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Laboratory Section

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MARTIN J. EPPLER & CLAUDIA PREMOLI*

“MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION”: A RISING STAR IN THE FAMILY OF ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION COURSES

A GLOBAL OVERVIEW ON CURRENT APPROACHES
IN GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY
PROGRAMS

In recent years, many universities worldwide have begun to discover the importance of offering systematic training programs and courses regarding *managerial communication* (i.e., communication theories, concepts, skills and issues for management or organizational contexts).

While this is still an *under explored* university course topic in German-speaking countries, the list below – which we have compiled in November 2008 – effectively demonstrates that many universities around the world are offering courses in managerial communication to their undergraduate and graduate students (particularly in the context of Masters of Business Administration or MBA programs).

As future employers frequently mention effective communication know-how as a key criterion for their hiring decisions of university graduates, universities are giving this important skill-building area more importance than ever before. It is also interesting to note, from a communication sciences perspective, that the institutions or professors who offer such

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courses can be frequently found at communication departments, rather than at the business schools or management departments of the respective universities. Managerial communication hence provides an opportunity to provide teaching and research value beyond the limits of communication schools or faculties. This, however, requires active research into the application context of communication, in this case the realities of contemporary organizations.

For a general overview on the communication faculties and departments of US universities we recommend the following link:

<http://www.vii.org/afercp.htm>.

The following *list* includes brief descriptions of more than thirty managerial communication courses at US-American, Asian, Australian and European universities. The links in the last column of each course provide pointers to additional resources, such as reference literature, course assignments, professor backgrounds, and – in some instances – presentation slides or lecture transcripts.

Typical *course contents* that are emphasized in these syllabi (and that we have highlighted in bold) include persuasion, (visual) data presentation, dealing with the media, managerial writing and speaking skills, meeting communication, change communication, cross-cultural communication, conflict communication, communicating for decision making, networking, and communicating strategically. Typical *teaching methods* include case study discussions, role playing, technological experiments, providing research-based guidelines and offering personalized feedback on the communicative performance of students during exercises.

| Country | University | Course Name | Content Synopsis | Link |
|---------|---|------------------------------------|---|---|
| USA | University of Southern California – MBA | Communication in the Working World | This university offers a wide range of managerial communication courses, which you can find at the link. | http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/cat2008/schools/business/concentration/communication.html |
| | North Carolina University | Management Communication | This course, required of all MBA students, emphasizes presentation skills for a general business audience. Work begins with baseline presentations, and the course continues through both planned and impromptu presentations during which students receive and consider feedback from their professor, their peers, and their own self-assessments. With an eye toward presentation best-practices, the course covers issues of organization and persuasion , effective delivery (maintaining executive presence, engaging your audience and handling Q&A, integrating PowerPoint slides, visuals, handouts and notes), and targeting each speaker's individual style and success. | http://www.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/Programs/MBA/Academics/yearone.cfm |
| | University of Pennsylvania, Wharton Business School | Management Communication | This course is designed to prepare business leaders for the communication challenges of the workplace. It enables students to develop and demonstrate effective, business oriented, verbal communication skills. This course is required of all first year MBA students, and meets once a week for six weeks. WHCP 653 enables each student to improve his/her oral presentation skills, regardless of current skill level. Students may select from one of two course offerings: the basic communication course or a course designed specifically for non-native English speaking students. Communication topics covered in both courses include: persuasion , organization and delivery of speeches, defending one's view before adversarial audiences, impromptu and prepared speeches, effective use of PowerPoint, visual display of data , and dealing effectively with the media . Each student will learn successful communication strategies, and gain confidence using these strategies. Students have the opportunity to receive instructor and peer feedback in the classroom, as well as one-on-one feedback and coaching from instructors and second year Wharton-Omnicom Communication Fellows. The small class size- maximum of nine students per section – allows each student to present five taped speeches. The course is offered in Quarters 1-4. | http://www.wharton.upenn.edu/mbaresource/curriculum/core/ |

| Country | University | Course Name | Content Synopsis | Link |
|---------|---------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | Dartmouth, Tuck Business School | Management Communication | <p>This minicourse gives students the opportunity to improve their ability to communicate effectively as managers. Students examine and practice the communication strategies and skills that are essential for success in business. More specifically, the three course goals are to improve (1) understanding of and ability to apply communication strategy; (2) managerial writing ability; and (3) managerial speaking ability.</p> | <p>http://oracle-www.dartmouth.edu/dartgroucho/tuck_mba_program.syllabus?id=MC</p> |
| | Duke, Fuqua School of Business | Management Communication – Undergraduates | <p>Management Communication is intended to help you think strategically about communication and aid you in improving your writing, presentation, and interpersonal communication skills within a managerial setting. We will look at a set of “best practices” or guidelines that have been derived from both research and experience, give you the opportunity to put those guidelines into practice, and provide you with feedback on your work to help you strengthen your abilities. More often than not, we will be using a workshop format that will rely heavily on discussion and in-class exercises.</p> | <p>http://www.fuqua.duke.edu/centers/cole/resources/MIT_Manerial_Communication.pdf</p> |
| | Duke, Fuqua School of Business | Leadership Communication I | <p>Leadership Communication I introduces you to the foundations of effective management communication. It focuses on helping you communicate clearly, strategically, persuasively and collaboratively in professional business settings. During Fall Term 1 you will learn and practice a variety of crucial communication skills in small sections. Building on the themes and content of the Global Institute, Leadership Communication I gives you opportunities to focus on individual goals for skill development. Topics include strategic management communication; giving and receiving feedback; researching companies; uses of influence and advocacy; individual and team presentation skills; cross-cultural communication; and career management skills, such as networking, branding yourself, crafting resumes and cover letters, and interviewing</p> | <p>http://www.fuqua.duke.edu/admin/stuserv/courseinfo/mgmtcom394.html</p> |

| Country | University | Course Name | Content Synopsis | Link |
|---------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| | Johns Hopkins University | Managerial Communication | Writer and historian James Humes said, "The art of communication is the language of leadership." It is that simple comment that forms the foundation of this course. Here the student will explore the role of communication with stakeholders including subordinates, superiors, internal and external customers, suppliers and community. The students will examine effective communication in hiring and promoting, in conflict , in community interaction and in the internal communication of an organization. The class is built around 3 precepts: with whom do we communicate, what do we communicate and how do we communicate effectively. This assessment is conducted from the perspective of senior leadership in an organization so it involves the design and successful implementation of vision, mission, and strategic plans. | http://advanced.jhu.edu/registration/description/?Dept=480&Number=646 |
| | Michigan, Stephen M. Ross | Persuasive Management Communication | Persuasive Management Communication --- This course presents persuasive communication strategies that facilitate effective management. Specifically, the course covers fundamental persuasive frameworks (e.g. compliance-gaining, conflict management, credibility control) applied to oral and written messages. These frameworks provide a basis for exploring persuasive communication in a variety of management settings. Special emphasis is placed on differing strategies associated with cultural variation , focusing on those most critical for global business communication. | http://www.bus.umich.edu/CourseManagement/ViewCourseDescriptions.asp?course=524&dept=LHC&term=W09 |
| | MIT, Sloan | Advanced Managerial Communication | Builds on managerial communication skills developed in 15.279 or 15.280. Introduces interactive oral and interpersonal communication skills important to managers, including presenting to a hostile audience, running meetings , listening, and contributing to group decision-making. Includes team-run classes on chosen communication topics. Also includes an executive summary and a long oral presentation, both aimed at a business audience, generally in conjunction with a project for another subject. | http://mitsloan.mit.edu/academic/courses-list.php?list=Communication2 |
| | MIT, Sloan | Communication for Managers | Writing and speaking skills necessary for a career in management. Students polish communication strategies and methods through discussion, examples, and practice. Several written and oral assignments, most based on material from other subjects and from career development activities. Schedule and curriculum coordinated with Organizational Processes class. Restricted to first-year MIT Sloan School of Management graduate students. | http://mitsloan.mit.edu/academic/courses-list.php?list=Communication2 |

| Country | University | Course Name | Content Synopsis | Link |
|---------|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| | MIT, Sloan | Management Communication for Undergraduates | Required seminar for Management Science majors to develop the writing, speaking, teamwork , and interpersonal communication skills necessary for managers. Students learn communication principles, strategies, and methods through discussions, exercises , examples, and cases. Assignments include writing memos and business letters, and giving oral presentations in labs outside of class. A major project is the production of a team report and presentation on a topic of interest to a managerial audience. | http://mitsloan.mit.edu/academic/courses-list.php?list=Communication2 |
| | Northwestern, The Kellogg School | Management Communications | This course aims to advance students' skills in handling the basic communication and rhetorical problems of trying to influence the behavior of others. Students apply current knowledge and norms of persuasion, argumentation and group dynamics to exercises in oral presentations. This course does not count toward the MORS major. Prerequisite: MORS-43 | http://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/register/1st_asgn/spring08/MORSEV.html |
| | NYU Stern | Management Communication | In a September 2007 feature, The Wall Street Journal reported that corporate MBA recruiters ranked Communication Skills as the most important attribute they considered when evaluating applicants. Being able to communicate effectively is a vital component to many aspects of business life. This course emphasizes both a strategic and practical approach to provide you with a set of frameworks that will help you construct effective email correspondence , documents and presentations which inform, persuade and influence your audience. The Management Communication course offers you the opportunity to speak and write in a managerial context while receiving personalized feedback and coaching to help develop and sharpen these critical skills. | http://w4.stern.nyu.edu/mc/academic.cfm?doc_id=1695 |
| | UCLA | Management Communication | Managers find their communication skills tested at work every day. They may need to communicate up to a challenging boss, down to difficult subordinates, or out to clients or customers. Whether terrified of speaking publicly, or highly adept at delivering presentations , students in this course will develop tools to help hone important written and verbal communication skills. | http://www.anderson.ucla.edu/x2117.xml |

| Country | University | Course Name | Content Synopsis | Link |
|---------|------------------------|---|--|--|
| | University of Virginia | Management Communication | <p>This course gives students the guidance and hands-on experience that will allow them to communicate effectively as managers and leaders. Students will examine communication strategies essential for success in business, identify their personal strengths and goals, and practice activities that build upon proven competencies and offer practice in new approaches. Students will gain comfort and skill in a personal communication style that is authentic, credible, and authoritative. The course will improve students' understanding of and ability to apply communication strategy, and will help them not only appreciate the power of personal and organizational narratives but also deliver successful written documents and oral presentations.</p> | <p>http://registration.darden.virginia.edu/Course/Info/Abstracts/721-0607.htm</p> |
| | University of Virginia | Communication with a leadership perspective | <p>This course provides students with an opportunity to learn the leadership-communication skills that are typically needed in MBA internships and first jobs. Case discussions will go beyond analysis to setting sound objectives and implementing them effectively. Students will build skills and learn techniques for articulating decisions and selling ideas with the goal of influencing people and putting managerial strategy into practice. Topics introduced in the required first-year Management Communication course – communication strategy, credibility, narrative, and persuasion, as well as nonverbal and visual communication – will be further examined. Experiential learning activities will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Interpersonal role-playing such as conversations, meetings, and conducting interviews – Experiments with workplace communication technologies such as conference calls, videoconferencing, and on-line communication – Prepared and impromptu speaking opportunities – Short written assignments <p>The course concludes with a persuasive presentation and paper tailored to students' job-related interests and career goals. Course objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop communication strategies and messages aimed at getting things done – Sharpen communication skills – oral, written, visual, and nonverbal – Learn more about key MC concepts – context, culture, credibility, audience, message style and structure, channels, and feedback – Involve students' job-related interests | <p>http://registration.darden.virginia.edu/Course/Info/Descriptions/753-06.htm</p> |

| Country | University | Course Name | Content Synopsis | Link |
|---------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| | Simmons Boston | Effective Managerial Communications | Provides a foundation in the strategic use of communication to inform, motivate, persuade , build consensus, and implement change in organizations. Helps students improve their written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills in managerial settings. | http://www.simmons.edu/gradstudies/mcm/academics/courses.shtml |
| Canada | University of Ottawa | Communication Management | Role of communication in organizational development, team development, and corporate/institutional positioning. Internal and external communication in public and private organizations. Case studies of Canadian and international organizations | http://www.etudesup.uottawa.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=1727&monControl=Cours&ProgId=531 |
| Europe | Copenhagen Business School | Management Communication | Both rhetorical and body language skills will be trained in this intensive 3 day course. You will learn about the psychological and social processes of communication as well as discuss the strengths and weaknesses of different kinds of communication forms such as oral communication and text communication. Training sessions will give you the possibility to evaluate and develop your own capability as a communicator. | http://uk.cbs.dk/uddannelser/executive_masters/executive_masters/mba_uuddannelser/master_of_corporate_communication/menu/course_descriptions |
| | Cranfield University | Communication skills | Communication skills are an essential requirement for anyone in a senior management role. Being able to articulate your ideas and communicate information and instructions in a clear, concise manner is a skill which is sure to be appreciated by colleagues and associates at all levels. | http://www.som.cranfield.ac.uk/som/communication-skills-training.asp |
| | Nyendrode Business University | Management Communication Skills 1/2 | Effective management and effective communication skills go hand in hand. This course aims to enhance the skills involved in communicating to inform and/or to persuade. The approach used in the course is very practical: it is essentially that of learning by doing . Participants will practice, putting forward a standpoint on an issue which they wish their 'audience' to adopt, defending a policy/decision/action before a (potentially) hostile audience , presenting an analysis of an advertisement. | http://www.nyenrode.nl/Education/businessdegrees/msc/curriculum/curriculum/mainphase/block3/Pages/Default.aspx |

| Country | University | Course Name | Content Synopsis | Link |
|---------|--|--|---|---|
| | Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) | Managerial Communication | The course on managerial communication introduces students to one of the most frequent tasks in management - leading effective conversations . It provides an overview on the rich theory on managerial communication, particularly in knowledge-intensive, complex situations, and sensitizes students to the challenges of management communication, ranging from leading interdisciplinary teams , to interacting with clients or conducting negotiations . The main goals of the course are thus to build a solid, theoretical understanding of the key mechanisms that shape effective managerial communication and understand its potential pitfalls, as well as to learn about effective practices of leading communication on an interpersonal and group level . | http://www.unisi.ch/corso?id=1644 |
| | IESE Business School | Managerial Communications | This course is designed to reinforce students' existing communication skills. Students analyze cases , deliver presentations and speeches, write reports, and explore the issues businesses face in communicating internally with employees and externally with the diverse public. It places strong emphasis on presentation and interpersonal skills and introduces a general theoretical framework for business communications. | http://www.iese.edu/en/MBAPrograms/MBA/the_mba/the_program/academics/courses.asp#18915 |
| Asia | University of Hong Kong | Advanced Business Communication Skills | Advanced Business Communication Skills focuses on consolidating the communication techniques and strategies students have acquired in the first year course Business Communication. The course aims at developing students' writing, presentation, teamwork , and interpersonal communication skills within a business setting. | http://www.fbe.hku.hk/Programme/Undergraduate/course_details.cfm?school=SoB&coursecode=BUSI0081A&yearheld=2008-2009 |
| | The Chinese University of Hong Kong | Interpersonal and Group Communication | Introduction to the elements of interpersonal communication, which include listening, feedback, self-disclosure , and relational communication such as relation building , relational systems, problem constructing and compliance-gaining. Communication within groups and group behaviour, such as group climate, decision-making and leadership, will also be discussed. Dyadic and small group communication processes in the context of workplace management are stressed. | http://www.com.cuhk.edu.hk/en/postgrad/course_list.htm#5570d |

| Country | University | Course Name | Content Synopsis | Link |
|-----------|--|--|---|---|
| | Nanyang Technological University Singapore | Communication Management & Leadership Developing Effective Communications Skills: An Executive Approach | <p>Seminar covers issues such as effective leadership, value-added management performance, managerial creativity, innovation, organizational knowledge creation and usage, as well as corporate productivity of info-communication and media organizations.</p> <p>Tomorrow's leaders require a command of communications skills to properly represent their organizations to their many stakeholders. These skills can be learned and this seminar is designed to teach the techniques used by effective executive communicators. Students will work intensively under guidance in the campus studio to apply the techniques on-camera, in simulated TV interviews and speaking engagements.</p> | <p>http://www3.ntu.edu.sg/sci/graduate/mass.html#a6338</p> <p>http://www.nanyangmba.ntu.edu.sg/Programme/CoursesElectives.asp#b8086</p> |
| | | Communications Management | <p>This course focuses on oral and written communications that managers use to get work done in organizations. Participants in this class respond to cases, complete interpersonal/intergroup scenarios, give individual and team presentations, run meetings, and write a variety of messages using diverse media replicating communications that managers must produce to perform their organizational responsibilities. Participants learn linguistic and rhetorical alternatives for structuring and delivering content, analytical tools for assessing message effectiveness, and frameworks that facilitate decisions involving information timing, media selection, and targeting multiple constituencies. Participants also collect evaluative data on their own communication effectiveness using a survey instrument to gather information from external associates as well as through videotape review of in-class performances and evaluations from the instructors and fellow participants.</p> | <p>http://www.nanyangmba.ntu.edu.sg/Programme/CoursesElectives.asp#b8090</p> |
| Australia | Bond University | Communication Skills | <p>The ability to communicate effectively is important in tertiary study and in professional life. This subject develops communication skills in researching, writing essays, reports and short business documents, working cooperatively in teams, and presenting group projects. It also provides an overview of communication theory and an insight into the processes of professional communication.</p> | <p>http://www.bond.edu.au/study/courses/hss/Outlines/CORE11-100.pdf</p> |

| Country | University | Course Name | Content Synopsis | Link |
|-------------|--|--|--|---|
| | Australian Graduate School of Management | Management Communication – Presentation Skills | The presentation skills component of the Management Communication Program focuses on the skills needed to develop and deliver clear, persuasive and engaging business presentations. This one-day intensive program is highly interactive, offering you the opportunity to learn new skills, gain personal insight and receive constructive feedback from both your peers and a professional facilitator. | http://www2.agsm.edu.au/agsm/web.nsf/Content/FutureStudents-MBA-CourseDescriptions-ListAll |
| | University of Auckland | Interpersonal Communication Skills | We are all in the relationship business and communication is the glue that holds relationships together. Interpersonal Communication Skills are vital for relating to others in a business setting. Mastering the art of one-on-one relationships is fundamental to good management. This short course examines a number of practical aspects of effective interpersonal communication. | http://www.shortcourses.auckland.ac.nz/courses/336/ |
| New Zealand | University of Canterbury | Management Communication & Management | The course portrays the workplace as a dynamic discursive system created by the interaction of task, technology, and social processes . It critically examines how this discursive system shapes rationality, decision-making , personal identity, and participation in the workplace. The focus is on communication from both managerial and subordinate perspectives | http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/courseinfo/GetCourseDetails.aspx?course=MGMT330&occurrence=09S2%20(C)&year=2009 |
| | University of Waikato | Management Communication | Managers and leaders spend a substantial portion of their day communicating with others - interacting, planning communication and interpreting others' communication. Research shows that their skill in doing so is critical to success. This course will explore communicative practices in the workplace and introduce you to some of the major theories . It will also develop practical skills through a focus on your leadership potential in the context of leadership research and evaluation of the experience of New Zealand leaders. | http://papers.waikato.ac.nz/subjects/MCOM http://papers.waikato.ac.nz/subjects/MCOM/MCOM200 |

