

15.281, Advanced Managerial Communication

Prof. Neal Hartman

Spring Term, 2005

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Course Purpose and Methods

This advanced course both builds on the basic oral and written managerial communication skills (covered in 15.280) and goes well beyond them. The goals of this class are to provide opportunities for you to continue polishing your communication skills in different contexts, and particularly to provide practice in and feedback on the interactive communication skills essential to successful managers.

You will give various types of presentations, including impromptu presentations and a longer (15-20 min.) presentation. In addition, we will practice interactive communication (e.g., role play with hostile client, interactive presentation to a hostile audience) and communication in groups (e.g., running meetings, participating in group decision making). Writing assignments include self-analyses (including two individual self-analyses and one team self-analysis of your team project) and one short business document (see discussion of individual project, below).

The course will be highly participative, with most class time being spent in hands-on communication exercises. Readings are from the course packet. You may also want to refer to Munter's *Guide to Managerial Communication*, used in 15.280 (if you did not take 15.280, you may want to purchase this book at the MIT Coop).

Team project: Team-led class and team self-analysis

The class sessions designated “Team-led classes” on the syllabus will focus on communication topics chosen by teams of students and will be organized by members of the teams. Early in the term the class will divide up into teams. Each team will be responsible for one class session. Your team will choose a topic, distribute readings (if appropriate), and plan classroom activities. Such activities could include role plays, discussion, presentations, cases, or outside visitors (if feasible). Some of the topics your team might choose include business-media relations, negotiation and conflict resolution, electronic communication, corporate crisis communication, intercultural communication, and gender issues in communication. After its class session, each team will submit a 2-3 page analysis of the team's *process* and its *product* (the class itself).

Individual project: Presentation and executive summary

The individual project for the course culminates in a long (15-20 min.) presentation and an accompanying one-page executive summary. You may choose your topic in conjunction with a project for another class, the 50K contest, a job-related task, or your thesis. If possible, it should

be a project involving an external organization so that your real audience will be non-academic. Whether or not your project has a true external audience, however, you will assume a "real-world" audience for both the presentation and the document. Your oral presentation and written document should serve a real need for your assumed audience.

Grading

Assignments in the course will be weighted as follows:

- 5% 5-minute persuasive presentation with Q & A
- 15% 10-minute presentation to hostile audience with self-analysis
- 10% Analysis of group decision-making role play
- 25% Team project and analysis(team grade)
- 15% Individual project, oral presentation
- 10% Individual project, executive summary
- 20% Class participation in role plays, impromptus, and other in-class activities
(missing more than two classes will count against your participation grade)

15.281 Syllabus
Spring, 2005

Feb. 2 Introduction to the course, and to interactive communication.
Exercises in listening and nonverbal communication.
Using listening and informal speaking skills in one-to-one interactive situations.

To Do

Read "Active Listening and Reflective Responses" and "Nonverbal Communication" teaching notes (course packet)

Feb. 7 Communication styles.
Interpersonal Attitude Survey (distributed in class).

To Do

Read "Giving and Receiving Feedback." and "Managing Interpersonal Feedback" (course packet)

Feb. 9 Discuss individual and team projects.
Discuss and practice 5-min. Persuasive Presentation with Q & A.

To Do

Read "Harnessing the Science of Persuasion"

Feb. 14 Persuasive Presentations with Q&A.

To Do

Prepare for presentations (see assignment at front of packet)

Feb. 16 Persuasive Presentations with Q&A.

To Do

Prepare for presentations (see assignment at front of packet)

Feb. 22 Handling hostility. "Fast Food Fiasco" hostile role play.

To Do

Read "Handling Difficult Questions and Questioners" (course packet)
Prepare for "Fast Food Fiasco" role play (to be handed out in class)

Feb. 23 Running effective meetings. Meeting exercise.

To Do

Read "Consult/Join Meetings" (course packet) and "Team Decision Making," Ancona et al., *Managing for the Future* (OP text), Module 5, pp. 16-24.
Prepare an agenda for a meeting about your team project (see homework Assignment at front of packet).

Feb. 28 Presentations to hostile audience.

To Do

Prepare presentation to hostile audience (see assignment at front of packet).
Turn in tentative topic for the individual project.

Mar. 2 Presentations to hostile audience.

Mar. 7 Group decision making. A role play will be handed out in class. **NOTE: You must write an analysis of the role play your group does today (see assignment at front of packet).**

To Do

Read Edgar Schein, “The Process of Building and Maintaining a Group” (course packet) and “Team Process Observation Guide” and “Team Decision Making,” Ancona et al., *Managing for the Future* (OP text), Module 5, pp. 6-24.
Turn in self-analysis of presentation to hostile audience.

Mar. 9 Group decision making and active listening

Mar. 14-18 SIP Week

Mar. 21-25 Spring Break

Mar. 28 Intercultural communication. Case discussion based on *Negotiation: Lost in Taiwan* (distributed in class).

To Do

Read “Intercultural Communication” and “Cross-Cultural Variables” (course Packet) and “Negotiation: Lost in Taiwan.”
Turn in analysis of role play (see assignment at front of packet).

Mar. 30 Intercultural communication. Case discussion based on *In the Shadow of the City*.

To Do

Read *In the Shadow of the City* (course packet)

Apr. 4 Team-led class

To Do

Help organize class as agreed by your team
Note: Last day to change individual project topic

Apr. 6 Team-led class

To Do

Help organize class as agreed by your team

- Apr. 11 Team-led class
To Do
Help organize class as agreed by your team
Turn in team analysis (see assignment--April 4 team only)
- Apr. 13 Team-led class
To Do
Help organize class as agreed by your team
Turn in team analysis (see assignment—April 6 team only)
- Apr. 18 Patriots Day Holiday
To Do
Turn in team analysis (see assignment--April 11 team only)
- Apr. 20 Team-led class
To Do
Help organize class as agreed by your team
Turn in team analysis (see assignment--April 13 team only)
- Apr. 25 Team-led class
To Do
Help organize class as agreed by your team
- Apr. 27 Team-led class
To Do
Help organize class as agreed by your team
Turn in team analysis (see assignment--April 20 team only)
- May 2 Leadership Communication
To Do
Turn in team analysis (see assignment--April 25 team only)
- May 4 Working with the media.
To Do
Turn in team analysis (see assignment--April 27 team only)
- May 3-10 Final individual presentations.
(Executive summary of individual project is due at time of presentation)
- May 9 Final individual presentations.
To Do
Turn in executive summary of individual project.
- May 11 Class wrap-up. Celebration.

