

Using Communication Technology at Work

CMS 346
Unique # 07200
Fall 2013
CMA A3.112
9-10 am, MWF

Instructor: Jeffrey Treem
Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays, 10-10:50 am, CMA 7.122D – or by appointment
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Overview

How do people use email, instant messaging, knowledge management systems, social media, and other communication technologies in the contemporary workplace? This course examines how communication technologies both help and hinder workplace communication. We examine theory, practical applications, key scholarship, and current empirical research. There is a heavy focus on using case studies that provide context for learning how to thrive in contemporary, often global for-profit and non-profit organizations. In addition to the core workplace technology tools covered in the class, each student will choose a unique communication technology tool to research for the course. This is a major research project that includes researching scholarly and popular press literature. By the end of the semester, students will have a robust understanding of the vast options for communicating with others at work.

Specific Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify key theories, scholars, and major research findings concerning workplace ICT use.
- Understand practical issues in using email, PowerPoint, and other common workplace communication technologies and evaluate others' use of these workplace tools.
- Critically evaluate their personal ICT use.
- Better understand how to conduct and read research on workplace ICTs.
- Synthesize scholarly and practical literature on one specific workplace ICT and create a final presentation that comprehensively applies course knowledge.
- Feel more prepared to enter the workforce and understand ICT use.

Class Format

Classes will consist of a variety of these four formats:

1. Lecture – The instructor will present material to the class introducing relevant theories and research related to that week's topic.
2. Discussion of Readings – Will consist of discussion of key points emerging from the week's reading assignments. Students should come to class having read the material and prepared for discussion.

3. Class Activities – Students will engage in an interactive in-class assignment. This will often take the form of a hypothetical organizational situation. Students will assume the role of organizational members and be asked to determine appropriate actions.
4. Guest Speakers – A subject-area expert will visit the class (either in-person or virtually) to discuss a relevant topic.

Text and Readings

- D. Shipley & W. Schwalbe (2007). *Send: The Essential Guide to Email for Office and Home*. Knopf. You may also have the more recent version of the book.
- Additional articles for each week will be available on the course's Blackboard site (<http://courses.utexas.edu>)

Tentative Course Schedule

****This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes will be communicated clearly, are not unusual, and should be expected.**

	Date	Class Topic	Reading (to be done <i>BEFORE</i> class)	Assignment Due
WEEK 1	Wed 8/28	Introduction: Review Class Goals and Expectations		
	Fri 8/30	<i>Lecture:</i> Overview of Workplace Communication Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D'Urso 	
WEEK 2	Mon 9/2	NO CLASS: Labor Day		
	Wed 9/4	<i>Lecture:</i> Role of ICTs in the Workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zuboff • Slattery 	
	Fri 9/6	<i>Lecture and Discussion:</i> Generational Differences in ICT Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cotto • Hira • Israel • Take Quiz: How Millennial Are You? 	
WEEK 3	Mon 9/9	<i>Lecture:</i> Media Choice		<i>Cutting-Edge Updates Begin</i>
	Wed 9/11	<i>Lecture:</i> Media Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narratives, Chapter 1 • Turner • Dennis (Optional) 	
	Fri 9/13	<i>Discussion and Activity:</i> Media Choice		<i>Practice Annotation Assignment</i>

	Date	Class Topic	Reading (to be done <i>BEFORE</i> class)	Assignment Due
WEEK 4	Mon 9/16	<i>Lecture:</i> Diffusion of Innovations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narratives, Ch. 3 	
	Wed 9/18	<i>Lecture and Discussion:</i> Diffusion of Innovations in Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abrahamson (Optional) Attewell (Optional) 	
	Fri 9/20	<i>Lecture:</i> Impression Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narratives, Ch. 5 	
WEEK 5	Mon 9/23	<i>Lecture and Discussion:</i> Impression Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walther Rosenbloom 	<i>Are You Hirable? Assignment</i>
	Wed 9/25	<i>Activity:</i> Impression Management		
	Fri 9/27	<i>Lecture:</i> Credibility		
WEEK 6	Mon 9/30	<i>Lecture and Discussion:</i> Credibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narratives, Ch. 2 	
	Wed 10/2	<i>Lecture:</i> Multitasking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manhart Kirn Lohr 	
	Fri 10/4	<i>Lecture and Discussion:</i> Multitasking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pattison Mark (Optional) 	
WEEK 7	Mon 10/7	Guest Speaker		
	Wed 10/9	<i>Lecture:</i> Multicommunicating		
	Fri 10/11	<i>Lecture and Discussion:</i> Multicommunicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turner Stephens 	<i>Explaining Your Own Use of Media Paper Assignment</i>

	Date	Class Topic	Reading (to be done <i>BEFORE</i> class)	Assignment Due
WEEK 8	Mon 10/14	Midterm Review		
	Wed 10/16	Class Activity		
	Fri 10/18	EXAM 1		
WEEK 9	Mon 10/21	Introduction of Research Project and Discussion of Research Process		
	Wed 10/23	<i>Lecture:</i> Email Use	• Introduction, Ch.1 & 5	
	Fri 10/25	<i>Lecture and Discussion:</i> Email Use		
WEEK 10	Mon 10/28	Class Activity	• Send Ch. 2, 3, 4 & Appendix	
	Wed 10/30	<i>Lecture:</i> PowerPoint and Presentations		
	Fri 11/1	<i>Lecture and Discussion:</i> PowerPoint and Presentations	• Gaskins	
WEEK 11	Mon 11/4	<i>Lecture and Discussion:</i> Social Media in the Workplace (external)		
	Wed 11/6	<i>Lecture and Discussion:</i> Social Media in the Workplace (internal)	• McAfee	
	Fri 11/8	Guest Speaker		
WEEK 12	Mon 11/11	<i>Lecture:</i> Meetings and Communication Technology		
	Wed 11/13	<i>Lecture and Discussion:</i> Meetings and Communication Technology	• Chudoba • Wasson	
	Fri 11/15	Guest speaker		<i>24 Hours of Comm. Tech Turned Off Paper Assignment</i>
WEEK 13	Mon 11/18	<i>Lecture:</i> Distributed Work		
	Wed 11/20	<i>Lecture and Discussion:</i> Distributed Work	• Kurkland • Leonardi	
	Fri 11/22	Class Activity		

	Date	Class Topic	Reading (to be done <i>BEFORE</i> class)	Assignment Due
WEEK 14	Mon 11/25	EXAM 2		
	Wed 11/27	Independent Final Project Work		
	Fri 11/29	NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING		
WEEK 15	Mon 12/2	Class Presentations		
	Wed 12/4	Class Presentations		
	Fri 12/6	Class Presentations		<i>Paper and Annotated Bibliography</i>

Grading

Students will be assessed on four different criteria:

1. Participation (10% of class grade, 40 points) – This consists of active and meaningful participation in class. Participation includes participating in discussions, coming prepared with questions, and being an active member of class activities. We understand that not everyone is equally comfortable speaking up in class, however it is important that each student find ways to participate.
2. Individual Assignments (25% of class grade, 5% each, 20 points each) – There are five assignments over the course of the semester (additional details are provided below). More detailed instruction and expectations will be provided for each assignment. Students' assignments should be posted to Blackboard by **midnight on the Friday of the week** they are listed on the syllabus.
3. Exams (40% of class grade, 80 points each) – The exams will consist of multiple-choice and short answer questions that will ask students to apply concepts from lectures and readings that have been discussed to that point in the semester.
4. Research Project and Presentation (25% of class grade, 100 points) – This assignment will ask students to individually research a communication technology and prepare a class presentation to share findings.

Summary of Course Assignments

The following are summaries. See Blackboard (Assignments) and in-class discussion for details.

Workplace Technologies Research Project (100 points)

Assume your manager has asked you to research and report on a communication technology that your company is considering purchasing or implementing. Choose a communication technology used in organizations today. You might want to apply this technology to a particular industry that interests you. Choose any technology where you can address communication issues within the workplace. If you choose a technology discussed in class, be sure you offer fresh information. You will be required to review the scholarly and popular press literature about this technology. Your final submission consists of an executive summary/memo, a presentation, interview transcripts, and annotated bibliography.

Cutting Edge Updates (need 2; 20 points total)

Throughout the course we cover various communication technology topics. On two occasions, you will be responsible for bringing a popular (or scholarly) press article to class and contributing to our discussion on that day. You will also post a copy of the article in Blackboard before class starts. I will ask you to sign up for two cutting edge updates that interest you.

Are You Hireable? (20 points)

You will do a self-assessment of your online presence and create a plan for how to manage it.

Practice Annotation (20 points)

Find a scholarly article and summarize it using the annotated bibliography format. We will provide detailed feedback valuable in constructing the annotated bibliography for your workplace technologies research project.

Explaining Your Own Use of Media Paper (20 points)

Apply the theories we learn about ICT use to your own communication technology.

24 Hours of Comm. Tech Turned Off Paper (20 points)

You will go 24 hours with NO access to communication technology. You will keep field notes and link your experiences to class readings, and write up reflections.

Semester Assignments

Graded Activity	Points available
Cutting Edge Updates (articles) (10points x 2)	20
Practice Annotation	20
Are You Hirable?	20
Explaining Your Own Use of Media Paper	20
Exam 1	80
24 Hours of Comm. Tech Turned Off Paper	20
Workplace Technologies Research Project	100
Class Participation	40
Exam 2	80
<hr/> Total <hr/>	<hr/> 400 <hr/>

Grading procedures

- Grades will be posted on the course's Blackboard site. It is each student's responsibility to ensure that posted grades are accurate.
- Late papers will not be accepted. If there are extenuating circumstances, please discuss these with us *before* the assignment is due. All assignments papers should be posted to Blackboard by **midnight on the day** they are listed on the syllabus as due.
- Please complete all assignments as Microsoft Word files (.doc or .docx) unless otherwise indicated.
- Around the mid-point of the semester each student will receive an indication of their participation grade to that point, along with comments about how to improve or maintain participation.

- Every effort will be made to provide clear rationale for assessments on all graded assignments. However, should a student wish to dispute a grade (for any assignment or the overall semester) that must be done within two weeks after the grade has been provided.
- Final grades will be determined based on the percentage of aggregate points earned on assignments out of all possible points. Numerical grades will correspond to the following letter grades for the course.

Percentage	Grade
92.01+	A
90-92	A-
88-89.99	B+
82.01-87.99	B
80-82	B-
78-79.99	C+
72.01-77.99	C
70-72	C-
68-69.99	D+
62.01-67.99	D
60-62	D-
59.99 and below	F

Course Information and Communication

- In this class I use Blackboard—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu> —to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to give you online quizzes and surveys. You can find support in using Blackboard at the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so plan accordingly.
- Both the instructor and teaching assistant will make every attempt to be responsive to questions, concerns, and inquiries from students – and students should feel free to approach us to discuss anything. However, students should not expect immediate responses to emails, and messages sent during evening or weekend hours may not receive as prompt a response.
- This course carries the Independent Inquiry flag. Independent Inquiry courses are designed to engage you in the process of inquiry over the course of a semester, providing you with the opportunity for independent investigation of a question, problem, or project related to your major. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from the independent investigation and presentation of your own work.

University Resources and Policies

Disability Services

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from SSD.

Please notify me as quickly as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible (e.g., instructional videos need captioning, course packets are not readable for proper alternative text conversion, etc.).

Contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone) or reference SSD's website for more disability-related information:
http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/for_cstudents.php

Academic Integrity

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code: *The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.*

Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/help/utmail/1564>.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Q drop Policy

The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6). As stated in Senate Bill 1231:

“Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number.”

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.
- More information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency