

B.A. (Honours) in Contemporary English Studies

Course Title	: Organisational Communication
Course Code	: ENG3265
Recommended Study Year	: 3 rd or 4 th Year
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Lecture-tutorial mode
Class Contact Hours	: 2-hour lecture per week 1-hour tutorial per week
Category	: Discipline Elective (Contemporary Language Strand)
Prerequisite(s)	: Nil
Co-requisite(s)	: Nil
Exclusion(s)	: Nil
Exemption Requirement(s)	: Nil

Brief Course Description

This subject gives students an opportunity to study language and communication in the context of organizations. Apart from drawing on students' knowledge about language and society and applying the skills of discourse analysis acquired elsewhere in the programme, students are expected to acquire other relevant theories to enhance their understanding of organisational phenomena. Such an in-depth understanding of language use in organizations will not only prepare students for organization life; it will also facilitate their mastery of skills to formulate communication strategies in order to function more efficiently in the workplace.

Aims

1. To understand the importance of communication and discourse in various aspects of organization life, both internal and external;
2. To understand the basic elements and processes of communication in an organization;
3. To acquire theoretical frameworks for the analysis of organisational communications;
4. To understand the factors involved in the making of strategic decisions in organisational communication;
5. To get acquainted with different genres of organisational communication and appreciate the linguistic and rhetorical strategies involved in the production of these genres.

Learning Outcomes

1. Apply concepts learnt to identify relevant organisational phenomena in case studies pertinent to the understanding of organisational communication;
2. Identify features characteristic of different genres of organisational communication, including typical genres of internal and external organisational communication;
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of organisational communications given the circumstances, intended messages, and use of linguistic and other rhetorical strategies;

4. Describe the relationship between leadership and communication and the patterns of communication associated with different styles of leadership;
5. Analyze the factors leading to organisational conflict and different approaches in resolving them;
6. Explain the strategic functions of public relations and its role in the external communications of an organization.

Indicative Contents

- Structures of organizations and their patterns and genres of communication
- Organization cultures and communication
- Leadership
- Power and control
- Conflict and its management
- Public relations and the media

Teaching Method

Besides lectures and tutorials, various other approaches such as case studies, games, writing assignments, and role simulations will be used to enable students to have a deeper understanding of the subject and have a better grasp of the skills necessary for the production and evaluation of typical genres of organisational communication.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

1. Students will write their first paper based on **desk research**, drawing on existing theories and research on the topic, plus a case study and/or reflection on relevant organisational experience of your own. It may also include a practical element involving a written or oral task arising from the case study reflecting what the student has learnt in terms of relevant theories and concepts. The emphasis of the first paper will be on the understanding of theories and concepts. (LO: 1, 2, 3, 4)
2. Students will write their second paper which involves some **field research**. It may include one or more case studies, involving analysis of either some verbal or nonverbal aspects of organisational communication. If the second paper is of a nature and a scale that warrants the joint efforts of more than one student, the students may form a small group of not more than three students. Each student working in the group will have to submit their own individual research report. Note that the second paper may also include an optional practical element arising from the application of theory to a situation in the case study. For example, the practical element may be in the form of a report, a mission statement, a press release, or a role-play of a negotiation meeting. The emphasis of the second paper is on fieldwork, which indicates an effort on your part to find out firsthand about theories and concepts learnt on the course. (LO: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)
3. Students will present their views and ideas about aspects of organisational communication in an oral presentation. The oral presentation will take place towards the end of the semester. Each student will be given 15 minutes for the

presentation. The presentation is based on the second paper and is given before the final submission of the second term paper. (LO: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

4. Students will demonstrate their understanding of concepts in organisational communication, critical responses to propositions and analytical skills in the final examination. A 2-hour examination will cover the various topics taught in class. The questions may require the student to write answers in essay form and give an analysis based on an unseen case involving organisational communication. (LO: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

Assessment

Continuous Assessment: 60% (two written assignments/papers 20% each/40% and oral presentation 20%)

Final Examination: 40%

Required Readings

Conrad, C. and M.S. Poole, *Strategic Organisational Communication in a Global Economy*, 6th ed., Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers, 2005.

Supplementary Readings

McPhee, R., Formal structure and organisational communication in *Organisational Communication: Traditional Themes and New Directions* (Eds.) R.D. McPhee & P.K. Tompkins, Beverly Hills: Sage, 1985.

Swales, John M. & Priscilla S. Rogers, Discourse and the projection of corporate culture: The Missions Statement, *Discourse & Society*, Vol. 6 (2), 223-242, 1995.

Connell, Ian & Dariusz Galasinski, Academic Mission Statements: An exercise in negotiation, *Discourse & Society* Vol. 9 (4): 457-479, 1998.

Boje, D.M., The storytelling organization: A study of story performance in an office-supply firm, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 36, 106-126, 1991.

Bormann, E.G., Symbolic convergence: Organisational communication and culture, in L. L. Putnam and M.E. Pacanowsky (Eds), *Communication and Organization: An Interpretive Approach*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983.

Cragan, J. and D.W. Wright, *Learning small group communication theories*, in *Communication in Small Groups: Theory, Process, Skills*, 4th ed., Minneapolis/St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1995.

Fairhurst, G. & R.A. Sarr, *The Art of Framing: Managing the Language of Leadership*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996.

Tannenbaum, R. and W.H. Schmidt, How to choose a leadership pattern, *Harvard Business Review*, 36, 95-113, 1958.

Thomas, J.A., The language of power: Towards a dynamic pragmatics, *The Journal of Pragmatics* 9, 6, 1985.

Thompson, M.P., The skills of enquiry and advocacy: Why managers need both, *Management Communication Quarterly*, 7, 1, 95-106, 1993.

Heath, R L., *Management of Corporate Communication: From Interpersonal Contacts to External Affairs*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Chapter 9, 1994.

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.