COMM 660 DE
Climate Change & Sustainability Communication Campaigns
Summer 2014: June 2 through July 16

Professor: Ed Maibach, MPH, PhD
Email address: emaibach@gmu.edu
Office Phone: 703.993.1587
Classroom: online/Blackboard
Office hours: by appointment

1. Course Description and Structure
Strategic communication can be a powerful means of advancing an organization’s objectives, especially when informed by insights into human behavior and social systems. This course is designed for graduate students in any discipline – and for working professionals in the fields of climate change, sustainability and related earth- and life-science disciplines – who seek to use communication strategically in helping organizations, communities, states, and nations pursue their climate change and/or sustainability goals. To that end, students will learn to use five frameworks: two frameworks that help organize and reveal “actionable” insights in the social and behavioral science literature (Maibach et al.’s People & Places framework; Heath & Heath’s Switch framework); two that help guide the development of effective communication (the 4-step strategic communication planning framework; Heath & Heath’s SUCCES framework); and one that helps guide the development of specific behavior change initiatives (McKenzie-Mohr’s community-based social marketing). Students will also apply these research-based insights in one of three ways – see the Requirements section below – based on their interests.

There are no pre-requisites, but please be warned: This is a rigorous course. I have taped a brief lecture (about 10 minute) to orient students to each of the 12 major course topics; students are expected to listen to these lectures, read extensively, think broadly about what they have read, and actively participate in the discussion about each of these topics.

This course will use a distance-learning format; we will be meeting virtually, on Blackboard 9.1. Though the delivery method is different, this course will take as much of your time as a typical graduate course. Moreover, because it is normally a 14-week course that is being compressed into a 6½ week summer semester, students taking the course for graduate credit should expect to spend 20 to 24 hours on coursework each week. Students taking the course on a professional development – i.e., no credit – basis are encouraged to devote as much time to the course as they can.

2. Logistics and Technology Requirements
Blackboard: Everything student’s need for the course – except for required books – can be downloaded from the web, or will be found on Blackboard, and students can submit their work to me via Blackboard.

Access Blackboard 9.1 by following these steps:

• Go to http://mymason.gmu.edu.
• Login using your NETID and password,
• Click on the ‘Courses” tab.
• Double-click on “201440.41429 COMM-660-B01 (Summer 2014) under the “Blackboard 9.1 Course” heading.

Email: Feel free to send me emails; when you do, please start the subject line of the email with COMM 660. I will respond to your emails within 48 hours. However, I would appreciate if you didn’t email me questions that you can answer for yourself. To that end, before sending me an email, please check the following (available on your Blackboard course menu) to see if the answer is there:

1. Syllabus
2. Help forum (Feel free to respond to other students in the Help forum if you know the answer.)
3. Blackboard videos on how to use Blackboard features
4. Blackboard Q&A, and
5. Technology Requirements.

Mason requires that Mason email be used for all courses. I will be sending messages to your Mason email and you are responsible for making sure you have access to these messages. You may forward your Mason email to other accounts but always use your Mason e-mail when communicating with me to allow verification of your identity. You are required to check your Mason email account regularly and to keep your mailbox maintained so that messages are not rejected for being over quota.

More information about technology requirements for this course is presented in the General Information portion of the syllabus.

3. Course Objectives
By the end of the course, students will be able to…
   1. Plan strategic communication initiatives to advance climate change and sustainability objectives
   2. Identify, prioritize and apply insights from the social and behavioral science literature to improve the effectiveness of climate change and sustainability communication.

4. Readings
A wide variety of readings will be assigned (see Schedule of Readings below); most are available online, and those that aren’t have been placed in Blackboard. In addition, three inexpensive, excellent books are required.

Because this is a compressed summer semester, you may not have time to read everything listed in the syllabus. That said, I urge you to read as much as you can, making a priority of those readings that align more closely with your professional interests.

5. Requirements

For professional development students:
Students enrolled in the course on a professional development basis will not be graded. They are nevertheless expected to watch the lectures, do as many of the readings as they can, and actively participate in the discussions of the materials on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. They are also expected to produce one brief video (3 to 5 minutes) – or write one short essay (see Option B for grad students below) in which they highlight and teach others one key concept from the course and illustrate how it can be used to improve a real or hypothetical climate communication initiative. The video or essay is due on the last day of the course. Students who meet these requirements will receive a certificate of completion from Mason’s Center for Climate Change Communication and Climate Access.

For graduate students:
Students enrolled for graduate credit will be graded on class participation (25 points) and written work (75 points). There are three distinct options for written work, described below: advising a client; writing blog posts; and writing a scholarly paper.

Class Participation (25 points)
You are expected to contribute to the discussion about each of the 12 topics on the syllabus – during the week the topic was assigned, as well as later if you wish – on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. This can include – but need not be limited to – identifying key ideas in a reading (or on the topic overall), making connections between key ideas, raising questions about – or challenging – a key idea, answering another student’s question, and expressing a point of view. You should feel free to embrace, reject, or modify any idea expressed by me, by authors, or by other students, but please do your best to stay on topic (by responding to ideas posed in the reading, in the lectures, or by an on-topic comment made by another student).

Option A: Select and Advising a Client
Select a client and familiarize yourself with their overall climate change and/or sustainability goals, communication objectives (and target audiences, communication strategy and tactics, if they have them). The ideal client is a person/organization you can actually gain access to AND who is interested in receiving (or at least willing to consider) your recommendations. This could be a government agency (e.g., Fairfax County Department of Environment, Virginia Department of Health, U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention), a non-profit organization (e.g., Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club, Union of Concerned Scientists), or a for-profit business (e.g., General Electric, My Organic Market). By the beginning of Week 2 you should select your client; submit to me a brief summary (one page maximum) of who the client is, what their objective is, and how you will endeavor to help them achieve their objective with improved communication.

Write Five 1-Page Client Memos (10 points each)
Over the course of the semester, write five 1-page memos addressed to your client. In each memo, pick one concept (or a very closely related set of concepts) from one or more assigned readings that has obvious implications for advancing your client’s objectives. For example, Made to Stick advises us to be “unexpected” in our communication; you might write a client memo on how to be unexpected in a manner that will increase the client’s communication effectiveness. In each memo, briefly explain the concept (with an appropriate citation), and explain how this idea might be applied to improve their communication. Use bullet points liberally; they can be used to convey a lot of meaning with relatively fewer words. For further guidance, please see the Appendix to this syllabus: Writing a one-page recommendation memo that gets your client to “yes.” These five memos, if done well, will become the fodder for your final project. The memos will be due in weeks 3 (n=1), 4 (n=2) and 5 (n=2). Please keep in mind that you are writing these memos for your client, not for me; therefore, you must both have strong recommendations, and you must present them effectively (to a client who – unlike me – may not have any familiarity with the basis of your recommendation). You need not submit these memos to your client, however, as you will instead be submitting your final project to your client.

Final Project (25 points)
Write a final recommendation memo to your client. The main body of this memo should be no more than 5 pages; you may included appendices, including any or all of your 1 page client memos, if the inclusion of appendices helps you write a compelling recommendation). Your recommendation should start with a brief statement of your client’s objective, and should proceed by giving practical (i.e., feasible for your client to implement) and compelling (i.e., based on a sound theoretical and/or empirical rationale) recommendations on how your client can use communication to make progress toward this objective. Feel free to use the content from your 1-page memos – or not – as you see fit; the purpose of having you write the shorter memos is to help you develop ideas for your final project. The final project is due on the last day of class.

Option B: Write 3 essays for the class blog
Select an objective that interests you and that will be relevant and timely throughout the semester (e.g., enacting a federal carbon tax, closing the gap between people’s “green” attitudes and their actual behaviors; helping communities prepare for the local impacts of climate change). This objective will become the thematic focus of three blog posts you will prepare. By the beginning of week 2, turn in a maximum of 1 page describing your thematic focus, including why it is relevant, important and timely.

Write three essays (25 points each)
Each of your three essays must do two things: (a) focus on one theory or one concept – or a very closely related set of theories and/or concepts – that we are studying (e.g., identifying and activating opinion leaders); and (b) make a practical point (i.e., illuminate how to improve communication in a manner that will help organizations make progress toward your stated objective). Each essay should be approximately 1,000 to 1,500 words. Ideally, the three essays will complement each other, as if they are three sub-sections one longer essay. For example, if your objective is to build support for a federal carbon tax, your three essays might focus on: (a) identify and communicate the benefits of a carbon tax that swing voters find most compelling; (b) identify and activate opinion leaders in swing voter social networks; and (c) enhance swing voters’ sense of collective efficacy that they can influence federal climate legislation.
Your three essays will be due at the end of weeks 3, 5 and 7.

The essays will be posted on the class blog; if they are suitable quality, they will also be submitted for publication at Talking Climate: http://talkingclimate.org/blog/. Here is an example of a blog post written by Comm 660 student Tina Cipara (2012): http://bigthink.com/age-of-engagement/kony-2012-a-revolution-in-social-campaigns

**Option C: Write a scholarly paper** *(required of PhD Students, optional for others; 75 Points)*

Select a scholarly paper on some topic in climate change communication that will help advance your academic career by leading to a conference presentation and/or a peer-reviewed paper, or by contributing to your dissertation proposal. Some options include:

- Write a conceptual paper and/or literature review.
- Develop a case study of a climate change communication initiative.
- Write a research proposal (for example, a dissertation or grant proposal).

By the beginning of week 2 of class, turn in a maximum of one page describing how you intend to focus your project. By the beginning of week 4, submit an outline of the paper. On the last day of class, submit the final paper. The final written paper should be approximately 20 pages, should conform to whatever publication style is dominant in your department (e.g., APA), and should be as close to ready for submission to a conference or a journal as you can make it.

**5. Grades:** Focus on learning -- by actively engaging with the course material -- rather than the grade. That said, the standard Mason grading scale will be applied (see below).

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td>A</td>
<td>93-97</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>59 or less</td>
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**6. Schedule of Topics and Assignments**

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>6/2 to 8</td>
<td>1 – Course overview</td>
<td>Introduce yourself on the Discussion Board</td>
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<td>2 – The strategic communication (and social marketing) planning process</td>
<td>Contribute to discussion of Topic 2</td>
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<td>6/9 to 15</td>
<td>3 – Climate change communication: A situation analysis</td>
<td>Submit 1-pager on client (Option A), blog theme (Option B) or paper (Option C)</td>
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<td>4 – People, Part 1: The Rider (i.e., cognition)</td>
<td>Contribute to discussion of Topics 3 &amp; 4</td>
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<td>6/16 to 22</td>
<td>5 – People, Part 2: The Elephant (i.e., emotion)</td>
<td>Contribute to discussion of Topics 5 &amp; 6</td>
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<td>6 – People, Part 3: Social Networks</td>
<td>Submit 1st client memo (Option A)</td>
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<td>Submit 1st blog post (Option B)</td>
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<td>6/23 to 29</td>
<td>7 – People, Part 4: Communities</td>
<td>Contribute to discussion of Topics 7 &amp; 8</td>
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<td>8 – Places and Policies -- The Path</td>
<td>Submit 2nd and 3rd client memo (Option A)</td>
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<td>Submit paper outline (Option C)</td>
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<td>6/29 to 7/6</td>
<td>9 – Setting Objectives: Should we try to change people,</td>
<td>Contribute to discussion of Topics 9 &amp; 10</td>
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places or both?
10 – Implementing the communication initiative
Submit 4th and 5th client memo (Option A)
Submit 2nd blog post (Option B)

7/7 to 13
11 – Evaluating the communication initiative
12 – Integration – Bringing it all Together
Contribute to discussion of Topics 11 & 12
Submit video or essay (PD students)
Submit your final client memo (Option A)
Submit 3rd blog post (Option B)
Submit final paper (Option C)

7. Schedule of Lectures and Readings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lectures and Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/2 to 6/8</td>
<td>Lecture 1: Course overview</td>
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<td>Lecture 2: The strategic communication (and social marketing) planning process</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• A quick overview of strategic communication planning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Parvanta (2011) A public health communication planning framework (in Blackboard)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• McKenzie-Mohr (2011) Chapter 1, pages 1 to 10.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Meet Global Warming’s Six Americas:</td>
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<td>6/9 to 6/15</td>
<td>Lecture 3: Climate change communication: A situation analysis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The science</td>
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<td>• National Climate Assessment overview (to be released late April 2014). Public domain.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The news environment &amp; analysis</td>
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The political response

- **Kristoff (2014)** Neglected topic winner: climate change:
- **Northrup (2014)** Reasons for optimism on climate action:
  [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-northrop/reasons-for-optimism-on-c_b_4545836.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-northrop/reasons-for-optimism-on-c_b_4545836.html)
- **Mufson (2014)** Four reasons why the fight against climate change is likely to fail:

- **Public opinion**
  - **Climate Change in the American Mind – Fall 2013:**
    - Extreme Weather
    - Policy Support
    - Behavior
  - **Vraga et al (2013)** The political benefits of taking a pro-climate stand in 2013:
  - **Harstad NRDC poll (2014)** Survey of EPA carbon regulations in 9 Senate battleground states:
    - **Hart Research (2013)** NRDC poll on President’s Climate Action Plan:
      [http://docs.nrdc.org/air/files/air_13071801a.pdf](http://docs.nrdc.org/air/files/air_13071801a.pdf)
    - **Clement (2014)** How talking about climate change might help Democrats win elections.

- **The political response**
  - **Cotto (2012)** Bob Inglis is making the conservative case for a green future:
  - **Present’s Climate Action Plan:**
  - **Davenport (2013)** Why it finally makes sense to talk about climate change.
  - **Lehmann (2013)** Conservatives attack each other over carbon tax plan:
    [http://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1059984618](http://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1059984618)
  - **Sargent (2013)** Making Republicans pay a price for climate science denialism:
  - **Lehmann (2013)** Elections show climate contrasts as a “denier” loses in VA:
    [http://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1059990052](http://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1059990052)
  - **Chemnixck (2014)** Obama admin shifts strategy on battling warming:
  - **Saenz (2014)** Climate change keeps Senate Democrats up all night long:
  - **Chemnixck (2014)** White House messaging strategy earns accolades from PR pros:
  - **Davenport (2014)** POTUS said to be planning to use executive authority on carbon rule:
• Other responses
  o Chemnick (2013) Shadow campaign ramps up: http://www.eenews.net/eedaily/stories/1059983338

• The opposition
  o Heartland Institute – Monday morning meeting SOP (in Blackboard)

Lecture 4: People, Part 1: The Rider (i.e., cognition)
• Heath & Heath (2010) Switch – Direct the Rider (pages 1 to 98)
• People’s specific cognitions about climate change matter
  o Roser-Renouf et al (2014) The genesis of climate change activism: From key beliefs to political action. (in Blackboard)
  o Ding et al (2011) Support for climate policy and societal action are linked to perceptions about scientific agreement. (in Blackboard)
  o van der Linden et al (2014) (in Blackboard)
• People’s mental models – and communicator’s frames – also matter
• People can use their thoughts to “disengage” if they don’t wish to deal with the issue
Lecture 5: People, Part 2: The Elephant (i.e., emotion)

- Health & Heath (2010) Switch – Motivate the Elephant (pages 101 to 176)

- Theme 1: Seeing is believing
  - Weber (2012) Seeing is believing (commentary on Meyers et al.) (in Blackboard)
  - Rudman et al. (2013). When Truth Is Personally Inconvenient, Attitudes Change (abstract only): http://pss.sagepub.com/content/24/11/2290

- Theme 2: Elephant repellants
  - Bashir et al. (2013). The ironic impact of activists: Negative stereotypes reduce social change influence. (In Blackboard)

- Theme 3: Elephant food

- Theme 4: Moral motives

Lecture 6: People, Part 3: Social Networks

- Social networks
• Social diffusion
  o McKenzie-Mohr: Social diffusion (73-82); Commitment
  o Cardwell (2012) Solar industry borrows a page, and a party, from Tupperware. NYTs.

• Opinion leadership
    http://sciencepolicy.colorado.edu/students/envs_4100/nisbet_2009.pdf

6/23 to 6/29

Lecture 7: People, Part 4: Communities

• Social norms
  o McKenzie-Mohr: Social norms (61-72)
    http://www.carlsonschool.umn.edu/assets/118375.pdf
  o Leivston et al (2012) Your opinion on climate change might not be as common as you think. Nature Climate Change. In Blackboard, or a summary is available here:

• Collective efficacy
  o Energy Smackdown case study (2010).
  o Thaker et al (2014) Role of collective efficacy in climate change adaptation in India. (in Blackboard)

• Social capital
  o Pelling (2010) Climate change and social capital.
    http://www.nchh.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=AXhUDggUH1k=&tabid=419

• Tribal thinking: us vs. them
    http://scholarship.law.gwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1298&context=faculty_publications

Lecture 8: Places and Policies -- The Path

• What is “The path?”
  o Heath & Heath (2010) Switch – Clear the Path (pages 179 to 249)

• Availability and cost of products and services
  o McKenzie-Mohr: Selecting behaviors (11-20); Identifying barriers and benefits (21-40); Incentives (111 to 120); Convenience (121 to 128)

• Physical structures
• ClimateWire (2011) Seattle finds more sidewalks can help slow climate change.
  http://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2011/04/21/stories/1059948060
• Social structures (i.e., policies and enforcement)
    http://www.sustainableprosperity.ca/d1026&display
  o Krosnick & Maclnnis (2013) Does the American public support legislation to reduce GHGs?
• Media and cultural messages
  o McKenzie-Mohr: Prompts (83 to 92); Communication (93 to 110)

6/29 to 7/6
Lecture 9: Strategy development
• Inform
• Change behavior
  o Dietz, Stern & Weber (2013) Reducing carbon-based energy consumption through changes in household behavior.
• Engage, mobilize, build public support for policy
  o Cox (2010) Beyond frames: Recovering the strategic in climate communication.
• McKenzie-Mohr: Developing strategies, revisited (129 to 136)
• Heath & Heath (2007) Made to Stick, Chapter 1 & 2

Lecture 10: Implementing the communication initiative
• Important perspectives on implementation:
  o McKenzie-Mohr: Piloting (137 to 142)
  o Dunwoody (2007) The challenge of trying to make a difference using media messages
• Communication and messaging recommendations:
  o Hart Research (2013) Messaging recommendations on climate change
  o Climate Nexus (2012) Connecting the dots
• Big picture thinking:
  o Independent Sector (2012) The art & science of advocacy. [Executive Summary only]
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>7/7 to 7/13</th>
<th>Lecture 11: Evaluating the communication initiative</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• McKenzie-Mohr: Broad scale implementation and evaluation + concluding thoughts (143 to 152)</td>
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<td>• Tierney (2010) Will you be emailing this column? It’s awesome</td>
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<td>• Formative evaluation methods:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Conducting an in-depth interview the ZMET (Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique) way</td>
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<td>• Outcome evaluation examples:</td>
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<td>o Larsen (2014) Six Tennessees, One Eaarth</td>
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<td>o Zhao et al (2013) Climate Matters evaluation</td>
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<td>o Ferraro et al (2011) The persistence of treatment effects with norm-based policy instruments</td>
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<td>• Heath &amp; Heath (2007) Made to Stick – Chapters 3 and 4</td>
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<th>Lecture 12: Integration – Bringing it all Together</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Kania &amp; Kramer (2011) Collective Impact</td>
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<td>• McLeod Grant (2010) Transformer: How to build a network to change a system: A case study of the RE-AMP energy network</td>
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General Information:

Netiquette For Online Discussions
Our discussion should be collaborative, not combative; you are creating a learning environment, sharing information and learning from one another. Respectful communication is important to your success in this course and as a professional. Please re-read your responses carefully before you post them so others will not to take them out of context or as personal attacks. Be positive to others and diplomatic with your words and I will try my best to do the same. Be careful when using sarcasm and humor. Without face-to-face communications your joke may be viewed as criticism. Experience shows that even an innocent remark in the online environment can be easily misconstrued.

Technology Requirements for this Course
Hardware: You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and to a fast and reliable broadband Internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to hear recorded content and a headset with a microphone is recommended for the best experience. For the amount of Hard Disk Space required to take a distance education course consider and allow for the storage amount needed to install any additional software and space to store work that you will do for the course. If you are considering the purchase of a new computer, please go to http://compstore.gmu.edu/pdfs/TechGuide.pdf to see recommendations.

Software: This course uses Blackboard as the learning management system. You will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the myMason Portal. See supported browsers and operating systems. Log in to myMason to access your registered courses. Some courses may use other learning management systems. Check the syllabus or contact the instructor for details. Online courses typically use Acrobat Reader, Flash, Java (Windows), and Windows Media Player, QuickTime and/or Real Media Player. Your computer should be capable of running current versions of those applications. Also, make sure your computer is protected from viruses by downloading the latest version of Symantec Endpoint Protection/Anti-Virus software for free at http://antivirus.gmu.edu.

Students owning Macs or Linux should be aware that some courses may use software that only runs on Windows. You can set up a Mac computer with Boot Camp or virtualization software so Windows will also run on it. Watch http://support.apple.com/kb/VI54?viewlocale=en_US about using Windows on a Mac. Computers running Linux can also be configured with virtualization software or configured to dual boot with Windows.

Note: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

Hardware or software required for this course or program may be available for purchase at Patriot Computers (the University’s computer store that offers educational discounts and special deals).

Possible Changes to the Syllabus
As the instructor, I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus. Students will be given ample notice regarding any major changes to the course plan.

Honor Code
George Mason University students are expected to adhere to the Honor Code; please familiarize yourself with the Honor Code if you have not already done so. All papers, projects, and exams are to be original and prepared for this class. Papers and projects for this class may be related to a task in another class, but you must get
specific permission from both instructors. While hired typists and proofreaders are permitted, your exams, papers, and projects must be your own work.

**Student Notification of Grades**
Grade reports are not automatically mailed to students at the end of the term. Instead, students may access their grades by calling 4GMU (703-993-4468) or by checking [http://webGMU.gmu.edu](http://webGMU.gmu.edu) for the grade report.

**Incompletes or Withdrawals**
The situations in which an incomplete can be given are specified very clearly in the university catalogue, which indicates that such a grade may be given 'to a student who is passing a course but who may be unable to complete scheduled course work for a cause beyond reasonable control. Along the same lines, the policies regulating withdrawal are clearly specified in the catalogue, but they are granted ONLY for non-academic reasons.

**Reasonable Accommodation**
Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact the instructor or the course directors as soon as possible so that the necessary accommodations can be made to ensure full participation and facilitate the student’s educational opportunities. A Disability Support Services office is available on campus to assist students with special needs. If you have a disability or suspect you might have a disability, contact this office at 703-993-2474. If you have a disability that will require assistance, let your instructor know within the first two weeks of this course.

**Student Services**
**Writing Center:**
The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. (See [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu).) ESL Help: The program was designed specifically for students whose first language is not English who feel they might benefit from additional, targeted support over the course of an entire semester. (See [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/?page_id=10](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/?page_id=10)).

**University Libraries:**
University Libraries provides resources for distance students. (See [http://library.gmu.edu/distance](http://library.gmu.edu/distance)).

**Counseling and Psychological Services**
The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance. (See [http://caps.gmu.edu](http://caps.gmu.edu)).

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), also known as the "Buckley Amendment," is a federal law that gives protection to student educational records and provides students with certain rights. (See [http://registrar.gmu.edu/privacy](http://registrar.gmu.edu/privacy)).
Appendix: Writing a one-page recommendation memo that gets your client to “yes.”

- In the subject line of your memo, concisely state the core of your recommendation (so that there is no ambiguity whatsoever as to the essence of your recommendation).

- Feature only one recommendation per memo. In subsequent memos, however, you can refer to – and build on – information presented previously in your earlier memos.

- Present three key pieces of information: the concept you are recommending (and why); critical information necessary to apply the concept correctly; and a simple, clear example of how you would apply the concept to advance your client’s objective(s). This can be done effectively with three paragraphs (which has the virtue of fitting onto one page if you are concise).

  o Paragraph 1: Sell your client on your recommendation. Identify the behavior change/communication concept you are recommending (e.g., identify and activate opinion leaders). Make clear why it is an important concept/recommendation. Ideally, prove the merits of the recommendation with data, but if you can’t cite data, prove its worth or importance using another persuasive approach. If you haven’t sold your client on the merits of the recommended concept in the first paragraph, s/he isn’t going to bother reading the next two paragraphs.

  o Paragraph 2: Teach your client how to apply the concept. Clearly identify any information needed to successfully apply the recommended concept (e.g., “To implement positive reinforcement techniques, you should immediately recognize and praise the specific aspects of the behavioral performance that were exemplary. Do not focus immediately, or primarily, on aspects of the performance that need improvement.”)

  o Paragraph 3: Show your client an example of how to apply the concept. Illustrate the concept in the context of your client’s current or potential future programs, policies, or products. You can do so by drawing from a current initiative and showing how your recommendation can be used to improve it. If necessary, however, you illustrate with a hypothetical scenario, but it must pertain directly to the client’s activities and objectives.