

COM 490 – COMMUNICATION KEYSTONE: Critical Conversations about Communication and Vocation

Contact information:

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Course Description:

This course integrates Communication Studies with your overall Augsburg learning experience in order to facilitate the personal process of applying knowledge, skills, and perspectives gained at Augsburg to everyday life and vocation. Emphasis will be placed on integrating the discipline of Communication Studies with other disciplines in the process of applying theory to practice in ways that are meaningful for you. Reflective journals, individual and group projects, public presentations, and class dialog are used to promote learning.

Course Goals:

1. Develop a deeper understanding of self & vocation based on theories of Communication, self-assessment instruments, self-developed models, and applied journals.
2. Reflect on the role of communication in developing a self-concept based on Julia Wood's model, theories of symbolic interaction, and self perception in multiple contexts (individual, dyadic, team, organizational, and community) through journals, class dialogue, and formal presentations.
3. Integrate theories and concepts from Communication Studies with those of other disciplines through reflective journals and dialogue with specific emphasis on how the liberal arts perspective has shaped your understanding of faith and community.
4. Enhance workplace communication skills (interpersonal, negotiation, problem solving, argumentation, decision-making and presentation) through applied individual and group projects and class presentations based on theories and concepts from your course work in Communication Studies.
5. Understand and appreciate cultural differences and the power of diversity in the context of small group settings through participation in a small group project and class dialogue of concepts from Communication Studies and other disciplines.
6. Promote critical reflection of self, vocation, and the workplace through reading, personal reflection, journals, videos (David Whyte's "Fire Starter" series), guest speaker(s), and class dialogue.

Required Texts:

Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future, by Margaret Wheatley (additional reading resources to be provided in class)

Evaluation Criteria & Course Requirements:

60% - Keystone Portfolio: You will assemble a portfolio of self-assessment profiles, vocational models, journals, and a reflective papers around the topic of “Communication & Vocation.” Your portfolio will consist of:

1. **Self Assessment Profile:** You will complete a self-assessment questionnaire found at www.authentic happiness.com. The questionnaire can be accessed by going to the “VIA Signature Strengths Questionnaire.”
2. **Vocational Models:** A personal “vocational model” that describes your personal journey so far. We will discuss this in detail during the first class session and I will provide examples from previous classes.
3. **Learning Journals:** You will maintain a journal of critical reflections and analysis of course topics as a means of demonstrating and documenting ability to apply and evaluate course ideas. You have broad choices in what you write about, but you must include at least four 2-4 page journal entries.
“Focusing” Journal one should be an initial “focusing” statement, an expression of your thoughts about communication and vocation as you enter this class.
Applied Journals two and three should be applied journals based on class reading and dialog, in other words, your reaction to a class dialogue or issue, or any example of “e-credit.” The “e” does not stand for electronic! It stands for *engagement* – a partnership with your facilitator to become co-learners, exhibiting curiosity, responsibility and initiative in the learning process. One sign of engagement is that you are able to make connections to experiences outside the classroom. You might apply some principle in analyzing real situations in the workplace, read and report on an article or book that relates to our learning goals or interview a community person about his or her working relationships. You could even apply course concepts in analyzing a movie scene or literary text. In short, be conscious of your learning as it happens and make *connections* that help you make *meaning*.
Reflective Journal four should be a reflective paper based on your overall learning experience in COM 490. You should also incorporate theories and concepts from other learning experiences in and out of the classroom.

Your portfolio is due Session Six.

20% - Speeches:

Speech #1: “My Story:” You prepare and deliver a speech about your personal experiences at Augsburg College (or other academic institution) and reflect on how your experiences in and out of academia have shaped your view of self, other, and the spiritual. A visual (prop) must be used to symbolize the theme of your “life story” (at least to this point in your journey). This speech is due Session Two.

Individual presentation: You prepare and deliver an oral presentation around your reflective journal #4 (see above). This speech is a sharing of your personal insights around communication & vocation. Presentations are due sessions six and seven

20% - Group Facilitation: We will form four groups. Each group will facilitate a dialog session around the “conversation starters” in Part Three of the Wheatley text. Conversations will be based on the principles covered in the Wheatley text and reviewed in class discussion. Part of this assignment includes a written 2-4 page summary of the class dialog that you facilitated. See instructions attached for more details. Group 1 and 2 will facilitate a dialog session three, groups 3 &4 will facilitate a dialog session five.

Attendance: Attendance and active participation in this class is essential to establishing a learning environment and achieving the class goals. Missing a class session means missing material, a concept or theory as well as the opportunity and responsibility to participate in open dialogue and to share insights with other members of the class. Therefore, regular attendance is essential.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GROUP FACILITATION

1. We will form four groups during the first class session.
2. Each group will pick a topic from the “Conversation Starters” in Margaret Wheatley's book *Turning to One Another*.
3. Your group will facilitate a class dialog around the topic chosen. You can apply the principles from the Wheatley text and class discussion (e.g. “World Cafe”). You have considerable freedom to develop a process that you think will facilitate good, open dialog around your topic.
4. Your group will provide a summary of the discussion to be distributed to the class the session following your facilitation.

CLASS SCHEDULE

(Subject to revision)

SESSION ONE (1/11): Critical Conversations around “My Story.”

Topics we will cover:

1. Course overview and introductions
2. The Art of Critical Conversations
3. Communication and the concept of “self” and “vocation”

Activities and/or assignments due:

1. Speeches of Introduction (impromptu – no preparation necessary)
2. Class dialog around the role of Communication Studies in our understanding of career and vocation using the critical conversation method. We will use a Video on “vocation.” By David Whyte.
3. Review models of “Self & Vocation.”

How to prepare:

1. Read Part One of Wheatley’s *Turning to One Another*.
2. Reflect on your personal educational experiences and the concept of “vocation.”

SESSION TWO (1/25): The Self and Communication

Topics we will cover:

1. The reflective Self (Wood)
2. Symbolic Interaction theory (Goffman, Mead, Cooley)
3. Conversation around “my signature strengths” based on your self-assessment, Howard Gardner’s Types of Intelligence, and a model by Jonathan Haidt, author of *The Happiness Hypothesis*.

Activities and/or assignments due:

1. Critical conversation around self and communication
2. Extemporaneous Speech on “My Story -- so far.”

How to prepare:

1. Read Part Two of the Wheatley text *Turning to One Another*, pages 40-52.
2. Prepare “My Story” speech.
3. Complete self assessment questionnaire at www.authentichappiness.com.
4. Work on “Self & Vocation” models for your Keystone Portfolio.
5. Write Focusing Journal for your Keystone Portfolio.

SESSION THREE (2/1): Career & Vocation

Topics we will cover:

1. Critical conversations around career & vocation (Wheatley)
2. Continued conversation on self & vocation
3. Conversation around emotional and social intelligence.

Activities and/or assignments due:

1. Group facilitation around critical conversations in Wheatley text by Groups 1 and 2.

How to prepare:

1. Read Wheatley text Part Three, pages 53-129
2. Groups 1&2 prepare facilitated dialog around Wheatley topics in Part Three
3. Work on Applied Journal 2.

WEEK FOUR (2/15): Communication and purpose

Topics we will cover:

1. Purpose and “calling” (Weber, Frankl)
2. Critical conversation on vocation and calling.

Activities and/or assignments due:

1. Facilitated dialog around vocation & calling (Guest facilitator)

How to prepare:

1. Read Wheatley text pages 138-158
2. Read Weber, and Frankl handouts
3. Work on Applied Journal 3.

SESSION FIVE (2/29): Building relationships

Topics we will cover:

1. Relationships and communication
2. Sacred relationships (Buber & Mitroff)

Activities and/or assignments due:

1. Group facilitated dialogue around Wheatley's “Conversation Starters” by Groups 3 & 4.

How to prepare:

1. Finish reading Wheatley text.
2. Read Mitroff and Buber handouts
3. Work on Reflective Journal #4 for your Keystone Portfolio
4. Groups 3 & 4 prepare facilitation

SESSION SIX (3/14): Personal discoveries

Topics we will cover:

1. Sharing personal discoveries from your Reflective Journals.

Activities and/or assignments due:

1. Individual presentations
2. Keystone Portfolios are due

How to prepare:

1. Prepare Individual Presentation
2. Complete Keystone Portfolios

SESSION SEVEN (3/28): “Afterthoughts”

Topics we will cover:

1. Critical conversations on Reflective Journals.

Activities and/or assignments due:

1. Individual Presentations.

How to prepare:

1. Prepare Individual Presentations