

**1. Description of the Discipline**

Communication uses material and methods from the humanities, fine arts and social sciences in order to explain they way people interact. Different courses will focus on different types of communication styles and will use different methods to discuss these styles.

- a. Interpersonal and Organizational Communication looks at conversations in both small (Interpersonal) and large (Organizational) groups.
- b. Rhetoric looks at how political and social actors, such as presidential candidates or protestors, use persuasion and argument.
- c. Performance Studies look at how communication is used in literature and theater.
- d. Media and Film Studies look at communication techniques in television and film.

**2. Citation Style Used**

The discipline of Communication uses either the MLA or the APA style of citation. You should ask your professor what he prefers and refer to The Bedford Handbook for rules regarding the citation styles. Both citation styles need an alphabetized Works Cited (for MLA) and a list of References (for APA) at the end of the writing assignment. When using in-text citations, the MLA citation style requires the author and page number. An example of this would be: (Root 727). In-text APA citation uses the author, the year, and the page number. An example of this would be: (Root, 1986, p. 727).

**3. Organization/Required Components**

The first step in a good Communication writing assignment is to analyze the material you will use for the paper, whether it is a dictated conversation, a political speech, or a film excerpt. Next, you must research what others have written about this particular material and the method you are using to analyze it. Finally, you must develop your own argument or theory regarding the material. A thesis statement would come at this point in the organizational structure.

**4. Voice**

It is important in this discipline that you put yourself within your analysis. Use “I” and “me” to help explain your argument regarding the material. Passive voice is acceptable, but professors often prefer active voice. Use the present tense when referring to an author’s argument.

**5. Types of Writing Assignments**

There are many types of writing assignments in Communication, including rhetorical analysis, in which you analyze a speech or debate. Another type of writing assignment could be a critical analysis of a particular conversation within a film or between two people. Yet another type could be an explanation of an ethnographic study, in which you spent some time learning about a different culture and how they use communication. Your professor will tell you what type of assignment you will be writing and if there are any particular rules for that style.

## 6. **Research Process**

When researching for a Communication paper, it is important to first look at academic journals because they have been written by scholars and reviewed by a group of editors for correctness and relevance. Good Communication journals are the Journal of Communication, the Quarterly Journal of Speech, and Communication Monographs. All of these journals can be found in Denison's library both online and in print.

## 7. **Common Mistakes**

Refrain from using quotes, especially lengthy ones, unless the wording is essential to your argument. If possible, paraphrasing and citing are always better because it includes your voice. Also avoid choosing too broad of a research topic. There has been a lot written on Communication, and it will be much easier and more beneficial to your assignment if you narrow your search to a specific Communication phenomenon or piece of rhetoric.

## 8. **Preferred Language (jargon, pronouns)**

Each Communication course will have particular jargon relating to specific material and methods.

## **References**

### MLA Style

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The Writing Center. Communications. 2005. 11. Feb. 2007. <<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/communications.html>>

### APA Style

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The Writing Center. (2005). Communications. Retrieved Feb. 11, 2007, from <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/communications.html>