

University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service
7303 Communication Processes and Conflict Transformation

Course Description

Potential for breakdowns in civic (and civil) discourse abounds in our global society. We need leaders and public servants who have the communication skills to facilitate and participate in effective discussion to bring about prudent and equitable social change. This course will focus on the role of communication in creating our social worlds and in transforming interpersonal relationships, social structures, and public policy.

Course Objectives

Your participation in this course will afford you the opportunity to

- Understand the essential skills of effective professional interaction
- Understand the application of communication theory and research to effective social change
- Understand the role of communication in constructing our social worlds
- Practice effective peacemaking and conflict transformation techniques
- Practice effective group facilitation techniques
- Analyze and critique communicative practices addressing public issues in a variety of contexts

Texts/Readings

Charles F. Kettering Foundation (2002). *Framing issues for public deliberation: A curriculum guide for workshops*. Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation.

Frey, L.R., & Carragee, K.M. (2007). *Communication activism: Volume one communication for social change*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Kraybill, R.S., Evans A.F., & Evans, R.A. (2001). *Peace skills: Manual for community mediators*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Sophocles. *Antigone*. Unabridged Dover Thrift Edition. 1993 republication from the *The dramas of Sophocles rendered in English verse dramatic & lyric by Sir George Young*, published by J. M. Dent & Sons, LTD., London, 1906.

Available for checkout

- Gusfield, J.R. (1981). *The culture of public problems: Drinking-driving and the symbolic order*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (Chapters 1 & 2).
- Mead, G.H. (1913). The social self. *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Method*, 10, 374-380. Available online: <http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Mead/socialself.htm>
- Pearce, K.A. & Pearce, W.B. (2001). The public dialogue consortium's school-wide dialogue process: A communication approach to develop citizenship skills and enhance school climate. *Communication Theory*, 11, 105-123.
- Pearce, W. B. (2007). *Communication and the making of social worlds*. Virum, Denmark: Danish Psychological Publishers. (Chapter 4)
- Tracy, K. & Muller, H. (2001). Diagnosing a school board's interactional trouble: Theorizing problem formulating. *Communication Theory*, 11, 84-104.

Guest Speakers

Bob and Alice Evans, Executive Director, Plowshares Institute. Plowshares Institute is a catalyst for social change that has been addressing social risks and conflicts for nearly 25 years. In partnership with an international advisory council and collaborative agencies on five continents, the Institute staff designs and implements projects that identify and address emerging social needs in order to build a more just and peaceful world community. In the last decade many of these programs have provided skills in mediation and conflict transformation, and have empowered civic, religious, and political leaders to work together to deal constructively with emerging conflicts. These programs led to Plowshares' recent nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize by members of the South African parliament, with endorsement by leaders in China and Indonesia and members of the U.S. Congress. A deliberately small organization, Plowshares is able to

make a valuable and sustainable impact by leveraging: its expertise in innovative core methodologies; its deep history of international experience and learning; its commitment to both thought and action; and its mutually beneficial partnerships with change agents around the world.

W. Barnett Pearce has consulted with communities and organizations, facilitated public and private meetings, and trained professionals in North and South America, Europe, Asia, Australia, and Africa for the past 15 years. He is a member of the faculty of the Human and Organizational Development Program of the Fielding Graduate University and is a Founding Member of the Public Dialogue Consortium. Known for his work in communication theory, he has written seven books and over one hundred articles and chapters. He was a Senior Visiting Fellow at Linacre College, Oxford University, in 1989, and a Fulbright Fellow in Argentina in 1997. Before joining Fielding Graduate University, he was a member of the faculty at the University of North Dakota, University of Kentucky, University of Massachusetts, and Loyola University Chicago, serving as Department Chair at Massachusetts and Loyola. He has a Ph.D. from Ohio University.

Kimberly A. Pearce has consulted with communities and organizations, facilitated small and large group meetings in private and public settings, and trained professionals in England, Denmark, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and throughout the United States. Additionally, she is a member of the faculty in Speech Communication at De Anza College and a Founding Member of the Public Dialogue Consortium. Before joining De Anza's faculty, she was Human Resources Director for an energy management company in Silicon Valley. She has an M. A. degree in Communication Studies from San Jose State University.

Assignments

Four 1-page memo assignments (5% each; 20% total)
Analysis of case study on conflict transformation (30%)
Facilitation of a group deliberation (10%)
Leading case study discussion (10%)
Final analysis paper (30%)

Grading Scale

90% - 100% = A
80% - 89% = B
70% - 79% = C
60% - 69% = D
Below 60% = F

Academic Integrity

All work you present to us should be your own. It is fine to study or prepare for class with others, but papers, presentations and assignments should be individual efforts. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to) adopting or appropriating for one's own use and/or incorporating in one's own work, without acknowledgement, passages, parts of passages, tables, photographs, models, figures, and illustrations from the writings or works of others; thus presenting such as a product of one's own mind. Any student who plagiarizes may be subject to **any or all** of the following sanctions: receiving a zero on the written work, receiving a reduced grade for the course in which the plagiarism occurred, being suspended from registering for one or more semester(s), being required to enroll in a short course on graduate level writing, being required to comply with any other appropriate remedy as proposed by the Associate Dean, and/or being dismissed from UACS.

You should keep digital copies of all written work for this class. We reserve the right to request a digital copy of your work.

Plagiarism on any assignment in this class will at minimum result in an "F" for the assignment. We reserve the right to pursue further disciplinary action if appropriate (e.g., any student caught cheating on an exam will receive an "F" for the course). We strongly recommended students maintain a record of the preparation of their assignments.

Student Accommodation

It is the policy of UACS to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal and state law. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation, for example in seating placement or in arrangements for examinations, should inform instructors at the beginning of the course.

Tentative Schedule

Week One: Orientation to the Class; Essential Interaction Skills/Basic Terms

Week Two : Communication Activism as Engaged Scholarship (Frey & Carragee pp. 1-20; 29-64);
Dilemmas in the Field (Crabtree & Ford in Frey & Carragee, pp. 249-285)

Week Three: Conflict/Peacemaking Workshop (Evans')

Week Four: **No Class**

Week Five: Introduction to Social Construction; Chapter 4: The Process of Communication: Coordinating
Actions and Making Meaning (B. Pearce); Adams, et al. in Frey & Carragee pp. 109-132; **First
Memo Due**

Week Six: More Social Construction/Mead; Ritchie in Frey & Carragee pp. 411-440 ; **Second Memo Due**

Week Seven: Group Facilitation (Kim & Barnett Pearce); Pearce & Pearce, 2001; **Analysis of Case Study
on Conflict Transformation Due**

Week Eight: Framing Issues for Public Deliberation; Kettering Workbook; **Third Memo Due**

Week Nine: Facilitation Practice

Week Ten: Facilitation Practice

Week Eleven: Facilitation Practice

Week Twelve: Public Problems; Antigone/Gusfield (Chapters 1 & 2)

Week Thirteen: Framing (Tracy & Muller, 2001); **Fourth Memo Due**

Week Fourteen: **NO CLASS**

Week Fifteen: Case Study Discussion/Analysis; Jovanic, et al. (pp. 67-108) & Orbe (133-156) in Frey &
Carragee

Week Sixteen: Case Study Discussion/Analysis; Sunwolf (pp. 287-323); Palmer (pp. 325-353), Campo &
Frazer (pp. 355-384) in Frey & Carragee

Monday 12/10: **Final Papers Due**

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