

Millikin University
Student Learning in the Communication Major
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2016-2017

Executive Summary

The Department of Communication at Millikin University is committed to providing a market-smart, challenging, and high quality major to students with a variety of professional and personal aspirations. We celebrate and inform our students about the wide variety of ways a major in communication can prepare them for a future life of meaning and value.

Communication is about the construction of meaning between people and their various stakeholders: friends, families, professional colleagues, communities, and more. The study of communication focuses on understanding the symbols and the processes that construct those meanings, whether the symbol is a word, a gesture, a song, a billboard, a website, or any other meaning-generating object in our world. We also examine the relationship of those symbols to the people who use them. We examine the pragmatic and ethical principles that guide people's communicative choices. We apply this learning to our personal and professional lives.

Consequently, the University's goals of professional success, citizenship in a global environment, and a life of personal meaning and value are manifest in the Communication department's goal to enable students to become effective problem-solvers, critics, and practitioners in their personal and professional communities. This is accomplished through classroom learning, research projects and practical application of service learning, internship projects, and media lab activities that help make these abstract ideas come alive.

Student skills and knowledge are assessed using a variety of techniques in the Department of Communication. Information is gathered through various sources and contexts: student exit interviews, internship evaluations, course evaluations, assignment evaluations, and the senior year capstone course and portfolio.

This past year work focused on five areas: 1) Onboarding of new assistant professor, Dr. Amy Delaney; 2) Assessment of the curriculum based on the required ethics course (CO 308); 3) Continued planning to move WJMU to the forthcoming new student center; 4) Review/evaluation of public speaking textbook; the Communication Department provides courses for the oral communication requirement in the university studies curriculum.

First, Dr. Amy Delaney joined the department in August 1, 2016. She is a great, strong addition to the department. During this past year, Dr. Delaney taught new and current, required classes for the department as well as started to advise new majors.

Second, this report includes new assessment data of CO 308, Communication Ethics & Freedom of Expression. This assessment of CO 308 is delineated and discussed on page 14 of this report

Third, the WJMU General Manager continued discussions and planning for the future location site of WJMU. It was finalized that WJMU will re-locate to the new forthcoming student center opening in Fall 2017.

Finally, work focused on reviewing and evaluating textbooks for CO 200, Public Speaking. The department felt that a new textbook was needed due to the price of the current one. The Communication Department provides the basic course, public speaking courses that fulfill the oral studies requirement in the university curriculum. Historically and currently, the department chair has been serving to also coordinate the basic course so the chair's time and effort was focused on this also.

Communication Department Goals

The drive to communicate forms the basis for human social behavior and is a critical element of any organization or field of employment, regardless of technological advancement or changes. Our department's commitment to the University mission of preparing students for professional success, democratic citizenship in a global environment, and a personal life of meaning and value is accomplished through a variety of discipline-specific learning objectives. Graduates with a Communication degree achieve the goal of professional success by becoming effective problem-solvers, critics, and practitioners in their professional communities. Our objective in addressing democratic citizenship in a global environment is to help students develop an appreciation for the power of symbols, awareness of the complexity of ethical choices in communication endeavors, and an understanding of the opportunities and constraints of technology. Classroom experiences, service learning, and internships are designed to challenge everyday assumptions about communication in a rapidly changing world. Finally, our objective in addressing a personal life of meaning and value is to enable students to become effective problem-solvers, critics, and practitioners in their personal communities.

More precisely, upon graduation, students who major in Communication will be able to demonstrate communicative competence in three areas:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate in personal, scholarly, and professional contexts through appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and mediated formats before diverse and varied audiences.
2. Students will distinguish the theories pertinent to communication studies and demonstrate the skills needed to create, present, analyze, and evaluate messages in relevant contexts.
3. Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills when generating, consuming, and evaluating messages in communication contexts.

Successful majors in Communication move into careers in media, sales, training and development, public relations, recruiting, human resources, business, and publishing. Recent graduates are currently pursuing graduate work, working for radio and TV stations, planning media events, working in universities, organizing PR campaigns, etc. A strong liberal arts background and intensive work in all aspects of communication uniquely qualify communication graduates for these positions. We expect that majors who have mastered the program learning

objectives will, at a minimum, be successfully employed in their chosen field and/or successfully perform in any master’s or doctoral program.

These departmental learning goals match well with Millikin's University-wide learning goals:

1. Millikin students will prepare for professional success.
2. Millikin students will actively engage in the responsibilities of citizenship in their communities.
3. Millikin students will discover and develop a personal life of meaning and value.

The table below shows how Communication Department learning goals relate to the University-wide learning goals:

Learning Goal	Corresponding MU Learning Goal Number(s)
Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate in personal, scholarly, and/or professional contexts through appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and mediated formats.	1, 3
Students will distinguish the theories pertinent to communication studies and demonstrate the skills needed to create, present, analyze, and evaluate messages in relevant contexts.	1, 2
Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills when generating, consuming, and evaluating messages in relevant communication contexts.	2, 3

Communication Department Snapshot

The Communication department in 2016-2017 consisted of 4 full-time faculty and 5 adjuncts that helped deliver approximately 65 traditional and PACE classes for the year. We ended the Spring 2016 semester with 63 majors. In addition to majors and minors, we also service students throughout the University who take our courses to satisfy their general education requirements in public speaking, and sequential elements (University Seminar). Students are also required to take communication courses by the Tabor School of Business and for the secondary language arts degree requirements in the School of Education. Various faculty and programs often encourage students to take communication courses for enrichment or remedial purposes. In addition to courses in the major, Communication faculty also taught courses listed in IN 251 U.S. Studies, IN 350, Global Studies, International Cultures and Structures, January and May immersion courses, and in the PACE adult degree completion program by providing courses for the Organizational Leadership major and general education needs.

The Communication department currently occupies offices on the 4th floor of Shilling Hall and shares a secretary with the Organizational Leadership/Sociology and Math Departments. In

addition, the Communication Department has radio broadcast facility in the basement of the Richards Treat University Center, including office space for a faculty member who also serves as general manager for the radio station. Editing equipment and software have been upgraded in the two facilities in the past including automation hardware/software for the radio station in January 2009.

The Communication Major

As noted in the 2015-2016 assessment report, the Department of Communication completed a self-study of its current curriculum and successfully passed through University governance a new curriculum structure that went into effect Fall 2015. After thorough review of existing classes and curriculum structure, three concentrations were modified and adjustments were made in the curriculum in areas of writing and ethics. The three concentrations (Media Studies, Public Relations, and Organizational Communication) now reflect a stronger, diverse, flexible and more in-depth curriculum targeted to that concentration. The diversity and choice of course options allows some flexibility for majors to complete a concentration even if they declare the major relatively late in their college tenure. There still remains a general studies option in the major for those not wanting to declare a concentration.

Immediately prior to the curriculum review and redesign, we dropped a fourth concentration, Sports Communication. Given the number of faculty and their teaching expertise, it was not feasible to offer a quality, in-depth Sports Communication concentration.

As of Spring 2016, there were 63 majors with about 37% declaring a concentration (23 majors). The breakdown of students in those concentrations shows the distribution of interest in each although students are taking courses throughout the Communication department curriculum in electives and for other professional reasons. The group ending in Spring 2017 (which does reflect graduating Spring 2017 seniors) included: 10 Public Relations; 0 Organizational Communication; 10 Mass Media; 40 without a concentration designation. Many students do not identify a concentration until late in the process, but the current distribution shows where the bulk of the students see their professional aspirations heading.

As of Fall 2011, Communication majors have the opportunity to complete their communication program with a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Sciences (B.S.) degree. This option was created to allow students access to a degree program that was more appropriate to their skills, professional aspirations, and academic preparation. This option is also seen as an advantage to students transferring into the department from other universities/colleges or other majors at Millikin. This change has been very successful for student access to the major. The 2016-17 group of majors have approximately 22 students with the B.S. degree, and 41 with the B.A. Other double majors might have a program in another college.

Oral Communication: General Education Requirement

In the Fall of 2007, the Millikin University faculty passed a new curricular structure including general education requirements. All students must now have an oral communication course under the new general education requirements. This requirement began with students entering Millikin University in the Fall of 2008. Thus, the university is entering into its 8th year with this requirement.

In the 2016-2017 academic year, the Department offered 26 sections of oral communication courses (CO 200, CO 230 and CO 242) The breakdown is as follows:

Term	CO 200	CO 230	CO 242
Fall 2016	11 sections	2 sections	1 section
Spring 2017	7 sections	3 sections	1 section
Summer 2017	1 section		

Part-time, adjunct teachers taught most of these sections, with the exception of three sections of the oral communication requirement. Even though this approach to deliver the oral communication program is seemingly cost-effective, it is not without other "costs" or ramifications. Although the department values the quality and commitment of its adjunct faculty, the lack of administrative support for a faculty member to oversee and coordinate this general education requirement does not demonstrate strong commitment to this general education requirement. The department chair contributes to some basic course coordination, but it is very minimal and not an optimal situation. What is needed is a faculty member who is compensated to serve as basic course coordinator. The current full time faculty generally cannot contribute significantly to the oral communication requirement teaching load without further eroding the access students in the major have to terminal degreed faculty.

Communication Department Learning Story

The Communication Department combines diverse perspectives to investigate the social creation and management of meaning through delivery of the Communication major, B.A. or B.S. degree. The major in communication builds upon a critical foundation that blends theory, methodology, and practice to prepare students for more serious study in their own area of interest. We study the interplay of messages and audience in a variety of contexts. Students develop an appreciation for the power of symbols, awareness of the complexity of ethical choices in communication endeavors, and an understanding of the opportunities and constraints of technology. Course work in theory and methods are central to the investigation and understanding of communication processes provides majors with tools for more intensive study in areas such as media production, public relations, organizational culture, and social issues. Thus, our curriculum and its corresponding pedagogy fully incorporate the University's mission of professionalism, citizenship, and a life of meaning and value, and it is intentionally designed to challenge everyday assumptions about communication in a rapidly changing world.

The Communication major ending in spring 2017 consists of a minimum of 39-40 credit hours, consisting of 21 hours in the core (required of all Communication majors) and 18-19 hours of Communication electives, depending on the concentration chosen. Regardless of the concentration chosen, at least 12 of the 18-19 credit hours of which should be numbered 300 or above. In the core courses, one course, the oral communication course, is required both for the major and for the MPSL university requirements. Thus, this course "double dips" for both. So technically, the major is 36-37 credit hours of additional Communication classes.

All communication majors begin their studies with an introduction to communication theory, after which they may select any required and elective course work, provided the prerequisites for the higher-level courses are completed. There are a few courses that do build onto each

other in stages, for example: public relations, video or radio production, organizational communication, and media courses.

Majors are required to use an internship experience to round out their classroom experience. The internship requirement is also an important part of the learning process for our majors. This requirement contributes to developing the student's goal of achieving professional success after graduation. It also supports the University's mission of performance learning. Our students practice their communication training in real life situations and for actual organizations. The department generates significant credit hours through internship experiences. For 2015-2016 (summer and fall 2015; spring 2016), students generated 113 credit hours for internships. This requirement is unique on this campus, and it has been an asset for students seeking employment after graduation. To that end, the department has a communication department internship coordinator who assists students in fulfilling this objective. Thus, communication majors are able to tailor their major both to explore their interests and construct a plan of study germane to their intellectual and career interests.

New to the Communication Major in Fall 2016

There are four new features to the Communication major as a result of the curriculum redesign in 2015. They are delineated as follows:

- 1) Added a two-hour course, CO 210, Communication Career Lab as a core course. This course provides an opportunity to explore a career using the Communication degree as well as prepares students for working in an internship and professional environment. Because there are many career options with a Communication degree, students often have trouble knowing about these and discerning which is best for them. Furthermore, we want to prepare students for professional behavior in the workplace prior to starting an internship. Therefore, we created this two-hour course taught every year in the spring. The goal is for students to take it their sophomore year and/or before they begin an internship.
- 2) All Communication majors must earn a C or above in four core courses:
 - CO 101, Introduction to Communication Theory
 - CO 200, Public Speaking or CO 230, Business Conversations (either fulfills the oral communication requirement)
 - CO 204, Communication Research Methods
 - Writing course, any writing course beyond IN 150/IN 151

Communication faculty felt strongly that Communication majors must be proficient in theory, speaking, writing and research in order to earn a Communication major. Therefore, we implemented these requirements.

- 3) Redesigned the concentrations to add more depth, rigor and flexibility. There are three concentrations (more details follow): Media Studies, Public Relations and Organizational Communication. Each concentration requires 12 of the 18-19 hours to be 300/400 level hours. Each concentration has four parts: A) Introductory course(s); B) Contexts courses; C) Platforms and Practices courses and D) Culminating Experience course. Each concentration has some choices of courses for B and C.

- 4) Restructured the general studies option to also require 12 of the 18 credit hours be 300/400 level.

WJMU Activities Report (2016-2017)

It has been another exciting and productive year at WJMU. While a significant portion of the administrative and logistic tasks involved in the station's management during this academic term were focused toward WJMU's move to the University Commons site, personnel, production, and programming aspects all provided highlights in the station's final year in RTUC. In many respects, this was a banner year.

Personnel

The WJMU student staff included over 25 members, performing various tasks in hosting, promotion, and administrative duties. The student executive board was comprised of eight highly experienced staff members, all of whom demonstrated the tenets of performance learning in operating the station and managing their student peers. While enrollment in the introduction course to radio was quantitatively reduced, the quality programming produced by enthusiastic novice DJs (many of them freshmen) was notable. Additionally, participation from Millikin faculty increased dramatically during the academic term. New programming provided by Drs. Lambert, Kovalcik, and Blanco, covering various aspects of the faculty experience, joined the long-running Spanish-language programming delivered by Dr. Cabrera.

Production

As noted above, quality production during the academic term was created by both new radio students and experienced DJs and Executive Board members. Executive staff submitted nine various elements of programming produced in the calendar year 2016 to the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System Awards panel. Two submissions were honored as national finalists in the "Best Show Promo" and "Best Station Contest" categories. In these Finalist categories entries from Millikin were in direct competition with submissions from both our regional peer and aspiration schools and nationally recognized Research One institutions.

These nominations lead to a third consecutive year of Student Executive cohort travel to the IBS Conference and Awards Ceremony in New York City. This conference represents one of the largest gatherings of national college radio personnel, and is a tremendous opportunity for MU students to network and interact with their peers from other non-commercial stations and media professionals in the country's largest media market. Our Executive Board represented Millikin and WJMU at round table sessions and attended lectures and presentations from some of the most qualified broadcasters and educators in their respective fields. Representation from WJMU at this event maintains both our station's reputation in the national college radio community and our place as a performance learning leader here on campus. The experience and national recognition for Millikin's brand of performance learning are of great value.

Programming

Supplementing the outstanding regular programming from Millikin students and faculty during the previous year, specialty programming created by the CO 314 Advanced Production and Performance class deserves particular recognition. After listening to the fictionalized investigative journalism podcast "Limetown" the students in the class decided to make their own fictionalized account of investigative reporting on the Millikin campus. The resulting five-

episode program, "Tunneling," was one of the most intensive and well-executed pieces of production created at WJMU studios in the past decade, and will certainly be a submission for next year's IBS Awards.

Final Note

In addition to the tremendous work and efforts noted above that was completed by the student staff, particular recognition should be given to the Executive Board members. These students' various efforts combined to justify the significant SAFAC allocations secured to assist in making the new WJMU facility a continued model of performance learning on campus. While there are a number of technical projects on the immediate horizon for WJMU, in many ways their hard work during the past year set a cornerstone for the future of the station.

The Communication Department, Version 2.0

As stated earlier, the department revised its curriculum in 2014-2015 in light of data and experience through self-evaluation, student feedback, and industry and disciplinary trends. The new curriculum structure offers clear concentrations in three areas of the major, it expands its emphasis on written communication skills, requires an internship experience for the professional development of all majors, and integrates ethical reasoning into the department's core course requirements. Our concentration programs have been a way to improve our major in the following ways:

- Students have a stronger identity for their major and professional goals.
- The concentrations have aided in the process of advising majors.
- The concentrations have directed students to take more advanced coursework in their areas instead of a general set of choices.
- The concentrations also help to recruit new students. Many of our applicants identify a specific concentration in their admissions profile.

The three concentrations are designed to help students find greater meaning and interconnectedness in their curricular choices. Any students, for whom these concentrations do not fully meet their requirements, may choose another combination of courses with the consent of their advisor and the department chair. The concentrations and their professional intentions include:

- **Public Relations:** Communication careers in public relations include a wide variety of professional settings in corporations, non-profit organizations, professional associations, government agencies, and public relations firms. Students combine coursework in public relations, organizational communication, advanced writing courses, and applied internship experiences to prepare them for successful careers.
- **Media Studies:** Media students focus on radio and/or television production in addition to theory and professional practice in the media environment. Many media majors are involved with the student-run radio station, WJMU or the campus newspaper, *The Decaturian*.
- **Organizational Communication:** Students in the organizational communication track develop communications skills vital for the professional workplace. Coursework in leadership, conflict management, organizational communication and small group

communication prepare students for a wide range of careers. Courses in management, marketing, and other areas from the University may be incorporated into this major track.

Throughout these concentrations we have expanded the writing requirements for many majors, incorporated a senior-level internship experience, and approved inclusion of courses from other departments that might enhance our own concentrations including coursework from the departments of Art, English, Psychology, Entrepreneurship and Marketing. Our students are also required to complete a 1-credit capstone course in conjunction with the internship experience designed to provide reflection, assessment, and preparation for future professional activities.

A communication program in the twenty-first century must be prepared to engage every facet of communicative competency from the physiology of sign production to the politics of institution formation and legitimation. A fully functional university program in communication must provide:

- First courses, non-remedial first courses, appropriate to the maturity and self-reflective habits of traditional university aged students and adult learners, instilling meta-vocabularies of risk, effects, and critique
- Skill courses, especially in the arts of public communication
- Intermediate and advanced courses, with special support for skill building, in interpersonal, small group, and organizational communication
- Initial and advanced courses in media production
- Specific preparation for the norms and standards of specific communication professions and industries
- Research methods training
- Creative outlets for student performance
- Courses in discourse in historical and comparative contexts, especially as related to the dominant institutions of society
- Ample opportunities to practice communication skills and knowledge in real world settings, to engage in performance learning in the spirit of the Millikin University mission
- Developing leadership for communication industries

The Millikin Department of Communication has done all of these things, and the current faculty see tremendous demand that it does these things more, and in increasingly sophisticated market-driven ways, and that there are extraordinary opportunities that remain to express leadership in communication education and win the rewards that go with that leadership.

Performance Learning in the Communication Major

Performance learning in the Communication major occurs in various classes. Some of the classes with performance learning include the following:

- CO 204, Communication Research Methods
- CO 341, Survey of Organizational Communication
- CO 342, Training & Technology Applications in Organizations
- CO 332, Gender Communication
- CO 432, Intercultural Communication
- CO 360, Health Communication

- CO 401, Topics in Persuasion: Environmental Advocacy
- CO 480, Internship
- CO 481, Communication Capstone

Specifically, these are classes that have completed projects and presented to external audiences (third-party, not peers who are taking the class also). There are some semesters in which some of these classes may not have this third-party component because of varying circumstances, such as lack of accessibility in securing a project or a new professor who has yet to develop an external project, etc. In short, while the Communication Department has many performance-learning courses, sometimes there is some variability.

There are other Communication courses that consistently incorporate a presentation component of presenting to peers in the classroom, like CO 200, Public Speaking; CO 230, Business Conversations, and most other Communication courses.

Assessment Methods & Analysis of Assessment Results

The Communication Department assesses student skills and knowledge using a variety of techniques. One of our assessment goals is to create a consistent, ongoing assessment process to improve the quality and quantity of data useful to our department for program development and growth. Assessment data will be gathered from the following sources and contexts:

- **Student Interviews:** A random sample of students is interviewed each year. These have included exit interviews for graduating seniors, discussions held with student leadership, and student feedback provided in the capstone course.
- **Internship Evaluations:** Communication majors are encouraged to have at least one internship experience. At the end of the internship, students, supervisors, and the faculty advisor evaluates the intern's performance. These evaluations will provide us with data from several different perspectives about the students' professional competence and their ability to apply coursework in the professional arena. The internship advisor also collects informal data as she places student interns and checks in with employers.
- **Assignment Evaluations:** Assessment of particular assignments to track implementation of learning goals is planned. Each year, a select set of courses and assignments will be evaluated for their contribution to the major and to student learning.
- **Student Activities/Experiences:** Assessment of experiential activities will also take place at regular intervals to assess the contributions of departmental opportunities outside of the traditional classroom. The student radio station provides on-campus media experience to students, both majors and non-majors. Lambda Pi Eta provides students with professional exposure and networking opportunities.
- **Capstone Project/Course:** All graduating seniors are to prepare a portfolio of their work at Millikin with a focus on their major. The department plans to assess these portfolios as an individual assignment and as a measure of meeting the goals of the department. Additional assignments in the capstone course may also be assessed.

Based on our departmental learning goals, a curriculum map has been created to illustrate the contributions of individual courses to student learning.

Core Courses	Learning Goal #1 Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate in personal, scholarly, and/or professional contexts through appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and mediated formats.	Learning Goal #2 Students will distinguish the theories pertinent to communication studies and demonstrate the skills needed to create, present, analyze, and evaluate messages in relevant contexts	Learning Goal #3 Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills when generating, consuming, and evaluating messages in relevant communication contexts.
CO 101, Introduction to Communication Theory	x	x	x
CO 200, Public Speaking; CO 230 Business Conv.	x	x	
CO 204, Communication Research Methods		x	x
CO 210, Communication Career Lab	x		
CO 308, Communication Ethics & Freedom of Expression		x	x
CO 480, Communication Internship	x	x	x
CO 481, Communication Capstone	x		x

Elective Courses	Learning Goal #1 Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate in personal, scholarly, and/or professional contexts through appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and mediated formats.	Learning Goal #2 Students will distinguish the theories pertinent to communication studies and demonstrate the skills needed to create, present, analyze, and evaluate messages in relevant contexts	Learning Goal #3 Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills when generating, consuming, and evaluating messages in relevant communication contexts.
CO 110, Introduction to Radio Industry	x		x
CO 181, WJMU Radio Laboratory	x		
CO 220, Introduction to Video Production	x	x	x
CO 225, Media History		x	x
CO 242, Bus. & Prof. Speaking	x	x	
CO 251, Introduction to Public Relations	x	x	
CO 260, Seminar in Communication		x	x
CO 306, Topics in Discourse Studies		x	x
CO 307, Argumentation & Advocacy	x	x	x
CO 310, Small Group Communication	x	x	
CO 314, Advanced Radio Production and Performance	x		x
CO 324, Advanced Video Production	x		
CO 330, Interpersonal Communication	x	x	x

Elective Courses	Learning Goal #1 Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate in personal, scholarly, and/or professional contexts through appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and mediated formats.	Learning Goal #2 Students will distinguish the theories pertinent to communication studies and demonstrate the skills needed to create, present, analyze, and evaluate messages in relevant contexts	Learning Goal #3 Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills when generating, consuming, and evaluating messages in relevant communication contexts.
CO 332, Gender Communication	x	x	x
CO 341, Survey of Organizational Communication	x	x	
CO 342, Training & Technology Applications in Organizational Comm.	x	x	x
CO 343, Communication and Conflict	x		x
CO 344, Leadership & Communication	x	x	
CO 345, Leading Organizational Change	x	x	x
CO 351, Topics in Writing for Communication Professions	x	x	x
CO 360, Seminar in Communication		x	x
CO 370, Internship	x		x
CO 391, Independent Study		x	x
CO 401 Topics in Persuasion		x	x
CO 432, Intercultural Communication	x	x	x
CO 470, Persuasion Campaigns & Performance	x	x	x

Assessment Methods and Analysis

Beginning in Fall 2015 the Department of Communication required seven experiences of every major: 1) Introduction to Communication Theory; 2) Research Methods in Communication; 3) Communication Career Lab; 4) an advanced writing course beyond the all-University IN150/151 requirement; 5) an ethics course (for most of our majors, by far, in recent years, Communication Ethics and Freedom of Expression); 6) and a senior internship and 7) capstone. It is time to begin assessing, where feasible, these experiences. In the 2014-2015 assessment report, it delineated an initial assessment of CO 101, Introduction to Communication Theory on page 12 of that report. In the 2015-2016 report, the Communication Department made initial steps in assessing CO 481, Communication Capstone. This report discusses assessment of CO 308, Communication Ethics and Freedom of Expression.

CO 308 Communication Ethics and Freedom of Expression 2017 Preliminary Assessment

The Communication Department went through a thorough curriculum revision in 1997-1998, coinciding with and meeting the departmental major requirements contained in the Millikin Plan for Student Learning (MPSL). No current member of the Communication Department faculty participated in the MPSL or Departmental curriculum revisions of that era.

One of the changes of the 1997-1998 Department curriculum was a new ethics requirement for the Communication major. From that time to this the requirement has been an "approved ethics course," and the intention is to approve any ethics course from any department, except for ethics courses taught as a part of the first-year University Seminar / University Honors Seminar (IN 140 / HN 150). For reasons that are not clear, almost every Communication major meets the requirement by taking CO 308 Communication Ethics and Freedom of Expression. A small number of students have met the requirement through a Philosophy course, and a miniscule number of students have met the requirement through a course entitled "Comparative Media Ethics" offered in recent years, in odd Fall terms, in London.

The new Communication major and the MPSL was implemented with the new students in the Fall of 1999. The assumption in the implementation was that the course would fall sometime near the end of a student's baccalaureate program. Therefore, CO308 was taught for the first time during Spring 2003, and has been offered every Spring term and only Spring terms since 2003.

CO 308 Enrollments

2003	27	2011	36
2004	34	2012	31
2005	32	2013	37
2006	31	2014	38
2007	28	2015	33
2008	31	2016	28
2009	38	2017	21
2010	36	mean / median	32.06 / 32

In addition, students who could not take the course at the regularly scheduled time took it by directed study, in this case a weekly tutorial closely following the regular course syllabus, during the Fall 2006 (1 enrolled), Spring 2008 (2), Spring 2009 (2), Fall 2014 (1), and Spring 2015 (1) terms.

It remains true that most students take the course in their third or fourth year of study at the University.

Broader Rationale

There is a felt need for "more" and "better" ethics training across the U.S. and acutely within the world of work. There is a "declinist" mentality afoot that says it is a morally decadent age. On closer examination it is more likely this is an acutely conscientious period where our "oughts" struggle to catch up with our mounting and complex "is."

The academic field of communication has always brought forward moral and civic rationales for its existence. One can see this in the ancient rhetorical tradition, especially in the writing of Aristotle, Isocrates, and Quintilian. The ethical tradition within communication studies has always been two-sided, (1) promising individual and community development, and (2) offering warning prophylaxis against exclusive, manipulative, and abusive communication. Within a few years of the founding of the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking in 1914, today's National Communication Association, the new field was explicitly absorbing progressive era civic principles adapted for the new college and university student who did not come from a socio-economically privileged background (Herman Cohen, *The History of Speech Communication: The Emergence of a Discipline, 1914-1945* [1994]; William M. Keith, *Democracy as Discussion: Civic Education and the American Forum Movement* [2007]; Pat J. Gehrke, *The Ethics and Politics of Speech: Communication and Rhetoric in the Twentieth Century* [2009]). The horror of World War I intensified the moral turn in communication thought; propaganda studies, Bruce Barton's attempt to enlist the advertising industry against war, Korzybski's general semantics, I.A. Richards's improbable definition of "rhetoric" as the study of misunderstandings and their remedies, Rosenstock-Huessy's work in bringing people from across class boundaries together through community work service, and Kenneth Burke's project on the rhetoric of motives *ad bellum purificandum* highlight the ethical turn toward communication in the inter-war years. As communication studies took off after World War II there was incredible moral excitement around seemingly ordinary but previously not at all obvious concepts such as "feedback" and the possibilities for deliberate, systematic, sustained, progressive self and social change toward heretofore barely glimpsed and unrealized human potential. The human life world could be a gently self-therapeutic place, wherein the Socratic admonition to "Know thyself" could finally be realized by more than a few people. This would not just be a private knowing but a transformation of human relationships as Eric Berne posited in *Games People Play* to new possibilities of spontaneity, intimacy, and awareness. Since the 1970s the communication studies disciplines have made a hard turn toward critical cultural theory, making profound contributions to problems in public communication, gender issues, media studies, and even critical organizational research-- all with a distinctive moral point of view. As Rod Hart concluded in the journal *Communication Education* ("Why Communication? Why Education? Toward a Politics of Teaching" [1993], 42, 97-105) "Communication is the ultimate people making discipline . . ." and is the special place in the larger university curriculum for helping the voiceless find their voice. Every criteria-- clarity, completeness, every preoccupation-- conflict, of contemporary communication cannot be separated from a

significant preferring and that from a crucial regard for second persons, third persons, in a communication event.

It would be reasonable to assume that communication has ethics problems, and ethics as a freestanding intellectual enterprise is "applied" to the problem. There is certainly some of this in communication ethics as a scholarly sub-discipline and a teaching subject. But the problem is more of the nature of the thing; as Umberto Eco defined terms, "A sign is anything that can be used to lie." In the last forty years one of the most promising developments in ethical theory is the development of the "communicative ethics" paradigm by Karl-Otto Appel, Jürgen Habermas, Seyla Benhabib, Robert Alexy, and many others (for key texts see *The Communicative Ethics Controversy*, eds. Seyla Benhabib and Fred Dallmayr [1990]). It is a Kantian style of thought in which the requirements of communication become the duties of ethics. It is an ethic built on the persuasive insight that the human being is not *homo sapien* but *homo loquens*, and it is that speaking being whose needs must be systematically realized.

It is well known that the sequential elements of the MPSL has a distinctive "inside out," small to large, self to other, moral logic, working from the "Whom am I?" focus of the University Seminar, through U.S. studies, and then global issues. At the time of its implementation the university had resources in place to carry out "service learning" at every level of the curriculum as the preferred way to actualize the ethical thrust of the program. The 1999 Communication Department curriculum had a moral vision of its own, much more profound in its way. It was a curriculum of big thinking determined to create independent, rational, expressive, inquirers. The majors curriculum of 1999 began with CO 101 Introduction to Communication Theory, then CO 107 Argument and Social Issues, CO 200 The Rhetorical Act, CO 204 Methods of Inquiry, mandated ethics, advanced writing, and internship, and concluded with a capstone that was to be based on the teacher's research and required a significant student research project. Millikin became one of only three (?) communication departments in the U.S. that began with a theory course, was confident that all Communication students would master argument and apply it to problems of social justice, was unafraid of being opaque about "public speaking" calling it "The Rhetorical Act" and thereby suggesting it contained complex layers of possible achievement, and stipulated students would conclude as real communication researchers. In the 1999 curriculum even Organizational Communication became "Organizational Culture"-- not the basic course on the topic but an advanced, critical, entryway into the problem of organizations. The moral vision was rationalist and critical, potentially sharply tipped toward aggressive civic participation. The curriculum certainly had some practical, market centered courses, such as radio, video (even the video class in 1999 was based on a service learning video advocacy project with Decatur public school students), and public relations. But none of those courses were required, and the attitude of the curriculum writers seemed to be that anyone educated as well as the requirements demanded and the electives allowed should be able to start a career.

The Scope of CO 308

CO 308, Communication Ethics and Freedom of Expression, has three main and one lesser element. The first unit concerns philosophical anthropology or the problem of what it means to be a human being; the second unit takes up traditional ethical theory including a careful reading of key texts by Mill and Kant; the third unit is about the philosophical inquiry into problems of freedom of expression, including reading Milton's *Areopagitica* and Sartre's *Anti-Semite and Jew*; and the fourth unit or sometimes extra topic introduced throughout the

semester is applied communication ethics with varying topics such as advertising, the Challenger disaster as a problem in organizational communication ethics, and the analysis of communication "profession" codes of ethics.

It is important to note the course begins with philosophical anthropology. As the noted Polish philosopher Karol Wojtyla, who went on to become Pope John Paul II, wrote, ". . . the total elimination of anthropological conclusions from ethics is not possible" (*The Acting Person* [1969]). Indeed, our sense of what it is about human beings that requires regulation, what it is about the human animal that makes it possible to motivate moral action, if left implicit, has too often inspired a comically limited conversation about the ethical life of Cambridge philosophers or Wharton MBA students. CO 308 takes its cue from Agnes Heller (*General Ethics* [1989]) who asks the question "Good person's exist-- how are they possible?" and insists that all of her work is not ethical *philosophy* but ethical *theory*, the difference being ethical theory is built on all the best ethical thinking in the philosophical tradition but also on the best social science, so that one is always working in ethics with as accurate a picture as possible of the human species. In CO 308 this means that students continue to learn about *communication*, especially as it is situated in social theory and historical-critical understandings of the speaking being. This is a very congenial point of view for contemporary communication scholars, many for whom Kenneth Burke's "Definition of Man" (in *Language as Symbolic Action* [1966]) is essential to understanding what is going on in symbolic behavior. The students in the course read all of Ernest Becker, *Escape From Evil* [1975] and much of Eugen Rosenstock-Huussy, *Speech and Reality* [1969]. It is an extremely important feature of CO 308 that students learn more about communication as an inextricable element in the moral life, and not just about ethics somehow "applied" to an hypostatized thing we call "communication."

Is CO 308 Effective?

As a preliminary and partial answer to this question we look at some of the writing students produce in the course. Most terms students take three essay exams, and a sampling from those exams gives us some sense of what students have been able to understand of the class, and in some ways they apply it to their own lives. Students should come to the course with some ethical sophistication, and some practice in expressing themselves in speech and writing about moral controversies. It is fair to expect them to understand the course material and be able to make both direct applications and to press within or beyond the material in the readings and the class hours.

Consider these specimens from exam one from Spring 2016, an *in-class* essay test on the thought of Ernest Becker and Eugen Rosenstock-Huussy.

Becker argues that evil is best understood as clumsiness in the self-expansion built into biological prosperity seeking. He works carefully over the topics of self-hood, among other things formulating seven types of guilt. Here a student with an "A-" answer begins with her own excellent language on "internalizing" ethical understanding, before turning to the details on Becker's seven kinds of guilt. It is very important that students "own" the course material and can use their own language to describe the ideas from the class.

There cannot be ethics without a sense of self-disapproval, correction, and regret because that is what helps establish our morals . . . We feel guilty for the evilness

and clumsiness we project to the world. [there follows a recitation of many of the seven forms of guilt Becker says people experience]

Rosenstock-Huessy explains in some detail the human problem of revealing and concealing, then holds that there are four kinds of lies-- the traditional deception concerning facts, and three different kinds of emotional lies-- hypocrisy, fiction, and cant. Rosenstock-Huessy added, unique in the literature, that lying is a lazy or low energy behavior, often motivated by the desire to avoid commitment. In this "A-" answer the student understood that lying can be a lazy behavior and was able to elaborate in two detailed examples.

When it comes to concealing, the reason people do it more often than not is because they are either afraid of being wrong or do not want to tell the whole truth about a situation in fear of stirring up trouble or hurting someone. Lying is [] a lazy response we give in our relationships with others. [follows two elaborate examples from that week in the student's life, one of lying, one of being lied to]

A second student, answering the same question in a "B" answer places the course material vaguely in a larger discussion of public communication, is able to provide examples of lying from his or her own life, and then gives an confused and imprecise understanding of "cant" as it relates to hymns from church.

ERH makes great explanations about how we passively keep our personal relationships active. I think ERH made a great point in that the four types of lies are behind some of the most popular forms of propaganda throughout human history. I think ERH made a great point in that revealing that concealing truths are efficient forms of lies. [follows a story about the student lying to her or his mother lying about poor work in a course at the University, and some thoughts on "cant" and hymns in church]

In a "D" answer to a different question on Rosenstock-Huessy-- one on his concept of *respondeo etsi mutabor*-- I respond although I will be changed, a student produces near gibberish in a run-on sentence.

The *respondeo* idea in terms of human relations in the new age is the idea of trusting in the society and we shall live . . . living ethically & thinking in that way means, all of our everyday rules & regulations involving government and politics, health, and all things that apply to man is that we believe whatever done or happens is happening without question we believe is true, right, so we trust it immediately.

The following specimens are drawn from the *take-home* final examination on freedom of expression topics from Spring 2017.

One of Milton's most advanced concepts was a critique of the censor, and what will always motivate the censor to under or over censor, why "authors" almost always "want it" more than censors and will apply their ingenuity to finding ways to get their content past censors and to the public. The specific question asked students about taking one of Facebook's new "Content Monitor" positions. This student highlights the crucial concept succinctly, then goes to a different point on the slippery slope of censorship.

Needless to say, people are very good at finding a way to get content that others say needs to be censored, into the public eye. [this student then develops an extended argument on the slippery slope of censorship and the likelihood of over censorship and the loss of understanding the role certain discourse played at its origin]

This student eventually gets to some true points about Milton, but has difficulty getting through her or his own slang to reach anything close to a specific point.

According to Milton he explains that censors are traditionally kind of old style, and concrete about who they are. Censors will not adapt to change and prefer the way things to go their way.

In the following "D-" answer a student not only meanders through the material with "bluff" sorts of generalizations, but has not come up to the basic point of view of the course that ethics is a real body of knowledge and consists of actual obligations: this student is worried she or he will "offend" and "hurt" peoples' feelings with her or his preferred answer.

As a censor you can do everything in your power to sift through every account until you have flagged, and had each comment or discussion deleted or taken off but the view of the company has already altered. You have to be so careful in today's society in order to not offend, or hurt anyone else's views of you.

The student whose work is quoted below missed the point that Facebook *is* hiring censors, and offered this whimsical and contradictory conclusion to an otherwise thoughtful answer.

Hopefully, Facebook doesn't create this position in the near future. But if they do, I might apply.

Sartre makes a series of very powerful remarks about who is the hater, the racist, the anti-Semite, and reaches the devastating claim that these people do not have a right to speak because they do not, in fact, *speak*. His radical, discourse centered, views make a compelling counterpoint to the liberal tradition of freedom of speech, and, in fact, Sartre turns on the liberal-democratic consensus to show why democratic universalism never fully protects the despised minority group members. This is a sophisticated, counter-cultural, thought for most undergraduate students.

In this "A" answer the student used the language from class discussion properly, and then reached into the text to quote a passage not discussed in class.

While democrats have good intentions on protecting groups, they really aren't adequate protection for them. The small "d" democrat protects everyone but this may not always be good. Protecting everyone's rights is the great democratic impulse. The democrat is unable to discriminate, regardless of a group's intentions. We'd like to see the democrat help those groups that we know stand for a good cause, but what happens when the democrat protects a hate group? [several sentences are omitted, then the student quotes from a passage in *Anti-Semite and Jew* that had not been discussed in class] "The anti-Semite lives fearfully in the past; the democrat lives, naively, sentimentally, inauthentically in the future."

In a "C-" essay on the same question a student offers a lazy generalization, about any book, and then ambiguously swings the problem around to blaming the victims.

When Sartre talks in his book, he references a lot of interesting topics and one was when he says the victimized minority has one true friend who is the democrat. [a repeating sentence is omitted] Why it thinks that this is a true statement is because a victimized minority, no matter what you do they will always feel out casted to the rest of the population.

These examples show a varying degree of mastery of the course material, some ability to apply course concepts to novel situations, in at least some students the capacity to see into and beyond the course content including seriously testing some counter-cultural positions, and for some students problems with composition that indicate limitations in learning and thought.

In higher learning it is almost always the hope that actual learning far outruns what is examined in formally evaluated assignments. In CO 308 some of the students seem to be understanding almost everything, but perhaps some students need to be motivated to take more responsibility for the reading and the class discussions at a factual-level so that they are better prepared to deal with the material as a synthetic possession for application and further development.

Synopsis

Based on current levels of assessment, we have compiled the following results concerning our majors. We have a strong grasp of our program's strengths and weaknesses. Our assessment resources are limited. Progress has been made on assessment of our delivery of the oral communication requirement. The data from that assessment is provided in a separate report for general education purposes. Because of previous approval of a stipend for oral communication assessment work, the chair envisions a more concerted, dedicated effort to assessment of the oral communication curriculum.

- In the past, students have often cited a lack of video classes for the Communication major. Just this past year, the department is coordinating some video course needs with the faculty in the Arts Technology program. We hope this coordination will be sustained and deliver what is needed for the Communication majors.
- Students benefitted from new courses offered in the department as a result of our new faculty member, Dr. Amy Delaney. She taught Health Communication, and we plan to construct a Health Communication concentration next year.
- Advising was highly praised by graduates from the major. On average, students were pleased that the department made an effort to help them graduate on time and that curricular and advising resources were available to make that possible. Students felt that their departmental advisor, the department secretary, and Registrar's office were meeting their advising needs.
- The study abroad was referred to as a unique and positive experience during exit interviews. One popular program has been a London Semester program. Student experiences in the London Semester were rated exceptional and the students were

extremely pleased to have had the experience and opportunity to study abroad. Other students have used their language skills, immersion courses and general education requirements to experience learning off campus. Millikin continues to evolve in this area, offering diverse opportunities for students.

- Consistent with the mission of the university for performance learning engagement, the departmental requirement for student internships has been a successful one. Student internships were located in a variety of places, both on campus and in the community at large. Summer internships also included experiences outside of the Decatur community.

The Department continues to have an internship advisor who has been instrumental at getting students meaningful and interesting learning positions. The students complete a learning contract, submit a portfolio, certify their hours, and receive feedback from the internship site. It takes a lot of time and effort to implement the department's internship requirement. However, it has been a valuable experience and distinctive requirement for our majors.

Improvement Plan/Resource Needs for the Department of Communication

The 2017-2018 academic year promises new challenges, dangers, and opportunities for the Department of Communication. A summary of concerns and goals include:

- Identification of a basic course coordinator to coordinate assessment for the courses fulfilling the oral communication requirement. This basic course coordinator can be compensated now based on approval of a stipend. More money or release time of someone would enable more basic course work to be completed, not just assessment per se.
- Creation of a health communication concentration to be developed and submitted for approval.

The Communication Department has accomplished a great deal over the years. We expect to continue to function as a successful department with interesting courses and valuable performance-learning experiences that are appealing and educational to students at Millikin University.