

**CMST 556**  
**Behavior and Communication in Organizations**  
Wednesdays 4:45-7:45  
Zoom

**Instructor:**

Dr. Joan R. Rentsch  
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**Office Hours:**

By appointment

**Course Objectives**

This course will cover topics related to behavior and communication in organizations. The objectives of this course are to advance understanding of theories relevant to behavior in organizations, to provide opportunities to integrate your knowledge of communication with the topics covered, and to increase insights regarding practical issues related to behavior and communication in organizations. A problem diagnosing/problem solving orientation will be taken to support the development of analytical skills, communication skills, and team skills.

**Online Instruction**

**Because this course is offered virtually using synchronous and asynchronous online technology, it necessitates all course material be shared electronically. Therefore, the paragraphs below are required. Please read them carefully. If you believe you cannot comply with the content, please let me know.**

The instructor of this class owns the copyright to the syllabus, handouts, assignments, quizzes, and exams associated with the class. All presentations developed by the instructor, as well as the instructor's lectures, are also protected by copyright, whether these presentations are delivered live in-class, shared through Zoom or other video conference platforms, or uploaded to Canvas or similar sites.

Sharing any of this material without the written permission of the instructor is a violation of copyright law, and is therefore also a violation of the University's policy on acceptable use of information technology resources (UT policy number IT0110). That policy states that students will not commit copyright infringement, "including file sharing of video, audio, or data without permission from the copyright owner" and that file sharing is a violation of the university's student code of conduct. At minimum, any violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.

**Students agree to never record (audio or video) classes.**

**Required Texts:**

(G) Greenberg, J. (2013). *Managing Behavior in Organizations (6<sup>th</sup> edition)*, Boston: Pearson.

(M) Modaff, D. P., Butler, J. A., & DeWine, S. A. (2017). *Organizational Communication (4<sup>th</sup> edition)*, NY: Pearson.

**Recommended Text:**

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.)*. Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association. ISBN: 1-978-1-4338-3216-1.

**Course Requirements**

1. *Participation*. This is a seminar, so students are expected to engage in lively discussion including drawing from their experiences integrated with the course content. You should be prepared for each class and engage actively in class and small group discussions. Be sure to do the readings ahead of classes.

2. *Organizational Behavior & Communication Proposal*. You will identify a behavioral/management challenge at your place of employment and through the course of the semester develop a plan to address that challenge. A behavioral/management challenge is something in the workplace that seems to be “blocking” or “disrupting” operations. It is something that seems to require attention. Such challenges include a major conflict, failed or incompetent leadership, motivational issues, inability to make quality decisions, power asymmetries, poorly designed structures, and so on. Your goal is to develop a proposed plan to address the challenge that you would be willing to share with your supervisor. The challenge is to resolve “people” issues. This does *not* include developing marketing plans, improving accounting systems, raising venture capital, or designing better IT.

You may talk with your supervisor about this assignment. Maybe together you can identify something that will help you in this course, help your supervisor find a solution to a challenge, and improve your organization.

The text will be double spaced, 12-point type (Times New Roman), one-inch margins, contain page numbers, use APA format. The paper should not exceed 10 pages. Your goal is to prepare a convincing, professional document. A more detailed guide for the document will be distributed in class.

We will discuss this project each week during class.

3. *Presentation*. You will make a 20-minute professional presentation to the class. A guide for the presentation will be distributed in class.

4. *Exams.* The instructor retains the option of requiring up to two examinations. The examinations will provide an opportunity for you to demonstrate your knowledge of course concepts. Each exam may include multiple-choice and open-ended questions about the material from the textbooks and class discussions. An exam or individual meetings will be held during Exam week.

5. *Class policies.*

Consider this class to be a free space to explore ideas, to be open to sharing your thoughts and to be open to considering the thoughts of others. We will discuss pros and cons of ideas, theories, concepts and their applications.

In order to create an open and trusting environment, students are expected to comply with the following class policies:

- a. Arrive and be settled to start class on time.
- b. Turn off cell phone ringers and put cell phones away upon entering the virtual classroom. Do not check cell phones during the class period while in the classroom. You may use devices during breaks.
- c. Close all windows and programs other than zoom during class.
- d. You may take notes using pen/pencil and paper.
- e. You will **not** make materials from this course including the syllabus, handouts, assignments, and examinations available to anyone.
- f. Under no circumstances is the recording (audio or video) of class sessions or class materials permitted.
- g. Uploading any material, recordings, pictures, etc. from this class is prohibited unless required by the instructor.
- h. Only students registered for the class may participate unless the instructor approves.

Violation of any of these policies will result in an allocation of 0 participation points.

## **Grading**

Each requirement is worth a percentage of your grade. Grades will be assigned at 10% increments.

1. Participation	25	30	40
2. Paper	25	30	35
3. Examination I	15		
4. Examination II	15	20	
5. Presentation	20	20	25

## **Attendance Policy**

The requirements for the course are listed above. High grades can be attained only if you attend class.

## Required Statements & Information

### Student Support

#### Counseling Center

Student Health Building, Second floor  
1800 Volunteer Blvd.  
Knoxville, TN 37996-4250  
Hours: Monday–Friday » 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.  
Closed on university holidays  
Phone: [865-974-2196](tel:865-974-2196) • Fax: [865-974-7039](tel:865-974-7039)  
Email: [counselingcenter@utk.edu](mailto:counselingcenter@utk.edu)  
<http://counselingcenter.utk.edu/>

Mobile Crisis: 865-974-HELP (4357)

#### Crisis Text Line

Text CONNECT or HOME to 741741

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 or 1-800-SUICIDE

#### Student Disability Services

915 Volunteer Blvd/100 Dunford Hall Knoxville, TN 37996  
Tel: [865-974-6087](tel:865-974-6087)  
Fax: [865-974-9552](tel:865-974-9552)  
Email: [sds@utk.edu](mailto:sds@utk.edu)

### Academic Integrity

“An essential feature of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the university, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity.”

Students are responsible for maintaining academic integrity. Violations of The University of Tennessee's policy on academic honesty will not be tolerated. Offenders will be subject to the disciplinary actions prescribed by the university's policy.

### Diversity Statement

CCI recognizes and values diversity. Exposing students to diverse people, ideas, and cultures increases opportunities for intellectual inquiry, encourages critical thinking, and enhances communication and information competence. When all viewpoints are heard, thoughtfully considered, and respectfully responded to, everyone benefits. Diversity and fairness unite us with the wider professional and global community.

### University Civility Statement

Civility is genuine respect and regard for others: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness. Civility enhances academic freedom and integrity, and is a prerequisite to the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the learning community. Our community consists of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus visitors. Community members affect each other's well-being and have a shared interest in creating and sustaining an environment where all community members and their points of view are valued and respected. Affirming the value of each member of the university community, the campus asks that all its members adhere to the principles of civility and community adopted by the campus: <http://civility.utk.edu/>.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic(s)</b>	<b>Reading</b>
August 19	Introduction	G pp. 3-12 M Ch. 1, 4
August 26	Culture	G pp. 366-380 M Ch. 5, 8
September 2	Individual Differences, Diversity, & Attitudes	G pp. 19-20, 66-79, Ch. 5 M pp. 108-113
September 9	Perception & Learning	G pp. 79-93, Ch. 3
September 16	Motivation	G Ch. 6
September 23	Emotions, Stress, & Mindfulness	G Ch. 4; M pp.114-121
September 30	<b>Exam I</b>	All material listed above
October 7	Groups & Teams	G Ch. 9 (& 10) M Ch. 12
October 14	Communication & Conflict	G Ch. 8
October 21	Leadership	G Ch. 11 M Ch. 10, 13
October 28	Organizational Structure	G Ch. 13 M Ch. 2, 3
November 4	Organizational Change & Development	G Ch. 14
November 11	Presentations <b>Last day to submit paper</b>	
November 18	Exam Review <i>Last day of class</i>	
November 25	Happy Thanksgiving!	
December 2	<b>Exam II</b>	All material for course