

Criteria for Communication-A Courses

Purpose

The first course of the two-course Communication requirement is to be an introductory course in communication skills at the college level, developing student abilities in writing and public speaking, for both exposition and argumentation. We interpret writing and public speaking, which draw on distinct disciplinary traditions, to be inclusive of a range of ways a communicator might express their ideas with words on a page or to a live audience.

Writing includes but is not limited to all of the following: composing texts for readers using a communication system (e.g., alphabetic literacy system, graphic/visual representations, symbol systems) and genres selected for the communication purpose and that may be delivered through a range of communication technologies, including printed texts, digital devices, or other platforms.

Public speaking includes but is not limited to all the following: delivering a speech to a live, in-person audience using verbal communication or sign language, delivering a speech via voice or adaptive technologies to a remote audience, communicating to an audience over a digital platform, or sending a message via audio or video recording.

The central purpose of the course is to serve as a general foundation in the central skills and conventions required for student success in a variety of subsequent course work, as well as in careers after college.

Communication Requirement Learning Outcomes

In courses satisfying the Communication requirement, students will:

- make effective use of information retrieved, organized, and synthesized from appropriate sources.
- present ideas and information clearly and logically to achieve a specific purpose.
- make effective use of communicative forms appropriate to a specific discipline, and adapted to the intended audience.
- use appropriate style and conventions associated with particular communicative forms, genres, or disciplines.

Objectives

Communication A courses advance basic skills in:

- A variety of modes of literacy with special emphasis on writing and speaking
- Critical thinking
- Information-seeking skills and strategies

These skills should be taught through continuous practice in the process of writing and speaking. Although the items listed below suggest a sequence, many or all of them are simultaneously learned in this process. Courses that satisfy the University Communication A requirement must advance student skills in the following areas:

Planning:

Selecting, narrowing, and focusing topics
Identifying and analyzing audience information needs
Generating and organizing ideas
Comprehending and analyzing texts

Drafting:

Learning structures of exposition and argument & the use of evidence
Organizing and developing compositions and speeches
Adapting communication for intended audiences
Learning conventions of academic writing as a discourse
Applying the conventions of academic writing as a discourse for effective communication
Preparing speeches for delivery in writing and at least one other mode of communication. (Other modes of communication might include presentations using one or more media, debate, discussion, poster presentations, and other forms of expression that convey course content.)
Citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, and compiling accurate bibliographies, information resources, or lists of references and citations appropriate to the form of communication

- **Revising:**
Developing critical skills for reading and listening -- in review of peer writing/speaking
Revising and editing essays and speeches -- for effective communication appropriate to communication purpose, including academic and disciplinary contexts
Analyzing assigned readings and speeches delivered outside class
- **Information-Seeking Skills and Strategies:**
Develop and adapt information seeking strategies in order to access information effectively
Evaluate information retrieved and select information sources appropriate to the particular research need information

Course Structure and Requirements

- Courses will include frequent assignments in writing and speaking totaling 25-30 pages of clear, revised prose, including at least one researched essay and several prepared presentations, including one researched speech; completion of the information component developed in conjunction with the campus library user education program.
- Class size should be held to 20 or fewer students. All Communication A courses are offered for at least three (3) credits. In compliance with campus policy governing the credit hour, all credit awarded assumes substantive instructor-student engagement, equivalent to a minimum of 45 hours of instructional contact and of 90 hours of student engagement with materials out of class.

Assessment

- There will be normal evaluations of student work by individual instructors. In addition, each course proposal shall include an assessment plan designed to demonstrate that the course meets the objectives stated above.
- Consistent with the University General Education Assessment Plan (first approved in May 2008), student learning with respect to the broad learning outcomes for Comm A courses will also be assessed at the program level, across all courses meeting the requirement.

Instructors

Faculty, academic staff, experienced TAs.

Student Requirements

Students are expected to complete the Communication A requirement before earning 45 credits (Faculty Document 1065). Students who are placed into English as a Second Language should begin (and many will complete) ESL before earning 45 credits. Transfer students who have not completed the requirement with transfer credit should complete the requirement within the first two semesters of study at UW-Madison.

Criteria Revision History:

Original approved: November 21, 1994

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Approved by UGEC 14 May 2021

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