

COMM 421 - Communication in Nonprofit Organizations*

Tuesdays and Thursdays – 11:00am – 12:20pm

Spring, 2019

LA 305

Instructor: Betsy Wackernagel Bach, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: Mondays, 2:30 – 3:30pm;

Thursdays 9:40 – 11:00am, and by appointment

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REQUIRED READINGS

Smith, Bucklin, & Associates, (2000). *The complete guide to nonprofit management (2nd Ed.)*. New York: John Wiley and Sons. (SBA)

The additional course readings listed below are posted on Moodle, along with the assigned text readings.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide you with an overview of the issues and topics in nonprofit organizational communication, and how you can organize to accomplish social change. We will read research articles and discuss how to create an organizational mission statement, develop a strategic plan, and manage a board of directors. We will consider the many challenges faced by those who work in nonprofit organizations: recruiting and retaining volunteers, staff burnout, and fundraising (to name a few). We will accomplish this through class lecture and discussion, in at least three different roundtables with community members serving in nonprofits as Executive Directors, board members, and/or staff, and by conducting applied research in an area of your choice.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

As a result of satisfactorily completing this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. Explain and illustrate the range of topics involved in the study and practice of organizational communication in nonprofit organizations.
2. Compare and contrast the issues and politics involved in nonprofit organizational communication.
3. Identify and explain nonprofit organizational problems.
4. Select an issue in nonprofit organizational communication; analyze literature related to that topic; gather data; and formulate, appraise and defend results.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Roundtable Interview Questions – 1 set due for each Roundtable	25 points	(5%)
Research Proposal – Due January 31	50 points	(10%)
Take Home Mid-term – Due February 19	75 points	(15%)
Literature Review – Due March 14	125 points	(25%)
Final Paper – Due April 23, 25 or May 2	125 points	(25%)
Paper Presentation	50 points	(10%)
Class Participation (includes overnight assignments)	<u>50 points</u>	<u>(10%)</u>
TOTAL	500 points	100%

A=92% and up; A- = 91-90%; B+ = 88-89%; B = 82–87%; B- = 80 - 81%; C+ = 78 –79 %; C = 72 – 77%; C- = 70 – 71%; D+ = 68 – 69%; D = 62 – 67%; D- = 60 – 61%; F 59% and below.

INSTRUCTIONAL POLICIES

1. Active student participation (in the form of contribution to discussion and involvement in class activities) is instrumental for success in this course; therefore, attendance is not only expected, it is **required**. Moreover, although I am not anyone's Mother, I expect you to contact me in advance if, for some reason, you must miss a class.
2. You are expected to read assigned material prior to class and be prepared to discuss the readings. **Expect to be called on** to answer questions about what you've read.
3. All assigned projects must be completed in order for a student to receive passing grade for the course. This includes the "overnight" assignments that are not graded—specified written responses to the readings, your nonprofit timeline, and other assignments made spontaneously during class to be handed in for my review.
4. Please read all articles for the first day that they are assigned. While we will not cover some of the information until the second day of class, it is important that you have the background provided in the readings to fully participate in the lectures and discussions.
5. The University and COMM department regulations on plagiarism and all other unethical behavior will be strictly enforced. **Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated!!**
Anyone caught plagiarizing will be given a grade of "F" for the course and will be reported to the Department Chair and to the Dean of Students. All students must be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students/Student%20Conduct%20Code%20-%20FINAL%20-%2008-24-18.pdf>.
6. Assignments are to be typed and proofread, unless specified otherwise. Messy, poorly spelled assignments communicate that you don't care about the reader—who in this case will also be the grader of the assignment....me!
7. All exams and papers are due on the assigned date. If you must travel for a University sponsored event, make sure you provide me with the paper/exam **prior** to your departure.
8. I like to joke around and have fun during class. Please don't mistake my sense of humor for a lack of standards. I expect you to do your best work.

Grading: Remember that grades are earned, not given. Grades do not define who you are, but do reflect on the outcome or product you turn in. I cannot evaluate effort, but effort does tend to result in a better outcome. I work to fairly evaluate the work on the criteria we set forth. If you feel I have made an error in evaluation, write down that objection to my evaluation of the content and then email me. I am happy to correct mistakes I have made. I do not change grades because someone wants or thinks they should get a different grade. I evaluate the outcome.

Respectful Environment: You will be expected to act respectfully towards others in this class and assist in maintaining a civil and professional atmosphere for the class including discussions, email, and other exciting interactions. This includes respecting differing opinions, not using vulgar language, and creating a supportive environment.

Disability Statement: If you have a disability for which accommodations are needed please contact me in the first week of the semester to provide me with verification from DSS of the accommodation(s) that you seek. We will then discuss what accommodations you need and will receive in this course. Be sure to contact Disability Services for Students (DSS) at (406) 243-2243 (Voice/Text) or <https://www.umt.edu/dss/> for further assistance

GRADUATE STUDENT INCREMENT

Graduate students are required to adhere to all course policies, complete overnight assignments as well as Project #1, the Roundtable Interviews. In lieu of Project #2, graduate students are required to write an in-depth

literature review in consultation with me, using at least 25 original sources. I will distribute the specific requirements and grading criteria the first week of class.

Tentative Course Schedule

Week One	
January 10	<p>Topic: What is a Nonprofit Organization?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montana Nonprofit Sector Report, 2017. • Frumkin, P. (2002). <i>On being nonprofit: A conceptual and policy primer (1-27)</i>. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. • Nonprofit v Not-for-Profit • What is a NPO? https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/what-is-a-nonprofit • Types of NPOs - https://www.upcounsel.com/types-of-nonprofits • How to read an academic article. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEVftUdfKtQ <p>How to read academic articles: A discussion</p>
Week Two	
January 15, 17	<p>Topic: Challenges Facing Nonprofit Organizations: How Can Organizational Communication Scholars Help?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carson, E. D. (2002). Public expectations and nonprofit sector realities: A growing divide with disastrous consequences. <i>Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly</i>, 31(3), 429-436. • Lewis, L. (2005). The civil society sector. <i>Management Communication Quarterly</i>, 19, 238-267. • Lewis, L. (2017). Becoming useful: Using engaged scholarship as a means to move NPO scholarship forward. <i>Management Communication Quarterly</i>, 26, 186-192. • Eisenberg, E.M., & Eschenfelder, B. (2009). Communication in nonprofit organizations. In L.R. Frey & K.N. Cissna (Eds.), <i>Routledge Handbook of Applied Communication Research</i> (pp. 355-379). New York: Routledge.
Week Three	
January 22, 24	<p>Topic: Starting a Nonprofit Organization</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wood, J. (2006). <i>Leaving Microsoft to Change the World: An Entrepreneur's odyssey to educate the world's children</i>. New York: HarperCollins, (1-19). • Room to Read Strategic Plan. Retrieved from: http://www.roomtoread.org/Document.Doc?id=220 • Room to Read Annual Report 2017 • SBA Chapter 1 • Rangan, V.K. (2004). Lofty missions, down-to-earth plans. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 82(3), 112-119.
Week Four	
January 29, 31	<p>Topic: Developing a Mission and Vision</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collins, J.C., & Porras, J.I. (1996). Building your company's vision. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 74(5), 65-77. • Fairhurst, G., Jordan, J., & Neuworth, K. (1997). Why are we here? Managing the meaning of an organizational mission statement. <i>Journal of Applied Communication</i>

	<p><i>Research</i>, 25, 243-263.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBA Chapter 4 <p>Roundtable I: NP Directors Discuss Mission and Vision Research Proposal Due 1/31!</p>
Week Five	
February 5, 7	<p>Topic: Strategy and Strategic Planning</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hambrick, D.C., & Fredrickson, J.W. (2001). Are you sure you have a strategy? <i>Academy of Management Executive</i>, 15(4), 48-59. • Brown, W.A., & Iverson, J.O. (2004). Exploring strategy and board structure in nonprofit organizations. <i>Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly</i>, 33(3), 377-400. • Herman, R.D., & Renz, D.O. (2008). Advancing nonprofit organizational effectiveness research and theory: Nine theses. <i>Nonprofit Management and Leadership</i>, 18(4), 399-415. <p>Roundtable II: NP Directors Discuss Strategic Planning</p>
Week Six	
February 12, 14	<p>Topic: Writing Literature Reviews and Academic Papers</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zorn, T., & Campbell, N. (2006). Improving the writing of literature reviews through a literature integration exercise. <i>Business Communication Quarterly</i>, 69, 172-183. • Torraco, R.J. (2005). Writing integrative literature reviews: Guidelines and examples. <i>Human Resource Development Review</i>, 4, 356-367. <p>Lecture on APA style; Flow presentation and practice at Mansfield Library</p>
Week Seven	
February 19, 21	<p>Topic: Nonprofit Governance: Boards, Accountability and Transparency</p> <p>Mid-Term Exam – Due February 19</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBA Chapter 2 • Taylor, B.E., Chait, R.P., Holland, T.P. (1996). The new work of the nonprofit board. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 74(5), 36-46. • Herman, R.D., & Renz, D.O. (2000). Board practices of especially effective and less effective local nonprofit organizations. <i>The American Review of Public Administration</i>, 30, 146-160. • Van Puyvelde, S., Brown, W.A., Walker, V., & Tenuta, R. (2018). Board effectiveness in nonprofit organizations: Do interactions in the boardroom matter? <i>Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly</i>, 47(6), 1286-1310. <p>NO CLASS February 21 – BB at annual BOD meeting at JRF, Athens, GA</p>
Week Eight	
February 26, 28	<p>Topic: Staff Recruitment and Management</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBA Chapter 13 • Gellar, S. L., & Salamon, L. M. (2008). <i>A Nonprofit Workforce Action Agenda:</i>

	<p><i>Report on the Listening Post Project Roundtable on Nonprofit Recruitment and Retention.</i> John Hopkins University.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown, W.A., & Yoshikoa, C.F. (2003). Mission attachment and satisfaction as factors in employee retention. <i>Nonprofit Management & Leadership</i>, 14(1), 5-18.
Week Nine	
March 5, 7	<p>Topic: Staff Burnout</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eschenfelder, B. (2012). Exploring the nature of nonprofit work through emotional labor. <i>Management Communication Quarterly</i>, 26(1), 173-178. • Karabanow, J. (1999). When caring is not enough: Emotional labor and youth shelter workers. <i>Social Service Review</i>, 73, 340-357. • Ward, J., & Greene, A. (2018). Too much of a good thing? The emotional challenges of managing affectively committed volunteers. <i>Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly</i>, 47(6), 1155-1177.
Week Ten	
March 12, 14	<p>Topic: Why do people volunteer?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sagawa, S. (2010). <i>The American way to change: How national service and volunteers and transforming America</i> (p. 9-50). San Francisco: Jossey Bass. • McAllum, K. (2014). Meanings of organizational volunteering: Diverse organizational pathways. <i>Management Communication Quarterly</i>, 28(1), 84-110. • Volunteering in America 2010 Report. Available: http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/assets/resources/IssueBriefFINALJune15.pdf <p>Literature Review Due 3/14!</p>
Week Eleven	
March 19, April 2	<p>Topic: Managing and Recruiting Volunteers</p> <p>Readings (see next page also):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brudney, J.L. (2010). Designing and managing volunteer programs. In D.O. Renz & Associates, <i>The Jossey-Bass handbook of nonprofit leadership and management</i> (pp. 753-793). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. • Vecina, M.K., Chacon, R., Marzana, D., & Marta, E. (2013). Volunteer engagement and organizational commitment in nonprofit organizations: What makes volunteers remain within organizations and feel happy? <i>Journal of Community Psychology</i>, 41(3), 291-302. • Kramer, M. W. (2011). A study of voluntary organizational membership: The assimilation process in a community choir. <i>Western Journal of Communication</i>, 75(1), 52-74. • Garner, J.T., & Garner, L.T. (2011). Volunteering an opinion: Organizational voice and volunteer retention in nonprofit organizations. <i>Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly</i>, 40(5), 813-828. <p>NO CLASS March 21 – BB program review at South Dakota State NO CLASS March 26 and 28 – Spring Break</p>
Week Twelve	
April 4	<p>Topic: Public Relations/Marketing</p> <p>Readings:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBA Chapters 3 and 8 • Patterson, S. J., & Radtke, J. M. (2009). Strategic communications for nonprofit organizations: Seven steps to creating a successful plan (p. 87-112). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons. • Network for Good (2918). Social media guide for nonprofits. Retrieved from https://learn.networkforgood.com/social-media-for-nonprofits-website.html
Week Thirteen	
April 9, 11	<p>Topic: Cultivating Donors and Fundraising/Philanthropy</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBA Chapter 5 • VanSlyke, D.M., & Brooks, A.C. (2005). Why do people give? New evidence and strategies for nonprofit managers. <i>American Review of Public Administration</i>, 35(3), 199-222. • Sargeant, A. (2001). Relationship fundraising: How to keep donors loyal. <i>Nonprofit management and leadership</i>, 12(2), 177-192. • Waters, R. D. (2011). Increasing fundraising efficiency through evaluation: Applying communication theory to the nonprofit organization-donor relationship. <i>Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly</i>, 40(3), 458-475. <p>Roundtable III: NP Fundraisers Discuss Challenges and Opportunities in Fundraising</p>
Week Fourteen	
April 16, 18	<p>Topic: Grantwriting</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBA Chapter 9 • Brown, L.G., & Brown, M.J. (2001). <i>Demystifying Grant Seeking: What You Really Need To Do To Get Grants</i> (pp. 35-68). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. <p>Video: Grantseeking Basics</p>
Week Fifteen	
April 23, 25	<p>Topic: Wrap-Up and Paper Presentations</p> <p>Final Paper Due at Presentation Time!</p>
Exam Week	
May 2	Topic: Project Presentations – 8:00 am SHARP!

Project #1 Roundtable Interviews

Rationale

The objective for this project is to allow you to interview nonprofit experts on a particular topic related to the readings to learn how nonprofit Executive Directors, staff and board members apply the information that you have read to their respective organizations.

Procedures

You will team up with 2-3 other students before each Roundtable interview to develop collective questions from that day's readings to ask during classroom roundtable interviews. You will also individually devise at least two questions from each reading to ask during the Roundtable session (so if we have three readings assigned for that day, you will pull together 3 collective and 6 individual questions). Make sure you note in your interview questions from which reading they are associated, and why you are asking that question. For example, you might say something like, "In the Fairhurst reading for today, she and her colleagues explain how mission statements become a part of everyday organizational communication. They found that organizational role was directly related to mission. In your organization, how does one's role in the organization impact how the meaning of the mission is communicated? This will help the interviewees as they will also have completed the readings.

You will ask your questions during class, turning in your questions to me after each Roundtable discussion. No interview questions will be accepted after that day's class. Interview questions should be typed (double spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font, 1 inch margins) and have each group member's name at the top of the page.

Evaluative Criteria

Your interview questions will be evaluated on how well they tie into the readings for that day and allow the practitioners in the Roundtable to provide insight and examples. You will receive a "check" if these criteria are met; a "check minus" if they are not, and a zero if no interview questions are turned in the day of the interview(s).

Project #2 Research Paper

Rationale

The objective for this project is to allow you the opportunity to review literature relevant to a specific area of communication within non-profit organizations and to apply this information through observation or interview of individuals who work in a nonprofit setting. Next, the assignment of this project assumes that a) the ability to observe organizational life, b) conduct a critical review of the literature, c) analyze data, d) write a research paper, and e) respond to feedback on your writing to improve over time, are an integral part of becoming a solid organizational citizen. This project is done in three steps.

Step 1 – Research Proposal – Due January 31

The first step in this project involves deciding three things.

- *First*, you must decide what specific area of communication within non-profit organizations is most interesting to you.
- *Next*, you must write up at least 2 research questions that will focus your study, and then review relevant literature to help you answer your questions.
- *Finally*, you will gather observation or interview data to supplement your literature review and help answer your research questions. Make sure you consider your choice carefully as you will be spending a significant amount of time thinking, reading, and writing about this topic. Here is how you should proceed:

1. Select a topic relevant to what we are reading in class. Possible topics include: fundraising, public relations, employee or volunteer socialization, stress and burnout, board management, board-CEO relations, advocacy, crisis management, donor relationships, etc.
2. Write two or more research questions regarding your topic. These will help you focus your study and the literature that you will gather for later review.
3. Select one of two methods to gather field data to support the literature that you will review. You will gather data using either a *volunteer ethnography* or *practitioner interviews*.

Volunteer ethnography

If you already volunteer with a non-profit organization or would like to start, this would be a great choice. If you choose this method, you should spend a **minimum of 10 hours** during the semester volunteering with a non-profit organization. You should keep a detailed journal recording each hour of your volunteer experiences; the journal should include the date, time, and activities for which you volunteered as well as your personal reflections upon the volunteer experience. Although you will be volunteering in part to complete this paper, you are also volunteering to support the organization and they are counting on you. Be realistic – if you are not going to be able to commit enough time to your organization, choose the other option.

Practitioner interviews

You will conduct 3-5 (approximately one-hour) interviews with members or significant stakeholders of non-profit organization(s). Depending upon your topic, you may choose to interview several members from one organization OR individuals from several different non-profit organizations. For example, you might want to study board decision-making procedures. You could do a focused study and interview several board members at one organization or you might want to interview board chairs at four different organizations to get a more diverse sample. Before your interviews, you should prepare an interview guide listing the questions you will ask your interviewees (see the chapter on informational interviewing posted to the course Moodle site. It has great suggestions for structuring interviews to get the most information). You should take detailed notes during your interviews as these notes will serve as the data for analysis in your final paper. Make sure you send a thank you note to all of your interviewees within 24 hours of your interview.

Research Proposal Guidelines

This project is to get you started thinking about your topic and the methods that you want to use to gather your data. So, on January 31, here is what I would like from you:

1. identification and description of the topic that you hope to research, and a reason for why you find it interesting;
2. copies of the first page of two journal articles that you will read for your literature review;
3. discussion of what you hope to learn, and what you hope to accomplish in your volunteer service or interviews, and how this ties into the organizational mission;
4. at least two research questions related to your topic;
5. description of your data collection method:

Volunteer ethnography – describe the organization that you are going to volunteer for and the position you will have, along with the name and contact information of the person who will supervise you. Describe how you will record your observations while on the job.

Practitioner interviews – list the names people you might interview making sure you include their job titles, organizations, and contact information. You might also briefly describe why you have selected each interviewee. What do you hope that the perspective of each person will add to your study?

This paper will be graded and suggestions offered should be included in the paper you write for Step 2. It should be double spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font, with 1-inch margins, and written using APA formatting.

Step 2 – Literature Review – Due March 14

In this second step you will examine *at least* 8 outside sources (from scholarly texts or journals—**no websites**—read in addition to course materials) and synthesize that material along with assigned course readings into a coherent essay on the topic. Make sure that you include the following:

1. an introduction where you describe the importance of your project and provide an overview of the topics you will cover;
2. an organized and coherent review of the relevant literature on your topic.

We will spend time in class talking about how to organize a literature review, using the APA style format, and will spend time in class “workshopping” your reviews for coherence, organization, and clarity.

This paper should be 7-8 pages double spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font, with 1-inch margins, and written in APA style. Make sure you include a reference page. It will be graded and returned to you with suggestions for the final paper that you should incorporate. Make sure that you turn in your research proposal paper (written for Step 1) as well so I can see any changes that you incorporated.

Step 3 – Final Paper – Due April 23 or the day of your presentation

For this paper you will take the knowledge you have gained from course readings, your literature review, class discussions, and your observation/interview data to analyze and answer your research questions. Depending upon the method you chose, you should do the following:

Volunteer ethnography

Your journal entries and your organizational experiences will serve as the data for analysis for your final paper. In this paper, you should bring together academic research with your experiences. Review the findings of your literature review and *answer your research questions*. Make sure you include examples from your journals to support your arguments. You might also consider responding to questions such as:

1. How does your experience agree with the literature? Disagree?
2. How did your organization do things as the research/reading said it “should”?
3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of your organization’s approach to the topic you studied?

Practitioner interviews

To write the final paper, review the findings of your literature review (paper #2) and compare these to what you learned from your interviews to *answer your research questions*. Make sure you include examples from your interviews to support your arguments. You might also consider responding to the following questions:

1. How do your interviewees’ experiences agree with the literature? Disagree?
2. How did your organization(s) do things as the research/reading said it “should”?
3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of your organization’s approach to (your topic area)?

Final Paper Guidelines

For this final step, it is your job to take the information that you wrote for the first two papers in Steps 1 and 2 and pull it all together by doing the following:

1. Provide an introduction, rationale, and overview to your paper (borrowing from Step 2);
2. Include your revised literature review;
3. State your research questions;
4. Highlight your methods, where you pull information from the paper you wrote in Step 1 to
 - a. describe the organization(s) and/or individuals you studied

- b. explain your data collection methods
 - i) *volunteer ethnography* - What did you do? How many hours did you volunteer? How were you trained? How long is your journal?
 - ii) *practitioner interviews* - Who did you interview? How long were the interviews? What major topics were discussed? How many pages of interview notes do you have?
5. Interpret your results (4-5 new pages)
 - a. these should come primarily from your experiences, but make sure that you are carefully examining the issue you decided to explore to answer your research questions.
 - b. When writing your results, use your literature review as a guide for important issues to look at – in other words, don't just tell me what you thought was important; tie your experience to a practical or theoretical issue in the field.
6. Discuss the implications of your research (1-2 new pages)
 - a. The majority of this section should connect your experiences to the current literature in the field. Yes, I expect citations here. It is here where you can talk about what you learned and how it might be beneficial to the topic and/or the organization you studied.
 - b. Conclude with a short section on practical implications/advice for the organization.

The final paper should be at least 15 pages double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font with one inch margins in APA format with references. Please include papers 1 and 2 and your journal or interview notes and copies of your thank you notes.

A summary of what is expected for each part is on the last page of this syllabus.

Summary of Requirements for Each Part of Your Paper

Part #1	Part #2	Part #3
Research Proposal	Literature Review	Final Paper
2-3 pages	8-10 pages	15-18 pages~
Due January 31	Due March 14	Due April 23 or day of presentation
1. Identify and describe topic 2. What you hope to learn 3. How it relates to mission 4. At least 2 research questions 5. Selection and description of data collection method 6. Copies of first page of 2 journal	1. Introduction and overview 2. Rationale 3. Organized review of literature 4. Reference page (s) 5. Cover page 4. Attach Paper 1 in appendix	1. Introduction and overview 2. Rationale 3. Revised literature review 4. Research questions 5. Discussion of methods 6. Interpret your results 7. Discuss implications

articles		8. Reference page(s) 9. Cover page 10. Attach Papers 1 and 2 11. Attach interview notes or log 12. Attach thank you note(s)
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~ includes revised work from papers 1 and 2

* Many thanks to Dr. Jennifer Considine at UW-Oshkosh and Dr. Joel Iverson for sharing their syllabi and course activities. I am indebted to them for their assistance and expertise.