

San José State University
Urban and Regional Planning Department
URBP 213 Communication Skills for Planners
Fall 2011

Adapted from a Course Developed by Asha Weinstein Agrawl

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Office hours:	Mondays 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm in WSQ 218B or CL127 (please confirm with me in advance)
Class days/time:	Monday 7:15 pm – 10:00 pm
Classroom:	CL 127

Course Catalog Description

Advanced techniques for communicating clearly, persuasively, and professionally in a city and regional planning context. Covers writing and public speaking.

Course Description

URBP 213 is designed to help you write documents and give presentations that are organized, easy to understand, and appropriate for a specific audience. The class is taught in a hands-on style, using real-world writing and speaking exercises relevant to planning professionals. The art of communicating well requires constant practice and feedback. Receiving feedback and revising your work are two of the best techniques for improving your skills, so these opportunities are built into assignments. For each one, you will receive feedback from your peers and/or the instructor. The process of critiquing your peers' work will also help you improve your writing and speaking skills, since you will be able to identify what aspects of their work are more successful and which less so, and then use these observations to modify your own work.

Communication skills are essential to work within the profession of urban planning. It is necessary for Planners to be able to effectively communicate to a wide range of audiences. Planners are required to talk to decision makers, governmental agencies, stake holders, community members, and the general public. This class is intended to refine skills you already have through constant practice and feedback.

Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) Knowledge Components

This course partially covers the following PAB Knowledge Component: 4.2.3. (c) use written, oral and graphic skills to compose clear, accurate and compelling text, images and maps in documents and oral presentations.

Student Learning Objectives

Students who successfully complete the course will be able to:

1. Articulate the qualities that make for excellent, effective writing and public speaking in a professional U.S. planning context.
2. Identify and prioritize aspects of their writing and public speaking skills that they want to improve over time, and plan strategies for achieving these goals.
3. Create documents and presentations that communicate a clear message to readers and listeners. For example, students will be able to:
 - Organize material logically and clearly, so that a reader or listener can easily understand the ideas presented.
 - Use headings, internal previews, and summaries to help readers or listeners easily identify the main points.
 - Design tables and figures that highlight the specific message they are meant to convey.
4. Create documents and presentations that are strategically designed to persuade resistant audiences.
5. Create documents and presentations that are professional in appearance and style. For example, students will be able to:
 - Apply simple design principles to create documents that are easy for readers to understand.
 - Develop and apply consistent formatting styles throughout a document or presentation.
 - Prepare professional-looking tables and figures with a table or figure number, title, and complete source citation and notes properly located just below the table or figure.
 - Properly format sources footnotes and bibliographies in Turabian A style.
 - Create PowerPoint presentations that use font sizes, colors, and images that will be easy for an audience to see and understand from a distance.
6. Decide when they need to include source citations in their writing, such as when they incorporate or refer to another author's intellectual property, such as exact language, data, theories, or illustrations.
7. Identify and apply techniques that will help them to deliver a professional presentation with a speaking style that is easy to understand, sounds natural, and stimulates audience interest and comprehension.
8. Design strategies to elicit useful feedback from colleagues and friends on their writing and public speaking.
9. Prepare useful, tactful feedback to help colleagues improve their writing and public speaking.

Required Course Readings

1. Primary Text
Munter, Mary. *Guide to Managerial Communication: Effective Business Writing and Speaking*, 9th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2012.

This book is readily available online. I strongly recommend that you purchase the latest edition so that the content and page numbering will be the same as my copy.

2. Other course readings are available through the library electronic course reserves. I may also hand out a small number of additional articles in class. If you miss class, be sure to check with another student to get a copy of any handouts you may have missed.

3. Style book

Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

This book is available for purchase at the campus bookstore, as well as at many bookstores around the Bay Area and online. Be sure to buy the correct edition.

Course Assignments and Grading Policy

Your participation in the class will consist of attending all class meetings, completing readings and short homework assignments, critiquing drafts of other students' work, and preparing five graded assignments. Written instructions for the assignments will be handed out and discussed in class. You should plan to spend an average of seven hours a week on the course in addition to the weekly class meetings.

I will calculate your grade for the course as follows:

Number	Assignment Title	Percent of Total Grade
1	Revising an Administrative Staff Report	10%
2	Persuasive Presentation	15%
3	Presentation from Two Points of View	20%
4	Persuasive Report and Presentation	25%
5	Personal Communications Strategy	10%
	Class Participation	20%

Class Participation

The class participation grade is based on the quality of your participation in discussion, the homework assignments, and the written and verbal comments you provide your classmates in the peer feedback sessions. All students begin the semester with an assumed "A" for class participation, and I then deduct points for missing or low quality work as follows:

Discussions: Students are expected to attend all class sessions and participate actively in discussions. Multiple absences and/or repeated tardiness will result in a lower class participation grade, since you cannot participate if you are not present.

Homework: I assign a few short homework assignments designed to help students learn the course material and prepare for class discussion. These assignments are due at the beginning of the class period for which they are assigned. If you must miss a class, you may email me the homework before the start of the class to receive full credit for completing it. If you miss a class when a homework assignment has been handed out, you must contact another student or myself for a copy. You are still responsible to turn the assignment in on the class date that it is due. Late homework will generally not be accepted. I do not assign a letter grade on the homework, but record the assignments as either a plus, check, or minus.

Lightning Round Presentations: Students will give several very short presentations in class. The purpose is to practice and build confidence speaking in front of others. I do not assign a letter grade on the presentations.

Peer Review: If you miss a class with a peer review exercise, it is your responsibility to arrange to give and receive the written and verbal feedback from your peer review partners outside of class. This should be done within a day of the missed class. If you do give your feedback late, email me a copy of your written comments and tell me the date and time when you talked with your partners to receive partial credit for the assignment. (Otherwise you will receive no credit for that peer review.)

Policies on Late Assignments

If life begins to overtake you such that you expect you will not be able to complete an assignment on time and you let me know well before the due date, we can discuss alternate arrangements that might reduce the grade penalty for lateness. Written assignment #1 will be penalized one full letter grade for each week late. Presentations must be given on the scheduled date. Late presentations cannot be accommodated unless there is a serious medical or personal issue that is discussed with me in advance. Assignment #4 will be penalized 1/3 of a grade if submitted late. Assignment #5 must be submitted on time because I have very little time before grades are due.

Any student who fails to complete all graded assignments will automatically fail the course.

Policies on Resubmitting Assignments

I encourage you to consider revising and resubmitting assignments #1 and #3, both to improve your understanding of the course material and as a way to improve your grade. If you wish to revise and resubmit your work, I encourage you to meet me to discuss it before you prepare the revised report or presentation. In addition, here are some guidelines to keep in mind:

- I expect a genuine rewrite or revision. You must do more than just fix the specific issues I have pointed out in my comments to you.
- Rewritten papers and revised presentations will not automatically receive a higher grade; I will lower your grade or leave it unchanged, should that be the assessment of the revised work.
- You must turn in the rewrite of Assignment #1 no later than two weeks after the day I return the graded reports to the class. If you turn in your original report late and so receive my comments late, your rewrite is still due two weeks from the date I return papers to the rest of the class, even though this may reduce the amount of time you have to rewrite your paper.

Academic Integrity Statement, Plagiarism & Citing Sources Properly

SJSU's Policy on Academic Integrity states: "Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development" (Academic Senate Policy S07-2). The policy on academic integrity can be found at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>.

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's language, images, data, or ideas without proper attribution. It is a very serious offense both in the university and in your professional work. In essence, plagiarism is both theft and lying: you have stolen someone else's ideas, and then lied by implying that they are your own.

Plagiarism will lead to grade penalties and a record filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. In severe cases, students may also fail the course or even be expelled from the university.

If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, it is your responsibility to make sure you clarify the issues before you hand in draft or final work.

Learning when to cite a source and when not to is an art, not a science. However, here are some examples of plagiarism that you should be careful to avoid:

- If you use a sentence (or even part of a sentence) that someone else wrote and don't reference the source, you have committed plagiarism.
- If you paraphrase somebody else's theory or idea and don't reference the source, you have committed plagiarism.
- If you use a picture or table from a webpage or book and don't reference the source, you have committed plagiarism.
- If your work incorporates data someone else has collected and you don't reference the source, you have committed plagiarism.

The University of Indiana has developed a very helpful website with concrete examples about proper paraphrasing and quotation. See in particular the following pages:

- [Overview of plagiarism at http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/overview.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/overview.html)
- [Examples of plagiarism at http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/examples.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/examples.html)
- [Plagiarism quiz at http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/test.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/test.html)

If you still have questions, feel free to talk to me personally. There is nothing wrong with asking for help, whereas even unintentional plagiarism is a serious offense.

Citation Style

It is important to properly cite any references you use in your assignments. The Department of Urban and Regional Planning uses Kate Turabian's "A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 7th edition" (University of Chicago Press, 2007, ISBN-10: 0-226-82336-9). Copies are available in the SJSU King Library. Additionally, the book is relatively inexpensive, and you may wish to purchase a copy. Please note that Turabian's book describes two systems for referencing materials: (1) "notes" (footnotes or endnotes), plus a corresponding bibliography, and (2) in-text parenthetical references, plus a corresponding reference list. We will be using footnotes and a bibliography in this class.

Accommodation for Disabilities

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

URBP 213, COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR PLANNERS
INSTRUCTOR, LAURA RUSSELL, FALL, 2011
TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Course Schedule subject to change with reasonable notice given in class or via email

Class 1: August 29th

Topics

- Introductions
- Course overview
- Introduce Lightning Round Presentations, Homework, and Assignments
- Why does communication matter?
- Planners' roles in the public communication process

Labor Day September 5th- No Class Meeting

Email Homework #1 to Laura by Tuesday, September 6th at 5:00 pm.

Reading

- Fujishnin, Randy. "Delivering your Speech: Being Yourself." In *The Natural Speaker*. 5th ed. Boston: Pearson, 2006 (107-128).
- Start on the reading for week 2

Class 2: September 12th

Bring your copy of Turabian to class.

Topics

- Communication strategies
- Organizing your ideas
- When to cite sources (how to avoid plagiarism)
- Formatting bibliographies and footnotes
- Introduce Homework #2

Reading

- Munter, Mary. pp. 2-51
- Lipson, Charles. "Chapter 3: Plagiarism and Academic Honesty." In *Doing Honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004 (pp. 32-48).
- Lipson, Charles. "FAQs About All Reference Styles." In *Doing Honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004 (pp. 171-181).
- Review Chapters 15, 16, and 17 of *Turabian* (You do not have to read word-for-word.)
- Makay, John J. "Chapter 8: Organizing and Outlining Your Ideas." In *Public Speaking: Theory into Practice*. 2nd ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1995 (pp. 183-207).
- DeVito, Joseph A. "Unit 9: Elements of Organization." In *The Elements of Public Speaking*. 3rd ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1987 (pp. 96-112).

Class 3: September 19th

Homework #2- Speaking style exercise completed Lightning Round Presentations in class

Topics

- Revising, editing, and proof reading (the same or different?)
- Effective sentences and paragraphs
- Signposts, internal previews, and transitions
- Giving and receiving feedback

Reading

- Munter, Mary. pp. 52-83
- Limerick, Patricia Nelson. "Limerick's Rules of Verbal Etiquette." In *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckonings in the New West*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2000 (pp. 342-43).
- Hairston, Maxine et al. "Chapter 5: How Do You Revise, Edit, and Proofread?" In *The Scott, Foresman Handbook for Writers*, 6th ed. New York: Longman, 2002 (pp. 60-82).

Class 4: September 26th

Assignment #1 due at the beginning of class

Topics:

- Discussion of Assignment #1
- Speaking style
- Coping with stage fright
- Types of presentations
- Introduce Assignment #2

Reading

- Daly, John, and Isa Engleberg. "Coping with Stage Fright: How to Turn Terror into Dynamic Speaking." In *The Results-Driven Manager: Presentations That Persuade and Motivate*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004 (49-58).
- Urech, Elizabeth. "Control Your Nerves with the 3-B Exercises." In *Speaking Globally: Effective Presentations Across International and Cultural Boundaries*. Dover, NH: Kogen Page, 1998 (pp. 75-77).
- Munter, Mary. pp. 84-103 and pp. 141-159

Class 5: October 3rd

Lightning Round Presentations in class

Topics

- Guest speaker¹
- Principles of persuasion
- Understanding your audience
- Introduce Assignment #3

¹ Topics and readings for October 3rd, 10th, and 24th are subject to change to accommodate a guest speaker.

Reading

- DeVito, Joseph A. "Unit 15: Elements of Persuasive Speaking." In *The Elements of Public Speaking*. 3rd ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1987 (pp. 203-214).
- Zelazny, Gene. Excerpts from *Say It with Presentations: How to Design and Deliver Successful Business Presentations*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006 (pp. 1-23).
- Tierney, Elizabeth. "Practicing and Planning." In *How to Make Effective Presentations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996 (pp. 96-101).

Class 6: October 10th

Assignment #2 outline due for peer review

Topics

- Peer review of presentation outlines
- Check in on citation style- check presentation outlines
- Guest speaker or visual aids

Reading

- Munter, Mary. pp. 104-139.

Class 7: October 17th

Assignment #2- Persuasive presentation given in class

Class 8: October 24th

Memo reflecting on Assignment #2 due in class

Lightning Round Presentations in class

Topics

- Discussion of Assignment #2
- Guest speaker or visual aids

Class 9: October 31st Individual Meetings by Appointment- No Class

Bring draft outlines and PowerPoint slides for Assignment #3 to meeting with Laura.

Select topic for Assignment #4.

Class 10: November 7th

Assignment #3- Presentation from two points of view given in class (may be videotaped)

Class 11: November 14th

Assignment #3- Presentation from two points of view given in class (may be videotaped)

Class 12: November 21st

Memo reflecting on Assignment #3 due.

Topics

- Discussion of Assignment #3
- Designing charts and tables

- Designing written documents

Reading

- Tufte, Edward R. "Chapter 2: Graphical Integrity" & "Chapter 4: Data-Ink and Graphical Redesign." In *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*, 2nd ed. Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press, 2001 (pp. 53-77, 91-105).
- Zelazny, Gene. Excerpts. In *Say It With Charts: The Executive's Guide to Visual Communication*, 4th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001 (pp. 9-27).
- Hairston, Maxine et al. "Chapter 19: What Is Document Design?" In *The Scott, Foresman Handbook for Writers*, 6th ed. New York: Longman, 2002 (pp. 330-345).

Class 13: November 28th

**Assignment #4 report outline and presentation outline due for peer review
Lightning Round Presentations in class**

Topics

- Peer review of report outline and presentation outline in class
- Discussion of email, websites, and social media tools
- Introduce Assignment #5

Class 14: December 5th

**Assignment #4 complete draft report and complete presentation due for peer review
Option to present revised version of Assignment #3**

Topics

- Discussion of your goals and strategy for improving your speaking and writing skills in the future.

Exam Period: December 12th

**Assignment #4 due at beginning of class. Presentations given in class.
Email Assignment #5 to Laura by Thursday, December 15th at 5:00 pm.**