NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
Dept. of Media, Culture & Communucation
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ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION (MCC UE 1745, sec. 1)

Course description: Students examine major concepts/theories related to organizational cultures with a particular focus on the 4 stages related to composing a professional life:
1. Anticipation (expectations we have about a particular field/career & the factors that influence career decisions);
2. Organizational Entry (interview process; salary negotiation);
3. Assimilation & Metamorphosis (learning the norms, roles, rituals & performances in workplace settings; challenges & barriers to 'fitting in'; mentoring; managing & leading effectively; dealing with conflict productively; impact of technology);
4. Exit (sources of stress; work/life 'choices'; clash of organizational norms/expectations & personal values)

Objectives: To provide students with an understanding of:
1. Transformations of organizational life, values &, culture;
2. How our different viewpoints of identity influence expectations about and, how we experience the workplace (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, culture, age, religion, ability, sexual orientation, class, etc.);
3. How we can influence/alter the organizational climate through impression management (focus on verbal/nonverbal message tactics)

Required Readings:
Coursepack: 33 chapters, essays and journal articles from scholars/writers in the fields of communication, media studies, sociology, & law that articulate with the course description and objectives. Additional articles will be assigned for presentation/discussion. Coursepack is available at Advanced Copy Center--735 LaGuardia Place (listed under Borisoff, Undergraduate; Course title; MCC UE 1745).

Course Requirements/Assessment: Hard-copy of assignments.
1. Research paper and/or preparation of an in-depth case study. (Sample topics & criteria for the case study are attached.) By week 5 or 6, please submit a brief abstract and/or outline of your proposed topic. Approx. length: 15 pages, typed, double-spaced. Due: 2nd to last class. 40 points
2. Resume: 5 pts; Cover Letter (if applicable): 5 pts.
3. Interview with an Interviewer: Estimated: 2 pages (criteria & format are on page 6). 15 points
4. Oral Presentation (in pairs) 20 pts. (List: pgs. 11-12)
5. Attendance/participation/small group presentations/short assignments related to the readings: 15 points
Every assignment is due on time. A penalty of 5 points will be assessed each day after the assignment is due. No exceptions without verifiable excuse, and then at the discretion of Dr. Borisoff.

Course grading:
Presenting the work/words of others as your own ideas/words (that is, uncited) constitutes plagiarism. University guidelines on plagiarism includes the possibility of receiving a automatic "F" on one's work; the possibility of expulsion from the program.

Final Grade Scale: A: 95-100; A−: 90-94.9 ; B+: 87-89.9; B: 84-86.9; B−: 80-83.9; C+: 77-79.9; C: 74-76.9; C−: 70-73.9, etc.

Ethical Standards:
It should be generally understood that all work submitted within this class is original and your own. Your submitted work for this class should not be excerpts or a duplicate of work previously completed and/or submitted in another class or for any other purpose. We will discuss the legitimacy and appropriateness of extending prior projects/papers.

Disability:
Those who qualify and/or are registered here at NYU as persons with a disability should notify me at the beginning of the course regarding any special arrangements or needs that may facilitate the completion of any given assignments or general success in the class. Please be sure to register with the NYU's office.

Attendance Policy:
Attendance holds an obvious relationship to participation. According to course policy, more than 2 absences will result in a grade reduction. If unforeseeable problems arise, please contact Dr. Borisoff.

Office Hours:
Available to meet regularly on Mondays (1:30-2; after class); before classes on Wednesday; and, will schedule meetings on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays working with your class/work schedules and my meeting schedules.
SCHEDULE OF CLASSES/ASSIGNMENTS: (Topics discussed by professor designed with (L); Readings are in course pack.)

Separate calendar with deadline dates are on the last page.

Week 1: Introduction and overview of course. Organizational Traits (identification; definition). Criteria for interviewing an interviewer included in syllabus (due week 5)

Assignment: Fredric M. Jablin: "Organizational Entry, Assimilation, and Exit;" Take/score Kilman/Thomas Conflict mode test. Written assignment: "Organizational Anticipation." Indicate your projected field and goals (i.e., position-level; responsibilities) in this field. Include the personal values, traits and competencies that you have (or hope to obtain) that you believe qualify you & will enable you to succeed in your given career. Estimated length: 1½-2 pages typed; double-spaced; will be collected).

Week 2: Discussion of Jablin; discussion of projected goals; Perspectives on Organizational Cultures (L).

Assignment: Read: Michael Pacanowsky & Nick Trujillo: "Organizational Communication as Cultural Performance." Small group assignments will be assigned that ask you to provide examples that relate to the diverse dimensions of "performance" discussed in the reading.

Week 3: Discussion of Pacanowsky & Trujillo; small group and full-class discussion of the implications of cultural performance.

Assignment: Steven M. Ralston & William G. Kirkwood: "Overcoming Managerial Bias in Employment Interviewing"; Jane Hyun: "Perfect for the Part: Mastering the Face-to-Face Job Interview" (Breaking the Bamboo Ceiling).
Written Assignment: resume; sample cover letter if in process or will be applying for a position.

Week 4: Organizational Entry: Discussion of issues raised in the readings related to self-representation/impression management as part of the selection process. Ethical issues related to the performance dimension of interviews will be examined as well as implications related to how factors (i.e., gender, race, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, age, class, etc.) may impact how we are read by others. Articles in the media will be distributed for discussion.

Week 5: Organizational entry continued: discussion of articles; assessment of verbal/nonverbal communication competence as this relates to hiring practices/decisions.
Due: Interview with interviewer. Due this week or next: proposed outline/brief paragraphs on projected research paper for class.
Assignment: Jeffrey Lax: "Do employer requests for salary history discriminate against women?"

Week 6: Organizational entry continued: Discussion of readings as well as media articles related to challenges regarding compensation; strategies for effective negotiations. Patterns and themes related to hiring decisions/practices related to traits, behaviors, prior experiences (deriving from interview with interviewers).


Week 7: Discussion of readings & media articles that relate to how we make meaning of the workplace environment; the impact on expectations for performance.


Weeks 8: Discussion of above readings. Challenges/barriers; applications from training programs.


Week 9: Discussion of readings on mentoring: focus on 'ideal' vs 'reality'; themes vis-a-vis culture, gender, norms, power, etc.

Assignment: (Make sure you've taken/scored Kilman/Thomas Conflict Mode Inventory--front of course pack); Michael Hackman & Craig Johnson: "Leadership & Followership Communication Styles" & take "Followership Test" in this chapter; Daniel Goleman "The Leadership Repertoire"; Take instrument/test "Self-Reflection: Looking In & Looking Out." (May be asked to prepare sample work-related conflict for discussion.)
Week 10-11: Discussion of readings; sample conflicts; media articles on leaders—relate to Organizational Entry, Interview, Values, Assimilation, Communication, Leadership styles. Discussion of the 3 self-tests you've taken.

Assignment: Challenges to "Fitting In"/Assimilation/Metamorphosis and/or Exit. Impact of FMLA--altering how the workplace is experienced. Read: Arlie Hocshild "The Second Shift"; "A Speed Up in the Family" (The Time Bind); Erika Kirby & Kathleen Krone: "The Policy Exists But You Can't Really Use It"; Lisa Belkin: "The Opt-Out Generation"; Laura Kessler: "Keeping Discrimination Theory Front & Center in the Discourse of Overwork and Family Conflict."

Week 12: Discussion of above readings; implications. Final Paper due week 13.


Week 13: FINAL PAPER IS DUE. Discussion of above readings. Media articles that articulate with readings: impact of technology and changing values.

Assignment: Sheryl Sandberg: "Don't Leave Before you Leave"

Week 14: Discussion of above works; concluding remarks; return papers/grades.
ASSIGNMENT: DUE WEEK 5 INTERVIEW WITH AN INDIVIDUAL IN THE WORKPLACE WHO CONDUCTS EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS

Instructions: See categories/questions below. Please prepare your paper in the order as it appears below. Your report should summarize his/her responses. Typical length: 2 typed, double-spaced pages.

1. Brief Background/overview.
   a) Name of company; type of organization.
   b) Name/postion & title of person interviewed. How long they have been at this company; size of company; ask them to estimate how often they hire & for what types of positions.
   c) What words would they use to characterize the organization's environment/culture. (i.e., adjectives/megaphors--'fast-paced,' 'cutting edge,' 'service-oriented,' 'family,' 'informal,' 'formal,' 'close-knit' '24/7')
   d) To be completed by you (DO NOT ASK!): approximate age of the individual; demographic information (gender, culture, ethnicity, race)

2. Tell the person that you're doing a survey on organizational entry; on how hiring decisions are determined.
   Below are the questions:
   a) If appropriate, considering the type of position that you would be applying for, approximately how many applicants do they typically receive for this type of position?
   b) What criteria are used to determine/decide who will be interviewed? What materials are submitted (i.e. resume; cover letter & how important are these materials?) How are applications submitted/reviewed?
   c) In general, how many applicants are actually interviewed for each position? Over what time period (e.g., 1 week, 2 weeks, etc)
   d) Typically, who interviews applicants & if relevant, how many interviews (and with whom--i.e., series of interviews; group interviews)

3. Interview Structure
   a) Does the company provide a list or protocol of questions that must be asked or, does the interviewer determine the questions?
   b) What are some typical questions asked during the interview?
   c) Are there atypical questions that the interviewer finds helpful? (some examples if 'yes').
   d) During the interview process, what are some examples of behaviors and/or responses to questions that are "turn-offs"? What are some examples of behaviors and/or responses that are "turn-ons"?
   e) Overall, what communication traits/qualities does the interviewer look for in an applicants?
   f) Can they provide examples of questions that the interviewee asks that they view as positive? That they view as negative?

4. What advice would they suggest for applicants who want to work for their company and/or in this field?

5. Final Question: Are there particular challenges to achieving balance between one's personal & professional life for individuals working in this field? (if yes, some examples)
FINAL PAPER FOR CLASS: DUE 2ND TO LAST WEEK OF CLASS

The topics below are merely suggestions of areas you may wish to explore. You may choose a topic and work alone; you may decide to work with a partner and do a collaborative project. The third option is to do an in-depth case study. (If you choose to do a case study, I will provide guidelines.)

General guidelines:
1. Length: see page 1; this includes references; typed; double-spaced; 12-point size (40 pages if working collaboratively). Paginate; staple; on first page include your email address & student ID number.

2. Citations: APA; MLA; footnotes (Bobst library and the NYU bookstore have materials on this.)

3. Use of outside/supporting sources: The paper should demonstrate an understanding of class readings. Topic selection would determine which class materials would be included. Example: a paper on the meaning of and transformations of "leadership" would include the class readings on this topic as well as other class works that also address leaders (i.e., Jablin; Weick, etc.) and, if appropriate, media articles discussed in class (i.e. "The Corner Office"). If you want to explore issues related to race, or gender, or culture in the professional landscape, multiple readings throughout the course would provide support for your work (i.e., Jablin, Weick, Kanter, Williams, Allen, Ragins et al, Murphy & Zorn, Hyun, Spradlin, Kessler). Once you determine or topic, I can help guide you regarding identifying appropriate works.

SAMPLE TOPICS:
1. "The Overworked American" has been an abiding theme in both academic and popular works for well over 6 decades. One approach to examining this topic is to examine the meaning of work over time. It would be possible, as well, to compare/contrast 2 cultures: does "the overworked American" resonate in another culture?

2. "Family Friendly" has been used, especially since the mid 1990s. to characterize many workplace environments (across fields). If you choose to examine the field in which you wish to work, is this an appropriate metaphor or, a contradiction in terms?

3. "Work/Life Balance" has been applied especially to gender and careers--particularly to women in diverse careers (i.e., higher education, law, finance, accounting, medicine, new/media industries, technology, engineering, etc.). How does this metaphor function? This topic can be approached historically. It can also be approached from a cross-cultural lens--that is, comparing what we are reading in class to expectations/norms in another culture.
4. Work as "performance." The notion of 'acting'/wearing a 'mask' in the workplace. Several scholars address this in our readings (Pacanowsky & Trujillo, Ralston & Kirkwood; Kanter; Allen; Spradlin; Hochschild; Williams; Hyun; Ragins et al, etc.). A critical essay could be done examining the threads that run through the discourse of the unauthentic self that we create in what, for most of us, will absorb the majority of our time for many decades; the potential 'cost.'

5. Globalization has become a ubiquitous term to justify expectations/transformations in the workplace (e.g., 'competitive edge,' '24/7 service/accessibility,' 'cost of doing business in a global economy'). What are the repercussions of this discourse on work/life 'balance' (i.e. impact on friendships; on the family; on outsourcing aspects of our lives)?

6. Being the perpetual "other". Kanter, Allen, Spradlin, Williams, Hyun, Ragins et al, Murphy & Zorn speak to the effects of being "different"; in some cases being the "token" in the workplace. This topic can be examined in different ways: a) examine this topic vis-a-vis the field in which you want to work; b) what are the extant demographics of inclusion; at diverse ranks?. This can be examined through a case study; through interviews with individuals working in a particular field (I would help you with this process).

7. How has our understanding of leadership & the nonverbal and verbal communication competencies associated with leadership been transformed over the past several decades? We'll be looking a several readings that address this topic. (This topic can also be examined by comparing class readings with construals of leadership in another country--cross-cultural comparison. It can also be examined through a case study in a particular organization.)

8. Many metaphors have been used to describe the workplace experience: "glass ceiling," "sticky floor," "maternal wall," "fatherhood penalty," "motherhood penalty," etc. Several readings address this topic. To what extent do these metaphors still apply? (You can examine the discourse in general; a particular field; a cross-cultural lens).

9. Technology has simultaneously been described as a "boon" and a "noose" in the workplace. These diametrically opposed metaphors would be interesting to examine. In what ways do these terms function? In what ways do these terms function? You can examine your workplace and/or the field in which you plan to work. What do these discourses reveal about organizational norms, expectations, values?

10. Several of the readings address the importance of mentoring in facilitating career success. Simultaneously they reveal multiple challenges to establishing, defining, sustaining and,
assessing "effective" mentoring. One way to approach this would be to write a critical essay bringing together the threads in the reading; identifying challenges/barriers. You can interview an individual and/or individuals in a particular field regarding mentoring experiences (or lack thereof): how this connects to the readings on mentoring and the impact on their own experiences.

11. Online sites & other media venues can speak volumes about individuals; about organizations/institutions; they provide an important 'snapshot' at a moment in time regarding "climate," "norms" and, "values." The following includes examples of separate topics that may be explored: a) Impression management, workplace ideologies and gender socialization: a content analysis of Linkedin.com user profiles; b) Forbes "Top 100 Companies": the factors/criteria used to delineate "the best": what is included; what is excluded?; c) Compare/contrast websites in a particular field: the language/words used and what is conveyed; what is left out? (example: university websites: impact on the commuter experience?; how "community" is characterized; the meaning of the "ideal" educational experience; if/how an "inclusive" "diverse" community is articulated.); d) Organizational websites (i.e. PR; media industries; legal field; finance; "brand" companies): the words used--what they communicate about the "ideal" candidate and "fitting in"
DATES THAT WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE:

1. Written assignment: "Organizational Anticipation: Self-Inventory" (described under "Week 1") : Mon. Feb. 3

2. Resume (& cover letter if applicable): Wed. Feb. 19


4. Abstract and/or outline for paper: Due either week 5 or 6

5. Final paper due: Mon. April 5

(No Class Monday 2/17).
LIST OF READINGS FOR PRESENTATIONS. THESE WILL BE SCHEDULED THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER (APPROX. 10-15 MINUTES IN LENGTH FOR PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION).

Instructions: Prepare a handout/summary of the reading (typically 2-3 pages—may be double-sided; typed)—make sufficient copies for each class member. Handout should include author(s), title, year, page numbers & where published—as listed below. It should include as well: a). major questions/theories/issues examined in the reading—the relevance of this piece to what we are examining in class; b). if a study—who are the participants (age; education level, number of individuals, breakdown on gender, race, culture if specified; c). findings; d). limitations of the study/reading as well as areas/questions for future study (if applicable). (Will be done in pairs; 2 readings may be done by 1—designated below)

(Organizational Assimilation/Sensemaking) Weeks 4-5-6


(Organizational Leadership) Week 6
Grozyberg, Boris & Katherine Connolly (Sept. 2013) "Twenty-Four CEOs on Creating Diverse & Inclusive Organizations." Harvard Business Review 69-76. (May be single presenter)

(Organizational Assimilation: Challenges to Fitting In/Conflict)
Week 7
Stone, Douglas, Bruce Patton & Sheila Heen (2010). "Sort Out the Three Conversations (3-20); How Does This Work With Someone Who Has all the Power--Like my Boss?" (258-277). In Difficult Conversations, NY: Penguin. (May be 3-4 presenters)

(Organizational Assimilation/Exit: Challenges to Achieving "Balance"; "Opting-Out" (Choices & Implications) Weeks 8-9-10-11


(Technology & the Workplace) Week 12