Marshall University

Course Title/Number	**Communication Foundations (CT)** **CMM 201**
Semester/Year	Spring 2014
Days/Time	Tuesday & Thursday, 11:00 am – 12:15 pm
Location	Smith Hall 227
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Office/Hours	Monday 1:00 - 3:00 pm Tuesday 12:30 - 1:30 & 3:30 - 6:00 pm Wednesday 1:00 - 3:00 pm Thursday 12:30 - 1:30 & 3:30 - 5:00 pm Other times by appointment.
University Policies	By enrolling in this course, you agree to the University Policies listed below. Please read the full text of each policy by going to www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs and clicking on "Marshall University Policies." Or, you can access the policies directly by going to http://www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs/?page_id=802 Academic Dishonesty/ Excused Absence Policy for Undergraduates/ Computing Services Acceptable Use/ Inclement Weather/ Dead Week/ Students with Disabilities/ Academic Forgiveness/ Academic Probation and Suspension/ Academic Rights and Responsibilities of Students/ Affirmative Action/ Sexual Harassment

Course Description, From Catalog

Develops essential skills in reading and critically analyzing scholarly texts, and in writing academic papers.

This course meets Core 1 critical thinking requirements.

Course Philosophy, From the Instructor

Sometimes it's the little things that mess you up, when you're working on a paper. And maybe they're actually not so little, when it comes down to it.

Maybe your writing mechanics have gotten a little sloppy, since you last studied grammar and punctuation in grade school. (Or maybe your school didn't even offer serious training in the intricacies of the English language—*eek!*) Maybe all your college profs figured you'd learn about citation formats in some other prof's course. And maybe, since personal computers have become cheap and powerful, you figure that spell-check and grammar-check are good enough substitutes for doing your own proofreading.

So now your papers are coming back decorated with red ink and you're hearing the repeated comment—phrased a little nicer than this, of course—that you better get your writing skills up to a professional level. In your spare time after all your required coursework. (Spare time—*yeah, right.*)

But wait—there's more. Big things can hurt you, too—foundational skills in critical thinking. Maybe you're not altogether clear about the difference between a topic and a thesis, or not familiar with the structured ways a skilled writer can use evidence to support a thesis he or she is arguing. Or maybe nobody ever told you that *argumentation*, in the scholarly meaning of the word, is actually a *good* thing to do—and there are a variety of ways to do it well. And that it's important to be able to see the difference between a good argument and a bad argument, when somebody's trying to sell you on an idea.

Maybe you can Google up a big pile of sources for a paper, but you can't tell what's good from what's ~~total garbage~~ inferior quality. Or maybe you've learned that using the academic databases instead of the generic search engines will at least restrict the hit list to material your profs say is OK to use, but you still don't quite know what to do with all that ~~stupid crap~~ scholarly material once you've gotten it—so you wind up with a paper that's essentially a bunch of quotations glued together with close paraphrases. And even though it's not plagiarism, you're not confident you know exactly what you said in the paper, if you said anything at all of your own.

Hey—maybe the problem isn't just about writing. Maybe you find yourself staring at page after page of assigned reading, and it's all starting to blur and you can't make sense of it no matter how hard you try. At best you can memorize enough of the stuff to get by, but your gut tells you that you don't really *understand* it. And if your life depended on it, you might not be able to explain what that stuff on the page has to do with real life—if anything.

Relax, pilgrim. You're not alone, I assure you.

We're talking about literacy as the set of essential input/processing/output routines for your brain—the *communication foundations* that enable you to truly think independently and critically. By no means is it a walk in the park to attain a high degree of intellectual performance, but it just might be one of the best things you'll ever do for yourself. This

course is designed to refine—or create—the crucial skills in acquiring information, thinking critically and incisively about it, and sharing your thoughts as a work of your own creation.

CMM Program Student Learning Outcomes

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.

Relationships Among Course, Program, and Degree Profile Outcomes

Course Outcomes	**How Accomplished in this Course**	**How Evaluated in this Course**	**CMM Program Outcomes**	**MU Degree Profile Outcomes**
Students will understand the nature of argumentation (i.e., reasoning to support a conclusion).	Textbook readings; lectures and explanations; in-class writing activities.	Weekly quizzes; midterm exam; final exam; formal written assignments.	7	• integrative thinking
Students will be familiar with common types of arguments and fallacies.	Textbook readings; lectures and explanations; in-class writing activities; formal written assignments.	Weekly quizzes; midterm exam; final exam; formal written assignments.	7	• inquiry-based thinking • communication fluency
Students will skillfully sequence	Lectures and explanations;	Formal written assignments.	2, 7	• information literacy • communication

ideas and structure written work.	in-class writing activities; formal written assignments.			fluency • creative thinking
Students will independently evaluate logical warrants and evidence.	Textbook readings; lectures and explanations; in-class writing activities; formal written assignments.	Formal written assignments.	7	• inquiry-based thinking
Students will understand the grammatical conventions of English.	Textbook readings; lectures and explanations; formal written assignments.	Weekly quizzes; midterm exam; final exam.	2	• communication fluency

Required Texts, Additional Reading, and Other Materials

1. Anderson, C. E., Carrell, A. T., & Widdifield, Jr., J. L. (2007). *What Every Student Should Know About Citing Sources with APA Documentation*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

2. Cooper, S. D. (2006). *Watching the Watchdog*. Spokane, WA: Marquette.

3. Eggenschwiler, J., & Biggs, E. D. (2001). *Writing: Grammar, Usage, and Style*. New York, NY: Wiley.

4. Weston, A. (2000). *A Rulebook for Arguments* (4th ed.). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.

5. Your choice of good-quality collegiate dictionary.

Recommended Materials

You can use these web tutorials to help with APA format conventions:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/
http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx

Course Requirements / Due Dates

All assignments and deliverables are described in the course calendar, below.

Make This a Habit

Learn this four-step technique for reading course materials. It's probably different from what you're used to doing, and there's a good chance you'll find it works much better.

- First browse the entire passage you've been assigned. Let your eyes go where they want to: check out the headings, bold-faced terms, diagrams and figures, whatever paragraphs catch your attention. Just get a general sense of what's in it.

- Next, look for summary materials the book might include. There may be an overview at the beginning, a wrap-up at the end, a glossary of key terms, a bullet list of take-away ideas. Use these to get a good sense of what's in the passage.

- Then read through the assignment in sequence. Take your time with this. Highlight passages, make margin notes in the book, write things down in your notebook. By all means, mark up your books! You own them, and this will help you tremendously in learning the material.

- Finally, make notes about things you don't fully understand in the reading. Ask about these things, in class.

Oh—and keep your dictionary handy. Stop and look up any unfamiliar word, when you're doing the third step. How else can you figure out what the sentence actually means, eh?

This four-step process won't require much more time, but I think you'll find you have a far better grasp of the material as a result. Try it and see.

As an added bonus, you even get points for bringing those notes (the fourth step) to class. Wow! Here's the 411 on these *reading notes*:

Handwritten is fine. Keep a notepad with you as you do the reading, and jot down questions about passages, puzzlements of any sort, *eureka!* moments, and *yeah, but...* moments. Be sure to note the page numbers for the passages that prompt your reactions. Put your name on the top, and turn it in at the class when that reading is due.

Plagiarism

The rapid development of the World Wide Web has opened a great many wonderful opportunities to all of us. It has also made it easier than ever to misrepresent someone else's work as our own.

Don't do it.

Plagiarism is a fool's shortcut. Not only do you cheat yourself of the opportunity to learn and grow, but you expose yourself to severe academic penalties.

Plagiarism is dishonest. There's a saying that sincerity inspires respect. Even if nobody catches you, you'll still know you cheated. Earn your self-respect through your own hard work.

There's little opportunity for plagiarism in this course; check out the assignments and that will be apparent. But after you're done with this course, you'll never even be tempted to "borrow" someone else's work. You'll be having way too much fun thinking for yourself and putting your thoughts into your own words.

Grading Criteria for the Weekly Assignments

Each of the weekly written assignments is worth a maximum of 50 points toward your course grade. The draft you bring to the first meeting of the week is worth up to 10 points. The final version you turn in at the second meeting can get you up to 40 additional points, like this:

Writing mechanics: 10 points.
Includes spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, word choice, general appearance of the page.

Relevance: 10 points.
How well your paper accomplishes the specified task.

Concepts: 20 points.
How skillfully your paper uses the course concepts and terms to get the job done.

So, essentially, there are 50 points riding on each of the numbered assignments described in the course calendar, below.

The Course Grade

Here are the point values which add up to your course grade:

In-class scribbles	50 points, in all	50 possible
Written Assignments	12 @ 40 points	480 possible
Drafts	12 @ 10 points	120 possible
Midterm Exam	1 @ 100 points	100 possible
Final Exam	1 @ 100 points	100 possible
Quizzes	100 points, in all	100 possible
Reading Notes	50 points, in all	50 possible
Total		1,000 possible

A = 900-1,000
B = 800—899
C = 700—799
D = 600—699
F = below 600

Attendance Policy, a/k/a Ground Rules and Tough Love

I reserve the right to reject assignments after their due dates pass. If you know you'll have trouble making a deadline on any of the work, get in touch with me *in advance* so we can make some arrangement. The key to success in this course is simple: take the course seriously, and think ahead.

That makes the attendance policy obvious, too: if you take this course, come to class. The penalty for blowing off class is losing the knowledge you would have gained from our activity that day, and losing the points you would have earned toward your grade that day.

That's the *tough* part. Here's the *love* part: if something is going on in your life such that you know you will not be able to attend a particular class, contact me in advance of that meeting. I will be glad to meet with you during office hours to keep you up to date.

The same logic applies to the written work. If you know that you'll have a problem with a due date, contact me in advance so we can work something out. Missing a deadline and then making lame excuses just won't cut it. If you don't turn in a written assignment when it's due you get a zero. Ouch! Don't hurt yourself like that, K?

You can understand what I mean, then, by calling this *tough love*. I sincerely care about your success in this course. But if I were to let you get away with doing less than your best in this course, or to give you the impression that life is about doing the minimum necessary to get by, I'd be devaluing you. Again, sincerity inspires respect. I want to earn your respect, and I hope you want to earn mine.

Remember that you are a student at a first-class state university, and this is a professional context for all of us. Be sure the papers you turn in reflect your professionalism. Your written assignments (both the draft and the final versions) must be typed, double spaced, with normal margins and font size. The quality of your thinking is the most critical aspect of your written work; there's no need to blow smoke, ever. Be sure your name, the course number, and the number of the assignment are at the top of the page.

When you're having trouble with an assignment or you know you won't make a deadline, don't suffer in silence. Call me! That's what I'm here for. My office hours are listed on this syllabus, and we can meet other times by appointment.

Here's what it all comes down to:

My job is to create an environment in which you can succeed.

Your job is to succeed.

Motivation

Your success in this course is in your own hands. As in so many other activities, your commitment is crucial. At one level, this is simple: come to class, be prepared for the class, and participate in the class. At a deeper level, this is complex; only you can promise you will do that, and then do what's necessary to keep that promise to yourself.

And speaking of motivation...

On "Phoning It In"

(If you're not familiar with that expression, hit *Urban Dictionary* and look it up.)

Probably the best way to get your beloved instructor totally p*ssed off at you is play around with your smart phone during class. Let's cut to the chase here: if you're fiddling with your Droid, iPhone, or whatever, you're not paying attention to what we're doing in class. Turn it off when class starts, and put it away.

We've got serious business to do, here.

Course Calendar

Week 1

January 14

We'll do the usual introductory stuff. Go buy the books—now!

January 16

- Reading

  The syllabus. Read it carefully, and mull over your personal goals for this course. Jot down any puzzlements you have about the course.

Week 2

January 21

- Reading

  Spend some quality time with all four of the books. Do the first step of the four-step procedure for reading scholarly text: browse the material.
- Bring to Class

  Bring to this class a paper (or two) of yours which gave you trouble in some way, or with which you're dissatisfied.
- Reading notes
- Draft of #1

January 23

- Writing #1

  Based on your browsing, what material in Weston and Eggenschwiler/Biggs looks most useful to you? Do a separate section—with a heading—for each book. Then do an overall summary, with its own heading: a bullet list of the top five items, rank-ordered, with rationale. Get personal; relate this stuff to your needs and current abilities.

Week 3

January 28

- Reading

  Weston: intro, ch. 1.
  Eggenschwiler/Biggs: intro, ch. 1, 2. Do the chapter checkouts*, for practice, and mark the answers in the book.*
  Watchdog: go back and browse the entire book, with the writing assignment in mind.
- Reading notes
- Draft of #2

January 30

- Writing #2

  Choose a passage in Watchdog which contains an argument, as Weston defined that term. (Hint: check the Introduction, Economics of Blogs, and Public Sphere chapters for arguments by the book's author—but the bloggers are quoted making various arguments throughout the book.)

  Do three things, each in its own section with its own heading:

  (1) Quote the passage but edit it, so that only the essential elements of the

argument are left. Use ellipses to indicate where you've taken words out. In this section, only words from the original text appear, but not all of the words in the original.

(2) Reduce the argument to its essential logical components, in your own words. Paraphrase the original argument as concisely as possible, while still including all the essential elements of the argument.

(3) Comment on the original passage with regard to each of Weston's six rules in ch. 1. A bullet list is appropriate for this section.

Week 4

February 4

- Reading

  Weston: ch. 2, 3.
  Eggenschwiler/Biggs: ch. 3, 4. Do the chapter checkouts*, for practice.*
  Watchdog: the Introduction.
- Reading notes
- Draft of #3

February 6

- Writing #3

  Consider the Introduction of Watchdog as an argument by analogy, making some claim (i.e., reaching a conclusion) about the structural relationship of the blogosphere to the mainstream media. Do these things, each in its own section with its own heading:

  (1) State that conclusion in your own words, then quote the sentences in Dog which state it or imply it.

  (2) List the points of similarity (between the blogosphere and the MSM) which the author mentions as support of the analogy. Also mention any other similarities you can add.

  (3) List differences between the blogosphere and the MSM which the author might note in the chapter. Likewise go on to mention dissimilarities you can add.

Week 5

February 11

- Reading

  Weston: ch. 4.
  Eggenschwiler/Biggs: ch. 5, 6. Do the chapter checkouts*, for practice. Also read pp. 155-157.*
- Reading notes
- Draft of #4

February 13

- Writing #4

  Do a topic outline of ch. 2 in Watchdog. Start at the chapter level and work down just to the level of particular media controversy. (Hint: you only need browse the chapter to be able to do this!)

Week 6

February 18

- Reading

  Weston: ch. 5, 6.
  Eggenschwiler/Biggs: ch. 7. Do the chapter checkout*, for practice.*
  Watchdog: the Rathergate scandal, pp. 54-77.
- Reading notes
- Draft of #5

February 20

- Writing #5

  Think of the controversy over the purported National Guard memos as an extended, complex, deductive argument; the conclusion is that the memos on which 60 Minutes based its reporting were forgeries. (Note that the book author isn't making that argument, himself; the bloggers are.) Take this big long argument apart into smaller, discrete syllogisms related, in some way, to that conclusion. For each component argument, state in your own words its major and minor premises. If it's an enthymeme, supply the implied premise. (This passage resembles the Sherlock Holmes example in rule #28 of Weston, right?)

  Put each component argument into its own graf, and include page references to indicate the corresponding passages in Watchdog. Mark the implied premises, where you've supplied them.

Week 7

February 25

- Reading
  Weston: ch. 7, 8, 9.
  Eggenschwiler/Biggs: ch. 8, 9. Do the chapter checkouts*, for practice.*
  Watchdog: ch. 2.
- Reading notes
- Draft of #6

February 27

- Writing #6
  Chapter 6 of Eggenschwiler/Biggs described various types of phrases and clauses. In this assignment you'll look for examples of these constructions in the introductory passage of the Watchdog section on memes (middle of p. 97 through the first full graf of p. 99).

  So, you're looking for these kinds of phrases: prepositional, participial, gerund, and infinitive. You're looking for independent clauses, and also for these kinds of subordinate clauses: relative, noun, and adverbial.

  Set up a two-level bullet list of all those constructions. For each, quote a Dog passage which is an example of it. If a particular construction doesn't appear in the passage, say so.

  Wrap the paper up with a different bullet list. (Distinguish the two with separate headings, K?). Decide which three constructions are most frequent in that Dog passage. List them, and for each of the three quote three examples of it in the passage.

Week 8

March 4

- Reading
  Weston: appendices I and II.
  Eggenschwiler/Biggs: ch. 10, 11, 12. Do the chapter checkouts*, for practice.*
  Watchdog: ch. 6.
- Reading notes
- Draft of #7

March 6

- Writing #7

  Consider the Economics of Blogs chapter as a complex, extended argument that bloggers are rational actors. List the various bits of evidence (including smaller, component arguments—i.e., premises which themselves need to be supported) the author presents for that conclusion.

  What type of argument, in Weston's terminology, does it seem to be? Say why you see it that way. You get bonus points for noting limitations of the argument or identifying counterexamples!

Week 9

March 11

- Reading

  Review everything we've read so far in Weston and Eggenschwiler/Biggs. (No need for reading notes.)

March 13

- *Today we knock off the dreaded midterm exam.*

☺ ***Yahooie! It's spring break...***

Week 10

March 25

- Reading

  Anderson, Carrell, & Widdifield. Read it slowly and carefully!

  And spend some quality time with both these online tutorials:
  http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/
  http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx
- Reading notes
- Draft of #8

March 27

- Writing #8

  Choose one of your own papers with a lengthy reference list; copy the reference list into this assignment. Annotate each work in the list, with regard to the way the entry is formatted. Correct boogered entries: show before and after versions, and explain the revisions you made. Affirm correct entries: say why they were correct, just as they were.

  From the same paper, choose six citations in text. Reproduce the complete sentence in which they appeared. Do the same thing: fix them if they were wrong, stand by them if they were right.

Week 11

April 1

- Reading

  Spend some quality time on these pages:

  http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/544/01/
  http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Topic_outline
- Reading notes
- Draft of #9

April 3

- Writing #9

  Do a topic outline of one of your own course papers, just the way you submitted it. If you see some logically misplaced passages in the outline, indicate them and say where'd you move them. If your material was badly sequenced overall, write an entirely new outline covering the same material. Attach a copy of the paper, so I can compare the outline to the full text.

Week 12

April 8

- Reading

  Eggenschwiler/Biggs: ch. 13, 14, 15, 16.
  Watchdog: Introduction.
- Reading notes
- Draft of #10

April 10

- Writing #10

  Do a topic outline of the Introduction in Watchdog.

Week 13

April 15

- Reading

  Watchdog: ch. 8.
- Reading notes (the last set!)
- Draft of #11

April 17

- Writing #11

  Do a topic outline of the Public Sphere chapter in Watchdog. Go at least three levels deep, throughout.

Week 14

April 22

- Reading

  Review all of the readings. Bring notes on material you want to go over again, before the final exam.
- Draft of #12

April 24

- Writing #12

  How has knowledge or skill from this course made a difference in a paper in another course, this semester? (Assumption: that it has, in fact!) Be specific, and give concrete illustrations. Big breakthroughs are great, but don't overlook small refinements, either.

Dead Week

April 29

- Reading

  Review all the material in Weston, and Egg & Biggs. Also review the APA materials, both the book and the online tutorial.

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