support and Technical Requirements

A full description of the technical requirements for this course can be found on our [technical support page](#).

Assistance to resolve technical problems is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. This service is provided by Pearson Education, and it is restricted primarily to problems associated with the functionality of the course delivery platform.

Pearson Education Group's Help Desk staff provides assistance to resolve problems you believe are not associated with the computer hardware and software you have purchased from a vendor.

Examples of problems that fall within this category are:

- Unable to view multimedia files
- Unable to view responses to comments you have posted in the Discussion area

If you are not sure if the problem is due to your computer system, contact Pearson's Help Desk for guidance; otherwise, contact the vendor.

To talk to a live technical support agent, please call the following number:

Toll-free	877-646-1885
Support Center	http://usc.echelp.org