

# Course Syllabus: Communication Skills for Human Resources Development

College of Education  
COUN 6073 Section DX-1/X30  
Summer Session 1 2022

## Contact Information

Instructor: Penny Miller, SPHR, SHRM-SCP  
Office: Instructor does not have an office on campus  
Office hours: Office hours are by appointment  
Office phone: NA, the instructor does not have an on-campus phone  
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## Instructor Response Policy

The instructor will attempt to respond to email and voice mail within one business day. If students do not receive a response, please text the instructor at the cell phone number listed.

## Textbook & Instructional Materials

There is no textbook for this course. All materials are provided in D2L.

## Course Description

This course is designed to teach students effective techniques in active listening, assertiveness, empathy, reframing, and conducting an effective performance review which results in positive change.

## Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Course Competencies

### Objectives:

1. Understand the communication process and exhibit the knowledge, skills, and abilities to demonstrate the techniques learned.
2. Understand assertive behavior and how to use it as a tool for making your relationships more equal.
3. Become an active listener and be able to exhibit active listening skills to enhance your communication skills.
4. Understand the need for empathy in business communication and be able to exhibit empathetic listening skills.

5. Understand the technique of reframing and be able to exhibit it during class activities.
6. Understand how to conduct an effective meeting.
7. Understand how to facilitate discussion and problem-solving meetings.
8. Understand how to effectively deal with conflict.
9. Develop a performance review instrument and use it in a situation which results in positive change.
10. Know how to have difficult conversations.
11. Understand how to set expectations and boundaries.
12. Know basic mediation techniques.
13. Understand the importance of communication during organizational change.
14. Understand the many situations HR participates in and the communication best practices in each.

#### Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook-2020-21](#)

#### Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. [Office of Student Conduct](#)

## Grading/Assessment

Assignments	Points
Communication Journal	200
Discussion Posts	75
Participation	30
Assessment Instrument	100
Final Exam	100
Total Points	505

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	454
B	404 to 453
C	353 to 403
D	303 to 352
F	Less than 303

## Homework

**Discussion Post:** In three of the class weeks, there will be a discussion question to respond to. Since this course is only for graduate level students, I would expect a well-reasoned, well-written response (normally around 2 paragraphs). It is not necessary to have resources, but they may bolster your argument. (25 points each week. Total: 75 points)

**Discussion Participation:** There is an expectation that students will respond to at least two other student posts each week. The posts should contribute to the discussion, not along the lines of "You're so right!" "I agree with you!" or similar. As examples: provide your thoughts beyond what the original poster provided, posit a different point of view, ask a question. (10 points each week. Total: 30 points)

## Projects Required

**Communication Journal:** There is no specific length or format for this assignment. Use your judgement in terms of readability and understanding. This is the major assignment for the semester. **Due June 26.** There are three parts to the journal.

Part One: Read a book related to some facet of communication and write a summary of the main points of the book and how you might apply them. 2 pages. 25 points.

Part Two: Students should describe a particular communications challenge or issue and how they handled them. Follow this with an analysis of what went well and what could have been done differently. You should have at least 10 entries. Each entry will be 1 – 2 pages. 100 points.

Part Three: Attend the following types of events (if you can't find them, create them) and summarize your experience. 1 – 2 pages each event. 75 points.

- Some sort of networking event where you know very few people—meet at least 2 people you didn't already know. Your event review should include their name (a first name only is fine), at least two interesting things you found out about them, and how you might be able to help one another.
- Some sort of formal meeting. If you're a participant, great; but an observer is fine. If you can't find anything else, you can watch one of the city council meetings online or attend one of the city boards/commissions. Look for Roberts Rules, discussion, problem-solving, etc.
- Participate in a decision making/problem solving meeting and watch how the discussion flows and the process for arriving at a decision. What were some positive aspects? Compare the process to the one described in the class materials.

**Assessment Instrument:** One of the objectives for this course is to develop a performance assessment instrument. There will be discussion post about this before the assignment is due. You will provide an instrument you have designed along with a short discussion on why you designed the instrument as you did (which will require some reference to literature on the topic) as well as a written policy/procedure (as if you were issuing the instrument to the employees in your organization), explaining the instrument and how it is to be used in the organization. Instrument 50 points. Explanation 25 points. Policy/procedure 25 points. **Total: 100 points. Due June 19.**

#### Final Exam

The final exam is 100 points (approximately 20% of the points for the semester). The final exam will be "take home." It will be an essay test, focused on a few questions relating to the content of the course. Students may discuss the exam and questions with one another, but I would not expect to see substantially the same answers on multiple tests (in other words, brainstorm together, but write your own answers.) The exam will be available for download by June 22. **Due June 30.**

### Extra Credit

I am not a fan of extra credit, but if you feel you need the opportunity to earn extra points, then I am prepared to accept a 5-page paper on the importance of a specific communication skill in the workplace. At least 5 references. Possible points: 40 (allows an improvement by one letter grade to the final class grade.) Must be turned in by **June 30**.

If you feel you are just a few points from where you want to be, then here's another option. Attend a meeting of Toastmasters International. Turn in a copy of the meeting agenda and provide a short summary of your impressions. Possible points: 10. Must be turned in by **June 30**.

**Note:** Extra credit may not improve a student's grade more than one letter grade, regardless of the number of points made. Focus on the class assignments, not extra credit.

### Late Work

Late work will be accepted, but there will be a late penalty of 10%. No work will be accepted after June 30.

### Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes: N/A

Deadline to file for graduation: June 27, 2022

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" June 16, 2022

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

### Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

### Attendance

This is an on-line class and there are not required class meeting. However, weekly discussion posts are a part of the course.

### Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. **Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as

the Academic Success Center. Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!! There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world that is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

### Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the [Schedule of Classes](#) each semester.

### Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

### Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

### College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by MSU TEXAS. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

## Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

## Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

## Course Schedule:

### Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 1 5/31 to 6/5	Review the syllabus and post questions for clarification to Question Discussion Board  Post an introduction  Read/watch supplemental material  Respond to discussion question	6/5
Week 2 6/6 to 6/12	Read/watch supplemental materials  Respond to discussion question	6/12
Week 3 6/13 to 6/19	Read/watch supplemental materials  Submit appraisal instrument	6/19
Week 4 6/20 to 6/26	Read/watch supplemental materials  Submit communication journal	6/26
Final Week	Final Exam Extra credit	6/30