

This is a NO LAPTOP class.

Spring 2007

LISTENING AND RESPONDING

MBCM-60460

T H 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

*The Eugene D. Fanning Center for Business Communication
College of Business Administration
University of Notre Dame*

The instructor for the course is Dr. Sandra Collins. Office: 219 Mendoza College of Business. Office Hours: T H 10:00-12:00, and by appointment. E-mail: scollin1@nd.edu. Business phone: 631-3919. Home phone: 277-1067. Mendoza fax number: 631-5255.

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TEXT

Collins, Sandra D. *Listening and Responding*, Mason, OH: Thomson-South Western, 2006.

Coursepack available from the Copy Shop in LaFortune.

Handouts distributed in class.

PURPOSES OF THE COURSE

- To give students an appreciation for the importance of effective communication in business and society.
- To improve students' communication skills and abilities in interpersonal, small group, and public contexts.
- To improve students' ability to set and achieve a listening and responding objective.
- To provide students with an understanding of the ethical dimension of professional communication.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

As a result of completing this course, students will be able to:

- Recognize common and uncommon interpersonal listening barriers.
- Describe techniques for overcome various listening barriers.
- Formulate strategies to increase listening effectiveness in different listening situations.
- Discuss the importance of listening in organizations and the role of listening in leading.

GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- You must complete the assignments described in this syllabus and submit them on the specified dates.
- You must participate fully and actively in our classroom discussions and exercises.
- You must attend class. Your professor will take roll at each meeting session to determine who is present and who is not.

Exams

There will be two exams for the class. Each exam may include multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and short essay questions. Each exam is worth 20 points.

Assignments

All written assignments should be typed, with single-spacing within paragraphs and double spacing between paragraphs. Only hard copies of assignments will be accepted, unless permission is granted in advance to submit an electronic copy.

Observation Journal. Keep a journal of observations you make during your day of people or organizations listening well, and of people or organizations not listening well. Relate your observations back to what we have discussed in class. Do your best analyze the situation and attempt to pull a “learning moment” from your reflections. You may write about interactions you participate in, as well as those you just observe. For example, I might write about an experience I recently had when I dealt with a counter employee at a business. The employee tuned out everything else in the room to pay complete attention to me and was calm and patient with my questions. I felt like a valued customer. It led me to reflect on how well I listen to students and to wonder if they feel valued after they visit me in my office. You will no doubt have many more observations than you care to write about. Keep your journal to between 7 and 10 pages.

The listening organization paper. Choose an organization and research its listening practices. Analyze the effectiveness of the organization's internal and external listening.

Write a 3-4 page paper citing specific examples of what the organization does to encourage good listening, or alternatively, specific examples of how the organization fails to promote good listening. Offer recommendations for actions the organization could take to grow its culture of listening.

For example, Pacific Sunwear has become a very successful company by continually developing its identity and changing its offerings to meet the needs and tastes of middle school and high school age kids.

On their website they say:

How does PacSun succeed when thousands of other clothing companies fail? We listen; and we change. Someone once said to the CEO of PacSun, "You give too much credit to those kids." But everyone at PacSun knows the kids have the answers. We listen to get the trends, the solutions and find out what we're doing right. The rest, of course, is history.

Source: <http://www.pacsun.com/company/about/>

This indicates they have a "listening" culture. If you wrote your paper on PacSun, you would want to find out exactly what they do to successfully listen to kids. You would also want to learn how well they listen internally. You will have to do a little research for this paper, so cite your sources, including personal interviews, at the end of the paper.

The paper should have four main points or sections.

1. General overview of the company. In this section, tell the reader about the company's products or services, its history, size, location, structure, etc.
2. Internal listening practices. In this section, discuss the listening practices (such as suggestion systems or quality circles) used by the company to hear from its employees and other internal sources.
3. External listening practices. In this section, talk about the techniques the company employs to hear from external sources, such as customers, markets, competitors and how the company responds to them.
4. Your response and recommendations. In this section, evaluate the company's listening practices and offer your suggestions for how they could be expanded or improved.

Use memo format with a traditional memo heading like the one above. You may use headings within the text for the different sections of your paper. You may use bullet points or numbered lists. You may use charts or graphs where helpful. Use 12 point font and double spacing between paragraphs and single spacing within paragraphs. Cite your sources at the end of your paper using APA or MLA style.

Fundraising project. Reading and attending lectures on listening are beneficial, but the effectiveness of these efforts can be enhanced by practicing what is learned. The purpose of the fundraising project is to give students an opportunity to improve their listening skills through experiential learning. The project is designed to simulate the work environment of a self-managed team where interpersonal communication skills are

paramount to success. Through the project meetings, you will have the opportunity to apply what you are learning in class, and get honest feedback from other students in the class about how you're doing.

While the primary purpose of the projects the team interaction and evaluation, a side benefit is the opportunity to do something good for a deserving charity. For the projects, students will be assigned to teams, a nonprofit organization will be selected by the class, and the teams will devise original ways to raise money for the organization using twenty dollars seed money provided by the instructor. The teams will collect as much money as possible by the project due date. If a team fails to increase the twenty dollars or loses money, they will earn no more than 7 out of 10 points for the project. The fundraising efforts cannot involve any gambling or alcohol consumption. All projects must be approved. Some class time will be devoted to group meetings.

Participation

Attendance and participation in the classroom discussions and exercises is critical for your success in this class. Much of your class time will be spent engaged in exercises with other students. After these activities you will be completing and turning in evaluation sheets, for which you will earn course credit. These activities can not be made up outside of class.

GRADING AND GRADE WEIGHTS

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percent of Grade</u>
Observation Journal	15%
Listening Organization Paper	20%
Fundraising Project	10%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Participation & Peer Evaluation	<u>15%</u>
	100%

GRADING PHILOSOPHY

Your grade for any particular assignment in this course is a reflection of your professor's judgment of the quality of your work. We can only grade on the basis of what you give us, not on what you had sincerely intended to do. Submit your work on time, follow the

assignment directions, do your own work, and you'll have little trouble achieving the course objectives.

Grades will not be distributed on a curve. You are attempting to meet our standards of quality work. Those standards have been developed through dealing with business, government, industry, the press and the public. We are asking you to do what your employers will ask of you: prompt, competent, effective work.

Once a grade has been assigned and recorded, it cannot and will not be changed unless evidence is provided that your professor has made an error. A difference of opinion between you and your professor about the quality of your work is not evidence of error.

THE ETHICS OF MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION

Three basic principles guide our discussion of ethics in this course. First, we contend that *all parties in the communication process have ethical responsibilities*. Second, *ethical writers, readers, speakers, and listeners possess attitudes and standards that pervade their character and guide their actions before, during, and after they communicate*. Third, *management communication is not value-neutral*. When listening to others, what you hear, how you interpret what you hear, and how you respond will have consequences for those with whom you interact. Your obligation is to listen and respond for the betterment and benefit of the speaker and your organization.

COURSE POLICIES AND STANDARDS

Please seek help as soon and as often as you need. Do not wait until it is too late for us to help you. We are here to assist you with the task of learning and improving your communication skills.

Deadlines. There are no automatic extensions, make-ups, or incompletes. You will be graded down for failing to meet deadlines. If you cannot meet your responsibilities in the course, see or call your instructor in advance of deadlines. We know that, from time-to-time, everything from a job interview to illness may keep you from attending class. Please let your instructor know *in advance* and he or she will make every effort to accommodate your needs.

Absence. We will have just fourteen meeting sessions in this course. We regard your presence as especially important, even if your instructor does not formally take roll at the beginning of each class. If you cannot be here, let your instructor know about it in advance. We have found, over the years, a remarkable correlation: those who come to class faithfully seem to do better in the course.

Incompletes. As a rule, we just do not award incompletes. They're genuinely a pain in the neck. You begin the new term with the obligations of the previous semester hanging over your head. Both instructor and student feel harried and unhappy about the situation.

In unusual cases, though, such as hospitalization or genuine emergency, an incomplete will be assigned. The student must complete all class assignments within one semester or the Registrar will assign a grade of “F” unless an extension is approved by both the instructor and the Dean, and we notify the Registrar.

Appeals. Your first course of appeal for any grade, assignment requirement, due date or other course-related decision is your instructor. If you either do not understand or cannot accept your instructor’s decision, you may appeal in writing to the course director. Subsequent appeals may be directed to the Associate Dean for MBA Programs and, from there, to the Dean of the College. Keep in mind that most administrators will be reluctant to overrule routine, course-related decisions of their faculty.

Last Day to Drop or Add Class. Because this is a 2.0 credit hour class that runs for only half the semester, the drop and add dates are different from full semester classes.

The Notre Dame MBA Honor Code. For this class, all writing tasks are to be accomplished by each student working independently. No student should copy another student’s work or represent work done by someone else as if it were his or her own. Evidence of plagiarism is cause for serious disciplinary action by the College. Please, do your own work. We strongly endorse and support the principles and process outlined in the *University of Notre Dame Graduate Business Honor Code*.

Schedule of Classes

(Tentative class schedule. Any changes will be announced in class.)

TUESDAY	THURSDAY
January 16 Listening in Organizations Read: <i>Barriers and Gateways to Communication</i>	18 Interpersonal Listening Barriers Read: L&R text, pages 1-24
23 Diversity and Listening Read: <i>Intercultural Listening</i> Handout from "Listen Up" (Will be distributed in class.)	23 Overcoming Listening Barriers Read: <i>Principles of Empathic Listening</i>
30 Listening and Memory Listening in teams Read: L&R text, pages 25-56	February 1 Exam 1 Group Projects: Brainstorming Meeting
6 Listening to Learn Group Projects: Choosing a solution, initial work plan Read: L&R text, pages 57-83	8 Listening to Decide Read: <i>The Process of Evaluating</i>
13 Listening to Conflict Read: <i>The Nature of Conflict</i> L&R text, pages 83-108	15 Listening and Leadership Due: Journal
20 Listening to Problem Solve: Frames	22 Listening to Problem Solve: Frames Due: Listening Organization Paper
27 Feedback Read: Handout Distributed in Class Due: Projects	Exam 2 is on Friday, March 2, during our regular class time.