

# A Communication Minor for Human Services Careers (especially for majors in Psychology and Sociology)

In the Human Services professions, communication knowledge and skills play an important role in career effectiveness. Employers normally assume that a job applicant with good grades in his/her major and good recommendations is likely to be able to perform the specific requirements of the position. The edge in the job search and in career advancement often goes to the individual who brings additional abilities needed by the organization. Survey after survey of personnel managers reveals that, regardless of job type, the top skills sought by employers include written and oral communications skills, ability to work in groups and teams, interpersonal skills, and planning and problem-solving abilities. These skills are particularly relevant to careers in Human Services. The courses that make up the Communication minor are specifically designed to enhance student abilities in just those areas. If you are interested in a career in Human Services, you may want to consider augmenting your program of study with the Communication minor.

Requirements for the Communication Minor include four courses plus workshop credit as shown below. (Best options for Human Services careers are in **bold**)

- at least .25 course credits of workshop experience (**COMM 113, 115, 116, 213 or 214**)
- Completion of the Communication Concentration, consisting of
  - one of the following courses
    - **COMM231 – Interpersonal Communication** or
    - **COMM 235 – Small Group Communication**, (Both of these choices are valuable courses in the world of human services. If you can take both COMM 231 and 235.)
  - two courses from
    - **COMM 333 – Organizational Communication**,
    - **COMM 335 -- Argumentation**,
    - **COMM 337 – Communication Criticism**
    - **COMM 339 – Persuasion**
  - And one additional Communication course elective

## Course Highlights

*COMM 113 - Communication Workshop* involves students in participation with ScotSpeak, our competitive forensics program (speech team). Working during their free time, ScotSpeak members participate in weekend speech contests or in on-campus public speaking events and debates. Some students enroll in COMM 113 and arrange special projects involving their interests and the practice of communication as an alternative to participation in ScotSpeak Public Speaking experience (and other special abilities in communication) promote extra skills that may be attractive to human service organizations. This course can be repeated up to three times for additional credit.

*COMM 116 - Electronic Media Workshop: Television* involves students in participation with one of the College's electronic media, MC-TV (cable). Working during their free time, workshop participants will film and report news or work on the production of MC-TV's news programming, participate in advertising or other business of broadcasting. Not only does the course develop oral communication skills, it also gives the student familiarity with the media operations and with communication technology, something that as an extra skill may be attractive to human service organizations. This course can be repeated up to three times for additional, credit.

*COMM 231 – Interpersonal Communication* focuses on face to face communication in both personal and professional settings. How people construct meaning through language, how to analyze communication situations, how to improve one's skills, and how relationships form and develop are significant elements in this course.

*COMM 235 – Small Group Communication* focuses on the dynamics of who people work in groups and teams. Students learn highly valuable skills for team work and group leadership along with developing abilities to use problem-solving and decision-making methods that are common and essential for success in human service careers. All this should serve the Human Services professional well in the context of working with colleagues or clients by improving your personal communication skills.

*COMM 333 – Organizational Communication* introduces the student to the major theories (e.g. traditional theory, human relations theory, cultural theory, etc.) of how organizations function with a special emphasis on how each theory reveals the role of communication processes in the effective organizational life. The course also offers a strong component emphasizing the role communication plays in your success in your future career. The laboratory portion of this course engages students in an extended simulation as employees in an imaginary training and development company. Thus, the lab allows students to gain experience in how to develop training programs, one of the hottest areas in the business world today and a frequent requirement of human services positions. The simulation provides a realistic immersion in an experience of work in a professional organization. The major assignment for this course often results in project of considerable interest to prospective employers.

*COMM 335 – Argumentation* focuses on reasoning, critical thinking and the development of (public) policy cases which are sound and compelling to citizens and decision-makers. Policy cases are proposals that define and support plans of action that groups or societies ought to enact. In the world of human services, it is not uncommon, especially in higher-level jobs that career professionals need to engage in the development of sound plans of action. If the individual or agency is to succeed, those plans must also be compellingly presented in order to gain support from those who can see that action is taken. In this course students learn to apply good reasoning to the development of plans of action that are presented in the form of cases (the plan and the reasons it should be adopted) that can lead to success. The major assignment for this course, development of a policy case on a contemporary social issue, often results in project of potential interest to prospective employers.

## Minors offered by the Communication Studies Department

**Required Courses for the Communication Minor** (*for students not seeking a major in Communication; 4.25 credits*):

- *One of the following two courses: (1 course credit)*
  - COMM 231 Interpersonal Communication
  - COMM 235 Small Group Communication
- *Two of the following four courses: (1 course credit each)*
  - COMM 333 Organizational Communication
  - COMM 335 Argumentation
  - COMM 337 Communication Criticism
  - COMM 339 Persuasion
- One additional Communication course elective, (1 course credit)
- At least .25 credits in workshop courses at the 100 or 200 level.

**Required Courses for the Media Minor** (*for students not seeking a major in Communication; 4.25 credits*):

- COMM 261 Mass Media and Modern Society, 1 course credit
- COMM 269 Introduction to Multi-Media Production, 1 course credit
- PUBR 363 Media and Public Relations Writing, 1 course credit
- COMM 369 Convergent Media Production, 1 course credit
- At least .25 credits in workshop courses from COMM 115, 116, 214, 215 or 216.

**Required Courses for the Journalism Minor** (a minimum of 5.25 credits)

- COMM 260 – Introduction to Journalism: Reporting and Writing, 1 course credit
- PUBR 363 – Media and Public Relations Writing, 1 course credit
- PUBR 367 – Layout & Design, 1 course credit
- An approved internship (or COMM 495/6) (0-2 course credits)
- At least .25 credits in workshop courses from COMM 116 or 214 or 216
- Two elective course credits, neither of which is in a student's major department or which counts.

Substitutions are sometimes permitted with departmental approval.