

Communication Studies Program Assessment Report 2012-2013

I. Introduction of the Communication Studies Major Program

Located exclusively at the Klamath Falls campus, 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.

Enrollment Trends

For Fall 2012, there were 51 total Communication Studies majors: 6 freshmen, 8 sophomores, 12 juniors, 23 seniors, and 2 non-admitted undergraduates.

Retention

From Fall 2011 to Fall 2012, the retention rate was 80.8%.

II. Program Purpose, Mission Statement, and Objectives

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. In April 2013, three COM majors presented original research at the Northwest Communication Association annual convention.

Communication Studies Program Mission Statement

The Communication Studies Program prepares students for the challenges of a society that is shaped by communication. As participants in the program, students develop and integrate knowledge, creativity, ethical practice, and skills. Students also examine and produce work in oral, written, and visual communication and practice skills in group and intercultural communication.

Program Education Objectives

After 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 application.
3. Practice critical thinking to develop innovative and well-founded perspectives related to the students' emphases.
4. Build and maintain healthy and effective relationships.
5. Use technology to communicate effectively in various settings and contexts.
6. Demonstrate appropriate and professional ethical behavior.

Expected Program Student Learning Outcomes

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

1. Demonstrate critical and innovative thinking.

2. Display competence in oral, written, and visual communication.
3. Apply communication theories.
4. Understand opportunities in the field of communication.
5. Use current technology related to the communication field.
6. Respond effectively to cultural communication differences.
7. Communicate ethically.
8. Demonstrate positive group communication exchanges.

Information About the Objectives

The program objectives are reviewed annually, most recently throughout CSAC meetings in the 2012-2013 academic year. The department meets with their advisory board twice per year, and the advisory board last reviewed the program objectives in May 2013.

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	'11-'12	'12-'13	'13-'14	'14-'15	'15-'16	'16-'17
PSLO 1: Critical Thinking	•			•		
PSLO 2: Competence in Comm			•			•
PLSO 3: Communication Theory	•			•		
PSLO 4: Opportunities in Field			•			•
PSLO 5: Use of Technology			•			•
PSLO 6: Cultural Communication			•		•	
PSLO 7: Ethics		•			•	
PSLO 8: Group Communication		•			•	

Table1: Communication Studies Assessment Cycle

IV. Summary of 2012-2013 Assessment Activities

The Communication Studies faculty conducted formal assessment of two student learning outcomes during 2012-2013, ethics and professionalism, and teamwork.

Student Learning Outcome 7: Students with a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies should be able to communicate ethically.

Direct Assessment

This outcome was assessed in COM 256 in Fall 2012 (n=5)

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable	Results
Ability to list, provide reason for importance, and apply an example of provision.	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	100% (5 of 5)
Using code of ethics, describes ethical issues	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	60% (3 of 5)
Describes parties involved and discusses their points of view	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	40% (2 of 5)
Describes and analyzes possible/alternative approaches	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	100% (5 of 5)
Chooses an approach and explains the benefits and risks	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	100% (5 of 5)

Table 2 Faculty Assessment Results for SLO7 in COM 256.

This outcome was assessed in COM 326 in Fall 2012 (n=15)

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable	Results
Demonstrates knowledge of the professional code of ethics	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	100% (15 of 15)
Using code of ethics, describes ethical issues	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	100% (15 of 15)
Describes parties involved and discusses their points of view	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	73% (11 of 15)
Describes and analyzes possible/alternative approaches	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	53% (8 of 15)
Chooses an approach and explains the benefits and risks	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	100% (15 of 15)

Table 3 Faculty Assessment Results for SLO7 in COM 326.

Indirect Assessment

The exit survey administered to seniors graduating from the Communication program in 2013 included questions about ethical communication. 100% of students reported that they have “high proficiency” in ethical practice.

Areas of Competence

After analysis of the student responses, the reviewers found areas of strength in the following categories: Students are able to choose an approach and explain the benefits and risks of that approach; students are able to show that they understand the importance of a code of ethics (though their ability to use the code needs some improvement).

Areas of Improvement

After analysis of the student responses, the reviewers found a need for improvement in the following categories: Only 60% of COM 256 students met the 3 or 4 benchmark with regards to using the code of ethics and describing ethical issues. More attention needs to be paid to working with the code and understanding it enough to use it to help explain ethical issues. Only 73% of COM326 students were able to describe the parties involved and their points of view; only 53% of COM326 students were able to describe and analyze possible alternative approaches.

Plans for Improvement

The following plans for improvement have been discussed by Communication Studies faculty:

- 1) The course core and the major have been under faculty review this year, with CSAC meetings dedicated to revising the major and planning implementation of a new major. In the new course design, more attention could be paid to a discussion of ethical issues.
- 2) The 2011-2012 assessment revealed that students in the Communication major struggled with critical thinking. These results seem to echo those results as the ability to consider alternatives and weigh the pros and cons of those alternatives are indicative of critical thinking. The 2011-2012 assessment report offered the following plan for improvement in critical thinking: “Faculty teaching lower level Communication Studies courses will encourage students to develop critical thinking skills in the areas of understanding the problem, developing perspectives, and comprehending the implications of the problem or situation.” We need to develop these skills as they relate directly to assessing ethical choices.

Other Areas of Consideration

After analysis of the student responses, the reviewers found other areas for consideration: While use of the ethics code and description of parties both fell short of the 80% at 3 or 4 benchmark, the sample size of 5 may have resulted in skewed data. The sample size is very small, so it is possible that the data are not representative of the entire COM major. The sample size of 15 in COM326 may result in the second set of data having more validity, though a larger sample size would be ideal.

Communication ethics, the COM major course dedicated to an examination of ethical issues, was not synced up with the assessment. Assessing in the course most directly related to the ISLO may have changed the data as it is in this course that students learn to understand, analyze, and apply ethical codes and principles.

The discrepancy between faculty assessment of students' ethical practice and students' assessment of their own ethical practice may be partly due to the different areas studied. Faculty assessed students on five different criteria whilst the exit survey just had one broad question about "ethical practice."

Student Learning Outcome 8: Students with a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies should be able to exhibit productive group communication exchanges.

Direct Assessment

This outcome was assessed in COM 407 in Spring 2013 (n=3 groups); these results are based on the instructor's report of the students' group communication.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable	Results
Identify and achieve goal/purpose	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	100% (3 of 3)
Assume Roles and Responsibilities	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	67% (2 of 3)
Interact Appropriately	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	100% (3 of 3)
Reconcile Differences	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	100% (3 of 3)
Share Appropriately	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	67% (2 of 3)
Develop Strategies for Effective Action	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	67% (2 of 3)

Table 4 Faculty Assessment Results for SLO 8 in COM 407

Indirect Assessment #1

This outcome was assessed in COM 407 in Spring 2013 (n=9); these results are based on students' self-report of their group communication.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable	Results
Identify and achieve goal/purpose	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	100% (9 of 9)
Assume Roles and Responsibilities	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	100% (9 of 9)
Interact Appropriately	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	100% (9 of 9)
Reconcile Differences	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	100% (9 of 9)
Share Appropriately	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	100% (9 of 9)
Develop Strategies for Effective Action	Questionnaire, rubric	1-4 scale	80% at 3 or 4	100% (9 of 9)

Table 5 Student Assessment Results for SLO 8 in COM 407

Indirect Assessment #2

The exit survey administered to seniors graduating from the Communication program in 2013 included questions about group/team communication. 100% of students reported that they have “high proficiency” in teamwork.

Areas of Competence

After analysis of the student responses, the reviewers found areas of strength in the following categories: Students were able to identify and achieve a group goal or purpose, interact appropriately in working towards that goal, and reconcile differences that came about during group work.

Areas of Improvement

After analysis of the student responses, the reviewers found a need for improvement in the following categories: Only 67% of students showed proficiency in assuming roles and responsibilities, sharing appropriately, or developing strategies for effective action.

Plans for Improvement

The following plans for improvement have been discussed by Communication Studies faculty:

1. Students need to learn to use their communication skills to negotiate roles and responsibilities to implement appropriate and effective actions.
2. Students need to learn to focus their communication on the task-at-hand; this skill can be honed in many COM courses by focusing on keeping students on track when they are working in groups in class.

Other Areas of Consideration

After analysis of the student responses, the COM assessment coordinator met with the COM reviewer. We realized that the students may rate themselves and their group communication a bit too favorably. As the instructor’s results show, the students do need to work on group roles, appropriate sharing, and strategies for effective action, but the students thought that they did fine. It is possible that having a tight-knit group assessing one another may have resulted in inflated numbers. In addition, there were only three student groups for the faculty member to assess, so the small sample size (N=3) may have skewed results.

SPE 321, Small Group and Team Communication, is required for COM majors but is a General Education course. The faculty expect COM students to hone their group and team communication skills in this required course. However, given that the course is a gen. ed. requirement, no SPE 321 course had enough COM majors to complete the assessment, forcing the small group assessment to occur in COM-major courses. Assessing in the course most directly related to the ISLO may have changed the data as it is in this course that students learn to understand, analyze, and apply small group and team communication skills.

The discrepancy between faculty assessment of students’ teamwork skills and students’ assessment of their own teamwork skills may be partly due to the different areas studied. Faculty assessed students on six different criteria whilst the exit survey just had one broad question about “teamwork.”

Additional Assessment

Desired Student Outcome: Professionalism

Students with a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies should display professionalism in their communication and behavior.

Direct Assessment: Faculty were given a list of professionalism traits and asked to assess graduating students on the traits. N=17 graduating COM majors

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable	Results
Timeliness	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	88% (15 of 17)
Quality-Content	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	88% (15 of 17)
Quality-Delivery	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	94% (16 of 17)
Attitude Towards Feedback	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (17 of 17)
Attitude Towards Tasks	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	82% (14 of 17)
Punctuality	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (17 of 17)
Attendance	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (17 of 17)
Academic Integrity	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (17 of 17)
Interpersonal Skills	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (17 of 17)
Policies and Procedures	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (17 of 17)
Work Ethic	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	94% (16 of 17)
Appearance	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (17 of 17)

Table 6 Faculty Assessment Results for Professionalism Among Graduating COM Majors

Indirect Assessment

The exit survey administered to seniors graduating from the Communication program in 2013 included questions about professionalism. N=13 graduating COM majors who completed exit survey.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable	Results
Timeliness of work	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	92% (12 of 13)
Delivering professional work	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (13 of 13)
Completing work according to professional standards	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (13 of 13)
Accepting feedback appropriately	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (13 of 13)
Accepting and carrying out tasks with a positive attitude	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (13 of 13)
Punctuality	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (13 of 13)
Attendance	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (13 of 13)
Integrity	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (13 of 13)
Interpersonal Skills	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (13 of 13)
Following policies and procedures	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (13 of 13)
Work ethic	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (13 of 13)
Appropriate professional appearance	Questionnaire, rubric	0-2 scale	80% at 1 or 2	100% (13 of 13)

Table 7 Graduating COM Majors Assessment Results of Their Own Professionalism

Areas of Competence

After analysis of students' professionalism, the faculty reviewers found areas of strength in the following categories: Timeliness, quality-content, quality-delivery, attitudes towards feedback, attitudes towards tasks, punctuality, attendance, academic integrity, interpersonal skills, policies and procedures, work ethic, and professional appearance.

After analysis of students' responses, the faculty reviewers found that the students assess their own strength in the following categories: Timeliness of work, delivering professional work, completing work according to professional standards, accepting feedback appropriately, accepting and carrying out tasks with a positive attitude, punctuality, attendance, integrity, interpersonal skills, following policies and procedures, work ethic, and appropriate professional appearance.

Areas of Improvement

From both faculty and student assessment of professionalism, all criteria were met at the 80% or higher benchmark.

Other Areas of Consideration

After analysis of the student responses, the reviewers found that our focus on professional communication is working. Our graduating students are meeting every professional benchmark, and, based on the exit survey, the students realize that they are meeting these benchmarks. In lieu of working towards improvement, the results indicate that the COM faculty should consider continuing their focus on professional verbal and nonverbal communication.

V. Summary of Student Learning

Student Learning Outcome 7: Students with a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies should be able to communicate ethically.

Strengths: In COM 256, 100% of the students in the assessment were able to describe the ethical issue, describe and assess different alternatives in dealing with an ethical issue, and choose the best approach, weighing the pros and cons of that approach. In COM 326, 100% of students in the assessment were able to demonstrate knowledge of the code of ethics, use the code of ethics to explain an ethical issue, and choose an approach and analyze the benefits and risks.

Weaknesses: In COM 256, only 60% of students could use the code of ethics to explain an ethical issue (though it is interesting that 100% could satisfactorily do so at the 300-level, showing that it is, possibly, a skill that is learned between the sophomore and junior level), and only 40% of students could describe parties involved and their viewpoints. In COM 326, only 73% of students could describe parties involved and their viewpoints, and only 53% could describe and analyze possible/alternative approaches.

Plans for Improvement: The 2011-2012 assessment revealed that students in the Communication major struggled with critical thinking. These results seem to echo those results as the ability to consider alternatives and weigh the pros and cons of those alternatives are indicative of critical thinking. The 2011-2012 assessment report offered the following plan for improvement in critical thinking: "Faculty teaching lower level Communication Studies courses will encourage students to develop critical thinking skills in the areas of understanding the problem, developing perspectives, and comprehending the implications of the problem or situation." We need to develop these skills as they relate directly to assessing ethical choices.

Student Learning Outcome 8: Students with a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies should be able to exhibit productive group communication exchanges.

Strengths: In COM 407, student and faculty assessment reveal that 100% of students can identify and achieve a group goal/purpose, interact appropriately with group members, and reconcile differences. 100% of COM 407 students also reported that they could assume roles and responsibilities and develop strategies for effective action; however, the COM 407 faculty believed that the students over-estimated their group communication abilities in these two areas (see below).

Weaknesses: COM 407 faculty assessment reveals that only 67% of student groups assumed roles and responsibilities, shared appropriately, and developed strategies for effective action.

Plans for Improvement: The Communication Studies major is being revised. One possible option is to include more in-class group work that focus on shared tasks to help students learn to negotiate and assume roles and responsibilities to help achieve effective action. Faculty can work with in-class groups to help them stay on task and share appropriately.

Additional Student Learning Outcome—Professionalism: Students with a bachelor's degree in Communication studies should exhibit professionalism.

Strengths: Faculty assessment of graduating students' professionalism reveal that students graduating with a degree in Communication Studies are meeting expectations for timeliness, quality-content, quality-delivery, attitudes towards feedback, attitudes towards tasks, punctuality, attendance, academic integrity, interpersonal skills, policies and procedures, work ethic, and appearance.

Students graduating with a degree in Communication Studies assessed their own professionalism, and they believe that they are meeting expectations for timeliness of work, delivering professional work, completing work according to professional standards, accepting feedback appropriately, accepting and carrying out tasks with a positive attitude, punctuality, attendance, integrity, interpersonal skills, following policies and procedures, work ethic, and appropriate professional appearance.

Weaknesses and Plans for Improvement: Based on the numerical data, the COM department does not have weaknesses with regards to professionalism, making identifying any specific weaknesses and thus offering any plans for improvement difficult.

VI. Changes as a Result of Assessment

As a result of assessment completed during the 2011-2012 academic year, the following changes occurred during the 2012-2013 academic year:

1. The Communication major is currently being redesigned, relying upon input from the advisory board, exit surveys, faculty experience, and the market to determine which classes are necessary for COM majors and what skills need to be developed in each course.
2. The 2011-2012 assessment of critical thinking and research revealed that students struggled with context and evidence. As a result, faculty have placed greater emphasis on finding credible academic sources to support arguments, using credible evidence effectively, and thinking critically about sources.
3. The 2011-2012 assessment of applying communication theories revealed that students struggled with sufficiently explaining theories and theory components when discussing problem and solution. In addition, students struggled with using the correct theory terms. As a result, faculty have placed greater emphasis on explaining theory and requiring students to correctly use theory in Communication Studies classes.

Appendix: Curriculum Maps

Courses that are shaded below indicate that the SLO above is taught in the course, students demonstrate skills or knowledge in the SLO, and/or students receive feedback on their performance on the SLO.

I = Introduced

R = Reinforced

E=Emphasized

Map 1:

Outcome (ISLO 7): Students with a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies should be able to communicate ethically.

Communication Studies Course	Introduced	Reinforced	Emphasized
COM 104 Intro to Comm			
COM 105 Intro to Comm Theory			
COM 106 Intro to Comm Research	I		E
COM 115 Intro to Mass Comm			
COM 205 Intercultural Comm	I		
COM 215 Creativity in Comm			
COM 216 Grammar and Punct			
COM 225 Interpersonal Comm	I		
COM 226 Nonverbal Comm			
COM 237 Intro to Visual Comm			
COM 246 Radio Production			
COM 248 Digital Media Prod			
COM 255 Communication Ethics		R	E
COM 256 Public Relations			
COM 276 Democracy and Media			
COM 301 Rhet Theory and Apps.			
COM 320 Adv Intercultural Comm		R	
COM 326 Comm Research		R	E
COM 345 Organizational Comm I			
COM 346 Health Comm		R	
COM 347 Negotiation and Con Res			
COM 348 Facilitation			
COM 358 Comm and the Law		R	E
COM 365 Elect Comm and Soc			
COM 407 Rhetoric of Disaster			
COM 415 Multimedia Presentation			
COM 420 Externship			
COM 421 Senior Project			
COM 425 Mediation			
COM 426 Mediation Practicum			
COM 437 Training and Dev			
COM 445 Organizational Comm II			
COM 446 Leadership and Comm			
JOUR 211 Publications: Newspaper			E
JOUR 311 Advanced Newspaper			E
SPE 314 Argumentation		R	
WRI 328 Technical Journalism			
WRI 350 Document Editing			
WRI 415 Technical Editing			
WRI 420 Document Design			

Map 2:

Outcome (ISLO 8): Students with a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies should be able to exhibit productive group communication exchanges.

Communication Studies Course	Fall	Winter	Spring
COM 104: Intro to Comm			
COM 105: Intro to Comm Theory			
COM 106: Intro to Comm Research			
COM 115: Intro to Mass Comm			
COM 205: Intercultural Comm	IE	IE	IE
COM 207: Graphic Design			
COM 215: Creativity in Comm			
COM 225: Interpersonal Comm			
COM 226: Nonverbal Comm		R	
COM 237: Intro to Visual Comm			
COM 248: Digital Media Prod			
COM 255: Comm Ethics			R
COM 256: Public Relations	R		
COM 276: Democracy and Media		R	
COM 301: Rhetorical Theory		R	
COM 326: Comm Research			
COM 345: Org Comm I			
COM 346: Health Comm			
COM 347: Negotiation and Conflict	R	R	R
COM 348: Facilitation			R
COM 365: Electronic Comm and Soc			R
COM 401: Civil Engineering Project I			
COM 402: Civil Engineering Project II			
COM 407: Seminar			R
COM 420: Externship			
COM 421: Senior Project I			
COM 422: Senior Project II			
COM 423: Senior Project III			
COM 425: Mediation		R	
COM 426: Mediation Practicum			R
COM 445: Org Comm II			R
COM 446: Leadership and Comm			R
JOUR 211: Pub/Student Newspaper	R	R	R
SPE 111: Public Speaking			
SPE 314: Argumentation			
SPE 321: Small Group Comm	IE	IE	IE
WRI 115: Intro to Writing			
WRI 121: English Composition			
WRI 122: English Composition			
WRI 123: English Composition			
WRI 214: Business Correspond			
WRI 227: Technical Writing			
WRI 327: Advanced Tech Writing			
WRI 350: Documentation Dev			
WRI 410: Proposal and Grant			
WRI 415: Technical Editing			
WRI 420: Document Design			