

# NRRT 625-001 Communication and Conflict Management in Tourism

---

## Course Syllabus

Instructor: Sam Martin  
[Sam.martin@colostate.edu](mailto:Sam.martin@colostate.edu)  
Forestry 202

**Office Hours:** R 2:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. and by appointment  
**Course Meeting Time:** R 3:30 to 4:45, Natural Resources 201

### Course Description

Communication has many roles in tourism management, from the most obvious: communicating with current and potential visitors; to more subtle applications such as internal and external stakeholder communication, conflict and change management. This course covers current theoretical approaches to communication study, as well as practical application of communication techniques relevant to tourism management.

Applications of communication theory and practice in tourism include marketing communications, interpretation of natural and cultural resources, agency and organization strategic communications, (both internal and external) conflict management and change leadership through stakeholder engagement.

Communication in tourism management can take the form of mass communication, such as marketing and publicity; as well as communications within groups and between groups and among individuals. Communication between individuals can either be verbal, non-verbal, or implicit.

The study of communication is a complex field and in this course we will attempt to narrow the focus to those communication theories and applications that are most closely associated with tourism management. The course will include online lecture, course readings, and weekly exercises designed to help students synthesize the information presented.

Student assessment will take the form of weekly assignments including discussion posts and responses, an individual written case study assignment and a group simulation. Students will research and adopt a position consistent with one stakeholder or stakeholder group in a scenario that is chosen in conjunction with your discussion group, producing a Written Case Study Assignment mid-term. This position paper will then form the basis of interaction between group members in a mock stakeholder meeting utilizing an engagement process chosen and facilitated by your discussion/work group. We will explain more about this in class at the first meeting and an assignment sheet will be posted.

All course module and assignment instructions will be posted on RamCT. Course materials will be available through RamCT and Morgan Library electronic reserve.

## Course Objectives

Develop and understanding of current communication theory and the application of theory in the study of tourism communication.

Understand the varied roles of communication in tourism management and the techniques available to tourism managers.

Understand and apply strategic communication planning principles and situation assessment techniques in the tourism management context.

Understand potential consequences of making organizational communication choices and employing different conflict management and stakeholder engagement strategies.

Develop the ability to communicate change and apply organizational communication strategies in the context of tourism industry practice.

Understand how oral and written communication functions in tourism organizations and develop skills in analyzing situations, synthesizing the course information and utilizing the knowledge for effective communication and conflict management in tourism organizations.

## Course Resources

Reading for the course will include excerpts from these and other resources that will be made available through course eReserves. Course reserves will be available beginning on the first day of scheduled classes for the term.

There are no required texts for this course. Course readings will be available through CSU Libraries eReserves. You may access eReserves using your CSU EID at the Morgan Library via this link:

<https://reserve.colostate.edu/ares/ares.dll>

## Resource Bibliography

Holman, P., Devane, T. & Cady, S. (2006). The change handbook: The definitive resource on today's best methods for engaging whole systems. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Berlo, David K. (1960). Process of communication. New York, NY. Holt, Reinhart and Winston.

Broadbent, Donald E. (1958). Perception and communication. New York, NY. Pergamon Press, Inc.

Coleman, Peter T. (2011). The five percent: Finding solutions to seemingly impossible conflicts. New York, NY. Public Affairs Books, Perseus Books Group. ISBN: 978-1-58648-921-2.

Craig, Robert T. & Muller, Heidi. Editors. (2007). Theorizing communication: Readings across traditions. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage Publications, Inc.

DeVito, Joseph A. (2001). The interpersonal communication book. New York, NY. Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.

Ihlen, Oyvind, Bartlett, Jennifer L., and May, Steve. Editors. (2011). Handbook of communication and corporate social responsibility. Chichester, West Sussex, UK. John Wiley & Sons, Inc

- Ferguson, Sherry Devereaux. (1999). Communication Planning: An integrated approach. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Fisher, Roger & Ury, William. (1991). Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in. New York, NY. Penguin Books USA, Inc.
- Gmelch, Sharon Bohn. (2004). Tourists and tourism: A reader. Long Grove, IL. Waveland Press, Inc. ISBN: 1-57766-306-3.
- Greenberg, Jerald. (2001). Managing behavior in organizations. Upper Saddle River, NJ. Pearson Education, Inc.
- Hackman, Michael Z., Johnson, Craig E. (2004). Leadership: A communications perspective. Long Grove, IL. Waveland Press, Inc.
- Hofstede, Geert & Hofstede, Gert Jan. (2005). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. New York, NY. McGraw-Hill.
- Kaner, S., Lind, L. (2011). *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*. 2nd ed. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.. ISBN: [9780787996413](#).
- Kiersey, David & Bates, Marilyn. (1984). Please understand me: Character and temperament types. Del Mar, CA. Prometheus Nemesis Book Co. ISBN: 0-9606954-0-0.
- Marquardt, Michael J., Berger, Nancy O. (2000). Global Leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Albany, NY. State University of New York Press.
- May, Steve. Editor. (2006). Case studies in organizational communication. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage Publications, Inc.
- May, Steve & Mumby, Dennis K. Editors. (2005). Engaging organizational communication theory and research: Multiple perspectives. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage Publications, Inc.
- McQuail, Denis. (2010). McQuail's mass communication theory. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Morrison, Alastair M. (2010). Hospitality and travel marketing. Clifton Park, NY. Delmar Cengage Learning.
- Plaisance, Patrick Lee. (2009). Media ethics: Key principles for responsible practice. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Shepherd, Gregory J., St. John, Jeffrey and Striphas, Ted. Editors. (2006). Communication as...Perspectives on theory. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Wood, Julia T. (2005). Gendered lives: Communication, gender, & culture. Belmont, CA. Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

## Grading

| Assignment   | Points | Percent |
|--|--------|---------|
| Written Case Study (Stakeholder position) Assignment (1 @ 90 points) | 90     | 21.5%   |
| Group Stakeholder Engagement Simulation Assignment (1 @ 90 points)   | 90     | 21.5%   |
| Discussion Exercises (8 @ 25 points each)                            | 200    | 48%     |
| Participation  | 40     | 9%      |
| Total  | 420    | 100.00% |

## Grade Scale

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| A | 90.0% - 100.0%  |
| B | 80.0% - 89.9%   |
| C | 70.0% - 79.9%   |
| D | 60.0% - 69.9%   |
| F | 59.9% and below |

## Course Assignments

### Discussion Exercises (DE)

Each week, students will be assigned a **discussion exercise** (DE; total of 8). Each DE will require the completion of a short written reflexive/synthesis paper be posted, as assigned per weekly module. The DE post must be posted to the course website within your discussion group thread by the due date listed in the course outline. Attach your initial post as a 1-2 page MS Word document that is double-spaced and follows the directions for each weekly assignment. Each student will then **review a minimum of two DE posts of other students** from within their discussion group, posting written responses for each of the two posts reviewed each week. Each completed weekly DE assignment and required responses (**25 points**). Points will be subtracted for late submission or missing responses.

The cohort will be divided at the beginning of the term into smaller discussion groups. Students will respond to discussion posts within their assigned discussion groups. You can find your group by clicking on the "Group Assignments" link. **Be sure to post and respond in the discussion forum assigned to your group.** All discussion posts and responses will remain available to the entire cohort after the week's module is complete.

### Written Case Studies (WCS)

Students will complete one written case study (WCS) assignment summarizing a scenario selected by their discussion group and adopting the position of one stakeholder of stakeholder group within the case scenario (**90 Points**). This assignment must be completed individually, typed, doubled-spaced using MS WORD, and **submitted on-line through the course website by Midnight (MDT/MST) on the due date.** A portion of the grade on these reviews will depend on the quality of the writing—so, be sure to proofread for errors in grammar and spelling prior to submitting the assignment. References supporting your work should be cited in APA style.

## **Group Stakeholder Engagement Scenario Assignment (GSE)**

Each discussion group will adopt a conflict scenario (case) suggested by previous coursework in MTM or personal experiences. The WCS assignment outlined above will form the basis of a mock engagement simulation that carried-out by the group during one of the last four class periods (**90 points**). Grades for this assignment will be based on the overall performance of the group.

## **Academic Integrity**

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the university academic integrity policy. An update about this policy and an amendment to the Faculty and Professional Manual, as passed by the Faculty Council, was forwarded to the Board of Governors. It was approved on June 20, 2011. It is our intent to adhere to the [Academic Integrity Policy of the General Catalog](#) and the Student Conduct Code.

The Academic Integrity Program at the Institute for Learning and Teach (TILT), and [Student Conduct Services](#) offer answers to frequently asked questions and support services for students.

**HONOR PLEDGE:** *"I will not give, receive, or use any unauthorized assistance."*

Course Schedule

## **NRRT 625 Learning Module Descriptions**

### ***Section 1. Communication theory and managing change through stakeholder engagement***

#### **Module 1**

Module one offers an introduction to concepts in communication and a review of communication theory beginning with the earliest theorist that defined the social, psychological, and physiological processes of perception and communication; as well as more recent attempts to streamline the diverse "traditions" and approaches to studying communications between individuals, groups, and within organizations and communities.

#### **Module 2**

Module two explores the dimensions of communication that often lead to conflict, including cultural context, gender, socio-economic status, political and philosophical viewpoints. Through interpersonal, intergroup, organizational and societal communication contexts understanding our audience is crucial in managing diverse points of view to diffuse conflict, or manage change.

#### **Module 3**

Module 3 is a practical, applied experience with facilitation of group interactions. Through developing a better understanding of group dynamics, conflict management in groups, and meeting preparation and facilitation, students will see the potential for success in facilitating the engagement of stakeholder groups with diverse viewpoints. Through positive engagement and facilitation, even the most diverse groups can be lead to consensus and move toward identifying and achieving common goals.

#### **Module 4**

Module 4 begins to apply concepts learned in Unit 1, including strategic communications planning, managing organizational communications strategies for change and consensus building, strategic goal and objective identification, stakeholder identification and situation analysis. Through the *Change Handbook*, students will identify a series of potential techniques and processes that may be employed to lead organizations and communities toward consensus and manage change to meet organizational and community goals.

### ***Section 2. Systems thinking and organizational communications***

#### **Module 5**

Module 5 explores the concept of System Thinking, and whole system engagement in order to facilitate change. Organizations and communities have diverse members that can constitute to issues and outcomes surrounding tourism. Addressing system thinking and using whole system engagement techniques can move diverse groups toward consensus and solicit buy-in from stakeholder groups that can help to ensure that organizational and community goals and objectives are met.

#### **Module 6**

Module 6 looks more closely at organizational communications, specifically, marketing communications, strategic communications planning and management; as well as situation analysis techniques. It is said that “failing to plan is the same as planning to fail,” and when communicating in the tourism management context, visitor levels, profitability, visitor experiences, as well as visitor impacts and the strategic goals of organizations can either succeed or fail based on sound marketing and communications planning.

#### **Module 7**

Module 7 examines the pace of change in communications technologies, “New Media,” the cultural implications of these changes, and the techniques that communications professionals in tourism can employ to manage change effectively and benefit from a more informed constituency.

#### **Module 8**

Module 8 examines the growing power of communicating an organization’s commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility. Through exploring the underlying concepts and commitments that underlie CSR, and analyzing a series of case studies in tourism-related and other organizations, students will understand how corporations employ this communication tool and to what extent the commitment is real; or merely “green-washing.”