

COM 388: Communication Studies Senior Capstone

Section 001 • 9:00 – 10:50am • M/W • SCH 207

“You’ve already made the choice. You’re here to understand why you’ve made it.” (Matrix)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

Instructors: Lance Lippert

Office: Fell 424

Office Phone: 309.438.7329

Office Hours: TTh 11:00 to noon and
appointment

Email: llipper@ilstu.edu

COURSE MATERIALS

- Access to classroom Canvas page
- A working ISU email account that you check regularly. **For class related questions & information please use the Canvas email.**

All course materials are available in Canvas (that includes media, Zoom, and additional readings). Online material will be available free to you. Most course content will be in PDF, Word, and PPT, which should work for either PC or Mac. To view or print some of the documents, you will need either Microsoft PowerPoint or PowerPoint Viewer software installed on your computer. If you don't have either, the "Viewer" product is available free from the Microsoft Download Center website.

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of this class is to identify transferable skills and knowledge, identify potential employment opportunities, and synthesize learning outcomes from your communication studies major and prepare you for your professional career or graduate studies. According to the undergraduate catalog, “students will synthesize coursework and communication experiences into transferable theory, skills, and applications via a senior project and portfolio.” Specifically, we will synthesize your skills, knowledge, attitude, and learning as you prepare a research paper, professional portfolio, and journal. I will work to be a career coach and consultant with you as you prepare to start your post-college journey. Thus, we designed this course to meet the following objectives:

1. To reflect and own students’ attitudes and values regarding personal and professional readiness and standards regarding the transition from classroom to career.
2. To identify transferable skills and discover how they apply to various jobs.
3. To identify three potential jobs.
4. To provide students an opportunity to clarify and articulate their area of specialization within the communication discipline.
5. To develop students’ understanding of the connection among communication theory, application, and research via an original paper reflecting on what you have learned.
6. To assess students’ communication competency and content knowledge across the curriculum of their communication studies major.
7. To produce a career portfolio with materials suitable for presentation to prospective employers.

PROFESSIONALISM:

Learning is maximized by reading, note-taking, critical listening, and cognitive engagement. Professionalism includes actively listening to others' opinions viewpoints and working together in a spirit of cooperation. We are a team of soon-to-be alumni working together to improve and learn so that we find career success. Use of any electronic device should not interfere with your ability to pay complete attention or become a distraction to classmates, guest speakers, or myself. Soon, you will be a working professional so anything that would reflect poorly on you or make an unfavorable impression should be avoided in here, as you need to make the transition from student to professional now.

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT:

There is a great place on campus if you need some assistance with study skills and writing. For workshops, tutoring, or coaching, check out <http://ucollege.illinoisstate.edu>.

FINAL GRADE ALLOCATION:

<i>Senior Praxis Paper</i>	<i>Professional Career Portfolio</i>	<i>Activities</i>
100 points	100 points	100 points
33%	33%	33%

EVALUATION:

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 300

The grading scale is a standard ten percentage point scale:

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

In this course, simply doing an assignment does not result in an "A." Failure to follow directions or meet criteria will result in a loss of points. Students should note the definition of each letter grade:

"A" is reserved for work that is exceptional

"B" is reserved for work that is above average

"C" is reserved for work that is average (meets all criteria)

"D" is reserved for work that is below average

"F" is reserved for work that is failing, late, or not submitted for evaluation

Please be aware of the fact that a "bad" grade is not a reflection upon you as a person or student. A lower grade is merely a challenge to do better. I would be doing you a huge disservice if I did not expect you to live up to your fullest potential.

COURSE POLICIES:***ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY***

Students must be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy in the *Code of Student Conduct*. All ideas are to be appropriately cited when borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Inadequate citation, unauthorized and unacknowledged collaboration, and/or the presentation of someone else's work constitutes plagiarism. Students

found to commit intentional acts of dishonesty (including falsifying evidence or plagiarizing a written assignment) will receive a failing grade in the course and be referred for appropriate disciplinary action through Community Rights and Responsibilities. I view reporting academic dishonesty as my professional responsibility and do not hesitate to enforce consequences.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Professional Career Portfolio (100 points)

Your portfolio should include at least two resumes, a curriculum vitae (if considering graduate school), several cover letter templates, list of at least five professional references and their contact information, selected samples of work, job listings and job search research (locations, organizations, careers, networking contacts), interviewing materials and research, and an online portfolio (such as a LinkedIn profile). Your portfolio must be professional and error-free. Since most of the materials included in your portfolio will be used in your job search, you should capitalize on this opportunity to make these materials the best that they can be. In many ways, this assignment should be one of your most important priorities this semester. Submit this assignment on Canvas in one collection or as a series of documents.

2. Senior Capstone Praxis Project (100 points)

This short (3-5 pages) paper should relate to your area of interest. (i.e., interpersonal communication, organizational and leadership communication, or political communication). Explain your understanding of ONE prominent communication theory or concept then apply it within a specific work context. Describe a communication theory or concept in practice. How does this “framework” inform your understanding of communication in a workplace situation? We will talk about this in class.

3. Activities (100 points)

Reading Abstract (10 points): Find and tell us about an article that describes the current state of the job market or what the landscape looks like as you prepare to move from the classroom to a career.

Networking Interview (20 points): Identify an individual that may have relevant experience for you. Reach out and do an interview (F2F, phone, Zoom). Submit a one-page summary discussing major takeaways. Basically, your paper should have 1) an introduction describing who you talked with and why you talked with them, 2) a body/section that provides the most memorable points or major takeaways from your conversation and explain why the points are meaningful to you, and 3) a conclusion that summarizes and indicates what you will do with the "advice" as you move forward with your job search. Please be prepared to discuss your findings or major takeaways in class. Some of the questions you can ask include, 1) what experiences led you to this job? 2) What do you like/dislike the about your job? 3) What do you do? 4) What did you study in school that was relevant? and 5) anything else that will provide you with information about that job, career, or organization.

Your Story (10 points): Develop at least four stories about yourself that will demonstrate your skill set, experiences, and competencies when an interviewer asks you about yourself (STAR).

Micro-Credentials/professional development (20 points): Pursue one set of credentials through LinkedIn or another certification. More on this later. [listening, AI, excel, nonverbal, alternative dispute resolution, deliberative dialogue]

The Book/Podcast (10 points): What do you need in a catch-all book/podcast to help prepare

you for this transition?

Job Applications (10 points): You will need to identify three domestic or international jobs as well as take multiple steps to apply for at least one job. See what you can find out about the job, organization, and industry. What will you need to do?

Professional, Participation, and Preparation (20 points): class participation, random attendance, in-class unannounced activities, journaling, cultural artifacts, and other stuff.

ATTENDANCE

Please be prepared to discuss the daily readings. Be engaged. Perfect attendance is expected, because by enrolling in this course you have made a commitment to being present during all class meetings. Being absent deprives you of valuable discussions and information. Historically, there has been a strong correlation between absences and grades; the more class time that students miss, the lower the grades they tend to earn. Missing more than 2 class periods will result in a 5% deduction from your overall course grade for each additional unexcused absence. Also, I will take random attendance as well as do unannounced activities for points during class.

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY BEREAVEMENT POLICY

If a student experiences a death of an immediate family member or relative as defined below, the student will be excused from class for funeral leave, subsequent bereavement, and/or travel considerations. The student will provide appropriate documentation and arrange to complete missed classroom work as soon as possible according to the process outlined below.

Upon notification of the absence and proper documentation, each faculty member shall excuse the student from class according to this policy and provide an opportunity to complete missed exams, quizzes, and other required work. Ultimately, the student is responsible for all material covered in class and must work with each individual professor as soon as they return to complete any required work. Details can be found at the following website: <http://policy.illinoisstate.edu/students/2-1-27.shtml>

LATE WORK AND INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY:

All assignments are expected at the beginning of class on the due date. An automatic 10% of the points possible will be deducted from late assignments, with an additional 10% deducted for each 24 hours the assignment is late. If these penalties seem steep, please consider that in eight more weeks you will likely be in a position where late work is not accepted at all. In the case of documented university excused absences, assignments should be completed *prior* to the absence. As a rule, incomplete grades will not be given.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Life at college can get very complicated. According to recent research, nearly 40% of college students are at-risk for developing generalized anxiety disorder and are less likely to seek help for it compared to other mental health issues. Students also sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience depression, and struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. However, many of these issues can be effectively addressed with a little help. Student Counseling Services (SCS) helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. Student Counseling Services is staffed by experienced, professional psychologists and counselors, who are attuned to the needs of college students. The services are FREE and completely confidential. Find out more at Counseling.IllinoisState.edu or by calling (309) 438- 3655.

STUDENT ACCESS AND ACCOMODATION SERVICES (SAAS)

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit the website at StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu.

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DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT DUE
<u>Week 1</u> Aug. 18 & 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course introduction & syllabus • ACTIVITY: What do you value? • What is your education worth? • How are you spending your time? • Why are you here? • What can you do with your degree? 	Check Canvas for readings. [Modules]
<u>Week 2</u> Aug. 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTIVITY: Bring a sixty-second version of what you want to be when you grow up. What are you doing about it? What do you need to do before graduation to get there? Written & ready for oral presentation. • Read & be prepared to discuss the readings. Take notes & seek out memorable passages and ideas and identify ways the readings resonate with you. • Bring a recent copy/draft of your resume. 	Check Canvas for readings. [Modules]
Aug. 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTIVITY: Bring a copy of a job description that interests you • Explain and defend a Communication Studies major • How to read journal articles • APA overview • Comparing academic to popular press coverage of research • Data-based decision-making 	Check Canvas for readings. [Modules] Networking Interview Assignment
<u>Week 3</u> Monday, Sept. 1 LABOR DAY NO CLASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job application process, job postings and search engines • Internships • Resumes and curriculum vitae's, cover letters, reference lists and letters • Emotions during the job search • Discuss paper topics & select for project (consider interest areas) • Order your ISU business cards 	Check Canvas for readings. [Modules]
Wednesday, Sept. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTIVITY: Contact an ISU CS alum and do a short interview. • Personal branding • Locating sources for papers • Work habits and productivity • Audience expectations during guest speakers 	Check Canvas for readings. [Modules] Networking Interview Assignment

<p>Week 4 Monday, Sept. 8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The power of networking & alumni networking • Professional behavior in the workplace • Privilege and professionalism. Who’s version of professional? 	<p>Check Canvas for readings. [Modules]</p>
<p>Wednesday, Sept. 10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying fit of applicant to position and organization • GUEST SPEAKER • Predicting success • What is GRIT? • ACTIVITY: Identify a job somewhere outside of the U.S. and compare/contrast. Bring in the job description. 	<p>Check Canvas for readings. [Modules]</p>
<p>Week 5 Monday, Sept. 15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DUE: Networking assignment • GUEST SPEAKER • ACTIVITY: Describe your favorite theory • Civic engagement, community, and service 	<p>Check Canvas for readings. [Modules] Your Story Assignment</p>
<p>Wednesday, Sept. 17</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GUEST SPEAKER • Researching and scouting employers • CEB Communications Leadership Council handout • STAR 	<p>Check Canvas for readings. [Modules]</p>
<p>Week 6 Monday, Sept. 22</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GUEST SPEAKER • Interviewing preparation, practice, and performance • Interview formats (phone, video, in-person) • Interviewing dos and don’ts • “Capability Handbag” 	<p>Check Canvas for readings. [Modules] The Book Assignment</p>
<p>Wednesday, Sept. 24</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTIVITY: In-class job interviews 	<p>Check Canvas for readings. [Modules]</p>
<p>Week 7 Monday, Sept. 29</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GUEST SPEAKER • Social media and CMC in the workplace • Telecommuting • The Artificial Intelligence (AI) Factor. • Listen to NPR story on bell curve and outliers 	<p>Check Canvas for readings. [Modules]</p>
<p>Wednesday, October 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTIVITY: Discuss theoretical framework and translation • Discuss Senior Praxis paper • Discuss and implement STAR 	<p>Check Canvas for readings. [Modules]</p>

<p><u>Week 8</u> Monday, October 6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GUEST SPEAKER • Financial Literacy • Negotiating salaries, bonuses, and conditions • Benefit packages, insurance, and retirement • Researching real estate, community, cost of living, and schools • Research pool participation reminder 	
<p>Wednesday, October 8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTIVITY: Tell us one of your four stories • Course evaluations • Synthesis and feedback 	<p>Portfolio Due Wednesday, October 8</p> <p>Senior Praxis Project (Due Friday, October 11)</p>

*****The above schedule, procedures and policies in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances such as guest coaches' appearances. Instructors will notify students in a timely manner of all changes related to the course schedule. In addition, the instructor reserves the right to handle situations with students on a case-by-case basis.**