

CMN 4950: Workplace Relationships
4 credit hours
online
Spring 2024

Professor: Dr. Elizabeth Gill

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Office: Buzzard 2423

Office Hours: in person: MW 10:50 – 11:20am, virtual: TR 8-9:30am, additional hours M-F by appointment

Course Description:

This course explores the principles of effective professional and relational communication in the workplace. The course combines both theory and practice in an effort to help students manage workplace interactions and to create and maintain successful workplace relationships.

Course Objectives:

1. Articulate the importance of communication in the development of successful workplace relationships.
2. Identify effective communication strategies in building successful co-worker, supervisor, and customer relations.
3. Identify problematic relationships in the workplace, workplace stressors, and conflict.
4. Identify connections between technology and effective workplace relationships.
5. Appreciate and understand work-to-home and home-to-work challenges and their influence on professional and relational communication.

Course Materials:

Omdahl, B. & Harden Fritz, J. M.(2012). Problematic Relationships in the Workplace (Volume 2). New York: Lang Publishing, Inc.

Sias, P. M. (2009). Organizing Relationships: Traditional and Emerging Perspectives on Workplace Relationships. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Additional readings assigned as appropriate.

Teaching Format:

This is a technology delivered course (meaning the learning environment is completely online in Desire2Learn). It applies discussion, critical thinking and reflection. All assignments will be submitted to the instructor in D2L. An integrative, collaborative, and experiential teaching and learning approach will be utilized throughout this course.

The instructor is a facilitator; one who is there to assist and provide input into the educational process. You are expected to actively engage in all aspects of the course in order to successfully meet course objectives.

Learning Modules:

Navigate through D2L first to become familiar with all the course components. Students will access all assignments in the D2L learning modules. There are a total of 16 weeks/modules in the course. Modules will become accessible at 8am each Monday. Any assignments in the module (quizzes, discussion posts, papers or projects) must be completed by 7:59am the following Monday (prior to the opening of the next module).

Note, however, that the final exam must be completed by Thursday, May 2nd, at noon. Thus, the course will close on May 2nd at noon during final exams week.

General Expectations:

- Please keep current in class. If something happens that is going to cause you to fall behind, contact me **immediately**. An extension will not be granted unless there is a serious, documented, and university-approved reason necessitating one.
- Since this is an online course, your attendance will be determined by your level of class participation and assignment completion.
- Contact me via Panthermail or d2l mail with any questions or concerns you have as they arise. I will do my best to respond to all queries within 24 to 36 hours.

Discussion Etiquette:

Eastern Illinois University (EIU) is committed to open, frank, and insightful dialogue in all of its courses. Diversity has many manifestations, including diversity of thought, opinion, and values. We encourage all learners to be respectful of that diversity and to refrain from inappropriate commentary. Should such inappropriate comments occur, the instructor will intervene as she monitors the dialogue in the course. The instructor will request that inappropriate content be removed and will recommend university disciplinary action. Learners as well as faculty should be guided by common sense and basic etiquette. The following are good guidelines to follow:

- Never post, transmit, promote, or distribute content that is known to be illegal.
- Never post harassing, threatening, or embarrassing comments.
- If you disagree with someone, respond to the subject, not the person. Conflicts of ideas are encouraged, while conflicts of feelings are discouraged.
- Never post content that is harmful, abusive; racially, ethnically, or religiously offensive; vulgar; sexually explicit; or otherwise potentially offensive.

Course Requirements:

Discussion Posts - Your participation in the course is essential to your success. One way that participation is gauged is via your engagement with course discussion posts. A discussion post will be due each week there is assigned reading. In the discussion posts you will be asked to react to the week's readings, reflecting on what you learned and applying it to your life. A minimum of 250 words must be used to answer the questions posed for each discussion post.

*Discussion posts will be graded according to the following guidelines:

- Thoroughly addressing all questions in the prompt
- Depth of analysis
- Correct use of course content

- Succinct and professional tone
- Correct spelling and grammar
- Must be at least 250 words

Quizzes - There will be a quiz each week there is assigned reading. Each quiz will consist of 10 multiple-choice and/ or true/false questions. You may only take each quiz once and you will have 15 minutes to complete it. Although you may use your textbook, you will find that this will consume your time.

Case Analysis Paper – You will find a real-life case related to organizational relationships in the news and analyze it based upon course content. You will write a concise but thorough 3-page analysis of your chosen case (6 to 7 pages for graduate students). This assignment is due in week 9. Be sure to cite course content where appropriate. Further assignment details will be provided in d2l. Graduate students should see details shared by Dr. Gill at the beginning of the semester.

Field Observations Presentation – You will analyze your work experiences through participant observation. This could be done while you are at work, or while you are interning or volunteering for an organization. If you are working virtually from home, those virtual experiences can be analyzed as well. If you do not currently have a work- or volunteer-related position within an organization, please contact me early in the semester so that I can develop an alternative for you.

You will create a recorded formal presentation during which you will discuss the types of workplace relationships you experienced/ observed and how your observations/experiences relate to what we have discussed in class. Finally, you will discuss how course material could help you negotiate these and other workplace relationships now and in the future. The presentation should be 7 to 10 minutes. Further assignment details will be provided in d2l.

Final Exam – Your final exam will consist of 50 multiple choice and true/false questions covering content from the entire semester. A study guide will be provided. You may only take the exam once and you will have 75 minutes to complete it. Although you may use your textbooks, you will find that this will consume your time. Therefore, I suggest studying and knowing the content very well before taking the exam.

Graduate Students Only - Annotated Bibliography – Students seeking graduate credit will complete an annotated bibliography for a topic related to workplace relationships that you would like to explore in greater depth. Your annotated bibliography should contain 10 to 12 annotations of academic sources in APA format as well as a discussion of what you learned from your research. More details will be shared with graduate students at the beginning of the semester.

Evaluation:

The grading scale is consistent with that of the University. To earn an “A” on an assignment, a student must do EXCEPTIONAL work demonstrating truly mature skills and **not merely**

competence. Demonstrating competence and meeting the requirements of the assignment will earn a grade of “C.” Assignments that do not meet the requirements of the assignment cannot earn a C or higher.

Undergraduate Point Distribution:

13 discussion posts @ 10 points each.....	130 points
13 quizzes @ 20 points each	260 points
Case Analysis Paper	100 points
Field Observations Presentation	100 points
Final Exam... ..	100 points
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Undergraduate Total.....	690 points

Graduate Student Point Distribution:

13 discussion posts @ 10 points each.....	130 points
13 quizzes @ 20 points each	260 points
Case Analysis Paper	100 points
Field Observations Presentation	100 points
Final Exam... ..	100 points
Annotated Bibliography	100 points
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Graduate Total.....	790 points

Final Evaluation:

90% and above= A
80 – 89% = B
70-79% = C
60-69% = D
59% and below = F

Course Policies

Student Responsibilities

Students ultimately are responsible for their learning and success in class. Reading assignments, taking notes, actively engaging in online discussions, asking questions, and consulting with the professor will help you learn and succeed. Students are responsible for all assigned reading material. **In a technology-delivered format it is essential for you to keep up with all course material and assignments. *Students must be proactive to be successful in this class!***

Late Work

Late work will not be accepted. Assignments, exams, quizzes or discussion posts not completed by the specified due dates will receive a zero.

Student Email Addresses

The School of Communication and Journalism requires each student to use his/her university email address for any class, department, college, or university email

correspondence. The university email address is used for many purposes, including accessing d2l and PAWS, receiving billing statements from the library, and receiving departmental correspondence and announcements through the undergraduate listserv.

For information on how to obtain your email address or to obtain a password, please visit the following web address: <http://www.eiu.edu/~itshelp/email/index/php>.

Incompletes

Incompletes will be granted only under very stringent conditions (e.g., serious illness or accident). Students who experience an extended absence should investigate withdrawal from the university.

Students with disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Accessibility & Accommodations (OAA). All accommodations must be approved through OAA. Please stop by McAfee Gym, Room 1272, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

Academic Support Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Academic Support Center (www.eiu.edu/success) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Academic Support Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to McAfee Gym, Room 2230.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<https://www.eiu.edu/deanofstudents/conductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

All work submitted in this course must be your own. Contributions from anyone or anything else – including AI sources – must be properly quoted and cited every time they are used. **Any text generating software (such as ChatGPT, Bard, iA Writer, Grammarly, DALL-E, etc.) is not permitted, and it will be treated as plagiarism.** Failure to comply with this policy will be considered an academic integrity violation and will be subject to EIU's academic dishonesty process.

Please also see the Discussion Etiquette section above.

Schedule of Weekly Modules and Assignment Closing Dates

Week 1: Jan 8-15 Course introduction; Approaches to studying workplace relationships	Read Sias chapter 1 Discussion Post 1 Quiz 1	Module Opens: 1/8, 8am Assignments Close: 1/15, 7:59am
Week 2: Jan 15-22 Supervisor-subordinate relationships	Read Sias chapter 2 View linked TedTalk Discussion Post 2 Quiz 2	Module Opens: 1/15, 8am Assignment Closes: 1/22, 7:59am
Week 3: Jan 22-29 Peer coworker relationships	Read Sias chapter 3 View linked TedTalks Discussion Post 3 Quiz 3	Module Opens: 1/22, 8am Assignments Close: 1/29, 7:59am
Week 4: Jan 29- Feb 5 Workplace friendship	Read Sias chapter 4 Read linked articles from <i>Forbes</i> Discussion post 4 Quiz 4	Module Opens: 1/29, 8am Assignment Closes: 2/5, 7:59am
Week 5: Feb 5-12 Romantic workplace relationships	Read Sias chapter 5 Discussion Post 5 Quiz 5	Module Opens: 2/5, 8am Assignments Close: 2/12, 7:59am
Week 6: Feb 12-19 Problematic relationships and Difficult co-workers	Read <i>Problematic Relationships</i> chapter 1 PDF in d2l Discussion Post 6 Quiz 6	Module Opens: 2/12, 8am Assignment Closes: 2/19, 7:59am
Week 7: Feb 19-26 Relationship difficulty And workplace emotions	Read Omdahl and Fritz Chapter 2 Discussion Post 7 Quiz 7 Read Case Analysis Paper Assignment	Module Opens: 2/19, 8am Assignments Close: 2/26, 7:59am
Week 8: Feb 26- Mar 4 Hostility in the workplace	Read Omdahl and Fritz, chapter 3 Watch Ted Talk Discussion Post 8 Quiz 8 Work on Case Analysis Paper	Module Opens: 2/26, 8am Assignment Closes: 3/4, 7:59am
Week 9: Mar 4 -11 Papers Due	Case analysis papers due Read Field Observation Assignment	Module Opens: 3/4, 8am Assignment Closes: 3/11, 7:59am

Week 10: Mar 11-18 Effects of problematic relationships	Read Omdahl and Fritz Chapter 4 and Social Ostracism, Cliques, and Outcasts (PDF of chapter 7 from <i>Destructive Organizational Communication</i>) Discussion post 9 Quiz 9	Module Opens: 3/18, 8am Assignments Close: 3/25, 7:59am
Week 11: Mar 18-25	Spring Break – no classwork	
Week 12: Mar 25-Apr 1 Resilience in the workplace	Read Responses to Destructive Organizational Contexts PDF Discussion Post 10 Quiz 10	Module Opens: 3/25, 8am Assignment Closes: 4/1, 7:59am
Week 13: Apr 1 - 8 Dealing with problematic relationships I	Read Working Alone (Chapter 17) PDF Discussion Post 11 Quiz 11	Module Opens: 4/1, 8am Assignment Closes: 4/8, 7:59am
Week 14: Apr 8-15 Dealing with problematic relationships II	Read Omdahl and Fritz, chapter 12 Discussion Post 12 Quiz 12	Module Opens: 4/8, 8am Assignments Close: 4/15, 7:59am
Week 15: Apr 15-22 Field Observations Due	Field Observation Presentations due	Module Opens: 4/15, 8am Assignments Close: 4/22, 7:59am
Week 16: Apr 22-29 Broader social issues related to workplace relationships	Read Omdahl and Fritz, chapter 13 and 14 Discussion Post 13 Quiz 13	Module Opens: 4/22, 8am Assignments Close: 4/29, 7:59am
Finals: Apr 22 – May 2 Final Exams Week	Final Exam Graduate students: annotated bibliography due	Module Opens: 4/22, 8am Assignments Close: 5/2, noon