Communication Skills Bootcamp
College of Continuing Education and Professional Development
Old Dominion University
University Credit Syllabus

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I intend this syllabus to accurately reflect the course content and schedule for the bootcamp. However, unforeseen circumstances and my desire to be flexible regarding the needs of the students in the class may require that I make changes to the syllabus. It is the responsibility of each student to keep current with these changes by checking his or her email and blackboard regularly.

Course Learning Objectives:

The Communication Skills Bootcamp provides individuals with the tools needed to communicate effectively with individuals and small groups. Participants will learn to craft their communication style so they listen well and gain insight, speak with an authority that is supported by both their body language and their voice, and respond with agility to the unexpected.

The emphasis of this camp is to learn both better communication and listening skills, which can be used in multiple roles including professional, leadership, classroom, and personal growth.

Students will be able to:

- Employ techniques for listening for facts, emotion, and values - and verifying correct understanding of these with customers, employees, and managers
- Recognize their own ineffective communication habits including poor use of body language and vocal tools.
- Perform exercises to improve communication through better use of body language and vocal techniques.
- Identify their own tendencies when confronted with the unexpected and have practiced skills to increase use of positive tendencies and decrease use of negative tendencies.

Contact Policy: I am enthusiastic about the course content and I hope to inspire a similar enthusiasm in my students. Students should contact me primarily by email. I encourage students to make an appointment for one-on-one help as I cannot always guarantee my availability on short notice. In general I respond to email messages within two business days. I do not generally respond to phone and email messages over the weekend or during school holidays. I prefer that students refrain from texting me.
Teaching Philosophy: I hope to encourage open exploration I endeavor to empower students to take risks in order to learn. The classroom is a space in which we all grow as people and professionals within an atmosphere of encouragement and respect.

Teaching and Learning Methods:

The boot camp portion of this class is highly experiential. You will learn primarily through your participation in class exercises, and improvisations. You will also be expected to participate fully as an encourager of your peers. This means that even when you are not working, you will still be expected to participate as an ensemble member, focusing on your peers’ work and providing significant encouragement and thoughtful feedback. Poor attitudes will be noted and will be reflected in the participation grade.

The on-line portion of this class is also highly participatory. You will be required to interact a synchronously with the whole class through discussion boards and our class Wiki. You will need to make occasional appointments to interact in real time with your peers and the instructor.

Other Requirements:
Please make sure that you are able to receive electronic messages sent to your ODU e-mail account. If this is not your primary e-mail source, make sure your university mail is forwarded to that account. Also, make sure you have the ability to read and/or download PDFs. If you don’t know how, please see the instructor.

Dress Code:
Students who choose to remain in the class after the first week must adhere to the following dress code:

• Please avoid skirts, uncomfortable shoes, and clothing that might make you feel vulnerable.

Attendance Policy:
In an experiential course such as this one with a short time line, it is impossible for students who miss class to receive a passing grade.

Personal Lateness Policy:

• Class begins promptly and ends promptly. Please respect your fellow students by arriving a couple minutes early already dressed appropriately and staying through the entire class period.

Late Assignment Policy:
No late assignments, quizzes, etc. will be accepted.
A Note on Evaluation and Achievement:

Our educational system puts an enormous value on grades. Often we think that the opportunity to earn a good grade is the reason to participate in an educational experience. I believe, however, that grades only measure part of what students might achieve in an acting class. Acting classes tend to result in three different kinds of achievement: academic, artistic, and personal. Academic achievement is relatively easy for me to measure. This sort of achievement is what your grade reflects.

Artistic achievement is a little harder to measure but generally we can evaluate whether a student is or is not growing as an artist through a combination of their in-class performance, their performance on-stage, and their performance in the Acting Track/BFA continuation process. Often artistic achievement does not necessarily correlate to academic achievement. For example some students grow as artists in Acting II, but fail the course because they do not turn in their written work.

Achievement in the area of personal growth is something that I cannot and should not measure. This is for you to define and evaluate for yourself. I am happy to discuss this area of achievement, but please understand that your grade is not a reflection of how you have grown as a person through participation in the class. Indeed, I have had students fail this course and yet feel that it was one of their most important experiences in college because it changed how they encountered the world.

It is very important that you define your own goals in the three areas of achievement and work towards a clear idea of how you wish to achieve in each area.

Participation

Students are REQUIRED to participate in class exercises to the best of their abilities. Students who refuse to participate or who are disruptive will be asked to leave and marked absent. Nevertheless, each student is responsible for his or her own safety. If a student feels that he or she cannot participate due to perceived lack of physical or emotional safety, he or she should communicate this to the instructor IMMEDIATELY. The student and the instructor will collaborate to resolve any safety issues.

Students must also take responsibility for the creation of a healthy environment for performance.

Writing Tutorial Services: Writing is a process. Students who choose to write their papers the night before the paper is due tend to do poorly. All written work for this course should be well-organized, communicate clearly, exhibit complexity of thought, and be free of typographical and grammatical errors. I may ask you to visit writing tutorial services before I grade an unsatisfactory paper. Learning to write well can be quite difficult. Luckily the university provides writing tutorial services. I hope that every student uses this class as an opportunity to improve his or her writing skills. To learn more about writing tutorial services visit: http://al.odu.edu/wts/students/FAQ.shtml.

Cultural Diversity: An atmosphere of open exploration and artistic excavation requires that we recognize and respect others’ cultural differences. I strive to recognize and respect difference in my endeavors in both the classroom and the rehearsal room and I hope to encourage a similar openness in

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my students. If any student feels that his or her difference is either not recognized or not respected, he or she should immediately speak to me.

**Honor Pledge:** All students are expected to abide by Old Dominion University’s Honor Code, which states: “We, the students of Old Dominion University, aspire to be honest and forthright in our academic endeavors. Therefore, we will practice honesty and integrity and be guided by the tenets of the Monarch Creed. We will meet the challenge to be beyond reproach in our actions and our words. We will conduct ourselves in a manner that commands the dignity and respect that we also give to others.” *(Old Dominion University Catalog, p. 14).*

**Plagiarism** is a serious offense, and it will not be overlooked in this or in any other classes. For guidance on how to avoid plagiarism, see the PowerPoint under “About Plagiarism” on our Blackboard site. Please talk to me if there is anything you don’t understand.

Cheating and Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in an F for the course. I report all infractions to Judicial Affairs.

**Cell Phones and other Electronics**

Cell phones, laptops, MP3 players are distracting and impede the progress of the class. Please turn these OFF and put them away before class begins.

**Discussing a Grade**

I encourage you to meet with me throughout the semester as your work progresses so that I may provide guidance when possible. In the event that you would like to discuss a grade that you have earned, please follow the following procedures for my 24/7 policy:

- Wait 24 hours after receiving an evaluation before contacting me with a concern.
- If, after thoroughly reviewing my comments and the course/assignment criteria, you feel a discussion is warranted, schedule a meeting with me no later than one week after you receive that grade.
- At least 24 hours before our scheduled meeting, electronically submit a letter to me addressing 1) what you would like to discuss in the meeting and 2) the ways in which your work achieved all the assignment criteria.
- Arrive at the meeting ready to discuss your evaluation in a reasonable manner.

**Other Classroom Policies:**

- Students are expected to treat each other and the instructor with respect. Students are expected to adhere to the classroom behavior standards as outlined in the Office of Student Judicial Affairs brochure College Classroom Conduct.
- All written assignments must be submitted via Blackboard. Emailed assignments will not be accepted. Students must be able to open a docx document for this class.
- No eating, drinking, or smoking in the classroom. Water must be capped and may only be used with the instructor’s permission.
• Students are responsible for their own wellbeing. Students are expected to protect their own and others’ physical safety and to adhere to all university regulations.
• “In compliance with PL94-142 and more recent federal legislation affirming the rights of disabled individuals, provisions will be made for students with special needs on an individual basis. The student must be identified, as "special needs" by the university and provide a letter from the Disability Learner Services Office, located at 1525 Webb Center. Any accommodations will be based upon written guidelines from the Disability Services Office. All students are expected to fulfill all course requirements” (from Center for Learning Technologies’ Learner-Centered Syllabus Checklist).
• Students are expected to approach each class-period and activity with open-mindedness and a positive attitude. Students are expected to come to class prepared to participate in class activities.
• Students are expected to participate in discussions and regularly volunteer to participate in activities.
• In addition to working towards their own growth as learners; students must also take an active interest in the ideas and views of their peers.
• Students are required to check their ODU email account and blackboard daily for class information.

Student Services:

Disability Services: Disability Services is committed to creating access to higher education for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are made for students with visual, hearing, mobility, learning and other impairments. Specific information about services may be obtained by calling (757) 683-4655.

Writing Tutorial Services: Contact writing tutorial services at BAL 1002, 757.683.4013 to schedule an appointment. Please note that you must get an appointment early in the semester.

Counseling Services: 683-4401; 1526 North Mall of Webb Center; http://web.odu.edu/~counsel.

Student Health Services: 683-3132; 1007 South Webb Center

Career Management Center: 683-4388; 2202 Webb Center North; www.odu.edu/cmc

Women’s Center: Services are open to women and men; 683-4109; www.odu.edu/womenscenter.
A syllabus constitutes a contract between the student and the course instructor. Participation in this course indicates your acceptance of its content, requirements and policies. Please review the syllabus and the course requirements as soon as possible. If you believe that the nature of this course does not meet your interests, needs or expectations (amount of work involved, class meetings, assignment deadlines, course policies, etc.), you should drop the class by the drop/add deadline, given in the ODU Schedule of Classes: