

**MARSHALL UNIVERSITY
BA COMMUNICATION STUDIES
FEBRUARY 2010
YEARLY REVIEW**

Program:___BA Communication Studies

College:___College of Liberal Arts

Date of last review: October 2009 (Program Review)

I. CONSISTENCY WITH MISSION

Marshall University has a commitment to undergraduate education that “contributes to the development of society and the individual.” In addition the vision of the institution places a priority on preparing students for “the responsibilities of life within a culturally diverse and globally interdependent society.” Our mission statement further emphasizes that faculty will require students to develop critical thinking skills, and that students will learn to engage in civic discourse in order to contribute to the betterment of society. The College of Liberal Arts emphasizes critical thinking and effective communication as part of its mission

The study of communication is central to these elements of the University’s mission. Since Greco-Roman times the study of communication has been at the core of the liberal arts. Logic and Rhetoric comprise two of the seven original liberal arts. The required fundamentals course in communication engages students in the study of issues in the public forum, encourages critical analysis of information and arguments associated with those issues and requires them to take a position, defend a position, and critically evaluate the ideas of others. These competencies are absolutely essential if students are to “use their knowledge . . . and critical thinking skills to make their communities better places in which to live.”

The study of communication has evolved in the past 60 years beyond the narrow focus on rhetoric as applied to public messages. As the study of rhetoric acknowledges that strategic communication in the public forum can lead to a sense of community and effective common action, strategic communication can positively influence interpersonal relationships as well as all types of social organizations. The Communication Studies program reflects that evolution by offering three tracks for majors in our program: Public Communication, Organizational Communication, and Interpersonal Communication. Students in the public communication track of our program focus on principles of rhetoric and persuasion and the application of these principles to public discourse. Students in the organizational communication track of our program focus on developing productive working relationships, strategic use of information and persuasion, and the application of communication competencies to situations requiring leadership and influence. Students in the interpersonal communication track of our program focus on personal and relationship development, as well as the skills required to develop 6

collaborative approaches to problem-solving and conflict management. The program also serves students in the College of Education specializing in Oral Communication 5-9 and 5-12.

The Department of Communication Studies is an integral part of the University and the College of Liberal Arts. The Department has ties to every other undergraduate program as well. The department offers the Fundamentals of Communication Studies course required by most colleges and the Business and Professional Communication course required by the Lewis College of Business. Communication Studies courses are also part of the required curriculum in Business, International Studies, and Counseling.

II. Program's Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the BA in Communication Studies students will:

1. Understand basic concepts associated with the primary theories of communication.
2. Write a clear, concise, and reasoned paper on topics dealing with the concepts of communication.
3. Understand the research literature underlying the discipline of communication.
4. Demonstrate speaking competencies by composing a message, provide ideas and information suitable to the theory and audience.
5. Basic understanding of the nature of scientific inquiry, as applied to human behavior.
6. Familiarity with the four research methods commonly used to study human communication behaviors.
7. Greater skill in analytical thinking and writing.
8. Demonstrate "sense-making," the ability to apply knowledge to lived experience.

III. Assessment Activities

For academic year 2009-2010, this Annual Assessment Report will focus on the Core Curriculum: CMM 303, CMM 411, CMM 478. The Core Curriculum consists of CMM 303, Communication Theory; CMM 411, Research; and CMM 478, Capstone course. The following Student Learning Outcomes will be assessed:

1. Understand basic concepts associated with the primary theories of communication.

2. Write a clear, concise, and reasoned paper on topics dealing with the concepts of communication.
4. Demonstrate speaking competencies by composing a message; provide ideas and information suitable to the theory and audience.
7. Greater skill in analytical thinking and writing.

A. Assessment Measures (Tools).

Outcome 1: Understand basic concepts associated with the primary theories of communication. To measure this outcome the answers to selected questions on the Midterm and Final exams in CMM 303, Communication Theory, will be used. The questions selected represent synthesis and application levels of knowledge. Also, this is associated with the selection of theories to be used in paper proposals and writing assignments in CMM 411, Research and CMM 478, Capstone thus the grades on these assignments will be used. These grades are determined using the following: Rubric for all paper assignments in CMM Core Curriculum and Areas of Emphasis:

- a. Review of Literature appropriate to theory being examined
- b. Explanation of theoretical concepts
- c. Organization of ideas/Critical Thinking demonstrated
- d. Appropriateness of Conclusion
- e. Style

Outcome 2: Write a clear, concise, and reasoned paper on topics dealing with the concepts of communication. To measure this outcome the grades on paper assignments in CMM 303, 411, and 478 will be used.

Outcome 4: Demonstrate speaking competencies by composing a message; provide ideas and information suitable to the theory and audience. To measure this outcome the oral assignment grades in the core classes will be used. These grades are determined using the following: Rubric for oral assignments in CMM Core Curriculum and Areas of Emphasis:

- a. Organization/Content
- b. Non-verbal/Paralanguage
- c. Language
- d. Eye Contact
- e. Overall Delivery

Outcome 7: Greater skill in analytical thinking and writing. To measure this outcome the grades from paper assignments and oral presentations will be used.

B. Benchmarks.

The department has established benchmarks for these outcomes as follows:

- a. Score at the “acceptable” level on appropriate traits of the rubrics, and
- b. 70% accuracy on selected questions

C. Results/Analysis.

Students in the core curriculum classes more than exceeded the benchmarks set for three classes, CMM 303, CMM 411, CMM 478. While this appears to be exactly what a department chair would want to see, our newly developed assessment

(Fall 1010) a bit ambitious to work with; therefore, the faculty will be reassessing the plan to make it more accurate in its data reporting and gathering.

D. Analysis/Planned Action.

The above section points out the need for further development of our assessment plan. Our students are learning the material as evidenced by the 'juried' results of their Capstone projects, however we need as a faculty to begin the development of more individual class feedback loops. This is an ongoing process and we continue to find ways to improve.

IV. Changes Implemented in Program

Since year 2009-2010 the Communication Studies have been developing an Assessment Plan and this is the first reporting period of that plan any changes will be reported in the next year.

V. Changes Based on Assessment Day Activities

None at this time.

VI. Assistance Needed with Assessment

We know that if we need the assistance Mary Beth is there to help and has been throughout this past year in our developing our plan. We will revisit some of the suggestions that she made earlier to make this process flow more smoothly.

Course: **Communication Theory 303**

Program's Student Learning Outcomes	Year evaluated	Assessment Measures (Tools)	Benchmarks***	Results	Analysis/ Planned Actions
Understand basic concepts associated with the primary theories of communication.	Fall 2009	Class and small group discussion Midterm & Final Exams (Multiple Choice)	Score at the "acceptable" level on appropriate traits of the rubric* 70% accuracy on selected questions	N=18 This was demonstrated in the written papers (Film Critique and Theory analysis paper) in level b of the rubric: Explanation of theoretical concepts. The mean score was 85%. Selecting 10 synthesis questions & 10 application questions on a 100 question midterm the students selected the correct answer 72.22% of the time. On the comprehensive final exam the students selected the correct answer 79.6% of the time on selected synthesis (18) & application (20) questions.	Information needs to be reported at each level of the rubric for more complete analysis. Overall good tool for seeing progress in understanding over the semester. Future analysis should be done more frequently not just at midterm and final.
Write a clear, concise, and reasoned paper on topics dealing with the concepts of communication.	Fall 2009	Critique of a film or TV program using a theory of the student's choice	Score at the "acceptable" level on appropriate traits of the rubric*	N=18 This was demonstrated in the written paper (Film Critique) using the final grade on the paper. This was determined by the points awarded for each level of the rubric: a. Review of Literature appropriate to theory being examined ,b. Explanation of theoretical concepts, c. Organization of ideas/Critical Thinking demonstrated, d. Appropriateness of Conclusion e. Style 84% of the students received grades of B or A.	Information needs to be reported at each level of the rubric for more complete analysis.

Program's Student Learning Outcomes	Year evaluated	Assessment Measures (Tools)	Benchmarks***	Results	Analysis/ Planned Actions
Understand the research literature underlying the discipline of communication.	Fall 2009	Analysis and Explanation of a Theory of the student's choice	Score at the "acceptable" level on appropriate traits of the rubric*	No individual analysis this year.	
Demonstrate speaking competencies by composing a message, provide ideas and information suitable to the theory and audience.	Fall 2009	Oral Presentation of Theory Analysis Paper	Score at the "acceptable" level on appropriate traits of the rubric*	N=18 This was demonstrated in the oral performances by the students on their theory analysis paper. The final grades were determined using the following: Rubric for oral assignments in CMM Core Curriculum: a. Organization/Content b. Non-verbal/Paralanguage c. Language d. Eye Contact e. Overall Delivery 88% of the students received grades of B or A.	Information needs to be reported at each level of the rubric for more complete analysis.

Course: **Communication Study and Research 411**

Program's Student Learning Outcomes	Year evaluated	Assessment Measures (Tools)	Benchmarks***	Results	Analysis/ Planned Actions
Basic understanding of the nature of scientific inquiry, as applied to human behavior.	Fall 2009	Class and small group discussion Midterm Exam Final Exam (Multiple choice and Essay questions)	Score at the "acceptable" level on appropriate traits of the rubric* 70% accuracy on selected questions	No individual analysis this year.	
Familiarity with the four research methods commonly used to study human communication behaviors. A sense of the fundamental critical questions particular to each of those methods.	Fall 2009	Weekly writing assignment based on research method being examined. Written analysis of critical questions.	Score at the "acceptable" level on appropriate traits of the rubric*	No individual analysis this year.	
Familiarity with formal conventions of scholarly journal articles, and increased ability to extract the main ideas in them.	Fall 2009	Paper Proposal Draft of Term Paper Term Paper	Score at the "acceptable" level on appropriate traits of the rubric*	No individual analysis this year.	
Greater skill in analytical thinking and writing.	Fall 2009	All of the above measures and tools.	Score at the "acceptable" level on appropriate traits of the rubric*	N=12 The students exceeded the "acceptable" level on all levels of the rubric for written work. 91% received grades of A or B on the assignments.	Information needs to be reported at each level of the rubric for more complete analysis.

Course: **Communication Studies Capstone 478**

Program's Student Learning Outcomes	Year evaluated	Assessment Measures (Tools)	Benchmarks***	Results	Analysis/ Planned Actions
Meet a set of competencies designed by the discipline for the graduating major. Demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge from many disciplines.	Spring 2010	Oral Presentation of the student's work in progress. Paper proposal of project.	Score at the "acceptable" level on appropriate traits of the rubric*	No individual analysis this year.	
Demonstrate problem solving skills and the ability to analyze critically. Demonstrate reflection, self-awareness and self-assessment abilities.	Spring 2010	Weekly writing assignment based on research method being utilized for individual project.	Score at the "acceptable" level on appropriate traits of the rubric*	No individual analysis this year.	
Demonstrate "sense-making," the ability to apply knowledge to lived experience. Demonstrate skills through some tangible product. Demonstrate the ability to collaborate, work on a team, and listen effectively.	Spring 2010	Peer/Instructor feedback Feedback on proposal. Paper Proposal Draft of Project Paper Project Paper IRB Certification	Score at the "acceptable" level on appropriate traits of the rubric*	No individual analysis this year.	
Greater skill in analytical thinking and writing.	Spring 2010	All of the above measures and tools.	Score at the "acceptable" level on appropriate traits of the rubric*	N=12 This was demonstrated in the written paper using the final grade on the paper. This was determined by the points awarded for each level of the rubric: a. Review of Literature appropriate to theory being examined ,b. Explanation of theoretical concepts, c. Organization of ideas/Critical Thinking demonstrated, d. Appropriateness of Conclusion e. Style 84% of the students received grades of B or A.	Information needs to be reported at each level of the rubric for more complete analysis.

Program's Student Learning Outcomes	Year evaluated	Assessment Measures (Tools)	Benchmarks***	Results	Analysis/ Planned Actions
Speaking/Presentation Competency	Spring 2010	National Communication Association Speaking Competencies Guidelines	Score at the "acceptable" level on appropriate traits of the rubric*	N=12 This was demonstrated in the oral performances by the students on their Capstone projects. The final grades were determined using the following: Rubric for oral assignments in CMM Core Curriculum: a. Organization/Content b. Non-verbal/Paralanguage c. Language d. Eye Contact e. Overall Delivery 88% of the students received grades of B or A.	These results were determined based on the 'juried' evaluations by the faculty as a whole. This practice appears to work well no plans for change are being considered at this time.