

Communication Studies Program Assessment Report 2007-2008

I. Introduction of the Communication Studies Major Program

The Communication Studies program offers courses in a variety of communication contexts, including technical, rhetorical, interpersonal, group, and organizational communication. The program serves primarily Communication Studies majors, but also serves a group of students in other fields interested in communication-related course work to complement their chosen major. The total number of students enrolled in the Communication Studies major during fall 2007 was 44. The enrollment trend in the Communication Studies program as of the 2006-2007 academic year has followed the trend of many majors across campus, peaking in 2004 and decreasing over the last few years (OIT Fact book, 2008). Despite the major's relatively small size, students participating in the Communication Studies major program are committed to it as demonstrated by the fall 2006 student cohort which was 100% retained in the major over that academic year (Institutional Research, 2008). Students continue to graduate regularly from the program as demonstrated by the 13 graduates in 2006-2007 (OIT Fact book, 2008). Graduating students were successful finding employment at typical starting salary rates (Careers, 2008).

II. Program Purpose, Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

Communication faculty reviewed the current program objectives and learning outcomes to provide feedback for change to the program. All of the most recent modifications to the program mission, educational objectives, and learning outcomes are included in the sections below. Although the student learning detailed in this report was assessed in a classroom setting, students had other opportunities to demonstrate their learning in Communication student clubs, honor societies, externships, and regional academic conferences.

Communication Studies Program Mission Statement

The Communication Studies Program prepares students for the challenges of a society which is informed, persuaded, entertained, and shaped by communication. Students develop and integrate knowledge, creativity, ethical practice, and skills related to communication. Students also examine and produce work in oral, written, and visual communication and practice skills in group and intercultural communication.

Program Educational Objectives

By completion of the Communication Studies program, students should be able to:

1. Apply appropriate communication skills across settings, purposes, and audiences.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of communication theory and practice.
3. Practice critical thinking to develop innovative and well-founded perspectives related to the student's field of study.
4. Build and maintain healthy and effective relationships.
5. Use technology to communicate effectively in various settings and contexts.

Expected Program Student Learning Outcomes

Students with a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies should be able to:

1. Demonstrate critical and innovative thinking.
 - a. Students will display innovative and critical thinking in course final papers, projects, and presentations in major courses.
 - b. Students will use appropriate research methods for gathering and citing data for research.
2. Demonstrate knowledge and awareness of skills in oral, written, and visual aspects of communication.
 - a. Students will demonstrate progressive competence in written, oral, and graphic communication skills.
 - b. Students will apply appropriate communication skills in their externship experiences.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of and ability to apply communication theories.
 - a. Demonstrate understanding of a wide range of past and contemporary communication theories.
 - b. Apply theoretical perspectives to communication work in a variety of courses and at all levels of the curriculum
4. Demonstrate understanding of opportunities available in the field of communication, including technical, interpersonal, group, and organizational communication.
 - a. Students will demonstrate a broad knowledge of the communication field.
 - b. Students will embrace opportunities in multiple communication fields.
5. Know and effectively use current technology related to the communication field.
 - a. Course projects in major courses will demonstrate use of a range of current technology-related to effective communication.
 - b. Students will appropriately use communication technology in major courses.
6. Understand the influence of culture on communication and respond effectively to cultural differences.
 - a. Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze audience needs in their written and oral presentations.
 - b. Students will demonstrate the ability to adapt their communication for cultural differences.
7. Demonstrate ethical, legal, and social accountability for communication behavior.
 - a. Students will demonstrate academic integrity and ethical behaviors in written and verbal contexts.
 - b. Students will practice ethical behavior in their extern and professional experiences.
 - c. Students will consider and use diverse choices and ethical frameworks when making decisions and/or taking action.
8. Demonstrate knowledge and skills that allow for productive interpersonal, team, and group exchanges.
 - a. Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively manage relationships (conflict, decision-making, etc.) in small groups and teams.
 - b. Externship supervisors of students will report excellence in relational skills.

III. Three-Year Cycle for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

The eight learning outcomes will be assessed, two or three each year, on a three-year cycle as demonstrated in Table 1.

| Learning Outcomes | '07-'08 | '08-'09 | '09-'10 | '10-'11 | '11-'12 | '12-'13 |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1a and b | X | | | X | | |
| 2a and b | X | | | X | | |
| 3a and b | | X | | | X | |
| 4a and b | | X | | | X | |
| 5a and b | | X | | | X | |
| 6a and b | | | X | | | X |
| 7a, b, and c | | | X | | | X |
| 8a and b | | | X | | | X |

Table 1. Communication Studies Assessment Cycle

Limitations of Program Assessment Process

In order to better understand the assessment of the Communication Studies program, some limitations must be addressed. First, class sizes in the Communication Studies program are small, leading to small sample sizes. However, the number of students selected for the assessment of each outcome represents anywhere from approximately 16% to 27% of the overall Communication Studies student population—a representative fraction of the population. Also, as a result of these relatively small numbers, percentages reported in this document may appear overly high or low when compared with other majors (See Table 2). Second, this assessment is the first attempt to measure the given outcomes, resulting in a baseline for later comparison with future data. That said, the findings in this report should also be points of consideration for immediate change to the program. Third, what is deemed “acceptable” performance still needs to be defined by the faculty in the Communication department, but in this report an average score from outcome to outcome was used to dictate acceptable performance.

| Learning Outcome | Class Used to Measure | Sample Size | Total Percentage of Program Pop. |
|------------------|-----------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 1b | COM 326 & 301 | 7 | 16% |
| 1a | COM 345 | 10 | 23% |
| 2a | COM 102 | 12 | 27% |

Table 2. Table of Sample Sizes

IV. Summary of 2007-2008 Assessment Activities

Communication faculty members conducted formal assessment of student learning outcome 1b during fall term 2007. Outcomes 1a and 2a were assessed during winter term 2008. However, due to a current lack of Communication Studies students participating in externship experiences, gathering assessment data for outcome 2b was postponed until the next cycle in 2010-2011.

Student Learning Outcome 1b: Demonstrate critical and innovative thinking. Students will use appropriate research methods for gathering and citing data for research.

Final student papers from COM 301—Rhetorical Theory and Applications and COM 326—Communication Research were used to assess student performance on this outcome. A rubric (See Appendix A) was used to directly assess the final papers. The rubric used a three category scale (above average, average, and below average) to consider student performance in research context, design, analysis, and conclusion. Seven total papers from the two classes were assessed by two members of the Communication department. Detailed records of the assessment of this outcome, including summaries, score sheets, and raw data are found in the 2007-2008 Communication Studies program assessment binder.

Areas of Competence

After analysis of the papers, the reviewers found areas of strength (60% or greater in all categories) in each of the categories identified in the rubric.

1. Most students (60%) understood research **context**, especially as it related to the use of a literature review to present and define elements of their research interests leading to the creation of hypotheses, research questions, and selection of appropriate research methods.
2. Most students (60%) demonstrated effectiveness in **design**, especially method used and sample selected.
3. Most students (60%) showed effectiveness in **analysis**, particularly in reporting and assessing their research findings.
4. Most students (60%) demonstrated competence in **discussing** the results of the paper as they related to the literature review and research findings.

Areas of Improvement

Analysis also revealed potential areas of student weakness given the rubric categories.

1. In the area of **context**, students demonstrated a need to find and review more current (last five years) sources for their literature review.
2. In the area of **design**, students needed to demonstrate greater understanding of the validity and reliability of their research methods.
3. In the area of **conclusion**, some students seemed weak in their discussion of research limitations and future implications of their research findings.

Other Areas of Consideration

The courses from which the assessment data were gathered were both research oriented classes; however, the expectations for what was part of a research-oriented paper differed dramatically between the two courses. This created some difficulty in comparing student performance necessary for measuring this particular SLO.

Recommended Actions

Given the results of this assessment process, the following actions were considered by all faculty members:

1. Instructors teaching research courses should place greater emphasis on the areas of improvement, particularly, finding current research sources, validity and reliability, research limitations, and future implications of the research.
2. Communication faculty should address courses and assignments appropriate for assessment of this particular outcome.

Result of Faculty Discussion of Learning Outcomes

On May 15, 2008 faculty from the Communication department gathered for an assessment retreat where the outcomes assessed this year were discussed. The discussion of strengths and weaknesses of SLO 1b yielded the following faculty thoughts:

1. Students in the Communication Studies program are not getting enough opportunities to do primary research projects in Communication Studies courses.
2. A variety of understandings regarding primary research exist among faculty in the department.
3. The research methods courses offered in the program stop short of allowing students to complete an entire primary research project, unless the student is willing to do additional work after the course has ended.
4. Few students are selecting to participate in the COM 421/422—Senior Project capstone course which requires students to complete a primary research study.
5. The Communication Studies program is deficient in required senior level courses.
6. In sum, Communication faculty members desire to improve the student research opportunities in the program.

Changes Resulting from Assessment

Given the results of departmental dialogue of this SLO, faculty members will meet during Convocation 2008 to further discuss the following changes to this outcome with the goal of submitting any curriculum modifications to the university curriculum planning committee (CPC) by the end of winter 2009.

1. Create *at least one* senior level course that requires students to focus on primary research.
2. Develop a new three course sequence in which student learn to:
 - Consider communication related research issues and write a literature review from which they yield research questions and/or hypotheses.
 - Apply appropriate research methods and design to respond to questions and hypotheses.
 - Analyze data to discuss findings, limitations, and implications of the research.

Student Learning Outcome 1a: Demonstrate critical and innovative thinking.

Students will display innovative and critical thinking in course final papers, projects, and presentations in major courses.

The final course assignment from COM 345—Organizational Communication I, was the activity used for assessment. The goal of the paper was for students to outline the sweep of organizational communication theory by placing various theories studied in the course into historical context and drawing connections between social conditions and the emergence of new ways of understanding organizations. This assignment met all of the criteria in the critical thinking rubric and was graded to motivate students to put their full

potential into the work. As an upper division and major specific course, this class met the qualitative institutional requirements for assessment of this outcome. Further, from a quantitative perspective, the ten participant papers met the minimum number of participants required by the university. Each of the papers gathered from course participants were assessed by two members of the Communication department using the university critical thinking rubric (See Appendix B). The rubric used a four category scale (no/limited proficiency, some proficiency, proficiency, and high proficiency) to evaluate student performance in six criteria (problem/question/issue, contexts, perspectives, assumptions, evidence, and implications).

Areas of Competence

After analysis of the papers, the reviewers found areas of strength (70% or greater in all categories) in each of the categories identified in the rubric; however, students were most competent in the following areas:

1. All students (100%) were able to effectively **contextualize** theories and approaches within a variety of social circumstances and were able to identify social tensions present that facilitated change.
2. Most students (80%) were able to identify the **problem** addressed in the assignment clearly and with adequate depth and insight.
3. Most students (80%) demonstrated the ability to thoroughly discuss the **implications** of different theoretical approaches on the worker and organizing.

Areas of Improvement

As mentioned above, all categories were relatively strong, but three areas seemed weaker than the others and of need of consideration for improvement:

1. Some students (30%) needed to better develop their own **perspectives** in relationship to the theories and assumptions instead of relying solely on instructor or text perspectives.
2. Some students (30%) listed and explained **assumptions** that were the result of social change, but did not evaluate the assumptions as positive, negative, etc.
3. Some students (30%) did not validate information with effective **evidence** and actual sources; rather they used the theories and the theory developers as evidence (The lower score in the evidence category could be that the university critical thinking rubric seems to focus on traditional research papers using outside evidence, whereas the papers in the course evaluated, focused on research internal to the course. Outside research was not an expectation with the assessed assignment).

Other Areas of Consideration

This baseline data provides an understanding of student excellence and potential problems given the current critical thinking SLO and rubric.

Recommended Actions

Given the results of the critical thinking assessment process the following actions were considered:

1. These data create a baseline for further discussion by faculty in the department and for potential change when considering critical thinking in the assessed course and others in the Communication Studies major.
2. Instructors should place greater emphasis encouraging student to develop their critical thinking in the areas of personal perspective, assumptions, and evidence.

Result of Faculty Discussion of Learning Outcomes

The discussion of strengths and weaknesses of SLO 1a yielded the following faculty thoughts:

1. The findings of the program assessment of critical thinking aligned with the findings of the university assessment of critical thinking. Like students across campus, Communication Studies students were more competent in the areas of context, problem, and implication, while less strong in the other areas.
2. The assessment results of Communication Studies students were higher than other programs on campus, but this could have to do with the small number of students assessed on this variable.
3. More than just one Communication Studies course should be used to consider this outcome.

Changes Resulting from Assessment

Given the results of departmental dialogue of this SLO, faculty members will discuss the following changes to this outcome during Convocation 2008 with the goal of implementing any modifications during the outcome's next turn in the assessment cycle.

1. Determine additional classes to be assessed for this outcome when this SLO is measured again during its next turn in the assessment cycle.
2. Identify ways to encourage students to practice their skills in the areas of perspective, assumptions, and evidence in courses across the major.

Student Learning Outcome 2a: Demonstrate knowledge and awareness of and skills in oral, written, and visual aspects of communication. Students will demonstrate progressive competence in written, oral, and graphic communication skills.

The written component of this outcome was measured using COM 102—Introduction to Communication Research (the oral and visual components will be evaluated later in the assessment cycle in cooperation with the Communication general education assessment). COM 102 is appropriate for measuring this outcome because it places emphasis on written communication in its review of communication theory. The class is required for all communication majors and as such is a good choice for gathering baseline data. Also, the course enrollment is large enough to meaningfully assess the outcome. The final course paper was used to evaluate student writing. Twelve papers were assessed using a rubric adapted from an instrument used to assess student writing in the Communication general education courses (See Appendix C). Members of the Communication department used the rubric to assess the COM 102 papers.

Areas of Competence

After analysis of the papers, the reviewers found areas of strength (60% or greater in the categories) in each of the following writing rubric categories:

1. In the area of **focus/ideas**, students (70%) clearly responded to the directions of the assignment and articulated their ideas to enhance understanding of the reader.
2. The majority of students (60%) were able to demonstrate effectively their aptitude for **supporting** their written ideas through the use of appropriate and credible research sources.

Areas of Improvement

Four areas of this outcome appeared weaker than the others and of need of consideration for improvement:

1. Although students were fairly effective in supporting their ideas through the use of sources, most students (70%) were unable to **document** sources appropriately, including frequent minor documentation errors and unintentional stylistic plagiarism.
2. In the area of **organization**, some students (50%) needed to more clearly order and structure their papers with a strong introduction, satisfying closure, and developed transitions.
3. In the area of **style**, many students (60%) needed to choose a more appropriate voice, convey their message with more interest and precision, and more carefully craft their language and sentences.
4. In the area of writing **conventions**, many students (60%) needed to demonstrate greater control of standard writing conventions to enhance their written communication by eliminating errors that impede both readability and credibility.

Other Areas of Consideration

COM 102 is a required introductory course that all majors must take. As a result, some of the students participating in the course were both new to the major and/or to the university and might not fully represent the learning of those students who have been participating in the major for greater amounts of time.

Recommended Actions

Given the results of the assessment of this outcome, the following actions were considered:

1. Communication faculty should discuss and implement strategies to improve student writing in the major, particularly in the areas of documentation, organization, style, and writing conventions.
2. Communication faculty should discuss upper division courses suitable for measuring writing.

Result of Faculty Discussion of Learning Outcomes

The discussion of strengths and weaknesses of SLO 2a yielded the following faculty thoughts:

1. Given that the data for this outcome were measured in a freshman/sophomore level course, the data provides an excellent opportunity to consider progressive competence of students in writing as they participate in the Communication Studies program.

2. The Communication Studies program needs a required writing/capstone course at the senior level to demonstrate commitment to writing and also measure senior students on this outcome.

Changes Resulting from Assessment

Given the results of departmental dialogue of this SLO, faculty members will meet during Convocation 2008 to further discuss the following changes to this outcome with the goal of submitting any curriculum modifications to CPC by the end of winter 2009.

1. Add senior level writing course or find another outlet (potential research course) that enables students to demonstrate their writing competency.
2. Use COM 237—Introduction to Visual Communication in place of COM 102 as the course to assess this outcome during its next turn in the assessment cycle.

Student Learning Outcome 2b: Demonstrate knowledge and awareness of and skills in oral, written, and visual aspects of communication. Students will apply appropriate communication skills in their externship experiences.

COM 420—Externship will be used to evaluate student application of appropriate oral, written, and visual communication skills in professional settings. During an externship, students have the opportunity to apply and be accountable for all of their learned communication skills. The number of student externships in Communication Studies varies from term to term; however, assessing student experience using externships is the most direct way to assess student communication in situations outside of the classroom.

Tools for Assessment

A rubric for assessing this outcome will be designed by members of the Communication department. The rubric will originate from extern assessment documents used for evaluating the effectiveness of students during their externship experiences by their mentors. While still in the creation process, the rubric will focus on communication skills and other professional competencies applied by students in their capacity as an extern.

V. Evidence of Student Learning

During the 2007-2008 academic year, Communication faculty formally assessed the student learning outcomes summarized below.

Student Learning Outcome 1b: Demonstrate critical and innovative thinking. Students will use appropriate research methods for gathering and citing data for research.

Strengths: Students performed at or above expectations for criteria related to use of research methods for gathering and citing data for research, including use of a literature review to create research context, appropriate selection of methods and sample, adequate reporting and assessment of research findings, and discussion of results.

Areas of Improvement: Students demonstrated a need to learn how to find more current sources (last five years) in literature reviews, to show greater understanding of validity and reliability, and to discuss limitations and future implications.

Plans for Improvement: Students need increased exposure to research. As a result, Communication faculty will meet during Convocation 2008 to discuss the development of at least one required senior level course with a primary focus on research. Also, faculty will discuss a new introductory three course sequence focusing on theory and research. Any curriculum changes will be submitted to CPC by the end of winter 2009.

Student Learning Outcome 1a: Demonstrate critical and innovative thinking. Students will display innovative and critical thinking in course final papers, projects, and presentations in major courses.

Strengths: Students performed at or above expectations for several criteria related to innovative and critical thinking, including contextualization of theory, identification of problems, and discussion of problem implications.

Areas of Improvement: Communication Studies students demonstrated overall proficiency in critical thinking; however, to a small degree, students need to further learn how to develop their own perspectives, critically evaluate assumptions, and validate evidence with effective sources.

Plans for Improvement: The program faculty will discuss changes to this outcome during Convocation 2008 to determine additional classes to be assessed for this outcome when this SLO is measured again during its next turn in the assessment cycle. Also, faculty will identify ways to encourage students to practice their skills in the areas of perspective, assumptions, and evidence in courses across the major.

Student Learning Outcome 2a: Demonstrate knowledge and awareness of and skills in oral, written, and visual aspects of communication. Students will demonstrate progressive competence in written, oral, and graphic communication skills.

Strengths: Students performed at or above expectations for criteria related to their skill in two of the written aspects of communication, including articulation of ideas and support of writing through credible and appropriate research sources.

Areas of Improvement: Communication Studies students demonstrated a need for further learning in the areas of source documentation, writing organization, writing style, and appropriate use of writing conventions.

Plans for Improvement: The program faculty will meet during Convocation 2008 to discuss developing a senior level writing course that enables students to demonstrate their writing competency. Any curriculum changes will be submitted to CPC by the end of winter 2009. Also, COM 237—Introduction to Visual Communication will be used in

place of COM 102 as the course to assess this outcome during its next turn in the assessment cycle.

Appendix A
SLO 1b: Critical Thinking and Independent Learning SLO Research Methods Sub-point Assessment Matrix

| | Above Average (3) | Average (2) | Below Average (1) |
|---|---|--|--|
| Context 1. Hypothesis or research question connected to previous literature 2. Method is rooted in previous research 3. Definitions are based upon previous research 4. Literature review is current and peer-reviewed | 1. Hypothesis or research question drawn from previous literature 2. Study uses previously validated method 3. Definitions are taken from literature review 4. Almost all literature review is from within 5 years and from peer reviewed sources | 1. Hypothesis or research question connected to previous literature 2. Method is connected to previous research 3. Definitions are loosely based upon previous research 4. Most literature review is from within 5 years and almost all sources are peer-reviewed | 1. Hypothesis or research question is not novel 2. Method is unique to study 3. Definitions are unique to study 4. The majority of the literature review older than five years and/or comes from non-peer reviewed sources |
| Design 1. Appropriate method used for claim 2. Objectives are discrete and measurable 3. Variables are related and measurable 4. Approach is valid and reliable 5. Sample, if used, supports claim | 1. Method allows for broad application of results 2. Objectives are discrete and measurable 3. Variables are casually related 4. Approach is valid and reliable 5. Sample allows generalizability | 1. Method supports claim in specific instance claim 2. Some problems with measurement 3. Variables may not be causal 4. Approach has face validity and reliability 5. Sample, if used supports claim | 1. Method does not support claim 2. Objectives are not discrete and/or measurable 3. Variables are not related 4. Validity and reliability is unknown 5. Sample does not represent population |
| Analysis 1. Results are described adequately 2. Proper analysis performed on data 3. Significant findings reported | 1. Results are described clearly and from multiple angles 2. Proper analysis performed on data. Report of results clear 3. Significant findings | 1. Results are described adequately 2. Proper analysis chosen, however, problem in reporting the results 3. Findings of study approach significance | 1. Results of the study are unclear 2. Improper analysis performed on data 3. Findings not significant |
| Conclusion 1. Limitations of study are acknowledged 2. Results of study are connected to literature 3. Future implications of study are discussed 4. Meaning of results discussed properly | 1. Limitations of study are clearly acknowledged and add to credibility 2. The contribution of the study to literature is clear 3. Future implications of study are interesting and well-considered 4. The results are assigned meanings that fit the method, literature, and goals of the study | 1. Limitations of study are acknowledged and detract from credibility 2. The contribution of the study to literature is not clear 3. Future implications of study are discussed 4. The discussion of the results of the study is not developed | 1. Limitations of study are not acknowledged 2. Results of study are not connected to literature 3. Future implications of study are not discussed 4. The meaning of the results are not discussed or inappropriate claims are made |

Appendix B
SLO 1a: Communication Studies Critical Thinking Rubric

| Criteria/Quality | No/Limited Proficiency (1) | Some Proficiency (2) | Proficiency (3) | High Proficiency (4) | Rating (1, 2, 3, 4 pts) |
|--|---|--|---|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Identifies and explains problem/question/issue | Fails to identify, summarize, or explain the main problem or question. Represents the issues inaccurately or inappropriately. | Identifies main issues but does not summarize or explain them clearly or sufficiently. | Successfully identifies and summarizes the main issues, but does not explain why/how they are problems or create questions. | Clearly identifies and summarizes main issues and successfully explains why/how they are problems or questions; and identifies embedded or implicit issues, addressing their relationships to each other. | |
| 2. Recognizes stakeholders and contexts (i.e., cultural, social, educational, technological, political, scientific, economic, ethical, personal experience) | Fails accurately to identify and explain any empirical or theoretical contexts for the issues. Presents problems as having no connections to other conditions or contexts. | Shows some general understanding of the influences of empirical and theoretical contexts on stakeholders, but does not identify any specific ones relevant to situation at hand. | Correctly identifies all the empirical and most of the theoretical contexts relevant to all the main stakeholders in the situation. | Not only correctly identifies all the empirical and theoretical contexts relevant to all the main stakeholders, but also finds minor stakeholders and contexts and shows the tension or conflicts of interest among them. | |
| 3. Frames personal responses and/or acknowledges other perspectives | Fails to formulate and clearly express own point of view, (or) fails to anticipate objections to his/her point of view, (or) fails to consider other perspectives and position. | Formulates a vague and indecisive point of view, or anticipates minor but not major objections to his/her point of view, or considers weak but not strong alternative positions. | Formulates clear and precise personal point of view concerning the issue, and seriously discusses its weaknesses as well as its strengths. | Not only formulates a clear and precise personal point of view, but also acknowledges objections and rival positions and provides convincing replies to these. | |
| 4. Evaluates assumptions | Fails to identify and evaluate any of the important assumptions behind the claims and recommendations made. | Identifies some of the most important assumptions, but does not evaluate them for plausibility or clarity. | Identifies and evaluates all the important assumptions, but not the ones deeper in the background—the more abstract ones. | Not only identifies and evaluates all the important assumptions, but also some of the more hidden, more abstract ones. | |
| 5. Evaluates evidence | Fails to identify data and information that counts as evidence for truth-claims and fails to evaluate its credibility. | Successfully identifies data and information that counts as evidence but fails to thoroughly evaluate its credibility. | Identifies all important evidence and rigorously evaluates it. | Not only identifies and rigorously evaluates all important evidence offered, but also provides new data or information for consideration. | |
| 6. Evaluates implications, conclusions, and consequences. | Fails to identify implications, conclusions, and consequences of the issue, or the key relationships between the other elements of the problem, such as context, assumptions, or data and evidence. | Suggests some implications, conclusions, and consequences, but without clear reference to context, assumptions, data, and evidence. | Identifies and briefly discusses implications, conclusions, and consequences considering most but not all the relevant assumptions, contexts, data, and evidence. | Identifies and thoroughly discusses implications, conclusions, and consequences, considering all relevant assumptions, contexts, data, and evidence. | |

Appendix C
SLO 2a: Communication Studies Writing Rubric

| | Needs Work (1) | Acceptable (2) | Good (3) | Excellent (4) |
|----------------------|--|---|--|--|
| Focus/Ideas | The main ideas and purpose are unclear and may require extensive inferences from the reader. Some responses don't address the prompt. | The essay responds to the prompt. The reader can discern the main ideas although they may be overly broad or simplistic. | The essay clearly responds to the prompt. The writing is clear and focused. The reader can easily understand the main ideas. | The essay clearly responds to the prompt. The purpose and main ideas are exceptionally focused, clear, and interesting. |
| Support | Development is minimal; details are insufficient. Some details may be irrelevant or repetitious. | Supporting details are relevant, but may be limited or rather general. Support may be based on clichés, stereotypes or questionable sources of evidence. | The main ideas are developed by supporting details suitable to the purpose. Use of outside sources provides credible support. | Main ideas are well developed by strong support and rich details suitable for purpose. Use of outside sources provides strong, credible support. |
| Organization | The writing lacks a clear organizational structure or may be too short to demonstrate organizational skills. Beginning, body, and ending may be missing or undeveloped. | Order and structure are present but may seem formulaic. The introduction and conclusion may be undeveloped or too obvious. The order and relationship of ideas may be unclear at times. | The order and structure are clear and easy to follow. The introduction draws in the reader and the ending brings satisfying closure. Transitions are present but may be formulaic. | The order and structure are compelling and move the reader through the text easily. The sequencing is effective, perhaps creative. The introduction draws in the reader and the ending brings satisfying closure. Transitions are smooth and effective. |
| Style | The voice provides little sense of involvement or commitment. The writing shows language that is monotonous or misused, detracting from meaning and impact. Sentences tend to be choppy, rambling, or awkward. | A voice is present but inconsistent. Word choice is quite ordinary, lacking interest, precision, and variety, and may rely on clichés. The sentences tend to be mechanical rather than fluid with an overuse of simple sentence structures. | The writer has chosen a voice that is generally appropriate for the topic, purpose. The wording conveys the message in an interesting, precise and natural way. At times the word choice may be imprecise or overdone. Sentences are carefully crafted with variations in structure. | The writer has chosen a voice that is appropriate for the topic, purpose. The wording is fresh, specific, with a striking and varied vocabulary. Sentences show a high degree of craftsmanship, with varied structure that makes reading easy and enjoyable. |
| Conventions | Numerous errors in usage, spelling, punctuation and grammar. Frequent errors impede readability. Substantial editing needed. | The writing contains punctuation, spelling, or grammar errors, but they do not impede readability and are not extensive. Moderate need for editing. | The writing demonstrates control of standard writing conventions and uses them effectively to enhance communication. Very few errors. Little editing needed. | The writing demonstrates strong control of standard writing conventions and uses them well to enhance communication. Little or no need for editing. |
| Documentation | Major documentation errors and unintentional plagiarism, may include no citation at all, only citing direct quotations, no works cited, and/or using the wrong citation style. | Frequent minor errors in documentation, may include "p" for page or a comma in in-text, period before citation, unblocked long quotation, web address rather than author, incorrect paraphrasing, and/or minor errors on works cited page.. | Documentation is correct except for a few minor errors and/or there is a general lack of attribution and instruction of major sources. | Not only is all documentation correct, quotations are also attributed and all major sources are introduced with full name of author(s) and possibly title of source. |