Proposal for New and Revised Courses (Version 1.5)

Proposal Date: September 20, 2016
15-Day Review End Date

Department: Communication
Course Designator and Number: COMM 1014
Title of Course: Introduction to Communication
Credit Hours: 3

Please refer to Office of University Registrar for guidelines and policy requirements:
https://www.registrar.vt.edu/faculty/teaching/instructional-minutes.html

Course Transcript Title (ADF): Introduction to Communication
Instructor and/or Departmental Contact: Marlene Preston
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Contact E-Mail: rpreston@vt.edu

Please count this course toward any of the following scorecard metrics area by inserting an X:

- Study Abroad
- Service Learning
- Experiential
- Undergraduate Research

Scorecard Metrics Definitions can be found here:
http://www.registrar.vt.edu/faculty/forms/scorecard-metrics.html

Please insert an X if this course should count toward First-Year Experience:

- First Year Experience (FYE)

For more information see:
http://www.fye.vt.edu

Mark ONLY ONE of the following boxes by inserting an X:

- New Course (NOT Pathways)
- Revised Course (NOT Pathways) (Fill out Part I)
  (Revision > 20% _______ Revision < 20% _______)
- New Course & Inclusion in Pathways General Education (Fill out Parts I & II)
- Existing non-CLE Course Revised for Pathways (Fill out Parts I and II)
  Revision > 20% _______ Revision < 20% _______
- Conversion of Existing CLE Course to Pathways (Fill out Parts I & II)
  Revision > 20% _______ Revision < 20% _______

A: Attach statement from Dean or Departmental Representative as to whether teaching this course, and/or inclusion of the course in the Pathways will require or generate the need for additional departmental resources.

B: Attach appropriate letters of support from affected departments and/or colleges.

C: Effective Term: (for CLE as indicated AND ALSO as Pathways effective Fall 2018) CLE – Fall 2017; Pathways Fall 2018

D: Change in Title From:

To:

E: Change in Lecture and/or Lab Hours From:

To:

F: Change in Credit Hours From:

To:

G: Percentage of Revision from Current Syllabus: 40%

Revision Summary:
Major change is alignment with Pathways student learning outcomes; foundational concepts remain the same with text and syllabus updates.

H: Course Number(s) and Title(s) to be deleted from the Catalog with APPROVAL:

Introduction to Communication Studies

Approval Signatures

Department Representative: Date
College Curriculum Committee Rep: Date
College Dean: Date
Proposal for New and Revised Courses (Version 1.5)

Part I: Course Information

Catalog Description
Survey of the communication discipline across areas of specialization from interpersonal to mediated and mass communication, including history and fundamental concepts, theories, contexts. Emphasis on ethical human behavior and message analysis. (3H, 3C)

Learning Objectives
- Identify disciplinary areas of specialization and contexts for application
- Explain how historical changes have influenced the development of the communication discipline
- Define foundational disciplinary terms and concepts (Pathways SS -- SLO #1)
- Analyze human behavior in communication contexts related to the application of disciplinary theories (Pathways SS -- SLO #2)
- Analyze the ways values and beliefs influence messages (Pathways SS -- SLO #4)
- Explain and contrast theories that integrate communication and ethics. (Pathways ER -- SLO #1)
- Identify ethical issues in complex communication contexts (Pathways ER -- SLO #2)
- Explain implications of disciplinary considerations on personal practice

Justification
This foundational course is crucial to the study of communication and has been taught by this department since 1985, with revision in 1994. The course is important to the departmental curriculum as a common requirement for all majors because it provides foundational information for the three majors: Communication Studies, Multimedia Journalism, and Public Relations. The course has also been a long-standing part of general education and has served non-majors as well. Regardless of their fields of study or their eventual employment, students will communicate with classmates, colleagues, clients, and citizenry. Understanding the complexity of that communication will help them to more carefully consider the choices they will make and the ethical implications of those choices in terms of messages, audiences, and methods of communication.

This revision of the course includes (1) a name change, (2) disciplinary content updates, and (3) general education updates.

1. The name change request reflects an updating from the course originally approved in 1994. At that time, the department’s name was “Communication Studies,” and its name reflected the department’s title. The Department of Communication changed its name in 2004, and now has a major named “Communication Studies,” which is one of three majors in the department. In order to avoid confusion and to continue to reflect the broad disciplinary scope of the course as an introduction to the field, the name change is requested.

2. The course content has also been slightly shifted, dropping a previous section on communication criticism, which is now covered in a different course. Instead, the focus of this course as an introduction to the discipline is on terms, concepts, and theories that form the basis of different approaches to communication in general and message analysis in particular. In addition, communication contexts are addressed, allowing students to grasp the variety of social, professional, and academic opportunities the discipline offers. The course also includes attention to ever-evolving communication technology. The importance of social and ethical issues and questions in the communication discipline are emphasized throughout each context.

3. The learning objectives have been shifted to reflect the Pathways curriculum, merging the student learning outcomes for social sciences and ethical reasoning with the communication content.

Commented [BS2]: The Ad Hoc Committee needs to see alignment of verbiage across the Course Description, Learning Objectives, and Syllabus
Here there is alignment with the Pathways core and integrative concepts

Commented [MP3]: Notice how all learning objectives are written in the format of ‘the student will be able to…’
Also, the UCCGE appreciated how the Pathways concepts/student learning outcomes (broad) were mapped to the course objectives (usually more specific). Notice that not all course objectives map to a Pathways concept/ outcome. However, without this explicit connection to Pathways a reviewer should be able to recognize this alignment and correlation to each concept/outcome chosen.
Language from the integrative concepts (e.g. ‘ethical issues’, ‘global issues’, ‘intercultural contexts’, etc.) should appear somewhere in these objectives.
This proposer started with the Pathways Concepts/Outcomes, then merged them with the existing learning objectives to ensure alignment.
As this was a revised course, some of the original learning objectives were no longer necessary and were therefore removed in the proposal revision.
In developing these objectives, the proposer used verbs appropriate for the level and nature of the student learning. These align with Bloom’s taxonomy. Learn more at www.bloomstaxonomy.org for verbs and examples or just get the chart here by searching ‘Bloom’s taxonomy verbs’
This course remains appropriate at the freshman level, as it is an entry-level survey course of the communication discipline. Communication majors and minors go into greater depth on various theories in upper-level courses for which this course is a prerequisite.

**Prerequisites and Corequisites**

None

**Texts and Special Teaching Aids**

Required:

**Syllabus**

1. Communication discipline and areas of specialization in context  
   - Specialization including study of rhetoric and culture; developing/delivering content for print, broadcast, and internet; study of multimedia journalism and effects; developing/delivering public relations tools for clients; study of organizational communication  
   - Contexts including application in areas of gender, health, international, diversity, advocacy, corporate, non-profit, sports, politics, social media, news, entertainment, gaming

2. Fundamental concepts, theories and applications related to ethical human behavior and message analysis  
   - Theoretical frameworks – historical development and ethics across frameworks  
   - Intrapersonal, Interpersonal  
   - Group and Organizational  
   - Public Communication  
   - Mass Communication  
   - Culture and Diversity

3. From theory to ethical personal practice – college, post-graduate studies, career

Total 100%

**Old (Current) Syllabus**

1994 Syllabus:

- The nature of communication – theory and models  
- Approaches to the study of communication – rhetorical, scientific, semiotic, critical  
- Major areas of study in communication – rhetoric and speech, journalism, film and photography, broadcasting, advertising and public relations, popular culture, interactive technologies  
- Ethical and value issues in communication  
- Career opportunities

Total 100%
Part II: General Education Information

Pathways General Education Mission

As a central component of the undergraduate experience at Virginia Tech, the Pathways curriculum will guide students to examine the world from multiple perspectives and integrate their knowledge across disciplines and domains of learning through a hands-on, minds-on approach.

Pathways General Education Principles

1. Integration. The promotion of integration in students’ learning is crucial to students’ ability to create meaning, explore connections, and build knowledge and skills for their academic, professional, civic, and personal lives. Students will meet many of the learning outcomes by taking sequenced courses that build upon one another, adding a dimension of depth to the curriculum. As they participate in one of three paths through general education, undergraduates will have opportunities to make meaning of their general education curriculum through the integration of diverse ways of knowing, recognizing that the whole is truly greater than the sum of its parts. The incorporation of the integrative learning outcomes—Ethical Reasoning and Intercultural and Global Awareness—throughout the curriculum will further enable students to connect the courses and identify various perspectives on these themes. This ability to integrate new learning into their ways of seeing the world will help students build a competency they will need for the rest of their lives.

2. Inclusivity. The Pathways curricular structure will address the needs and challenges of populations of students and acknowledge the diverse paths they have taken to Virginia Tech, including such groups as first-semester freshmen, first-generation college students, transfer students, and veterans. In turn, the Pathways curriculum will prepare these diverse groups of students to become contributors to the global society in which they will live and work. To support this effort, inclusive pedagogies that foster deep learning in all students will be adopted. Extending this principle, all students will be encouraged to examine issues of diversity and inclusion, such as gender, race, socio-economic status, and sexual orientation. This will be accomplished through the integration of concepts in intercultural and global knowledge across the Pathways curriculum. Note: this principle speaks to how the class is taught (pedagogies, classroom environment, etc.) as much as the what is taught.

3. Relevance. The Pathways curriculum will be relevant to students' personal development, helping them to integrate new learning into their lives for current and long-term application. The curriculum will challenge undergraduates in fundamental areas of learning, which will be relevant to major courses and activities across the undergraduate years and beyond. Students will also develop the skills they will need for success in every area of their lives: communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, ethical behaviors, inquiry, and creativity.

Pathways General Education cont.

Select one of the following by inserting an X:

☐ New Course  X Existing CLE Course  ☐ Existing Course NOT in the CLE

Narrative: Describe how this course will fit the mission and each of the three principles (integration, inclusivity, relevance) of Pathways.

Why would a student take this course? Who is the audience for this course? Limit your response to less than 400 words.
Pathways Concepts

A. Core Concepts

Please select the concept(s) this course will meet by inserting an X. Then click on the concept(s) you need to address to move to that section of the form. A course may be approved for no more than two concepts.

- [ ] Discourse
- [ ] Quantitative and Computational Thinking
- [ ] Reasoning in the Natural Sciences
- [ ] Critique and Practice in Design and the Arts
- [x] Reasoning in the Social Sciences
- [ ] Critical Thinking in the Humanities

B. Integrative Concepts

Please select either or both of the Integrative Concepts by inserting an X. Then click on the concept(s) you need to address to move to that section of the form.

- [x] Ethical Reasoning
- [ ] Intercultural and Global Awareness

Commented [BS4]: The reviewers appreciated how each principle is addressed separately. However, because there may be a great deal of overlap, a proposer might weave these into a unified narrative as long as it is clear each principle is addressed.

Commented [BS5]: A Pathways course can meet one or at maximum two core outcomes.

Commented [BS6]: A course can meet one or both integrative concepts (see comment in integrative concepts section).

students can begin to understand early in their academic careers that every interaction requires sensitivity to readers and listeners. Intercultural awareness is a basic tenet of the course.

Relevance: Communication majors take the course as an intro to the major; they want to understand the directions in which the major might take them. Minors and other non-majors recognize the importance of communication in any career. They are interested in understanding the roles communication might play in various contexts. Students can see themselves building on the fundamentals of communication (concepts and theories) as they interact with faculty and peers on campus and also as they develop competencies for their future careers.
Reasoning in the Social Sciences

You can hide this section from viewing and printing by clicking on the section title, then clicking on the little arrow that pops up to the left... unless you are using a Mac, in which case you will just need to delete the sections that don’t apply to you...

Reasoning in the Social Sciences is the utilization of quantitative and qualitative methods to explain the behavior and actions of individuals, groups, and institutions within larger social, economic, political, and geographic contexts. Courses meeting this outcome will help students to understand that they are a small part of a larger global community and to engage with diverse individuals, groups, and ideas that have shaped or continue to shape the worlds they inhabit. Courses or course sequences addressing this concept must meet a majority of the student learning outcomes.

Credit hours: 6 credits

Choose at least a majority of the student learning outcomes for this core concept by putting an X in the box next to the outcome. As you complete the descriptions, please use real-world examples, particularly to explain discipline-specific vocabulary.

Note: This class is taught mostly as a large lecture (approximately 200 per semester). While the class delivery is engaging in many ways, the tests are necessarily objective. Students are not submitting essays or projects. Smaller sections are offered online in Winter Session and Summer I and can include more student writing and/or reflection; however, those sections are not the norm. The responses below reflect the large lecture.

**Identify fundamental concepts of the social sciences.**

Guiding prompts: What are some fundamental concepts of the social sciences explored in this course? In what ways might an instructor evaluate students on the acquisition of this knowledge?

Because the course is taught in various sizes and formats, the evaluation might be an essay in smaller courses but is most likely an objective test in the large lecture (the dominant format for the course).

**Concepts:** Social behavior—relationships, power, gender, etc. **Evaluating acquisition of knowledge:** Objective examination of understanding of theoretical concepts related to interpersonal relationships, small group and organizational roles, power, stereotypes, “muting” gendered communication, etc.

**Analyze human behavior, social institutions and/or patterns of culture using theories and methods of the social sciences.**

Guiding prompts: Identify examples of behavior, institutions, or cultural patterns students will explore in this course. What are some theories or methods students will employ to analyze them? In what ways might an instructor evaluate students on the acquisition of this skill?

Because the course is taught in various sizes and formats, the evaluation might be an essay in smaller courses but is most likely an objective test in the large lecture (the dominant format for the course).

**Examples:** strategies to overcome cognitive dissonance; uncertainty reduction strategies; overcoming transgressions resulting in de-penetration in relationships; recognizing objective and subjective elements of a culture; identifying strategies of “silencing” and employing strategies to resist silencing; priming, framing, gate-keeping, and agenda-setting functions of media, etc. **Evaluating acquisition of knowledge:** Objective examination of understanding and application of theoretical assumptions and concepts to evaluate examples.
Identify interconnections among and differences between social institutions, groups, and individuals.

Analyze the ways in which values and beliefs relate to human behavior and social relationships.

Guiding prompts: How might students explore this relationship? In what ways might an instructor evaluate students on the acquisition of this skill?

Because the course is taught in various sizes and formats, the evaluation might be an essay in smaller courses, but is most likely an objective test in the large lecture (the dominant format for the course).

Analysis of Symbolic Interaction Theory, media Uses & Gratifications Theory or media Cultivation Theory. For example, students might watch clips from video “Killing Us Softly,” and evaluate advertisements, songs, music videos, etc. in light of relevant communication theories. Evaluating acquisition of knowledge: Objective examination of understanding and application of theoretical assumptions and concepts to examples.

Commented [MP9]: While this student learning outcome is met in this course, the proposer selected the minimum number of required outcome. For any outcome chosen, student learning must be documented not only for course purposes but also for general education.

Commented [BS10]: The Ad Hoc Committee greatly appreciates ‘Such as’ and ‘For example’ statements in each outcome response box. This paints a clear picture for how students might meet this outcome. The proposer is NOT bound to these statements down the road… this is a proposal…

Commented [BS11]: This proposer has deleted all sections they aren’t filling out (e.g. Reasoning in the Natural Sciences, etc.) This is very helpful.
Ethical Reasoning

You can hide this section from viewing and printing by clicking on the section title, then clicking on the little arrow that pops up to the left… unless you are using a Mac, in which case you will just need to delete the sections that don’t apply to you.

Ethical Reasoning is the principled evaluation of moral and political beliefs and practices. In today’s complex and diverse world, ethical behavior requires more than just the desire to do the right thing. Foundational learning of ethical theories, issues, and applications provides tools that enable students to deliberate and to assess for themselves, claims about ethical issues in their personal, public, and professional lives. Courses addressing this concept must meet a majority of the student learning outcomes.

Credit hours: This integrative concept will be met in conjunction with Core Concepts. No extra hours will be necessary.

Please choose a minimum of two student learning outcomes by putting an X in the box next to the outcome. As you complete the descriptions, please use real-world examples, particularly to explain discipline-specific vocabulary.

- Explain and contrast relevant ethical theories.
  
  Guiding prompts: What are some relevant ethical theories students will explore within the context of the core outcome? In what ways might an instructor evaluate students on the acquisition of this knowledge?

  Because the course is taught in various sizes and formats, the evaluation might be an essay in smaller courses but is most likely an objective test in the large lecture (the dominant format for the course).
  
  Semantic Perspective; Critical Theory; Muted Group Theory; Standpoint Theory; Cultivation Theory. Such theories—relevant to communication and ethics—will be explored and compared as they relate to standards for ethical practice. Instructor evaluation of student acquisition of knowledge by objective examinations.

- Identify ethical issues in a complex context.
  
  Guiding prompts: What are some ethical issues students might explore that fit within the context of the core outcome? In what ways might an instructor evaluate students on the acquisition of this skill?

  Because the course is taught in various sizes and formats, the evaluation might be an essay in smaller courses but is most likely an objective test in the large lecture (the dominant format for the course).
  
  Asymmetrical power-related issues between genders; “triggers” and “micro-aggressions” versus free speech/expression; violence in media. Instructor evaluation of student acquisition of knowledge by objective examinations.

- Articulate and defend positions on ethical issues in a way that is both reasoned and informed by the complexities of those situations.
  
  Guiding prompts: Outline a lesson in which students articulate and defend positions on ethical issues grounded within the context of the core outcome. What would an effective defense look like?

Commented [BS12]: All Pathways courses are required to meet a minimum of one integrative concept… with a minimum of two student learning outcome within that concept.

A course can meet both integrative concept. As a reminder, the instructor is responsible for meeting and assessing any concept and any outcome checked off on this proposal (across all sections).

A course can also receive “provisional approval” for Pathways by not selecting an integrative concept now, but rather submitting that in two years. In that case, no integrative concept is to be selected. Simply write “seeking provisional approval” in the first student learning outcome box.
As Pathways courses must also map to CLE credit (since there will be students operating under each program simultaneously), mark the appropriate Areas for which you think your course would fit.

If your course is already in CLE, put an X in the first row and mark the Areas in which your course currently resides.

X Already in CLE?
☐ Area 1: Writing and Discourse
☐ Area 2: Ideas, Cultural Traditions, and Values
X Area 3: Society and Human Behavior
☐ Area 4: Scientific Reasoning and Discovery
☐ Area 5: Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning
☐ Area 6: Creativity and Aesthetic Experience
☐ Area 7: Critical Issues in a Global Context

Commented [BS14]: NOTE: Versions 1, 1.1, and 1.2 require justification of the CLE goals... don't do that! If you have already begun on one of those versions, please copy-and-paste this section from the current form so you only have to choose an area.