

## Using Communication Technology at Work

CMS 346 Hybrid

Unique # 07008

Spring 2018

CMA 6.170

1-2pm, MW

Instructor: Dr. Dina Inman Ramgolam  
Office Hours: Monday, 11-12:00pm, Wed. 9-10am and 11-12pm CMA 7.122D – and online  
via Zoom (similar to Skype) by appointment  
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Contact: [harrisana@utexas.edu](mailto:harrisana@utexas.edu)

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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. 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 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) use.
- Understand some of the implications of ICT use in the workplace.
- 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.

## How does this class work?

### Hybrid Class Format

*A typical three-hour class may meet three times a week (M,W,F); however, as a hybrid we will meet twice a week (Monday and Wed., 1-2pm). In lieu of meeting on Fridays, the extra hour of class time will be devoted to listening to lecture outside of class via a PowerPoint presentation. These 10-15 minute slides will be available to you on Thursdays by 11am. Please come to class on Monday and Wed. prepared to discuss the lecture and reading material. In-class time will be devoted to the following:*

- ☐ Discussion –You will be assigned to discussion groups. Discussions will cover key points emerging from the week’s reading assignments and students should come to class having read the material and prepared for discussion.
- ☐ Class Activities – Students will participate in interactive activities and in-class assignments. Activities will range in content and form. At times, we will work through the readings or they will take the form of a hypothetical organizational situation. Students will assume the role of organizational members and be asked to determine appropriate actions.

### Text and Readings

- Atkinson, C. (2011). Beyond bullet points: Using Microsoft Power Point to create presentations that inform, motivate, and inspire. Microsoft Press, Redmond: WA (Provided to you on Canvas)
- Chan, J. F. (2008). E-mail: A write it well guide; How to write and manage email in the workplace. Write it Well, Oakland: CA. (Please purchase—Amazon has it for \$9.99 Kindle edition)
- Serdula, D. (2017). LinkedIn profile optimization for Dummies. John Wiley and Sons, Inc., Hoboken: NJ. (Please purchase—Amazon has it for \$5.99 Kindle edition)
- Additional articles for each week will be available on the course’s Canvas 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	Discussion Topic	Course Reading(s) and/or Deliverable(s)
<b>Week 1</b>		
Jan. 17 <sup>th</sup>	Introduction to Class	
<b>Week 2</b>		
Jan. 22	Role of ICTs in the Workplace	A) The role of IT B) Stephens Introduce Assignment by 11:59pm: Are you hireable? Assignment

Jan. 24	Generational Divides	C) Generational D) Generational differences
<b>Week 3</b>		
Jan. 29	Media Choice	E) Media Choice
Jan. 31	Media Choice	F) Predicting collaboration
<b>Week 4</b>		
Feb. 5	Impression Management	G) The dialectical nature
Feb. 7	Impression Management	H) How implicit theories
<b>Week 5</b>		
Feb. 12	Mobile Communication	I) Sent from my iPhone
Feb. 14	Mobile Communication	J) Examining the antecedents
<b>Due by 11:59pm: Are you hireable?</b>		
<b>Week 6</b>		
Feb. 19	Distributed Work	K) The connectivity paradox
Feb. 21	Distributed Work	L) Individual virtual competence
<b>Introduce Assignment by 11:59pm: 24hours with Technology Turned Off</b>		
<b>Week 7</b>		
Feb. 26	Leadership and VTs LinkedIn Profile	M) Interaction effect + Chapter 2: LinkedIn Profile Optimization for Dummies
Feb. 28	Manager and Subordinate LinkedIn Profile	N) How managers + Chapter 7: LinkedIn Profile Optimization for Dummies
<b>Week 8</b>		
March 5	Social Media	O) The contradictory + Chapter 10: LinkedIn Profile Optimization for Dummies
March 7	Exam 1	
<b>Spring Break</b>	<b>March 12-16</b>	
<b>Week 9</b>		
March 19	Multicommunicating	P) The business communicator
March 21	Interruptions	Q) Interruptions in the workplace
<b>Due by 11:59pm: 24hours with Technology Turned Off</b>		
<b>Week 10</b>		
March 26	Instant messaging Cybervetting & Cyberdeviance	R) Invisible whispering S) Online employment Screening
<b>Introduce Assignment by 11:59pm: Explaining your media use</b>		
March 28	Email	T) Explaining affordances U) Chapter 1 (Email textbook)
<b>Week 11</b>		
April 2	Email	V) Chapter 2 (Email textbook)
April 4	Email	W) Chapter 4 (Email textbook)
<b>Week 12</b>		

April 9	Power Point	X) Chapter 4 (Beyond bullet points book on Canvas)
April 11	Power Point	Y) Chapter 5 (Beyond bullet points book on Canvas)
<b>Due by 11:59pm: Explaining your media use</b>		
<b>Week 13</b>		
April 16	Power Point	Z) Chapter 6 (Beyond bullet points book on Canvas)
April 18	Exam 2	
<b>Week 14</b>		
April 23	Student Presentations	
April 25	Student Presentations	
<b>Week 15</b>		
April 30	Student Presentations	
May 2	Student Presentations	

## Grading

Students will be assessed on five different criteria:

1. Participation (15pts verbal; 15 discussion group; 100pts activity-based) – 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 (60pts.) – There are three 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 Canvas by **11:59pm on the due date listed on the syllabus.**
3. Exams (80pts each) – The exams will consist of multiple-choice and short answer questions that will ask students to apply concepts from discussions and readings that have been discussed up to that point in the semester.
4. Research Project and Presentation (100pts; 80pts for report and 20pts for PPT presentation) – This assignment will ask students to individually research a communication technology and prepare a class presentation to share findings.
5. Presentation evaluations (40pts). You will evaluate at least one student per presentation day. Criteria will be provided before presentations begin.

## Summary of Course Assignments

The following are summaries. See Canvas (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. In addition to the report, your final submission consists of an executive summary, a presentation, and annotated bibliography. You are also responsible for producing a PowerPoint presentation using the tenants learned from the *Beyond Bullet Points* book.

*Are You Hirable? (20 points)*

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

*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.

*Explaining Your Own Use of Media Paper (20 points)*

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

**Assessments**

Are You Hirable?	20 points
24 Hours of Tech Turned Off	20 points
Explaining Your Own Media Use	20 points
Exam 1	80 points
Exam 2	80 points
Workplace Technologies Research Project	100 points
Participation	130 points
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>450 possible points</b>

*Grading procedures*

- Grades will be posted on the course's Canvas 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. Response papers should be submitted via Canvas by **11:59pm on the day they are due**. Due dates will be listed on Canvas.

- For all assignments students will be provided with guidelines that indicate the required elements. These guidelines will be used as rubrics to provide assessments.
- Every effort will be made to provide clear rationale for assessments on all graded assignments. However, should a student wish to dispute a grade, it must be done within two weeks after the grade has been provided.
- Final grades will be determined based on the aggregate of the weighted percentage of points earned for each of the five assessment criteria in the course. Numerical grades will correspond to the following letter grades for the course.

#### Grades and Grading Policies

A	94.5 – 100%	Excellent: Far exceeds all standards
A-	89.5 – 94.4%	
B+	86.5 – 89.4%	Above Average: Exceeded some standards
B	82.5 – 86.4%	
B-	79.5 – 82.4%	
C+	76.5 – 79.4%	Average: Fulfilled all standards
C	72.5 – 76.4%	
C-	69.5 – 72.4%	
D+	66.5 – 69.4%	Pass: Fulfilled most standards
D	62.5 – 66.4%	
D-	59.5 – 62.4%	
F	below 59.5%	Fail: Did not meet several standards

#### Course Information and Communication

- In this class I use Canvas—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://canvas.utexas.edu/> —to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, and to submit and accept assignments. You can find support in using Canvas at the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so plan accordingly.
- I 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.
- Exams: Do not procrastinate when studying for exams. I will not answer questions, in person or via email, about exam material 24 hours before the exam, with the exception of scheduled office hours or appointments. Study guides are provided on Canvas approximately 1 week before each

exam. Please note that neither the instructor nor the TA will answer the study guide questions—these are for you to answer.

- Exams: Make-up exams are only given when there are extenuating circumstances AND when the student can provide documentation regarding those circumstances. If a legitimate absence is known ahead of time (e.g., university-sanctioned activity, religious holy day), you must make arrangements before the exam date. If you are involved in a university-sanctioned activity, such as being part of an athletic team, you must provide a copy of your schedule at the beginning of the course to be excused from absences related to these activities. Please note that a plane ticket scheduled home before the final exam date does NOT excuse you from taking the exam on the day it is scheduled.

### University Resources and Policies

- **Extra Credit (Optional).** You have the option to up to 2% extra credit on your final grade. For example, if your final grade is 78% or C+, and you earned the full 2% extra credit, you would increase your grade to 80% or B-. You can earn extra credit in two ways:
  - Participate in research studies in the Communication Studies department using the Communication Studies Research Participation System. You will earn 1% (or one Research Participation Credit) for each hour in which you participate in 15-minute increments. We round this to the nearest 15 minutes. So if you participate in a 1-hour and 15-minute study, you will receive 1.25% added to your final grade. You can sign up for studies and keep track of your research participation online: <http://commstudies.utexas.edu/undergraduate/extra-credit-opportunities>. More information is available on Canvas under Assignments > Extra Credit. Check early and check often. There tends to be a rush for extra credit at the end of the semester.
  - In a single-spaced page, summarize key theoretical and practical findings of an empirical scholarly article or digital technologies and human communication from 2015-2016. Possible journals include: Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, New Media & Society, and so forth. Not sure whether the article interests you is empirical and scholarly? Check with a librarian or a member of the instructional team. Students will receive 1% for each article summarized. Submit online under Assignments > Extra Credit.

### Disability Services

Any students with a disability may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/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.).

### 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.

Additional information regarding what constitutes plagiarism can be found here:

[http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint\\_plagiarism.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint_plagiarism.php). Penalties for plagiarism or other violations of the Honor Code may include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

### Attendance

**If your absences exceed two days, your final grade is impacted by a minimum of a 1% deduction of your final grade per absence. Instructors reserve the right to fail students whose absences exceed five classes.**

### 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](http://www.utexas.edu/emergency)