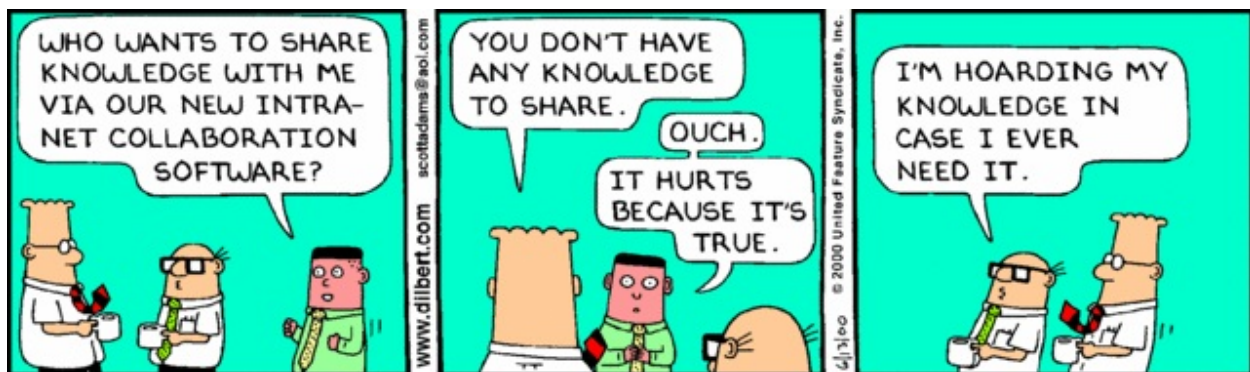


# Comm 6730 – Collaboration & Decision Making

Tues/Thurs

2:00-3:15 pm

Hellem 77

**Professor**

Matthew Koschmann, PhD

**Email**

[koschmann@colorado.edu](mailto:koschmann@colorado.edu)

**Office Hours**

Wednesdays 2:00-3:00  
and by appointment

**Office**

Hellem 87B

**Phone**

303-492-2824

**Skype**

matt\_koschmann

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

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In today's interdependent world, it is critical that scholars and practitioners understand how diverse groups can work together to make quality decisions and achieve collective action. Collaboration highlights important aspects of human interaction, and a communication perspective offers key insights into this vital context of organizing. Accordingly, the three main objectives of this course are:

- (1) To develop a thorough understanding of the broad, multidisciplinary literature on communication and organizational collaboration
- (2) To learn and understand the key issues, questions, and problems that arise from various contexts of organizational collaboration
- (3) To develop a distinct communication perspective towards organizational collaboration and understand how this relates to other theoretical perspectives

To achieve these objectives this course covers the following primary topics:

- Communication and discourse models/theories of collaboration
- Contexts of organizational collaboration
- Identity, trust, & membership
- Leadership, governance, & authority
- Outcomes, assessment, & effectiveness
- Tensions & challenges of organizational collaboration
- Complexity theory
- Inter-organizational networks

The course will be taught from an *organizational communication* perspective, with a particular emphasis on inter-organizational collaboration and communicative/discursive models and theories. But this will not preclude other areas in the Department of the Communication (rhetoric, discourse & society), nor students from other departments and disciplines.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

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All assignments are graded on a 100-point scale and weighted by the percentages listed below

### FINAL PROJECT

40%

**Due: Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup> @ 11:59 pm (D2L dropbox)**

Choose one of the options below, depending on your position in the Department of Communication (e.g., MA or PhD student, org comm area or not):

#### **Literature review paper** (ideal for MA students or PhD students outside the department)

For this assignment you will write a 4000-5000-word literature review on a topic broadly related to organizational collaboration and communication. Your literature review should be *analytical*, not just descriptive. In addition to the main content of your literature review, papers should begin with an introductory section that explains the rationale for your review, a methodology section that explains the procedures of your review, and a closing section where you discuss the conclusions, remaining questions, and ideas for future research that arise from your review. Papers will be graded based on the relevance and significance of your topic, the breadth and depth of your literature review, the insightfulness of your analysis and critical thinking, and the overall quality and clarity of your writing.

#### **Research proposal** (ideal for experienced grad students, preferred for PhD students not in org comm)

For this assignment you will write a 4000-5000-word paper that proposes an empirical investigation of some issue/question broadly related to organizational collaboration and communication. Basically your paper will include all the components of a normal research project, but without actually data collection and analysis/findings. Your proposal should contain an introductory section that explains the rationale for your investigation, a section that reviews the relevant literature, a methodology section that details the procedures for your proposed study, and a concluding section where you discuss the potential conclusions and contributions of your research. Your proposal should contain specific research questions and/or hypotheses that would guide your investigation. Papers will be graded based on the significance of your research rationale, the relevance and thoroughness of your literature review, the appropriateness of your research methodology, the potential contributions of your analysis, and the overall quality and clarity of your writing.

#### **Full empirical study** (required for org comm PhD students)

For this assignment you will develop a complete empirical investigation on a topic broadly related to organizational collaboration and communication, resulting in a 5000-6000-word manuscript that could be submitted as a competitive paper for a national or regional academic conference. Data for your study may be qualitative and/or quantitative, but must be collected by you through first-hand experience with an actual collaboration. Your paper should contain all the components of a normal research article (rationale, literature review, research methodology, analysis/findings, and discussion sections). Papers will be graded based on the significance of your research rationale, the relevance and thoroughness of your literature review, the appropriateness of your research methodology, the quality of your data, the insightfulness of your analysis/finding, the contributions of your study, and the overall quality and clarity of your writing.

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS (continued)**

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### **FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL**

**10%**

**Due: Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup> @ 11:59 pm (D2L dropbox)**

For either of the final project options above you need to submit a 1-2 page proposal that explains the basic parameters of your project. There are no requirements on the exact content of your proposals, just convey you plans for developing and completing a successful final project. These proposals are basically graded as pass/fail—the goal is to give me enough information about your project so I can provide detailed feedback to help you develop a successful final product.

### **DISCUSSION FACILITATOR**

**30%**

For this assignment you will facilitate class discussion for one session. You are responsible for covering the assigned readings for that day and developing a creative presentation that summarizes and expands the material, as well as questions for class discussion. Your facilitation should also include an additional empirical research article that illustrates topic or issue that is the subject of our discussion, plus a practical example that further clarifies these ideas. You will be graded based on the creativity and thoroughness of your presentation, the quality of questions and comments you facilitate, and the insight and relevance of the research article and practical example you include.

### **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

**20%**

This is a discussion-based class where much of the learning comes from your interaction with other students, the professor, and the material. Therefore your participation plays an important role in the development of the course. Here are the main things that influence your participation grade:

- Consistent, substantive involvement in class discussions  
*Insight, analysis, and critical reflection...not just summary and description*
- No more than 1 absence
- Not consistently arriving late or leaving early
- Not a distraction in class

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

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**All course readings & materials are free and posted on Desire@Learn (D2L)**



<https://learn.colorado.edu/>

## **COURSE GRADING**

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This course follows the standard CU grading system.

A	93% and above	C	73 – 76.5%
A -	90 – 92.5%	C -	70 – 72.5%
B +	87 – 89.5%	D +	67 – 69.5%
B	83 – 86.5%	D	63 – 66.5%
B -	80 – 82.5%	D -	60 – 62.5%
C +	77 – 79.5%	F	59% or below

I use the following criteria to guide my grading decisions:

A	Excellent...exceeds the minimum requirements with distinction
B	Good...goes beyond the minimum requirements to a fair degree
C	Average...meets the minimum requirements of the assignment
D	Poor...only meets some of the minimum requirements of the assignment
F	Failing...does not meet most of the minimum requirements of the assignment

### **Important grade considerations**

The only thing I grade is your product...not your effort or intentions. I don't grade based on what you need to keep a certain GPA or what you think you're entitled to.

I'm happy to discuss any graded assignment with you, but please wait 24 hours after receiving your grade for any discussions.

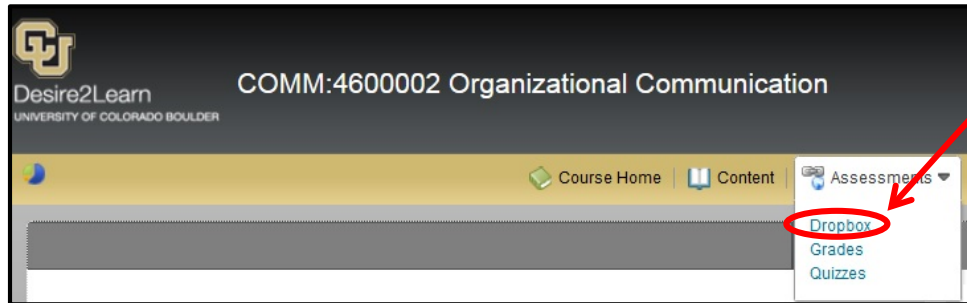
I love to talk with students about their assignments BEFORE they are due. After assignments are due there is very little I can do, other than to explain my decisions.

# COURSE POLICIES

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## Paper Submissions

Please submit all papers electronically through the dropbox feature in Desire2Learn:



All files should be Microsoft Word version 03 or later. Save your file using your last name (ex: Koschmann.doc)

## Technology Use in Class

Laptops and tablets are welcome in class; cell phones are not. Technology distractions will count against your participation grade.

## Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services (DS) by the end of the second week of the semester so that your needs may be addressed. DS determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (303-492-8671, Willard 322, [www.colorado.edu/sacs/disabilityservices](http://www.colorado.edu/sacs/disabilityservices))

## Religious Observance

I will make reasonable accommodations for students who have conflicts between religious observance dates and course requirements. Please approach me with these requests before the end of the second week of the semester.

## Academic Misconduct

Cheating, plagiarism, or unacknowledged assistance is unacceptable. Web-based plagiarism-detection services will be utilized. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu); 303-725-2273).

Please see the Honor Code at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

## Deadlines

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due on the date/time indicated in the course schedule. Late work is not accepted unless you contact me BEFORE the due date with a legitimate reason.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

<b>UNIT 1: Foundations</b>		
Dates	Topics	Readings
<b>Week 1</b> Aug 25 & 27	Course Introduction  Thinking about Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gray (1989)</li> <li>▪ Gray &amp; Wood (1991)</li> <li>▪ Huxham (2003)</li> <li>▪ Kania &amp; Kramer (2011)</li> <li>▪ Koschmann, Lewis, &amp; Isbell (2011)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2</b> Sept 1 & 3	Communication and discourse models of collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lawrence, Phillips, &amp; Hardy (1999)</li> <li>▪ Hardy, Lawrence, &amp; Grant (2005)</li> <li>▪ Hardy, Lawrence, &amp; Phillips (1998)</li> <li>▪ Lewis (2006)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b> Sept 8 & 10	<u>Communication Background</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Video: <a href="#">What is Organizational Communication?</a></li> <li>▪ Article: Ashcraft, Kuhn, &amp; Cooren (2009)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Keyton, Ford, &amp; Smith (2008)</li> <li>▪ Koschmann, Kuhn, &amp; Pfarrer (2012)</li> <li>▪ Heath (2007)</li> <li>▪ Milam &amp; Heath (2014)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b> Sept 15 & 17	Contexts of organizational collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Browning, Beyer, &amp; Shetler (1995)</li> <li>▪ Austin &amp; Seitanidi (2012a &amp; 2012b)</li> <li>▪ Selsky &amp; Parker (2005)</li> <li>▪ Bryson, Crosby, &amp; Stone (2006)</li> <li>▪ Bruns (2013)</li> </ul>
<b>UNIT 2: Key Issues, Problems, &amp; Questions</b>		
<b>Week 5</b> Sept 22 & 24	Identity, trust, & membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Huxham &amp; Vangen (2000a)</li> <li>▪ Beech &amp; Huxham (2003)</li> <li>▪ Zhang &amp; Huxham (2009)</li> <li>▪ Williams (2007)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b> Sept 29 & Oct 1	Identity, trust, & membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maguire, Phillips, &amp; Hardy (2001)</li> <li>▪ Maguire &amp; Hardy (2005)</li> <li>▪ Koschmann (2013a)</li> <li>▪ Koschmann (2013b)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 7</b> Oct 6 & 8	<b>NO CLASS – Meetings to discuss final project proposals</b> <b>Final project proposals due: Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup> @ 11:59 pm (D2L dropbox)</b>	

Dates	Topics	Readings
<b>Week 8</b> Oct 13 & 15	Leadership, governance, & authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Huxham &amp; Vangen (2000b)</li> <li>▪ Vangen &amp; Huxham (2003)</li> <li>▪ Connelly (2007)</li> <li>▪ Weber &amp; Khademan (2008)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 9</b> Oct 20 & 22	Outcomes, assessment, & effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hardy, Phillips, &amp; Lawrence (2003)</li> <li>▪ Gray (2000)</li> <li>▪ Provan &amp; Milward (1995)</li> <li>▪ Provan &amp; Milward (2001)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10</b> Oct 27 & 29	Tensions & challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hardy, Lawrence, &amp; Phillips (2006)</li> <li>▪ Babiak &amp; Thibault (2009)</li> <li>▪ Lewis, Isbell, &amp; Koschmann (2010)</li> <li>▪ Koschmann &amp; Laster (2011)</li> </ul>
<b>UNIT 3: Additional Perspectives on Organizational Collaboration</b>		
<b>Week 11</b> Nov 3 & 5	Complexity theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Anderson (1999)</li> <li>▪ Dent (1999)</li> <li>▪ Matthews, White, &amp; Long (1999)</li> <li>▪ Bradley (1999)</li> <li>▪ Innes &amp; Booher (1999)</li> <li>▪ Wheatley (2006)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 12</b> Nov 10 & 12	Inter-organizational networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Human &amp; Provan (2000)</li> <li>▪ Provan, Fish, &amp; Sydow (2007)</li> <li>▪ Shumate, Fulk, &amp; Monge (2005)</li> <li>▪ Shumate &amp; O'Connor (2010)</li> <li>▪ Cooper &amp; Shumate (2012)</li> <li>▪ Walker &amp; Stohl (2012)</li> <li>▪ Doerfel &amp; Taylor (2004)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 13</b> Nov 17 & 19	<b>NO CLASS – NCA conference</b> (available 11/17 for meetings)	
<b>Week 14</b> Nov 24 & 26	<b>NO CLASS – Thanksgiving &amp; Fall Break</b>	
<b>Week 15</b> Dec 1 & 3	<b>Final project meetings</b>	
<b>Week 16</b> Dec 8 & 10	<b>Final project meetings</b> <b>Final projects due: Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup> @ 11:59 pm (D2L dropbox)</b>	
<b>Week 17</b> Finals week	<b>Final project presentations</b> <b>Thursday, December 17<sup>th</sup> – time &amp; location TBD</b>	