

# INFORMATION FOR COMMUNICATION FACULTY

*This information on how we do what we do is provided for full- and part-time faculty. Prepared by Ron Smith. Revised June 08*

## **DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION**

**Website.** The department maintains a website at [www.buffalostate.edu/communication](http://www.buffalostate.edu/communication). The site includes the semester calendar, faculty e-mail addresses, program and major overviews, and other information useful both to faculty and students. Direct students here for scholarships, advisor lists, graduation requirements, and resources for ethics, diversity, writing, professional organizations & online media.

**Chair:** Ron Smith (878-6008) is accessible to every faculty member, both full time and part time. If you wish to meet with him, contact the department secretary to select a time convenient for your schedule.

**Secretary.** Joe Mazur (878-6008) maintains department and student records, coordinates the office suite, supervises work-study students, and supervises the chair's appointment schedule; she is not the personal secretary for individual faculty members. The department also currently has a temporary secretarial assistant. Both can assist with copying and other faculty needs.

**Technical Assistant.** Jeff Proctor (878-3513) maintains broadcast and computer equipment and coordinates their use by faculty and students. He is in Savage 102.

**Work-Study Students.** Student workers assist in making copies, obtaining supplies and so on. Instructors may deal directly with them for routine assistance. Please work through the department secretary before asking work-study students to undertake major tasks.

**Mail Room.** All faculty will have a key to Bishop 208, which houses the mail room, copiers and supplies. Access directly or through 208 conference room.

**Part-Time Faculty Office.** The department has an office (Bishop 37) for use by part-time faculty.

**Faculty Mentor.** The Communication Department will assign an experienced full-time faculty member as a mentor to new full- and part-time instructors. The mentor is available for advice and assistance. New instructors are expected to consult periodically with their mentors. Likewise, mentors will be held accountable for consulting with the new faculty members assigned to them.

**Employment.** The department makes every effort to notify part-time employees of their intended employment for upcoming semesters. However, sometimes the decision must be made to cancel a low-enrolled class. After a part-time instructor has served at Buffalo State for 6 consecutive semesters, the College is bound by union contract to give 45 days' notice of any cancellation.

**Compensation.** Faculty pay is based on contract negotiations which result in uneven compensation between colleges and university centers. The department has no flexibility in pay. Part-time instructors receive union-negotiated raises if they are teaching during the semester when raises go into effect. Pay checks are sent every two weeks.

## **COMPUTERS & AV EQUIPMENT**

**Computer Software.** Computing Services (878-4357) can talk you through some problems.

**Computer Hardware.** For equipment associated with departmental labs (Savage 110 & 111, Bishop 32 & 36), contact the department Technical Assistant (above) at 878-3513 to report the need to repair any equipment.

**AV Equipment.** To schedule the use of AV equipment, contact Instructional Resources at 878-4535 (Bill Cran, Bulger 204). Each building with classrooms has an on-site inventory of equipment, including VCRs and monitors, slide projectors, and audio cassette players. Every classroom should have a working overhead projector.

**Videotaping:** To schedule videotaping for your class, contact Instructional Resources at 878-4922 (Pat Trinkley, Bulger 114). IR tapes student presentations, guest lectures and other classroom activity at no charge. Videotaping can be arranged for your regular classroom or in the television studios in the basement of Bulger Communication Center.

## **SCHEDULING**

**Semester Schedule.** The department chair develops the semester/term schedule, based on input from faculty about courses, times, locations, etc. It is expected that full-time faculty will be on campus at least four days a week for classes and/or office hours. Scheduling is done far in advance: June for the Spring semester, January for the Fall semester and summer term. Part-time instructors are should notify the chair if they will be unavailable during a semester in which they previously have taught.

**Classrooms.** Faculty members may request particular classrooms, without guarantee. The department schedules classes in the computer labs in Bishop 32 & 36 and Savage 110 & 111, as well as the production studio (SA 103) and the viewing room (SA 121). The college tries to accommodate requests for smart classrooms will a full range of computer and AV equipment built in.

**Final Exams.** You will find the CEP schedule at [www.buffalostate.edu/registrar](http://www.buffalostate.edu/registrar) (semester course listing).

## **TEXTBOOKS**

**Ordering.** The campus Barnes & Noble bookstore provides order forms for class textbooks. These are provided automatically to instructors of previously-taught courses; new instructors may obtain forms from the department office. It is the instructor's responsibility to notify the bookstore of any changes in text requirements or in the maximum number of students. Contact the textbook manager/staff at 878-5509.

## **GOVERNANCE**

**Department Meetings.** Faculty meetings are held several times each semester, usually on Friday mornings. Part-time faculty may attend and participate, without voting privileges. Exception: Portions of meetings dealing with personnel issues are held in executive session. Contact the department office if you are interested.

**College Senate.** 878-5139. Senate meetings are open to all; only senators have voice/vote.

**Union.** 878-5732. The campus UUP chapter has a Part-Time Affairs Committee.

## **STUDENT ISSUES**

**Health/Medical Issues.** 878-6711. Weigel Health Center offers shots, health education and some treatment to all registered students.

**Emotional/Psychological Issues:** 878-4436. The Counseling Center in Weigel Health Center does an excellent job helping students deal with issues ranging from homesickness and test anxiety to depression and suicide. The Center's work is confidential and free. If you sense that a student is in crisis and needs to talk with a professional, please refer him or her to the Counseling Center.

**Learning Disabilities:** 878-4500. Disability Services in Twin Rise S-150 assists students who have been diagnosed as having a learning disability. Such students deserve, as a matter of law, special accommodation in testing situations. These accommodations vary according to individual student needs. They may include additional time for tests, a quiet location for test taking, and/or a reader to present questions orally. Students should arrange accommodations a week prior to any tests. At the beginning of the semester, instructors should invite students to notify them confidentially of any diagnosed learning disabilities. The Disability Services director (Marianne Savino) will provide written notice of what accommodation the student should be given. Note that some students are sensitive about the LD label. Please respect a student's wish for privacy in such matters. Here is an appropriate note for syllabi: "Students with disabilities or special needs should make these known to the instructor. More importantly, they should contact the Office of Disability Services (120 Twin

Rise South Wing, 878-4500). Based on recommendations from that office, students may receive needed assistance or accommodation in this course."

## **CANCELING CLASSES**

**Canceling Classes (by Instructor).** Notify the department office at 878-6008 so an official Class Cancellation notice can be placed on the classroom door if you need to cancel a class. If possible, also notify students by e-mail. In your syllabus, inform students that the only legitimate cancellation is e-mail from you or a posted formal Class Cancellation notice with colored department logo and authorizing signature.

**Cancelled Classes (by College).** Announcements are made through major radio and television stations. Information also is available at the college info line, 878-5000.

**Class Meeting Times.** Instructors are expected to meet their classes each scheduled time during the semester, including during finals week. Students cannot be faulted for leaving the classroom if the instructor fails to arrive within a reasonable time. Instructors should plan to meet their classes for the full allotted time period.

**Finals' Week Classes.** During the final week of each semester (Critique and Evaluation Period – CEP), day courses operate on a special schedule to allow extended time for final exams. As a matter of college policy, every course is expected to meet during the assigned time during CEP week. Faculty members must schedule a class meeting during the assigned CEP time. Appropriate activities for this time include exams, presentations, student feedback, and other meaningful academic activity. If you cannot meet with students during the CEP time, you must obtain permission from the department chair and, if necessary, from the dean.

## **ACADEMIC FORMS & MATERIALS**

**Permission to Add Students to Full Classes.** Consult the chair before allowing any student into a course that is already full. Faculty can give permission for individual students to register, up to the total allowable by the room quota. Supply the CRN course number and Banner ID for the student. Be sure to order additional text books.

**Class Roster.** Instructors obtain class rosters via the online Banner system at the College website. This list is updated daily until the end of the drop-add period. The roster allows instructors to communicate via e-mail to any student individually or to all students (enrolled and/or waitlisted).

**Course Outlines:** Each course taught by the department has an official Course Outline that has been endorsed by the department, school and senate curriculum committees and approved by the provost and president. The outline lists learning outcomes and prescribes course content. While individual instructors are free to teach the content in your own way, you are responsible for covering the material. This

should be reflected in the syllabus (see below) and will be part of faculty performance reviews. Course outlines are available in the "Department Info" section of our website.

**Syllabus.** Each student should receive a syllabus (on paper or at the instructor's website or Blackboard site) on the first day of class. This syllabus should include the name and number of the course, instructor contact information, text(s) and other readings, evaluation and grading procedures, learning outcomes from course outline, attendance requirements, cheating/plagiarism policy (see Grading Issues below), schedule of assignments and exams, and other course requirements and expectations. This syllabus is a contract between teacher and student; it should not be changed without good cause. Two copies of the syllabus must be given to the department office at the beginning of each semester; one of these copies is forwarded to the dean's office. Instructors may have students sign acknowledging the syllabus.

**Syllabi Content Analysis:** Here's a report on the various the elements included in Communication syllabi:

- 98% Office hours & instructor availability
- 98% General grading policy
- 98% Attendance policy
- 95% Text(s) & readings
- 93% Course description; overview
- 70% List/description of exams & projects
- 68% Semester calendar; assignments, readings, due dates
- 63% Course objectives; learning outcomes
- 58% Participation
- 35% Academic integrity; plagiarism
- 20% Instructor's philosophy
- 15% Prerequisite courses
- 15% Accommodations; students with disabilities
- 13% Topics without calendar
- 13% Grading criteria
- 13% Bibliography; recommended readings; videos
- 13% Conduct; behavior
- 5% Cell phone policy
- 5% Materials needed
- Other: Gum chewing; feedback; revision; extra credit; Angel; writing guideline

Chair's suggestions re: syllabi:

- Learning outcomes & objectives should be consistent with course proposal and will make assessment easier.
- Consider explaining expectations about participation beyond mere physical presence.
- Syllabus is a contract between the instructor and students. Best to avoid statements that say the terms will be changed at the instructor's discretion.
- To minimize grad grievances, explain your grading policy (i.e., the number of points for an A, or your formula for translating percentages into letter grades), as well as your policy on extra credit, late work, revisions, and so on.

## **ADVISEMENT & REGISTRATION**

**Advisement:** We encourage advisement for every student every semester. Full-time faculty post advisement schedules about two weeks before registration. Students sign up at faculty offices. We continue to use the Advisement Record and insert it into the student files.

**Advisers:** Each full-time faculty member is assigned advisees. Meeting with advisees is a semester-long commitment. Students are encouraged to meet at least once each semester, generally prior to registration for classes. Students may select a different advisor; change-of-adviser forms are available at the department office. Part-time instructors are not expected to do formal academic advising, though students appreciate informal advising and assistance in career preparation.

**Registration:** Students register for classes online through Banner, which can be accessed at the college website.

**First Day of Class.** The department encourages instructors to enforce the show-up-the-first-day-or-you're-out rule, which is published in the course schedule booklet. Instructors may give students advance notification of this policy via a Banner-generated e-mail to all registered students. Here is some suggested language: "All students must attend the first meeting of class (unless specific prior permission for an absence has been given by the instructor). Enrolled students who miss the first class will be required to drop the course."

## **LIBRARY**

**Photocopy Card.** Contact the circulation desk at 878-6303 for swipe cards to use in the photocopy machines. Take a copy of your hiring letter to the circulation desk.

**Library Reserve.** Instructors may place either library materials or their own personal materials on reserve in Butler Library. Use periods can range from two hours to several days. Contact the circulation desk at 878-6303.

**Inter-Library Loan.** Contact the circulation desk at 878-6320 to can obtain books and articles from other libraries at no charge. Provide title, author, and ISBN/publication data. This can be done on-line via the library website.

**Video Library.** Butler Library has a good selection of videos, but the location hides under the name Media Services (878-6307). You can put videos on reserve or borrow them. The department conference room also has several media-oriented videos available for class use.

**Department Library.** The Communication Department has discipline-related books, videos, magazines and journals available in the Conference Room (Bishop 208) for faculty and student use.

## **CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR**

**Food & Drink.** Instructors are asked to enforce a ban on snacks and open containers in labs and studios housing computers, audio and video equipment, etc. In regular classrooms, it is the instructor's prerogative whether to allow students to snack during class.

**Cell Phones.** Increasingly instructors are finding it necessary to add cell-phone disruptions to the category of issues addressed in syllabi. Some faculty have reported cheating incidents involving text-messaging during quizzes and exams.

**Disruptive Students.** Instructors never have to tolerate disruptive behavior in the classroom, whether such behavior is directed toward the instructor or toward other students. In extreme cases, instructors may have to contact the University Police (6333) for assistance in removing disruptive students.

## **TEACHING EVALUATION**

**Student Evaluation.** At the end of each semester, instructors will receive packets of student evaluation forms. Administer these to students. Get extra pencils from the department mail room; inked evals cannot be processed. Have one student responsible for gathering the complete forms and returning them to the department office. Instructors should leave the room while students are completing eval sheets.

**Departmental Use of Student Evaluations.** The department takes student evaluations seriously and uses them as part of the decision about reappointing part-time and full-time faculty. The department chair reviews student evaluations for each faculty member. These evaluations are made available to the instructor after the end of the semester. Instructors are invited to comment on evaluations, such as by offering information to mitigate complaints or reflecting on changes that might be implemented to prevent future problems. Such feedback will be kept in the faculty member's personnel file.

**Peer Evaluation.** From time to time, full-time members of the department will arrange to observe a class being taught by each part-time lecturer. This generally occurs when an instructor is new or when s/he is under review. The evaluator will prepare a written report to the department chair and/or personnel committee. This report is copied to the instructor being reviewed.

## **PARKING**

**Permits.** Full-time and part-time instructors can obtain permits at nominal cost (currently \$3.25) from the Student Accounts office in Moot Hall 260.

**Guest Speakers.** Instructors can request parking permits for campus guests through the department office.

## **GRADING ISSUES**

**Grading Criteria (Syllabus).** Instructors must indicate their grading criteria at the beginning of the semester via the course syllabus, which stands as a contract with students outlining course requirements. Grading criteria should not be changed during the semester. Each instructor is free to develop grading criteria as s/he sees fit, but these must be applied equitably to all students. Remember that courses are meant to be developmental. Make sure the standards you apply are appropriate for a level of academic and professional development appropriate to students in the particular course being taught.

**Grading Criteria (Individual Assignments).** In making class assignments, instructors should be as specific as possible re: criteria on which the paper, project or presentation will be evaluated. This requires that the instructor refine his/her thinking about what is expected for assignment. Sharing such grading rubrics with students allows them to develop their own check lists of the requirements for the assignment. Such advance planning makes grading easier; it also reduces both the anxiety that students feel about grades and the incidence of complaints about their grades. Grading complaints are more easily resolved when the instructor has developed such criteria with students.

**Mid-Term Grades.** College policy is that students must have an indication of their standing in class at the semester mid-point. Instructors should provide students with this information in writing, either as a progress report or as feedback in the form of graded assignments and examinations. Students are entitled to this feedback prior to the course withdrawal deadline listed in the academic calendar (see departmental website for current calendar). Failure to provide mid-term grades makes the instructor vulnerable to student petitions for late withdrawal from courses, which require the chair to acknowledge to the Academic Appeals Committee that the instructor has violated college policy on providing mid-term grades.

**Course Withdrawal.** Students may withdraw from a course prior to the end of the semester. This course withdrawal deadline is about 10 weeks into the semester (see departmental website for the current calendar).

**Final Grade.** At the end of the semester, instructors report final grades directly online via Banner. The grading policy is that students will receive a letter grade from A to E, including plus and minus grades (but no A+ or D-). Incomplete and pass/fail grades also are options (see below). Instructors need to print a copy of their grades and submit this to the office for departmental records.

**Minimum C Grades.** The department policy is to not allow students to place grades lower than C in major courses counted toward the 42 required credits for a Communication degree. This means that a student receiving a C-, D+, D or E in a Communication course will either have to repeat the

course or, if it is not required, use it as elective outside the major. It is the instructor's prerogative to note in the syllabus that any grade lower than C will be reported as an E.

**Writing Quality.** All written assignments should reflect college-level writing skills. All instructors share responsibility to evaluate and improve student writing. Grading for all assignments should reflect an assessment of the quality of writing, even in non-writing courses.

**Writing Assignments in Studio/Lab Courses.** All instructors are encouraged to incorporate student writing into every course with 90 or fewer students. In addition to formal reports, such assignments may include written observation related to course topics (for example, lighting techniques in a television program, news coverage of a sporting event, or analysis of a political speech or a website). Students should not be allowed to conclude that studio or lab courses are easier because they don't require student insight or analysis.

**Plagiarism.** Instructors sometimes find that plagiarism is a problem that may involve written, graphic, digital or other forms of student work. Sometimes this results from student unfamiliarity with the proper way to document sources or work with existing data; other times it involves outright cheating. The department has information and links at its website to assist students in avoiding plagiarism. Instructors also may use turnitin.com, which provides an originality check on student writing.

**Plagiarism Penalty.** The penalty for plagiarism may vary at the discretion of the instructor. Penalties can range from students being allowed to revise and resubmit the assignment, failing the assignment, receiving a lowered course grade, failing the course with an E, or failing the course with an EJ (a judicial failure noted on the student's record as a result of academic misconduct).

**Plagiarism Procedure.** Instructors intending to fail a student for the entire course (either with an E or EJ grade) must first notify the chair. They also must meet with the student, providing a written accusation and obtaining from the student a statement acknowledging the accusation and indicating acceptance of the penalty or intention to appeal. The chair will assist the instructor in following the college's formal policy on academic misconduct (linked under Current Student section of the department website).

**Pass/Fail Grade.** Students with a GPA of 2.2 or higher may take one course outside their major on a pass/fail basis each semester or term. Students do not need the instructor's permission for the pass/fail option. When instructors submit grades via Banner, the computer automatically re-designates any passing grade (D or higher) as P. Instructors may allow students to substitute a letter grade instead of the pass/fail designation; students must initiate this request. In general, such substitution can encourage students to continue trying to do good work in the class rather than merely settling for a passing grade.

**Incomplete Grade.** Students may receive an incomplete grade (I) only if circumstances beyond their control prevent them from completing the assigned work. Generally, this requires a medical excuse or other documentation. Instructors must e-mail the chair with a justification for the incomplete grade, noting progress on work completed and indicating the remaining work due. This e-mail will be placed in the student's academic file. Students may be given until the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the following semester (excluding summer) to complete the work. If work is completed, the instructor submits a change of grade form. If work is not completed, the I grade automatically becomes an E.

**Grade Change.** Instructors may find that they have not accurately recorded a student's final course grade, or they may wish to recalculate the grade. To change a grade, obtain a change-of-grade form from the department office. No stigma is attached to such changes, and the department encourages changes that are justified.

**Grade Grievances.** Students may challenge grades they consider to be unfairly given. Instructors must produce records indicating how the grade was calculated, which should be in accordance with criteria indicated in the course syllabus. Department policy is that students first deal with the individual instructor if they wish to challenge a grade. Their next recourse is to contact the department chair, who will facilitate student-instructor dialogue. The chair's policy is not to force an unwarranted grade change. Grievances can be avoided by documenting how the grade is calculated.

## COMPUTER ACCESS

**Faculty E-mail.** Both full- and part-time faculty have campus e-mail addresses. The user name is the first six letters of the last name, followed by initials of the first and middle name, followed by @buffalostate.edu.

**Student E-Mail.** Students also have e-mail accounts, which faculty can access through the Banner registration system. Encourage students to set an automatic forward from this college e-mail to another preferred e-mail server (yahoo, hotmail, etc.)

**Banner Access.** Both full- and part-time faculty have accounts that allow access to the Banner online registration system. Through Banner, instructors can monitor class enrollment, send e-mails to students, and submit final grades.

**Angel.** All instructors have access to Buffalo State's online learning management system, Angel. Training is available. Info at [www.buffalostate.edu/offices/ir/e-Learning](http://www.buffalostate.edu/offices/ir/e-Learning).

**Turnitin.com.** All instructors have access to a program for online submission of student papers and plagiarism detection. Info at [www.buffalostate.edu/offices/ir/e-Learning](http://www.buffalostate.edu/offices/ir/e-Learning).