



Communication for Software Engineers – Fall 2020

Tuesdays: 8:00-9:20, remote only

Wednesday 17:00-18:20 in Gates-Hillman 6115

Instructor and Grader

<p>Peter Kolenich - Instructor</p> <p>I have about 15 years with the department, but I have no SE experience. Instead, I came here through my work with languages and cultural adaptation/adjustment. As the non-industry person, it is my job to help you gain the skills to talk to future non-industry folks (i.e. many clients) in your life .</p>	<p>Jen Moritz - Grader</p> <p>I have been working with the department for about a year and a half, but have 9 years of communications experience in various domains. I am here to help ensure your English is clear and correct to help you be prepared to communicate effectively throughout your career.</p>
<p>Contact: kolenich@andrew.cmu.edu</p> <p>Office hours by appointment</p>	<p>Contact: jmoritz@andrew.cmu.edu</p> <p>Office hours by appointment</p>

Weekly Schedule: Readings and Assignments

A link to the weekly schedule is posted on **Canvas> Home**

This schedule is subject to change. We may adjust topics, activities, or assignments to meet your needs, or to mitigate concerns arising due to the covid pandemic, as the semester progresses.

Prerequisites

It is assumed that you are capable of reading, writing, speaking, and listening in English. If your fluency is lacking, we strongly encourage you to use the [Student Academic Success Center](#). See **Canvas> Resources for Writing Help** for a list of helpful resources.

Students who seek additional instructional support should know that the [Student Academic Success Center](#) has transitioned to remote services that can be found on the website. Your college/departmental advisors and resources are also valuable assets for you.

Technical Issues

Please contact the Computing Services Help Center at 412-268-4357 (HELP) or it-help@cmu.edu with tech issues. If you're having troubles with Canvas, please contact canvas-help@andrew.cmu.edu or 412-268-9090.

Course Description and Goals

All software engineers have technical skills. The **best** software engineers also have the skills to effectively communicate their technical ideas, then collaborate with others to implement those ideas. In this course, you will practice the verbal, written, and interpersonal communication skills required to successfully work with diverse stakeholders, teams, and peers.

This course requires you to have an open mind and a willingness to try new approaches. Classes are a mix of mini lectures, group discussions, workshop activities, and occasional requests to write or speak with little advance warning. You may not appreciate these activities and experiences in the moment, but we promise: None of them are detrimental to your health.

By the end of the semester, you will demonstrate improvement in the following areas:

- Identifying factors that improve or hinder your communication and applying that knowledge to achieve your communication goals
- Using appropriate and accurate language in all contexts
- Clearly and concisely conveying ideas
- Including examples and cited sources to support your ideas
- Using peer reviews, proofreading, and feedback to create higher quality work

- Individually or collaboratively creating written and verbal communication that meets stated requirements and addresses audience needs

Required Materials

We have one required textbook for this course -- it will be used for **both** semesters:

Real Communication by Dan O’Hair, Mary Weimann, Dorothy Imrich Mullin, Jason Tevin Fourth Edition, ©2018

ISBN 978-1-319-05949-1 (PAPERBACK)*

ISBN 978-1-319-07801-0 (LOOSE-LEAF VERSION)*

There are pros and cons to the various versions (paper, e-, rental...) of the text. Unfortunately, the e-version does not have page numbers (at least last year it did not), and the rental ends up being more expensive.

*TO ORDER YOUR BOOK

If you are **inside** the US:

<https://store.macmillanlearning.com/us/product/Real-Communication/p/131905949X?searchText=real>

If you are **outside the US**:

<https://macmillan.force.com/macmillanlearning/s/article/Student-Store-How-do-international-students-make-purchases>

Assignments and Classroom Work

All readings and assignments are posted on Canvas and -- when possible -- linked to from the weekly schedule. They are designed to help you improve written, verbal, and interpersonal communication skills.

We expect you to come to class prepared for discussions and other in-class work.

Assignments	Class Work	Readings
<p>Assignments include written work, presentations, and a final paper or project.</p> <p>Each one is structured as a loose combination of use cases and user stories and will include:</p> <p>The size and/or category</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assignment: Small ○ Assignment: Medium ○ Assignment: Large ○ Final Project or Paper <p>The goal and/or requirement</p> <p>The acceptance criteria that define what fulfills the goal and/or requirement</p>	<p>Classroom work includes discussions, problem-solving activities, and written or verbal exercises</p>	<p>Readings include textbook chapters, handouts, and articles posted to or linked through Canvas. These readings are required in order to complete an assignment or participate in classroom work.</p>

Conflicts

If you have a conflict between a homework deadline and a religious holiday, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can resolve the issue according to university guidelines.

Late Policy

You are expected to submit assignments when they are due. However, we know that you have a lot of other courses and a life outside of CMU.

We will leave the assignment open for 48 hours after the due date, but will automatically deduct 33.33% for each day your work is late.

- *Example:* The assignment is due on September 3 at 11:59 p.m.
 - You submit it on September 4 between 12:00 a.m .and 11:59 p. m. = 33.33% deduction

- You submit it on September 5 between 12:00 a.m. and 11:59 p.m. = Another 33.33% deduction
- You try to submit it on September 6 at 12:00 a.m. = 0 (Canvas will not allow you to submit)

NOTE: All times are the times in Pittsburgh, PA, USA (i.e. Eastern Standard Time). I strongly suggest that you get a separate clock/app to keep at Pittsburgh time.

Grading

You must have a B- or better to pass this class, which is a required part of your curriculum. Your grade is based on homework assignments and in-class work or activities.

All work is graded on a four point scale:

- 0: Unacceptable
- 1: Needs improvement
- 2: Meets expectations
- 3: Exceeds expectations

When we are grading your work, we consider three questions:

- Did you meet the Basic acceptance criteria for all assignments?
 - If your work does not meet these basic criteria, you will automatically receive a zero (0).
- Did you meet the assignment-specific acceptance criteria (completeness of work)?
- How well did you meet the acceptance criteria (quality of work)?

Assignments are weighted based on size and type:

- Assignment - small: 10% of your grade
- Assignment - medium: 20% of your grade
- Assignment - large: 40% of your grade
- Final project: 30% of your grade

Grading scale

Because of the assignment grading scheme, we use an adjusted grading system to determine your letter grade for the course. If you always meet expectations, you will receive all 2s. Calculating 2 out of 3 gives a score of 66.67%, which equates to a B.

Letter Grade	Percentage
A+	98 - 100
A	90 - 97
A-	82-89
B+	74-81
B	66 - 73
B-	58 -65
C+	50-57
C	42-49
C-	34-41
R	33 or below

Your grade is your responsibility. Monitor it throughout the semester.

Immediately contact us if you have questions or concerns. Do not wait until the end of the semester to determine if you're passing the class -- by then, it will be too late to correct the situation.

Academic Integrity

CMU demands a lot from its students. You will have a heavy workload. You will feel overwhelmed. You will probably wonder if you'll ever sleep again. (You will.)

CMU also demands honesty and integrity in all academic work:

<https://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/academic-integrity.html>

- We expect you to complete your own writing (unless you are collaborating on a group project). Assignments are scanned by TurnItIn, and we do pay attention to the similarity scores.

- We also expect you to cite any source you use (images, text, lectures) in your individual or group work. You must use IEEE guidelines and include both inline citations and a Works Cited page.

Bottom line: do not cheat, plagiarize, or otherwise copy the work of others! If you have questions on whether you can use a specific phrase, term, figure, or anything else – please contact us prior to turning in your assignment. Cheating is cause for failing the class.

Class Policies

Covid and Sanitation

In order to attend class in person, I expect that you will abide by all behaviors indicated in [A Tartan's Responsibility](#), including any timely updates based on the current conditions. In terms of specific expectations for in-person students, this includes:

- entering the classroom via the designated ingress route with appropriate physical distancing,
- wearing a facial covering throughout class,
- sitting in the seats with appropriate spacing (and not moving furniture),
- using the sanitizing wipes available in the classroom to wipe surfaces (e.g., your desk, tablet arm) upon entry and exit,
- exit the classroom at my direction, proceeding in a row-by-row fashion, following the designated egress route and maintaining proper distancing.

Facial coverings. If you do not wear a facial covering to class, I will ask you to put one on (and if you don't have one with you, I will direct you to a distribution location on campus). If you do not comply, please remember that you will be subject to student conduct proceedings, up to and including removal from CMU. Accordingly, I will be obliged to take other measures for the safety of the whole class.

Class attendance and participation

This class is most effective when you are prepared for and actively participate in discussions, group work, and class exercises. You cannot participate if you aren't in class, so please make every effort to show up on time. If you must miss a class, contact Jennifer and Peter (in advance if possible). Absentees cannot make up in-class activities.

Devices and other distractions

Please respect people -- and their ideas -- by focusing on class, not on your laptop, on your phone, or on your neighbor.

- Turn off and put away all devices before class. Use them only when we ask you to do so as part of a class activity.

- Avoid private conversations that distract others who are speaking (classmates and instructors).

Accommodations for students with disabilities

If you have a disability and have an accommodations letter from the Disability Resources office, we encourage you to discuss your accommodations and needs with us (and all your teachers) as early in the semester as possible. We will work with you to ensure that accommodations are provided as appropriate. If you suspect that you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations but are not yet registered with the Office of Disability Resources, we encourage you to contact them at access@andrew.cmu.edu.

Student Wellness

Take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress.

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is almost always helpful.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is here to help: call 412-268-2922 and visit their website at <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>. Consider reaching out to friends, faculty, or family members you trust for help getting connected to the support that can help.

If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal or in danger of self-harm, call someone immediately, day or night:

- *CaPS: 412-268-2922*
- *Re:solve Crisis Network: 888-796-8226*

If the situation is life threatening, call the police

- *On campus: CMU Police: 412-268-2323*
- *Off campus: 911*

If you have questions about this or your coursework, please let us know. Thank you, and have a great semester!