INTRODUCTION

Communication is a set of skills critically needed by everyone, particularly those working in the fields of recreation, tourism and natural resources management (park management, forestry, wildlife and fisheries, public and private sector recreation and tourism management) ... because these professionals are managing people as much as, or more than, the resource. As a professional, you will work with colleagues daily, often in active teams. In fact, competence in communication (both oral and written) is one of the major attributes that employers look for when interviewing job applicants ... in almost any field. Computer skills also are critical. Effective communication is important in presenting and gaining support for program ideas, for marketing services, for creating customer/visitor satisfaction, for acquiring funding and other support for projects, for building constituencies, and for promoting a positive work environment within the agency, business or other organization. Communication is an integral part of any marketing strategy, of human resource management, of service delivery, and organizational image and operations.

The purpose of this course in communications methods is to expose students to underlying principles and types of communication, and to provide opportunities to plan, develop and implement various messages and/or projects using a variety of oral, print and electronic media. Additionally, this course is designated as a university WRITING course, so you will be doing a lot of writing, and critique will be made on writing (by you, peers, and instructors) as well as other elements of your projects.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. explain principles of communications and public relations as they apply to recreation, park and other leisure/tourism/resource management settings, and to apply them to course assignments;
2. plan and execute various types of communications messages and public relations projects, working individually and in small groups (created from your "base team" members, which you will choose; groupings can be based on your academic emphasis/interest area, schedule, course/grade goals), using topics and resources appropriate to your field of interest;
3. evaluate the application and effectiveness of communication and public relations programs and projects;
4. practice developing and presenting oral and non-personal messages appropriate to your field of study via oral, print, and electronic media;
5. gain additional experience with computers and apply their use in communication strategies;
6. appreciate and apply the use of communications and public relations (using a variety of electronic, print and face-to-face media) within an "information system" framework to help achieve park, recreation, tourism, and resource management objectives;
7. be able to plan your communication strategies to accommodate persons with disabilities and to incorporate information about programs relevant to such persons in information pieces;
8. gain experience productively critiquing your peers' work (both those in your "base team" and in the rest of the class) as well as your own; and
9. contribute to your PRTR professional portfolio with your edited, polished work (to be used in the future for internship and job applications).

WRITING COURSE

Because PRR 351 is a university-designated writing course, much attention will be paid to the actual writing components of all your projects. Most projects, however, will involve writing components different in style from typical term papers. Nevertheless, all written work is to be professional, with attention paid to structure, clarity, grammar, spelling, etc. Statements should be explicit, opinions and choices clearly justified, and ideas should be logically presented. One of the requirements of a writing course is that you have opportunities to revise your work. Major projects are done in phases or stages, which will allow you this critique and revision opportunity. Part of your grade will be based on the writing component of your projects.

Grade Components: In addition to "writing quality" components embedded in projects (e.g., quality of writing in text blocks and headings for the brochure, and quality of writing in your video script), you will receive a writing grade for each draft and final planning document for the major projects within the overall grade. For partner and group projects, each group member is responsible for proofreading group planning documents and making corrections prior to its submission. Points will be taken off separately for mistakes made on items written on the class OOOOOPS board and in your list of "common mistakes" (on course web site, under "writing workshop").

OOOOOPS Board: Located in the classroom (room 19, NR) is an "OOOOOPS" section of the bulletin board. This is where we will post "writing mistakes" that appear in print. You may contribute to this board (for extra credit @ .25/item, for a maximum of 2 points, to be added to final grade average) by bringing in mistakes you find in print to be posted on this board. Either cut out or make a photocopy of article (or other print source) where the mistake is identified. Write on the article your name, lab section, date and source of the piece. Highlight the mistake, identify its type (spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc.) and write (at bottom of page) what it SHOULD BE. Participation in this activity has moved several students’ borderline grades to the next higher grade. When more than one person finds the same "ooops," only the first person to submit the “ooops” will receive the credit.

REQUIRED READING MATERIALS


Course Reader: available at Budget Printing Center, 974 Trowbridge (we will let you know when it is ready); Bring to class every day.

Course Assignments, Worksheets, Critique Sheets, etc.: You will find these on the PRR 351 web site. Be sure to print and bring all relevant materials to class with you on the appropriate days. Check “course schedule” for dates.

Professional Presentations: Oral and Written guidebook: This guidebook (to include information about electronic media) is available on the web at http://www.prr.msu.edu/PRR351/PRR351.htm

You are encouraged to access this publication for use throughout your work in the PRTR Dept. and for reference as you begin your career.
LECTURE/LAB STRUCTURE OF COURSE

This course is structured in a lecture/lab format. All students will be together for lecture on Tuesdays, then will participate in one of the Thursday labs. Lecture will cover broad concepts, theory, and use of communication strategies and techniques, particularly as applied in the park, recreation and tourism field. Note that labs and lecture are conducted separately. Therefore, it may seem that there is not always a direct linear progression of course content from lecture to lab. We may work on a single project several times throughout the semester even though the lecture portion related to that topic may occur just once or twice. Also, some lecture sessions are not directly related to any of the projects; rather, they are self-standing topics. Use your "base team" members to help keep on track and to confirm project due dates. Also use the class schedule to help you keep track of assignment due dates.

CLASS BASE TEAMS

The class (within each lab section) will be organized into teams, based on similarity of academic emphasis or interest areas, preferred out-of-class meeting availability, personal grade target, or other characteristics of similarity. Students will have access to this information in order to self-select teams. Team members will be responsible to and for each other throughout the semester. You should remind each other of due dates, critique each other's work honestly and openly, pick up materials or provide class summaries to team members should they have to miss a class, and openly invite ideas from all members. You will use this group as a work team throughout the course.

As stated previously, some of your projects will be developed by yourself, others will be completed with base team members. Partners and project group members will be selected from within your "base team." It is recommended that each team select a specific organization, business or agency related to their interest area so that you can address projects to this group throughout the semester. Using a real entity, you will be able to more easily and effectively research possible target audience characteristics and will be able to contribute real projects based on real needs of the organizations. ASSIGNMENT 3 (the major project) incorporates both a print (brochure) and electronic (video or web site) component, which should be integrated within the organization's larger information system (remember that each should fulfill a different role in the info system).

COURSE EXPECTATIONS and STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Both instructors and students share responsibilities in a course. As the instructors, our responsibilities include providing interesting, relevant and effective learning opportunities for students; allowing and encouraging open discussion and diversity of opinions during the course; challenging students to do their best--and even stretch their skills and thinking; being fair in assessment and evaluation; returning papers and projects in a timely manner; and providing critique in a timely manner to enable students to revise and improve their work.

The basic assumption of this course is that you will learn from a continuing process of rational conversation with your peers, and from actual participation in and production of real products. Within the course there are both opportunities and responsibilities. In this course you have the opportunity to learn. Your responsibilities are to maximize your learning from the course (i.e., improve your intellectual understanding as well as your applied skills), to maximize and assist in the learning of your classmates (especially your team members), and to apply what you learn to your work. To take advantage of the opportunity and to meet your responsibilities, students are to:

1. Master the basic concepts, theories and methods. You are expected to know a great deal more after taking this course than you did before, and you should be able to apply your knowledge and skills in practical settings. This includes reading and thinking done beyond what is actually covered specifically during the in-class portion of the course. (We will not directly discuss and present everything in the course readings. You are to read them and then apply that knowledge to your projects.)
2. **Think critically about the course content** to gain understanding and insights. Additionally, as you plan and develop your projects, you should think critically as you match message content and approaches to specific target audiences to meet specific needs. During each new phase of a project's development, you should think critically about further focusing, improving and refining your projects -- based on your and your peers' critical thinking, not solely in response to the instructors' comments. *Increasingly sophisticated levels of development and polish are expected for each successive stage of project development.*

3. **Explain precisely to several classmates your learning, insights, and conclusions.** Your learning is not complete until you teach what you know to someone else and can describe precisely what you have learned and what you now understand.

4. **Ask others to share their knowledge, conclusions, and insights with you.** The course is structured to provide some opportunities for this. However, you should make additional opportunities throughout the semester. When others do share with you, listen carefully, elaborate by explaining how what you learned from them fits in with previous knowledge you have learned . . . and be sure to thank them. Peer commentary and critique may be relatively new to you (as it most likely will be to others). So we are all learning together. Honest, open sharing and peer critique (both positive comments and suggestions for improvement) can provide positive learning experiences.

5. **Engage in intellectual controversy** by taking positions counter to those of your classmates (and instructors), developing clear rationale for your positions, challenging their reasoning and conclusions, and arguing (in a positive way, not a negative, attacking way) the issues until you or they are logically persuaded. (This does not mean butting heads just for the sake of butting heads. This should be used as an opportunity to develop skills in justifying and clearly presenting your ideas and perspectives.)

**INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. **Provide learning opportunities** and environment for exploration and creativity by students (no spoon feeding in this course) through structured, guided course approach.

2. **Return assignments in a timely manner** and provide appropriate feedback for student consideration for project improvement and enhanced learning.

3. **Be accessible** (in person, through email and phone).

4. **Actively listen** to students and respect their ideas, yet challenge thinking to broaden ideas and perspectives.

5. **Challenge students** to be successful and to develop projects of higher quality and creativity than they think possible.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Assigned readings from the course reader, text, course web site, handouts and other sources as assigned.** Additional readings will be handed or checked out to you. You must be prepared to discuss and apply readings in class. Occasionally we will engage in short, one- to five-minute papers addressing the reading or other course content (part of "class participation").

2. **Active participation in classroom activities and in discussion based on the assigned readings.** It is suggested that you come prepared with questions or specific discussion issues related to the readings. This will help you analyze and synthesize what you are reading. Additionally, you will be participating in hands-on in-class activities, interacting with guest speakers, and developing and presenting projects. **Active class participation assumes on-time attendance in all class sessions, including both lecture and lab.** This is one of
your responsibilities, both to the class and to your "base team" members. You are responsible for attending class (AND other meetings, as scheduled with team members), especially when you are working with team members on a project.

Each of you will be given one "Get Out of Jail Free" card, which you can use at any time for an unexcused absence from lecture OR lab (not one of each) (except when projects are due in class; you may not use GOJ card on project due-dates). If you miss a class, fill out your card with name and date, then turn in to the instructor. This absence will not be counted against you (or your grade). (If you lose your card, you will still receive the "free" absence.)

3. Completion of laboratory assignments/projects (some individual, some with team members; some are relatively small projects, some are in-class projects, and some are major projects that involve several planning phases). For multi-phase projects, each phase requires increasing sophistication, detail and clarity of thought. You will receive feedback on earlier phases to use as a basis for revising and further developing your projects. However, these comments should simply provide a starting point for revisions; they should not be assumed to be comprehensive (in other words, do some of your own analysis and work with team or other class members to clarify issues and improve your projects). All papers and projects must be professionally written and presented. (See guidelines in the Professional Presentations booklet.) The standards are excellence and professionalism! Remember, a "writing" assessment is included in grades for projects.

4. Mini-graded assignments and quizzes: A series of several types of exercises will receive either "credit" for submitting them, or a mini-grade indicating general quality of assignment. If these project components and exercises are not turned in on time, you will receive no credit for the project. Occasionally, quizzes maybe given to assure reading and understanding of course materials.

POLICY ON LATE and MISSED ASSIGNMENTS

- Assignments are due during class on the scheduled due date, unless otherwise specified. Late assignments, as general policy, will not be accepted. Therefore, start work on projects early (including contacting resource people, ordering resource materials, allowing time for photos to be developed, allowing time for correcting mistakes or taking care of computer/equipment problems, etc.). You and your team members should continue to make progress on project development even when you are waiting for a critique on an earlier phase of the project.

- In-class assignments and presentations that are due and scheduled to be presented during a specified class period may not be made up (except under special circumstances, such as conference attendance, when arrangements are made ahead of time with the instructor) . . . or with the following "emergency" exception.

- Emergency situations or serious illness, if presented to the instructor prior to the day of the presentation or in-class project [if possible], are the only exceptions to the above.

NO PAPERS or PROJECTS (including extra credit Ooosps Board items and the radio version of the news release) will be accepted after Thursday, December 5, 2002.
**Time Management:**
Throughout the semester you will be working on more than one project at a time. Plan early, budget your time wisely and do not to get behind. Falling behind is the faddaastest way to feel as if you’re drowning! Doing all the work for major projects at the end of the semester, when you have other projects and exams in other courses IS NOT FUN, nor conducive to QUALITY LEARNING.

NOTE: Based on comments from the previous classes, major assignments are all introduced early in the semester so that you can develop your own schedule (in concert with team members) throughout the semester. However, this means YOU are responsible for keeping up with work.

**Protecting Yourself:**
Most assignments and readings are found in your course reader, text, or on the course web site. However, you may be given additional handouts and assignment sheets...once. You are responsible for all material, so should have a notebook or folder in which you keep all materials.

Be sure that you print out your own copies of assignments, worksheets, and critique sheets from the course web site (and bring to class on appropriate days). Many of the worksheets and critique sheets should be completed and turned in with your projects.

The course schedule clearly spells out daily class content, in-class assignments, project team work time, and project due dates. It is **your responsibility** to keep track of these dates. Work with your team members to stay clear about the schedule, especially due dates and in-class work time. Remember, you are responsible to your team members just as they are responsible to you.

You may want to develop your own **PERT chart** to plan a detailed schedule of work.

It is a good idea to keep a photocopy of any assignment you turn in -- just in case of loss or miscommunication. This helps protect you and your work. (Computer disks or using your AFS space help you keep file copies. Be sure to make back-up copies of your computer files in case a disk crashes or becomes infected with a virus. You may choose to store your back-up files on your AFS space.)

**Typing of Assignments:**
All assignments (except those done in class) must be typed (word-processed). You are expected to know how to use a computer; it is suggested that you use it for your assignments. This will give you an additional back-up copy of your work. Plan ahead so you have time for this final step... and to edit. Sometimes computer labs get full, printers run out of ink, or other computer gremlins pose challenges to your work. **So plan for the gremlins.** Also, you will be completing a computer assessment exercise to help you (and us) determine potential needs for additional outside computer training or experience to be able to complete the course effectively.

**Project References:**
When you conduct research for your projects, you should use a variety of resources, including traditional library resources (books, journals, newspapers, etc.), internet resources, and personal interviews. Sometimes even personal experience can provide one source of information. However, you are expected to include **AT LEAST BOTH traditional library resources and Web resources.** Personal interviews and personal experience can be used as additional resources when appropriate (but should not be used as sole references). Neither should the web be used as the only reference source.
See readings in your reader/workbook that provide guidelines for assessing quality and validity of web sources. Also see information about citing electronic sources in the Professional Presentations Guidebook and the APA Style Guide web site.

Expenses:
During this course you will incur expenses in addition to those for the course reader and text. You will need to purchase supplies to help you appropriately and professionally present your projects (such as providing visual aids to support you talk, developing your camera-ready copy of the brochure, and purchasing blank video disks). You should consider placing your textbook in your personal professional library after the course, and refer to it in the future; it is much more expensive to buy a lot of books when you begin your first professional job. Team security deposits will be required for digital video tapes and JAZ disks. These will be returned upon return of the tapes and disks to instructors. You may make a digital or VHS copy of your video for your own use (you provide the blank tape).

Academic Honesty:
"Academic honesty is central to the educational process and acts of academic dishonesty are serious offenses within the University community. Suspension from the University could be the consequence for acts of academic dishonesty." (Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide, 2001, p. 80-81, see Academic Honesty section in box and section 1.00, Protection of Scholarship and Grades). Such violations will not be tolerated. Any student in this class found to be in violation of University academic honesty regulations automatically will receive, at a minimum, a failing grade on the project or in the course.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:
- plagiarism (any time you use ideas or information from another source, even if not directly quoted, you must cite the source)
- cheating
- fabrication
- facilitating or allowing dishonesty (of or by someone else)


Communication:
Communication (a major part of any group process, which is what this course is all about) is a two-way street. You are being evaluated frequently -- by yourself, your peers, and your instructors. We'd like to know how we're doing, too. Suggestions or support, we'd like to know how the course is going. We are trying several new strategies this semester, so we'd like to know how they are working. You will have a formal opportunity to provide a mid-course critique. In the meantime, if you have questions or suggestions, please express those. Remember that I will schedule an appointment with you if you want to talk with me outside of class. THANKS.

Take advantage of e-mail to ask questions or share opinions. If more than three students ask the same question, I will send the question and answer to the entire class. Check your e-mail regularly because I will send announcements, reminders, answers to questions, and job announcements.

Communication also is a major part of effective group work. Stay in touch with each other -- during class, outside of class, via e-mail, via telephone, whatever works for you and team members. This is not always easy, but each team member should take partial responsibility.
STUDENT EVALUATION

The majority of class members are PRTR majors who are committing themselves to a people- and communication-oriented profession. Non-PRTR majors are assumed to have similar or related interests. Therefore, it is also assumed that each class member is interested in and concerned with improving personal communication skills and will commit to the necessary study and participation involved (which means attending and participating in all classes as well as being an active, cooperative partner and group member for non-individual projects, and an active, cooperative member of your "base team"). All work is to be submitted ON TIME and to be done professionally (see Professional Presentations booklet/web site for guidelines).

You are expected to attend all classes and to arrive on time. (See information in "Course Requirements" section about your one "Get Out of Jail Free" card.)

During the semester, your "base team" should select an organization, agency or business related to your emphasis area that you can use for the context and "information system" for your major (Assmt. 3) project. This should reduce the amount of time you will need to spend researching your topic, audience and information system components so you can focus on development of the project components. Be sure to select a topic and organization that is of interest to you and your group members. The major project must be applicable to your field of study/future career choice, and contribute to the community (organization, agency, or business selected). When working with your team, identify a project in which all members are interested; this increases the likelihood of mutual cooperation in project development. Before selecting any specific project or topic, brainstorm and research the real needs. Then you may analyze and discuss the pros and cons of various project ideas.

Your work will be critically evaluated in addition to traditionally "graded." This means that much of the critique will be in the form of written and verbal comments, including questions to challenge you. The intent of this course is to help you learn, to provide opportunities for oral and written communications practice, and to allow you opportunities for self- and peer-assessment.

To meet the minimum expectations of the class, all of the following must be met:

- attend all classes and labs (if you must miss a class for a legitimate reason, or when you use you "get out of jail free" card, make arrangements with other team members for a summary and review of class content and discussion);
- read all assigned readings prior to class and be prepared to discuss and/or write about them, and take daily quizzes based on readings;
- arrive at class ON TIME (by the time roll is checked -- and the quiz given -- to get credit for it);
- participate actively during class, including completing in-class assignments;
- work as an effective team member throughout the semester;
- complete all assignments, including all stages of major projects (participate and contribute equitably to partner/group projects);
- turn in all assignments on time (and/or present on scheduled date); and
- complete and submit course evaluations.

You will be able to drop the grade for one of your 5% projects (as long as the assignment was completed and turned in on time). Probably this will be one of the early-version planning documents, written when you are still learning what is expected from project research.
The following scale will be used for grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>93.0% - 100.0%</td>
<td>Much Above Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>88.0% - 92.9%</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>83.0% - 87.9%</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>78.0% - 82.9%</td>
<td>Average (meets min. course requirements)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>72.0% - 77.9%</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>66.0% - 71.9%</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>60.0% - 65.9%</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>below 60%</td>
<td>Much Below Average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NOTE: This means: "just because you complete the work, you are not guaranteed an automatic '4.0'". Grades of 3.0 and above indicate levels of quality, clarity of thought and writing -- not simple completion of basic requirements. Also note that, while it is challenging to get a 3.5 or 4.0 in this course, it is also extremely difficult to do poorly (grades below 2.0 usually indicate late, incomplete assignments [often due to last minute completion of assignments] or failure to turn them in; lack of attention to details of assignments; failure to start projects early enough to allow time for proper research [e.g., time to visit a site, conduct an interview, or wait for resource materials to arrive in the mail]; or failure to ask for help when a student does not understand a concept).

Failing to turn in even the SMALL, 5%-weighted assignments can greatly affect your grade (i.e., it can drop your final grade by a full grade).

Class attendance and participation:
You are expected to attend all classes and to be on time. This includes class sessions reserved for teamwork on projects. Students regularly ask for more in-class time to work on projects, so take advantage of the time provided. Participation is crucial, partly because the course is heavily hands-on and involves in-class projects, partly because other team members with whom you will be working on projects will rely on you just as you will rely on them to be in class. (Remember that you do have one "Get Out of Jail Free" card. However, if you plan to miss, be sure to inform team members, or be sure that any materials you are responsible for providing for in-class work get to class even if you don't.)

Participation in in-class activities & discussions, work with your team members and other peers (in and out of class), and active participation in self- and peer-critique are expected.

NOTE: Always bring your Course Reader & relevant course web site materials (assignments, worksheets, critique sheets) to class. They contain background material, assignments, worksheets and other information that we will use regularly during class. Be sure to turn in peer-, instructor- and self-critiques at the appropriate times (see course schedule due dates).