Excluding materials for purchase, syllabus information may be subject to change. The most up-to-date syllabus is located within the course in HuskyCT.

Program Information

This is a three-credit graduate level course and is one of three elective courses (students must complete two of three elective courses) in the online graduate certificate program Sustainable Environmental Planning and Management.

Course and Instructor Information

Course Title: Communications for Environmental Decision Makers  
Credits: 3  
Format: Online  
Prerequisites: None  
Professor: Chadwick Rittenhouse

Email: chadwick.rittenhouse@uconn.edu After the first day of classes, students registered in the course should send emails to the instructor via their official UConn email.  
Telephone: +1/860 486 0335  
Office Hours/Availability: Unless otherwise noted, I will check into the course at least five days a week to monitor discussions and respond to emails. If I expect to be away due to illness, travel or family obligations, I will make every attempt to notify you in advance. I commit to reading every discussion post throughout the class but please understand that I cannot respond to every one.

In addition to daily monitoring of discussions and emails, I will maintain online office hours for one hour per week. Date and time of office hours are flexible - please email me in advance to set an appointment.

Permission Requests: A permission number is required to enroll in this course. Contact the course instructor (chadwick.rittenhouse@uconn.edu) to request permission. Include your Peoplesoft ID number and reason for taking the course.

Course Materials

Required course materials should be obtained before the first day of class.

Texts are available through a local or online bookstore. The UConn Co-op carries many materials that can be shipped via its online Textbooks To Go service. For more information, see Textbooks and Materials on our Enrolled Students page.

Required Materials:  


Additional course readings and media are available within HuskyCT, through either an Internet link or Library Resources.
Course Description

Course Description from Course Catalog:

Methods and techniques for effective communication with diverse audiences using written, spoken, and digital media. Central concepts and topics include conflict resolution, crisis situations, persuasion, negotiation, marketing and advocacy.

Additional faculty description:

This course presents concepts and techniques for effective communication in the workplace and in public. The first component explores frameworks for written communication, including story structure, internal structure, and editing. The second component explores how to structure, lead, and prepare conversations using the focused conversation method. The third component explores communication techniques for conflict resolution, persuasion, customer service, and negotiation. This course introduces some of the central topics in communication and provides a basis for successful communication in environmental and natural resource management.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Recognize effective communication methods,
2. Apply theories and methods of communication to environmental issues,
3. Exhibit the ability to communicate using multiple methods,
4. Analyze a communication issue in a social-ecological system context,
5. Operate effectively in individual and team-based settings.

Course Outline (and Calendar if Applicable)

Week 1: Writing as Story Telling
Week 2: Story Structure - Opening
Week 3: Story Structure – Challenge, Action, and Resolution
Week 4: Internal Structure
Week 5: Editing
Week 6: Peer Review
Week 7: Writing in Context
Week 8: Mid-term Exam – Written Project
Week 9: Spring Break – No Class
Week 10: Structuring a Conversation
Week 11: Leading a Conversation
Week 12: Preparing a Conversation
Week 13: Principled Negotiation – Theory
Week 14: Principled Negotiation – Application
Week 15: Principled Negotiation – Strategies
Week 16: Final Exam – Communication Project

Course Requirements and Grading

Summary of Course Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Components</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Activities</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Posts &amp; Responses</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Module Activities
Module Activities (45% of total grade). Each of the weekly modules contains a learning activity (or activities)
where you will be asked to apply your knowledge related to the topic covered. These activities are varied in format and may include responses to questions, presentations, etc. A significant portion of your grade is based on the quality and thoroughness of your required weekly activity reports. Your responses to specified questions, at the conclusion of each week, are meant to provide evidence that you understand key concepts. Much of your learning in the course will come from your reading, discussion postings and responses to the postings of other students. Within the course, each activity explains your expected role and outlines the grading criteria. The deadline for completing each activity is listed in HuskyCT's Course Schedule.

Discussion Posts & Responses

Discussion Posts & Responses (15% of total grade). These are weekly online discussions, where you post your reflective response to discussion questions and provide a substantive response to other students’ postings. Reflective responses are due by the dates listed HuskyCT’s Course Schedule. Substantive responses are due within 2 days of the reflective posting due date. Late discussion posts will be graded in accordance with the Late Policy.

Mid-term Exam – Writing Project

Mid-term Exam: (20% of total grade). This assignment requires that you revise a paper based on peer reviews. Your revision will consist of an excel file that lists suggestions by and responses to the reviewers, and your revised paper with all changes incorporated. More details on the assignment will be provided in lecture.

Final Application Project

Final Application Project: (20% of total grade). This assignment requires that you identify an issue affected by poor communication. You should have (or be able to acquire) a high degree of familiarity with the issue (e.g. based on your experience), and the issue can be historic or current. The purpose of the project is to provide you with an opportunity to examine the nature of communication in context. An excellent project is one that combines both rich description of the underlying issue with a thorough and informed (by the readings) analysis and critique.

At a minimum, your paper (≥3 pages, 1.15 line spacing) should:

a. Identify the issue and communication method (e.g. written, oral, digital media, etc.).

b. Identify and critique the process for communication based on methods and theories identified in class.

c. Identify the actual and/or planned outcomes from communication and evaluate the effectiveness.

d. Identify what the communicator (individual, team, or organization) either should have done differently or what they should do next.

e. Be thorough and concise; leverage our class text/article references; include a complete and proper use of references throughout the paper including a reference list; demonstrate critical thinking and analysis

Grading Scale

Graduate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>93-96</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Due Dates and Late Policy

All course due dates are identified in the Course Calendar posted online. Deadlines are based on Eastern Standard Time; if you are in a different time zone, please adjust your submittal times accordingly. The instructor reserves the right to change dates accordingly as the semester progresses. All changes will be communicated in an appropriate manner.

Late activities and discussion posts will be penalized 1 letter grade (10% of the activity’s total points) for each day late.

Feedback and Grades

I will make every effort to provide feedback and grades in a timely manner. To keep track of your performance in the course, refer to My Grades in HuskyCT.

Religious Holidays and Extracurricular Activities

I will make reasonable accommodations in response to student requests to complete work missed by absence resulting from observation of religious holidays. Students anticipating such a conflict must inform the instructor in writing within the first week of the course, and prior to the anticipated absence, and must take the initiative to work out with the instructor a schedule for making up missed work.

Students may request to complete work missed by absence resulting from extra-curricular/co-curricular activities performed in the interest of the university and/or those that support the scholarly development of the student. Examples include participation in scholarly presentations, performing arts, and intercollegiate sports, when the participation is at the request of, or coordinated by, a University official. Students involved in such activities need to inform their instructor in writing prior to the anticipated absence and take the initiative to make up missed work in a timely fashion.

Student Responsibilities and Resources

As a member of the University of Connecticut student community, you are held to certain standards and academic policies. In addition, there are numerous resources available to help you succeed in your academic work. Review these important standards, policies and resources, which include:

- The Student Code
  - Academic Integrity
  - Resources on Avoiding Cheating and Plagiarism
- Copyrighted Materials
- Netiquette and Communication
- Adding or Dropping a Course
- Academic Calendar
- Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Inappropriate Romantic Relationships
- Sexual Assault Reporting Policy

Students with Disabilities

Students needing special accommodations should work with the University's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD). You may contact CSD by calling (860) 486-2020 or by emailing csd@uconn.edu. If your request for accommodation is approved, CSD will send an accommodation letter directly to your instructor(s) so that special arrangements can be made. (Note: Student requests for accommodation must be filed each semester.)

Blackboard measures and evaluates accessibility using two sets of standards: the WCAG 2.0 standards issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act issued in the United States federal government.” (Retrieved March 24, 2013 from Blackboard's website)
Software Requirements

The technical requirements for this course include:

- Word processing software
- Adobe Acrobat Reader
- Reliable internet access

Help

Technical and Academic Help provides a guide to technical and academic assistance.

This course is completely facilitated online using the learning management platform, HuskyCT. If you have difficulty accessing HuskyCT, you have access to the in person/live person support options available during regular business hours through the Help Center. You also have 24x7 Course Support including access to live chat, phone, and support documents.

Minimum Technical Skills

To be successful in this course, you will need the following technical skills:

- Use electronic mail with attachments.
- Save files in commonly used word processing program formats.
- Copy and paste text, graphics or hyperlinks.
- Work within two or more browser windows simultaneously.
- Open and access PDF files.

University students are expected to demonstrate competency in Computer Technology. Explore the Computer Technology Competencies page for more information.

Evaluation of the Course

Students will be provided an opportunity to evaluate instruction in this course using the University's standard procedures, which are administered by the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE).

Additional informal formative surveys may also be administered within the course as an optional evaluation tool.