

ML539-COM 410
COMMUNICATING A SELF IN THE MODERN ORGANIZATION

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Classroom: Please refer to Records & Registration on the Inside Augsburg page (<http://augnet.augsburg.edu>) for the latest information on room assignments.

INTRODUCTION:

A syllabus will not tell you everything there is to know about a course, but it can provide information to help you make a more informed decision. To that end, this document attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Why this course?
2. What should I expect to learn?
3. What methods does the instructor plan to use to achieve the learning objectives?
4. What is expected from me should I choose to participate?
5. How will mastery be measured?

WHY THIS COURSE?

Formal organizations are part of everyday life in much of the world. Many people work inside them while others use their services. When they grow big and powerful, organizations shape social policy, social habits, and even social identities.

What is the role of communications in the formal organization? Charles Conrad, author of *Strategic Organizational Communication* (1985) answers this questions by referring to three functions of organizational communication: 1) a command function, 2) an ambiguity-management function, and 3) a relational function. Conrad's typology suggests that one of the functions of communicating in the context of the formal organization is to communicate a self in relationship to one's work and other people who work in the same organization. In other words, people communicate in order to be confirmed as valued persons with significant roles in a social system. One might say there is a social contract between the organization and the individual. The organization expects a commitment from the individual as energy to achieve its goals and, in turn, the individual expects fair pay, meaningful work, healthy relationships, and a sense of self.

Following World War II, formal organizations grew large and powerful. They were

relatively stable social structures where people worked and formed a sense of identity that remained stable throughout their career. This is no longer true. Like many other social structures, organizations are being challenged to adapt to the new paradigms of an information or digital age wherein global communication and technological complexity are part of everyday life and economic influences are global. As a consequence, the implied social contract between the individual and the organization is being revised. As the formal organization changes people are being challenged to change, to “reinvent themselves” as Tom Peters, modern guru and author of several business books, puts it.

The overall objective of this course is to probe the changes taking place to formal organizational structures in order to understand how these changes influence the social contract between the individual and the organization. At the heart of this course is the overriding question: Under what conditions does the human spirit soar?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

In addition to and supportive of the overall objective to probe the social contract between the organization and the individual, the course will focus on the following questions:

1. How does structure and culture influence relationships and the concept of a self and human identity?
2. In what ways is the social contract between the individual and the organization evolving?
3. What is the role of leader in facilitating a healthy, informed dialogue between the self and the organization?
4. How do leaders become more sensitive to the needs of the individual and the organization?

Each of the questions above will be researched and dialogued separately and then integrated to achieve a deeper understanding of the changing social contract at work and its impact on personal identities. The course emphasizes applied learning. In other words, the objective is for you to be able to relate the concepts dialogued to everyday life experiences. As a result, you should experience a deeper appreciation for the role of the individual for shaping and being shaped by the formal organization. Other related potential outcomes include, but are not limited to the following: a) an appreciation for relationships at work that leads to heightened empathy toward others, b) a critical eye toward the self-defining capacity of formal organizations, c) an enhanced capacity to make an informed choice about one’s involvement in formal organizations and the leaders influence on the new social contract at work.

APPLICATION OF AUGSBURG MAL LEADERSHIP MODEL:

This course is based on the assumption that an understanding and appreciation of the changing social contract between the individual and the organization is essential to an understanding of organizational leadership in the 21st Century. Specifically, this course will challenge participants to reflect on the ethical demands of **social awareness** and a **tolerance of religious and philosophical differences** through reading, reflection, writing, and dialogue of concepts about self and identity in the workplace. Other visionary dimensions include creativity as it relates to a **long term perspective** on social change and organizational structures. In addition, the course will focus on the communicative perspectives and skills associated with being an **effective team member** and showing **interpersonal sensitivity** as well as an increased cultural awareness and a **tolerance of individual differences** through class exercises designed to heighten interpersonal sensitivity.

TEACHING METHODS:

The concepts introduced in this class are examined through lecture, group discussion, class exercises, and applied learning projects. The use of multiple methods hopes to appeal to multiple types of intelligence and differing learning styles. Heeding the advice of adult educators such as Malcolm Knowles and Patricia Cross participants are given the opportunity to contribute to the balance between the methods applied. The instructor will strive to facilitate the emergence of a learning environment that respects the individual while engaging everyone in open dialogue.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Required Reading:

Daniel S. Hanson, *A Place to Shine: Emerging from the Shadows at Work* (Butterworth Heinemann, 1996)

James O'Toole & Edward Lawler, *The New American Workplace* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)

Handouts to be distributed in class

A reading list is also provided as a resource for applied papers (see attached).
You are encouraged to add to the list.

Written Assignments:

1. Participants will bring **two to five questions for dialogue to each class** session based on the readings and personal experiences.

2. **Two applied learning papers** involving an analysis (3 to 5 pages) of a work environment or a review of a book or article. (See attached guidelines)
3. Undergrad students are given a choice to write **a term paper** (7 to 10 pages) on human identity at work – or write from a set of questions on a **Take-home Exam**. The paper or exam deals with the heart of this course. It is your chance to express your own views and develop your own theory of human identity and the concept of self as it is reflected in and through one’s work.
4. Graduate students are required to write an **extensive term paper** (15 to 20 pages) using at least three outside resources on the role of leader in defining the social contract at work and its impact on members of an organization. You will be expected to include your own perspectives based on reading, dialogue, and personal experience. You should also be prepared to share your research and insights with the other members of the class. (See attached guidelines)

GRADING:

Mastery of the concepts will be evaluated on the basis of the participant's ability and willingness to engage in open dialogue consistent with personal styles. Participants are also evaluated based on their ability to apply in writing the concepts dialogued to everyday life experiences. You earn points in this class from the following participation:

Undergraduate students:

Participation in class dialogue (Includes bringing written questions to class).....	100 points
Two applied learning papers (50 points each).....	100 points
Term paper or Take-home Exam.....	100 points

Graduate Students:

Written questions and facilitating one class dialogue session....	100 points
Two applied papers (50 points each).....	100 points
Term Research Paper	150 points

Factors used to determine your final grade include:

1. Percentage of total points
2. The median point of the total distribution
3. How the grades are “clustered” or distributed.
4. College guidelines which state that 4.0 work “achieves highest standards of excellence” and 3.0 work is “above basic course standards”
5. Any intangibles such as active participation in class dialogue, perceived competence, and class attendance.

(Note: If you have any concerns about your grade please contact me)

CLASS SCHEDULE

(Schedule is subject to revision based on the direction of class dialogue and the input of participants)

Session 1:

- Theme:** Introduction to theories and perspectives on Self and Organizations.
- Preparation:** Read Part One (chapters 1-4) of *A Place to Shine* and reflect on your own thoughts about what it means to shine in your work.
- Activities:** Introduction of class members and dialogue of interests and expectations. Small group discussions around concepts of self (several quotes by authors and philosophers will be distributed in class).

Session 2:

- Theme:** The changing social contract at work.
- Preparation:** Read Part Two (chapters 5-10) of *A Place to Shine* and class handouts (Goffman & Maccoby), prepare **three written questions** from reading and reflecting.
- Activities:** Small group dialogue around written questions regarding the changing social contract at work.
Lecture and dialogue on work cultures based on a model by Edgar Schein (class handout). Introduction to Michael Maccoby's typology of "Social Types" at work based on his book *Why Work?*
Case study of a work culture using Schein's model and Goffman's perspectives (material to be distributed in class).

Session 3:

- Theme:** Roles and identities at work.
- Preparation:** Read Part Three (chapters 11-18) of *A Place to Shine* and class handouts (Highwater, Lee)
APPLIED PAPER #1 DUE
- Activities:** Small group dialogue of applied papers – be prepared to share your paper; grad students **facilitate a dialogue** around applied papers.

Session 4:

- Theme:** The new organization: What will it look like? What should it look like?
- Preparation:** Read pages 1-147 in *The New American Workplace*. Bring **three written questions** from reading and reflection
- Activities:** Class exercise: "Building a 'Healthy' Organization" using the "Theory-Structure-Script" model (Hanson) **facilitated dialog by grad student group**.
Lecture and dialogue on "Self-investment" theory (Hanson) – to whom or what to I give my time and energy and why?

Session 5:

- Theme:** The self-defining aspects of organizations and organizational life and the importance of making conscious choices.
- Preparation:** Read pages 149-244 in *The New American Workplace*.
APPLIED PAPER #2 DUE
- Activities:** Share applied papers in small groups, **facilitated dialog by grad student groups**.

Session 6:

- Theme:** The new social contract at work.
- Preparation:** Read class handouts (Csikszentmihalyi)
Prepare **three written questions** from reading.
- Activities:** Exercise on “pulling together what we have learned” based on the reading, reflection and dialogue up to this point **facilitated dialog by grad student group**.
Video on courage at work (David Whyte)

Session 7:

- Theme:** A coming together of our collective minds – and hearts.
- Preparation:** Bring articles from local and national publications on the future of work environments.
TERM PAPER DUE or **TAKE-HOME EXAM** due for WEC students;
TERM RESEARCH PAPER due for MAL students
- Activities:** An open and lively dialogue of class concepts and key learning.
Sharing insights from term papers.

Suggested Reading List:

(The books on this list are not required reading. Rather, they are resources for dialogue and written assignments. Some contain old wisdom; some are full of new ideas. I expect the list to be further developed by class participants)

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| Autry, James | <i>Love and Profit: The Art of Caring Leadership</i> |
| Bellah et al | <i>The Good Society</i> |
| Bettelheim, Bruno | <i>The Informed Heart</i> |
| Carse, James | <i>Finite and Infinite Games</i> |
| Cohen, Anthony P. | <i>Self Consciousness: An Alternative Anthropology of Identity</i> |
| Csikszentmihalyi, M. | <i>Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience and
The Evolving Self</i> |
| Estes, Clarissa | <i>Women Who Run With Wolves</i> |
| Florida, Richard | <i>The Rise of the Creative Class</i> |
| Frankl, Viktor | <i>Man's Search for Meaning</i> |
| Fox, Matthew | <i>The Reinvention of Work</i> |
| Frenier, Carol R. | <i>Business and the Feminine Principle</i> |
| Goffman, Erving | <i>Presentation of Self in Everyday Life
Asylums</i> |
| Greenleaf, Robert | <i>Servant Leadership</i> |
| Hagberg, Janet | <i>Real Power</i> |
| Haidt, Jonathan | <i>The Happiness Hypothesis</i> |
| Hall, Edward | <i>Beyond Culture</i> |
| Hanson, Daniel | <i>Cultivating Common Ground</i> |
| Hey, Kenneth &
Peter Moore | <i>The Caterpillar Doesn't Know</i> |
| Kanter, Rosabeth | <i>Confidence</i> |
| Lee, Dorothy | <i>Freedom and Culture</i> |
| Lulic, Margaret | <i>Who We Could Be at Work</i> |
| Maccoby, Michael | <i>Why Work? Motivating the New Generation</i> |
| Palmer, Parker | <i>The Active Life: Spirituality of Work, Creativity and Caring,
A Hidden Wholeness</i> |
| Postman, Neal | <i>Technopoly</i> |
| Rifkin, Jeremy | <i>The End of Work</i> |
| Schor, Juliet | <i>The Overworked American</i> |
| Schumacher, E. F. | <i>Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered</i> |
| Sennett, Richard | <i>The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work
in the New Capitalism</i> |
| Weber, Robert J | <i>The Created Self</i> |
| Wheatley, Margaret | <i>Leadership and the New Science
Turning to One Another</i> |
| Whyte, David | <i>The Heart Aroused</i> and other books by David Whyte |

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLIED PAPER

The applied paper is just what the title suggests, a paper that translates the concepts introduced through reading, lecture and class dialogue into everyday life.

You choose from three approaches:

1. Apply a theory/concept to your own experience in a work environment. For example, you might choose to describe the theory of human identity that is predominant in your workplace and show how the structures and scripts reinforce the theory.
2. Observe a work environment other than your own and describe the predominant theory of human identity. You might choose to compare the theory-in-practice to Gergen's typology of the romantic, modern, or postmodern self. You might ask the question: what type of self is most accepted in this environment?
3. Review an article or chapter of a book from the list provided by the instructor or one of your own choosing. Compare and contrast the theory or perspective of the writer to the theories and perspectives dialogued in class.

The paper is worth 50 points. The length should be three to five pages double-spaced. The learning objectives for this paper are:

1. To better understand the issue of self and human identity at work.
2. To express ideas and theories in your own words and relate them to personal experiences and/or other theories.
3. To bring your ideas together in a meaningful way so that they "hang together" persuasively.
4. To provide you with the opportunity to gather details, relate experiences and use outside resources to back up personal opinion.
5. To give you a chance to dig deeper in the spirit of inquiry, reflection, and learning.

You have the right to discuss your paper with the instructor. You may choose to re-write one of your papers for additional points. **CALL OR EMAIL IF YOU NEED HELP!!**

Suggested perspectives, concepts, and theories:

Romantic, modern, postmodern self (Gergen)

Theories, structures, scripts (Hanson)

The social contract at work (Goffman)

Real Power (Hagberg)

Social Types at work (Maccoby)

Spirituality at work: what does it mean? (Lulic, Whyte)

Feminine/masculine theories of leadership (Frenier)

Value shifts (Scott & Hart)

A Place to Shine: what is it? (Hanson)

The social contract at work (Sennett, Handy, Goffman, or an author of your choice)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TERM PAPER RESEARCH PAPER (MAL Students)

This paper is your opportunity to blend the concepts and theories from reading and class dialogue with your research, insights, and experiences. I expect you to go beyond your applied paper and actually create your own perspective or theory about communicating a self in the modern organization and the implied social contract between the individual and the organization. You should use at least three outside resources in addition to the required reading. The paper should include the following sections:

1. **Thesis Statement:** You should state your approach and what you plan to cover as a statement of purpose (e.g. This paper shows how Goffman's typology of "commitments and attachments" can be used to explain the changing social contract at work).
2. **Background:** This section of your paper should include a review of your approach and why you chose it, the theories you will examine in more depth and their implications on self and organization. You may also include "definitions" if needed. This section should be 2 to 4 pages in length.
3. **Research Methods:** In this section you will want to describe the methods of research you used to get at your thesis. Methods could include reviewing books and articles (see list of suggested reading), conducting interviews, administering a survey or questionnaire, empirical evidence (your own experiences) or a method of your choice.
4. **Research Results:** In this section you will write about the results of your research. In other words, what did you find out about your thesis? You may want to list key points. This section is usually 3 to 4 pages long.
5. **Discussion:** In this part of your paper you will discuss your results in the context of class material and make observations or share insights about your findings. This is the place for you to elaborate on the findings and suggest what they mean for people and organizations. You will want to go into considerable depth here. This will likely be the longest part of your paper in (3 to 5 pages).
6. **Bibliography:** List here the resources used (e.g. books, articles, interviews, websites, etc). Any accepted format is okay, but I recommend the MLA format for consistency.