

**COMM 5625**

<i>Times</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Location</i>
6:00–8:50 p.m.	Mon	GAB 406

Professor: Brian Richardson  
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<u>Office Hours:</u>	
T	11 – 12:15
Th	11 – 12:15
& by appt.	

**Course Rationale:**

Communication and Consulting will *primarily* address one aspect of the consultant process: communication (skills) training/development. The purpose of this course will be to introduce students to appropriate tactics and techniques, including effective researching skills, as critical ingredients in successful communication training. We will pay special attention to the preparation, execution, and assessment of communication training/development programs.

The course will touch on a number of topics related to communication training/development. We will review and analyze Stolovitch and Keeps' (2011) *Telling Ain't Training* as a primary source for learning about the training process. We will also read and analyze Block's (2011) *Flawless Consulting* for learning about interacting with (prospective) clients. Finally, we will read additional articles to supplement various topics. After learning the basics of training and client interaction, we will put our skills into practice and execute a workshop.

This course will be seminar style and depend upon everyone's reading and participation. Each week, students will be expected to read several book chapters, articles, and/or case studies focusing on communication training/development issues. These readings will be discussed in class and all students will be expected to contribute to the class discussion. We will also have three guest speakers with careers in consulting/training.

**Course Objectives.**

Students completing this course should be able to:

1. Talk competently about consulting and training/development including the skills and techniques necessary to be an effective trainer;
2. Conduct a real-life training workshop on some communication topic;
3. Assess one's own training workshop, identifying areas of strength and areas that could use improvement;
4. Understand Block's concepts of authentic communication and handling resistance.

**Disability Accommodation/Special Needs:**

If you have a special need (such as a learning disability or physically challenged classification), please notify me so that I can accommodate you.

**Textbooks (available at University Bookstore) or Amazon.com:**

Block, P. (2011). *Flawless consulting: A guide to getting your expertise used (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.)*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.

Stolovitch, H. D., & Keeps, E. J. (2011). *Telling Ain't Training (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.)*. Alexandria, VA: ASTD.

Additional readings can be downloaded from library databases (unless noted otherwise). These are not “optional readings.” They are relevant to the discussion material and the course assignments. **You are responsible for ensuring that you get copies of all class handouts.**

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Discussion Participation** - Each week we will concentrate on a small set of readings. You should plan to spend quality time closely reading each assigned article/chapter so that you are prepared to discuss them during class that week. Know them well enough that when asked on the spot to give a cursory overview of the author’s points, you could do so.

The instructor will lead the discussion, asking a series of questions about each chapter/article. These questions will lead to a discussion of the material. Being present and participating are minimum requirements for a “B” level participation grade. For any grade higher than that, your participation grade will depend on the quality of your contributions. Quality comments include: adding new insights to the readings, offering a different, unique, and relevant perspective on an issue, contributing to moving the discussion and analysis forward, extending rather than repeating others comments, and demonstrating reflective thinking. “*I thought this article was interesting,*” “*I agree with what Lori said*” are examples of weak comments especially if there’s no follow-up ... make your comments stronger.

**Applied communication articles paper** – Choose any communication-related topic for which training could be conducted. Some examples include: sexual harassment prevention, diversity processes, team-building, leadership skills, decision-making, presentation skills, media crisis training, etc. Identify and read a minimum of three articles related to this topic. Useful journals for this are *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *Journal of Business Communication*, *Academy of Management Learning*, *Communication Education*, and *Management Communication Quarterly*. Write a 5-6 page paper that summarizes and analyzes N learning points that would be useful for a training program on that topic. Turn in copies of the article you use along with your paper. Paper should be written in APA style with a cover page and reference page attached. **Due date: 3 options: Feb. 25, March 4, or March 18.**

**Training proposal paper**

For this paper, you will write a 6-8 page proposal that proposes a training workshop for your “client.” Your proposal will include a cover letter, a fairly thorough description of the elements of your training session, a description of your pricing structure, and your bio. **Due date: April 8**

**Final group project (Training workshop/analysis/group member evaluation)** – Your instructor has/will secure approval from a group in the DFW-Denton community that could benefit from communication training in an area that you mutually negotiate. Next, you will (b) schedule the training; (c) develop an assessment tool for measuring your training’s success; and

(d) execute the training. The training should provide the audience with useful "take-aways." They should get more than a lecture. They should get some useful skills and/or tools to take away to their own lives and organizations. You are allowed to use previously documented tools for your session. We will work together to decide how "clients" are identified, groups are formed, etc. **Organizations: Opening Door for Women in Need; Grace Under Fire (3/1 – 3/3** → same date as dept. student conference)

**Training workshop paper** – After you have completed the training session, you will turn in an individually written analysis of your group, consisting of 12-15 typed, double-spaced, error-free, well-written pages. Your analysis should be thoughtful and thorough, consistently illustrating critical thinking skills and good writing. This paper is designed to allow you to apply the concepts learned throughout the semester to an actual training experience. Think of this paper as an assessment and critique of your group and training experience. In the end, your paper should be a 12 -15 page paper (12 pt. font, 1-inch margins). Please include a reference page with full references for everything cited in the paper itself. **Due date: May 6**

**Peer evaluation** – In addition to the instructor's grade, each group member will receive a peer evaluation from the other members of the group.

### **Grade determination**

Assignments will be worth the following number of points:

- |                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Applied Comm. paper | 50 points        |
| 2. Training exercise   | 200 points       |
| 3. Final paper         | 100 points       |
| 4. Peer evaluations    | 50 points        |
| 5. Proposal paper      | 50 points        |
| 6. Participation       | <u>50 points</u> |

Total: 500 points

Individuals who accumulate 90% of the points will receive an A, 80 – 89% will receive a B, and 70 – 79% will receive a C.

### **Course policies**

**Assignments:** Papers are due on the dates listed. They should be typed and in APA style. No late papers will be accepted. Unless given explicit approval from the instructor, students are not allowed to turn in the same paper for two different graduate classes.

**Attendance:** Class attendance is a must. One cannot learn without attending class and absences are not positively regarded. You will also be expected to be prepared to discuss reading for each week.

**Academic Dishonesty.** All persons shall adhere to the Code of Student Conduct regarding academic honesty, including acts of cheating and plagiarism. Of particular concern in a course with written and oral assignments is the issue of plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined by Webster's (1989) as "the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work" (p. 1100). In other words, plagiarism is stealing. You must cite your sources accurately and consistently in both your oral and written

assignments. Penalties for plagiarism will vary according to severity and will range from a failing grade to prosecution through the University System.

**Class format:** This course will be managed as a lecture/seminar. Each week, we'll review the readings. We'll also talk as much as possible about progress on your various assignments. I'd like for this class to be an engaging, informative, process built upon reading, discussion, and lots of doing.

**Completing the Course:** Students are expected to complete all assignments for this course during the semester. Assigning a grade of "incomplete" is rare, and in order to request an "I," the student must meet these requirements: a) The student must have completed at least 75% of the course assignments; b) The student must be passing the course; c) There must be an unforeseen and compelling reason why the course cannot be completed on time; and d) The student must present a plan for completing the assignments within the time period specified in the catalog.

**Crisis Contingency.** In the event of the university closing for weather-related reasons or illness outbreak, e.g. flu, please check your email account. I will provide instructions on how to turn in assignments and how the class will proceed utilizing email.

**Student Behavior in the Classroom:** Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr)

**This syllabus is not a contract. It is a guide and may be changed by the professor at any time without prior notice.**

This Semester's Topics/Readings

**Readings are tentative and could change.**

Week/Date	Topic	Assignments due
Jan. 14	Introduction to course; individual introductions; syllabus and schedule review	
Jan. 21	<b>No Class – MLK Day</b>	
Jan. 28	<p><b>What are these things called consultants/trainers?</b></p> <p>Read: Block, Ch. 1-2; S &amp; K, Ch. 1-3</p> <p>Daly, J. A. (1998). Consulting. In A. Vangelisti, J.A. Daly, &amp; G.W. Friedrich's (eds.) <i>Teaching communication: Theory, Research, &amp; Methods</i> (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). pp. 507-516.</p> <p>Beebe, S. A. (2007). Raising the question #6: What do communication trainers do? <i>Communication Education, 56</i>, 249-254.</p>	
Feb. 4	<p><b>Adult Learning: It's not an oxymoron (Block's concept of "flawless consulting")</b></p> <p>Read: S &amp; K, Ch. 4-5; Block, Ch. 3</p> <p>Wojecki, A. (2007). "What's identity got to do with it, anyway?": Constructing adult learner identities in the workplace. <i>Studies in the Education of Adults, 39</i>, 168-182.</p> <p>Cotton, D. (2004, May). Essentials of training design part 5: Adult learning theories and design. <i>Training Journal, 22-27</i>.</p> <p>Sims, R. M. Five strategies for cracking the code of adult learning. <i>Training, 43</i>, 40-41.</p> <p><b>Guest speaker: Chris Tran, Consultant at ThoughtWorks</b></p>	
Feb. 11	<b>"Some Kind of Consulting" exercise</b> (or prep for Grace Under Fire workshop)	
Feb. 18	<p><b>Finish Discussion on Adult Learning</b></p> <p><b>Interacting with clients – Needs</b></p> <p>Read: S &amp; K, Ch. 6-7; Block, Ch. 4-6</p>	
Feb. 25	<p><b>Interacting with clients – Resistance</b></p> <p>Read: Block, 8-10</p> <p>Karp, H. B., &amp; Sammour, H. Y. (2000). Workforce diversity: Choices in diversity training programs and dealing with resistance to diversity. <i>College Student Journal, 34</i>, 451-458.</p> <p>Lipshitz, R., Friedman, V., &amp; Omer, H. (1989). Overcoming resistance</p>	Applied article first optional due date

	to training: A nonconfrontive approach. <i>Training and Development Journal</i> , 12, 46-51.	
March 4	<b>Guest speaker: Kent Hutchinson, C.J. Baxter Group</b>	Applied paper second optional due date
March 11	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
March 18	<p><b>What are you worth? – Proposals and Contracts</b></p> <p>Read: Block, 11-13</p> <p>Buday, R. (2003, February). A consultant's comeuppance. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 81 (2), 26-35.</p> <p>Iandiorio, J. S. (1994). Confidentiality and consultant agreements. <i>Journal of Management Consulting</i>, 8, 59-65.</p> <p>Roberson, L., Kulik, C. T., &amp; Pepper, M. B. (2003). Using needs assessment to resolve controversies in diversity training design. <i>Group &amp; Organization Management</i>, 28, 148-174.</p>	Applied paper last optional due date
March 25	<p><b>Designing your training/workshop – Part 1</b></p> <p>Read: S &amp; K, Ch. 8-9; Block, 14-16</p> <p>Pio, E., &amp; Haigh, N. (2007). Towards a pedagogy of inspirational variables. <i>Education &amp; Training</i>, 49, 77-90.</p> <p>Webb, L. (1989). A program of public speaking training: One consultant's approach. <i>The Southern Communication Journal</i>, 55, 72-86.</p> <p><b>Guest speaker: Geoff Tumlin, Mouthpeace Consulting</b></p>	
April 1	<p><b>Designing your Training Workshop – Part II (training and technology)</b></p> <p>Read: S &amp; K, Ch. 10-11</p> <p>Stephens, K. K., &amp; Mottet, T. P. (2008). Interactivity in a web conference training context: Effects on trainers and trainees. <i>Communication Education</i>, 57, 88-104.</p>	
April 8	<p><b>Executing the Workshop (without executing your clients)</b></p> <p>DeWine, Ch. 6-7 (instructor will provide); Block, 17-18</p> <p>Lindsay, C. (1994). Things that go wrong in diversity training: Conceptualization and change with ethnic identity models. <i>Journal of Organizational Change Management</i>, 7, 18-33.</p> <p>Sloan, D. K. (2004). The penis people. In J. Keyton &amp; P. Shockley-Zalabak (Eds.) <i>Case Studies for Organizational Communication</i> (pp.</p>	Proposal paper due

	369-373). Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company. (Instructor to copy)  <i>Heckler</i> case study	
April 15	<b>Well, did they learn anything?</b>  S & K, Ch. 12-13; Block, 19  Leonard, D., & Swap, W. (2004, September). Deep smarts. <i>Harvard Business Review</i> , 82 (9), 88-97.  Siebold, D. R., Kudsi, S., & Rude, M. (1993). Does comm. training make a difference?: Evidence for the effectiveness of a presentation skills program. <i>Journal of Applied Comm. Research</i> , 21, 111-132.	
April 22	<b>Ethics – Do you have any?</b> Read: DeWine, Ch. 7, Ch. 20 (Instructor will provide)  Risser, R. (1999). Sexual harassment training: Truth and consequences. <i>Training and Development</i> 53, 21-23.  Rubin, D. B. (2002). The ethics of consulting for the tobacco industry. <i>Statistical Methods in Medical Research</i> , 11, 373-380.	
April 29	<b>Careers in Consulting/Training</b>  El-Tannir, A. A. (2002). The corporate university model for continuous learning, training, and development. <i>Education &amp; Training</i> , 44, 76-81.  BeeBe et al., Ch. 12 DeWine, Ch. 20	
May 6	FINALS WEEK	<b>Final papers due</b>