

Implementing Routine across a Large-Scale Writing Program

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Common sense says that a routine by definition is fixed, unchanging. That common-sense view of routine held in the field of organizational science until fairly recently, when researchers such as Pentland and Reuter (1994) pointed out that people perform routines and that people have agency. Because people, as Feldman (2000) writes, “think and feel and care” (p. 614), routines change. Pentland and Feldman (2005) put it this way: “Routines are continuously emerging systems with internal structures and dynamics. The internal structure of a routine can produce a wide range of different outcomes on the continuum between ‘very stable’ and ‘constantly changing,’ depending on the circumstances” (pp. 794–795).

In other words, any routine—including one within a writing program—is an “ongoing accomplishment” (Feldman, 2000, p. 613). Routines are just as much verbs as they are nouns.

We argue here that a large-scale writing program such as the Advanced Communication program at Iowa State University, like any organization, thrives best when it functions with routine. At Iowa State on an annual basis, over 4,300 students enroll in one of the four courses that comprise the Advanced Communication (AdvComm) program in order to fulfill a graduation requirement for an upper-level communication course. Which of the four courses students choose depends on the course or courses that their program or department has specified as best meeting their needs. With already high and steadily growing enrollments, we set out to institute routine across the 200-plus sections of the program’s four courses that the English Department offers annually.

Our conceptualization of routine derives from the organizational-science theory of routines posited by Feldman (2000), Feldman and Pentland (2003), and others. The field of organizational science, according to Feldman and Pentland (2005), tries to answer questions such as these: “How can we explain organizational stability, change, and survival? What promotes (or inhibits) learning, flexibility, and adaptation within organizations?” (p. 793). Routines, they write, “are not the only factor that may influence these phenomena,” but “they are widely recognized as critical to all these issues, and more” (p. 793). As the codirectors of the AdvComm program, we sought to implement routine in order to balance stability and change.

Routine, as Feldman and Pentland (2003, 2005) conceptualize it, comprises two components:

1. Ostensive aspects. With these general and abstract patterns, members of an organization, such as instructors in a large-scale writing program, “guide, account for, and refer to specific performances of a routine” (Pentland & Feldman, 2005, p. 795).
2. Performative aspects. At particular times and places, individual members of an organization carry out specific actions (Pentland & Feldman, 2005, p. 795).

As Turner and Rindova (2012) explain, this alternative view of routine, which sees routines as flexible and context-dependent, differentiates between the “formal design” of a routine (the noun part of the routine), which includes rules, schedules, and other artifacts, and the routine itself (the verb part of the routine), which consists of the “interactions and connections among actors” (Feldman & Rafaeli, 2002; Pentland & Feldman, 2005). In this article, we argue that a large-scale writing program such as the AdvComm program at Iowa State succeeds when it instantiates and maintains general patterns yet acknowledges and takes advantage of the specific performances of individuals within their context.

In this article, we describe how we worked with AdvComm instructors to implement routine in the AdvComm program at Iowa State. Specifically, we discuss the process by which we put into place the ostensive components of a routine—the syllabus, major assignments, policies, tests, online exercises, and learning management system—to achieve the benefits of routine that previous scholars have discussed: reducing deliberation and enhancing coordination (Becker, 2004; see also March & Simon, 1958; Nelson & Winter, 1982); increasing legitimacy (Hannan & Freeman, 1989); and increasing stability (Cohen, 2007; Cohen & Bacdayan, 1994). Further, we discuss the process by which we acknowledged and harnessed the performative components of the AdvComm routine—the dynamic context constituted in large part by individual, agentive people. With this discussion of the particular program at Iowa State, we hope to help other WPAs faced with developing (or redeveloping) a large-scale writing program in order to ensure that students achieve the learning outcomes and instructors benefit from the program’s ostensible aspects while they carry out its performative aspects.

The AdvComm Program at Iowa State

Iowa State’s vision of communication education, ISUComm, requires and promotes communication instruction across the curriculum. The Foundation program comprises the first- and second-year writing sequence required of all students, and the AdvComm program promotes and supports communication education in the upper levels. The AdvComm program offers four courses to ensure that undergraduate

students leave Iowa State with proficiency in developing written, oral, visual, and electronic (WOVE) communication (see Blakely, 2016; Dinkelman, Aune, & Nonnecke, 2010) that is most relevant to their major discipline:

- English 302: Business Communication
- English 309: Proposal and Report Writing
- English 312: Biological Communication
- English 314: Technical Communication

Students from almost all degree programs take one AdvComm course as part of their degree requirements.

Like other universities in the United States (Lederman, 2014; US Department of Education, 2016), Iowa State has seen enrollments grow. With an increase of over ten thousand students in the past ten years, the demand for delivery of more sections of the four courses has grown as well. Indeed, when we began the changes toward routine that we report here, a backlog of students had developed such that students often ended up taking their AdvComm course in their senior year—sometimes in their last semester at Iowa State. As figure 1 shows, at a maximum of 24 students per section, the number of students enrolled in each of the program’s courses has consistently increased. Figure 2 breaks the increased enrollment down by course. English 302 has consistently enrolled the most students.

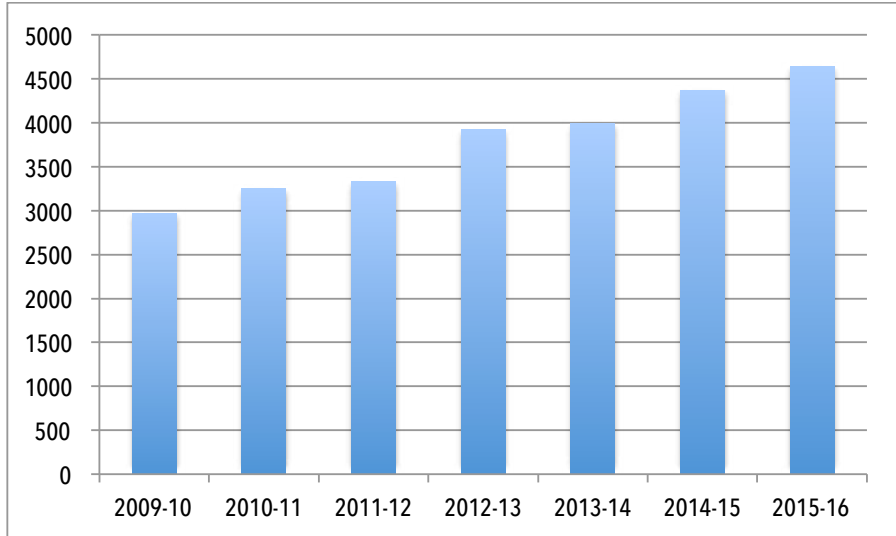


Figure 1. Total student enrollment.

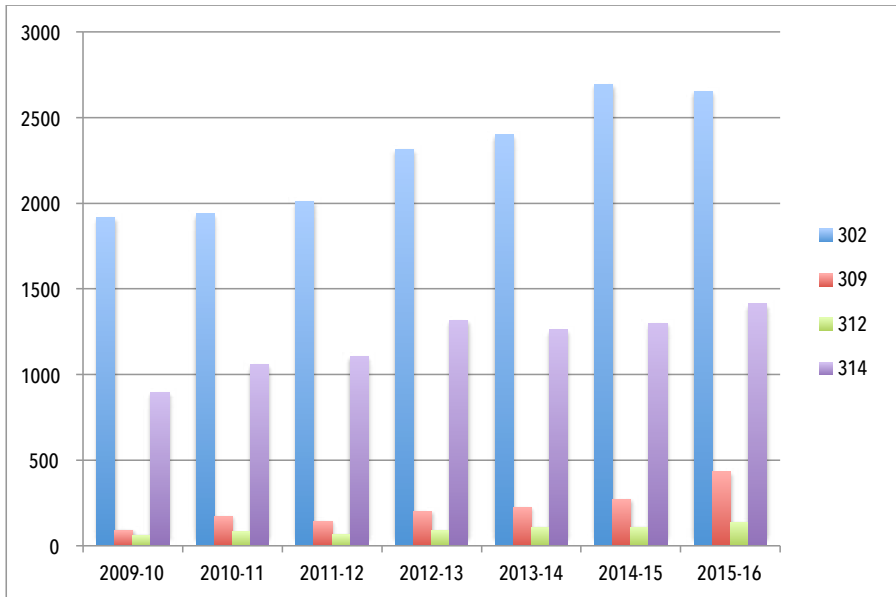


Figure 2. Student enrollment per course.

Part of our move toward programmatic routine arose out of the need to offer more sections of the courses, particularly English 302 and English 314.

The Problem

Before 2014, the AdvComm program manifested a decided lack of routine, and suffered consequences for it. The lack of routine stemmed, we believed, at least in part from the lack of routine’s ostensive aspects—artifacts such as schedules that lead to positive outcomes such as consistency. To illustrate the inconsistency across the AdvComm program’s sections, we gathered instructors’ syllabi and course policies from English 302 in 2012/2013—the academic year immediately preceding our implementation of routine—and identified the range of genres (e.g., a positive-news letter) that English 302 (the course that constitutes roughly 55% of AdvComm’s sections) across instructors’ syllabi. Figure 3 shows the frequency with which different assignment types appeared across instructors’ syllabi in those years. More important to note, though, is the range of assignment types that instructors assigned—over 25 different assignments (depending on how one counts). In addition, as figure 4 shows, instructors varied greatly in how many assignments they required students to complete; the range spanned 5–12 assignments per semester.

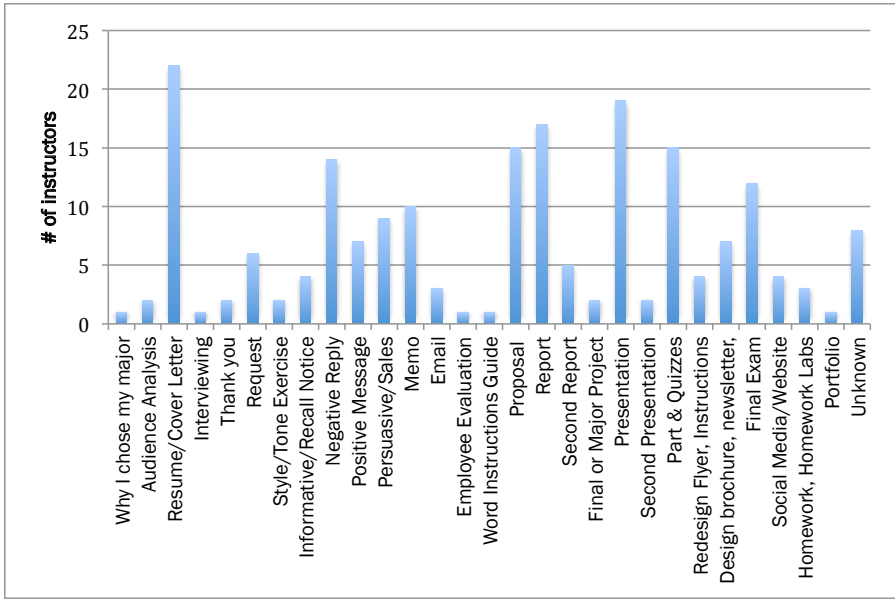


Figure 3. Types of assignments in English 302 in 2012 and 2013.

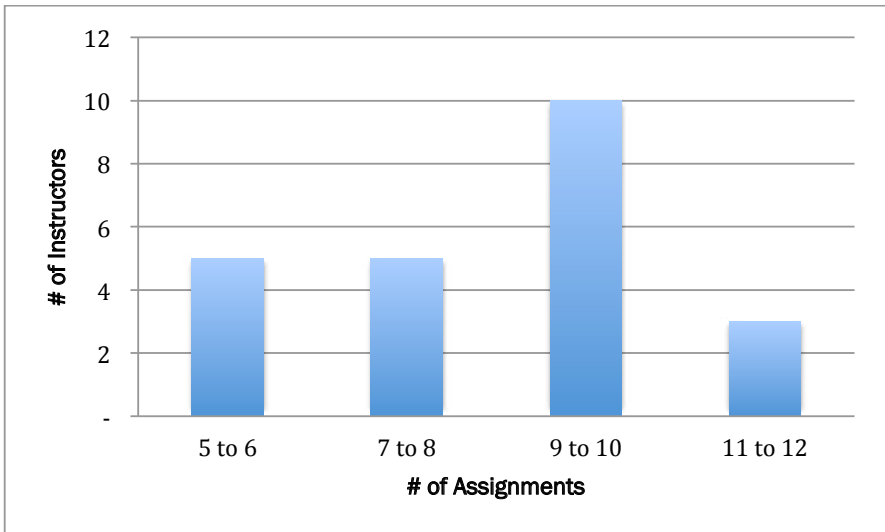


Figure 4. Number of assignments per semester in English 302 sections in 2012 and 2013.

In addition, instructors largely overlooked the program's learning outcomes (LOs). In 1999, as part of a larger process of developing communication across Iowa State curricula, the director of the program and other faculty members began to develop the LOs for each of the four courses, and these LOs have been in place since 2004. Of the 25 instructors teaching English 302 in 2012–2013, just 7 listed the program's official 302 LOs on their syllabi and thus followed AdvComm policy as written in the AdvComm Instructor's Guide. Another 17 instructors adapted the program's LOs or simply created their own, and one instructor had refused to submit course policies and a schedule to the program administrator. This variation across sections generated reports from academic advisors that students were complaining about their AdvComm experience. Some students encountered a lot of assignments and some encountered few.

Inconsistent grading of students' assignments posed another problem. For example, one advisor in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences declared her wonder at how Honors students received a B in a section of English 302 that required eight projects, yet three students just shy of flunking out received As in a section that required three collaborative projects. Such inconsistency in rigor decreased the legitimacy of the program (see Hannan & Freeman, 1989) and thus began to undermine its stability (see Cohen, 2007; Cohen & Bacdayan, 1994), as administrators began to talk about dropping the requirement for an AdvComm course and meeting the LOs within their own colleges.

Stakeholders in the AdvComm Program

The AdvComm program at Iowa State, like any large-scale writing program, has a range of stakeholders, and each group has unique needs.

First, upper-division students across the university's colleges need to achieve the LOs of the course. They should encounter an AdvComm course in their junior year so that they can put their communicative skills to work in their upper-division coursework. However, students (as well as administrators and staff in their colleges) have faced a backlog in AdvComm course enrollment, making it nearly impossible for students to take their required AdvComm course in their junior year. One reason behind our movement toward routine across AdvComm courses was the need to make more sections of the courses available to decrease the backlog. To make more sections available, we needed to create course curricula that more instructors could readily use rather than needing to invent a curriculum for themselves. That is, creating routine in the AdvComm organization made it possible for instructors with less experience to feel comfortable teaching an AdvComm course.

In addition, the English Department commonly adds sections of AdvComm courses at the last minute—right before the semester begins—to accommodate

students' needs (as best as it can). Instructors assigned to these late additions would have little time to generate a new curriculum on their own. The routinized ostensive aspects of the AdvComm curriculum—the major assignments, the online exercises, the syllabus and policies, and so on—make it possible for last-minute hires to feel prepared (or at least more prepared) than they otherwise would.

Second, non-tenure-eligible faculty comprise another important cohort of stakeholders in the AdvComm program. In fall 2016, a typical semester, these lecturers and senior lecturers comprised 64% of AdvComm instructors that semester, but they taught 79% of the sections in the program. (See table 1.) The English Department typically employs lecturers and senior lecturers on one-year, two-year, and three-year contracts. Some of these instructors, particularly the senior lecturers, have worked in the program for over 20 years. Some have as few as three years of teaching experience; some have over 40 years of experience. However, the English Department also hires a cohort of new lecturers each year. As noted above, before moving toward routine, we were especially concerned that instructors who were new to the program were unnecessarily reinventing the curricular wheel on their own. Our move toward routine aimed to ameliorate the work of inexperienced AdvComm instructors.

Table 1. Number of instructors and sections taught.

| | Count (%) | Sections (%) |
|-------|-----------|--------------|
| GTA | 11 (26) | 16 (16) |
| L/SL | 27 (64) | 79 (79) |
| T/TT | 4 (10) | 5 (5) |
| Total | 42 | 100 |

However, we knew that some long-time instructors, especially senior lecturers, would push back against a curriculum that they viewed as imposed from the top down and that they perceived as a threat to their academic freedom. Part of implementing the change toward routine was differentiating between a course and a section of a course and then clearly articulating that difference to instructors. We highlighted the truth: instructors in the AdvComm program teach a section or multiple sections of one course such as English 302 as opposed to individual courses. We changed our language throughout our written and oral communications to reflect the way that we viewed the four courses that comprise the curriculum.

That said, we stressed that instructors still had day-to-day choices to make about how to teach the skills that the consistent assignments—the ostensible aspects of the AdvComm routine—seek to showcase and test. While all sections of a given AdvComm course follow the same syllabus on a week-by-week basis, all daily lesson plans, including exercises and activities, are still the instructor's to choose, to develop, and, we hope, to share with other instructors. To that end, we created a shared folder in the university's file-sharing system for instructors to share their materials and email lists for each course so instructors can communicate with their course cohorts.

A third critical cohort of stakeholders in the AdvComm program consists of graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) in the English Department. The AdvComm program enlists GTAs who have 18 credit hours of coursework in the subject matter to teach courses. Typically, PhD candidates in the Rhetoric and Professional Communication program make up this cohort of instructors. In fall 2016, this cohort comprised 26% of AdvComm instructors. They taught 16% of the AdvComm sections offered that semester. GTAs who want to teach in the AdvComm program enroll in a course devoted to teaching upper-division writing, particularly AdvComm at Iowa State: English 504: Teaching Business and Technical Communication. They take this course concurrently to teaching their first AdvComm course or before teaching it. Taught by the AdvComm co-directors, this course covers topics such as designing effective assignments, providing useful feedback, developing rubrics, assessing visual communication, and teaching online. The move toward routine benefited GTAs. Although they have 2–10 years of teaching experience, these instructors are new to teaching upper-division writing and thus appreciate the ostensive aspects of the AdvComm routine. GTAs are, of course, busy with their own coursework and research; a complete course template in the LMS for the two sections they teach every semester lightens their workload by keeping them from the added work of developing a curriculum for themselves.

A fourth important but smaller group of stakeholders in the AdvComm program consists of tenure-eligible and tenured faculty. These faculty members teach a small percentage of AdvComm courses, mainly English 302 and English 314. In fall 2016, these instructors comprised 10% of the AdvComm instructors, but they taught just 5% of the program's sections. Mainly, these faculty members teach sections of AdvComm course to fill out their teaching load when other English Department offerings are not available to them (for example, courses in the technical communication or linguistics majors). These instructors vary in their teaching experience as well—from 3–35 years—but as important, they vary in their level of enthusiasm about and preparation for teaching upper-division writing. Some instructors whose specialty is linguistics or communication studies have little preparation to teach writing, including advanced writing. One tenure-track faculty member whose specialty

is computational linguistics said this about the routinized English 314 course: “It was definitely useful for me to plan the classroom sessions as someone who never taught that course before.” One tenure-track faculty member whose specialty is interpersonal communication said this about the routinized English 302 course: “The course template reduces time in preparing a course, leaving more time to teach the course and provide meaningful feedback.” Even instructors whose specialty is in writing studies see AdvComm courses as somewhat of a burden—something they have to do because nothing better came along that semester. The move toward routine benefited tenure-eligible and tenured faculty teaching in the program in that the ostensive aspects of the program’s routine allow them to devote their time to matters other than AdvComm course development.

Finally, faculty and administrators across the university’s colleges make up yet another group of stakeholders in the program. This group wants reassurance and, even better, evidence that the courses are relevant to students and that students achieve the course outcomes. Indeed, ensuring that each course’s content meets the needs of students from a variety of disciplines was one of the main challenges in redeveloping the courses and implementing routine across the program. (See appendix B for a list of the departments and programs that require an AdvComm course.) For example, mechanical engineering, forestry, and kinesiology majors regularly enroll in the same section of English 314. In an effort to develop a course that targets the specific communicative needs of their discipline, some faculty and administrators initiate conversations about discipline-specific versions of AdvComm courses. In these cases, the Learning Communities (LC) director works with the administrators and faculty to create a special section of a given AdvComm course. For example, faculty members in chemical engineering requested LC Linked English sections for their students, and the LC director found an instructor with the expertise to create a targeted version of English 314 for chemical engineering students. In this way, the LC program and the AdvComm program together become an ad-hoc writing in the disciplines (WID) program for the university—particularly useful given that the University has no formal WID/WAC program.

As the above delineation of the various stakeholders in the AdvComm program suggests, one of the challenges of creating and maintaining an organization that is stable yet open to productive change is the need to accommodate the wide range of proficiencies that organizational members such as a writing program’s instructors bring to their performance in the organization. Discussing writing instructors who teach outside their education (for example, people with doctoral degrees in literature who teach business communication courses), Wardle and Scott (2015) argue that such instructors need to develop *interactional expertise*, a term that stems from Collins and Evans’s (2007) research; that is, instructors need to have “mastered the language

and gained an informed understanding of the specialty without necessarily having contributed to its body of knowledge through research” (p. 80). Clarifying the term further, Wardle and Scott (2015) paraphrase Collins and Evans again, saying that a person with interactional expertise in a discipline can “talk the talk” without necessarily being able to “walk the walk,” which requires another sort of expertise—contributory expertise (p. 80). Similarly, instructors in the AdvComm program require different levels of mentoring.

As in any large-scale writing program that employs over forty instructors per semester, instructors within the AdvComm program vary widely in their teaching experience, their experience in business and industry, and their technical skill. For example, as noted previously, some instructors have over twenty years of teaching experience, while some GTAs are just starting to learn how to teach AdvComm courses. Further, some instructors have industry experience as technical writers or industry experience that exposed them to business communication. In contrast, some instructors come to teaching in the AdvComm program straight from a master’s degree and have little experience with professional communication outside academia. In addition, some instructors have graduate-level coursework in writing studies, while others have advanced degrees in literature. Finally, some instructors are eager to use and teach new technologies; for example, some instructors create daily assignments that ask students to write blog entries and create interactive visual displays. Other instructors’ technical savvy stops at creating graphs in Excel. As administrators, we wanted to implement routine that acknowledged and supported instructors’ different backgrounds and capabilities.

In addition to a range of experience, instructors vary widely in their openness to and enthusiasm for programmatic routine. New lecturers and GTAs have, in general, welcomed the ostensive aspects of routine put into place. They have valued the support and reassurance that tested and shared assignments and common policies bring. However, as noted above, some instructors—those who have grown used to creating their own assignments and developing their own syllabi—bristled when we began to implement routine across the program. These long-term lecturers and senior lecturers expressed their discontent in myriad ways—from outright verbal challenges during pre-semester workshops to passive-aggressive refusal to deal with student problems arising from the new ostensive aspects of the course’s routine. Their thinking seemed to be this: if they did not develop the assignment, policy, or test, they were not going to deal with any problem arising from it.

The Solution

In spring 2014, we started to overhaul the four courses that comprise the AdvComm program. Our goal was to instantiate ostensive aspects of routine into the program. In

fall 2014, the ostensive aspects of routine that we began to implement into pilot sections of English 302 were these:

1. All sections of a course share the same week-by-week syllabus, course policies, and textbook.
2. All sections of AdvComm courses use the same learning management system (LMS), the LMS that the university supports.
3. All sections of a course share the same major writing assignments.
4. All sections of a course use the same rubrics (online in the LMS) for assessing the major assignments.
5. All sections of AdvComm courses use the same online adaptive-learning exercises.
6. All sections of a course use the same pretest and posttest for summative and programmatic assessment.

We began with pilot sections of English 302 because the course constitutes over half of the AdvComm program's sections; as noted above, the English Department runs about 55 sections of this course per semester. In spring 2014, we continued to refine the assignments, rubrics, and schedule for English 302 as we overhauled English 314. The English Department runs about 30 sections of this course per semester. In fall 2015, we redeveloped English 309: Proposals and Reports, a course that averages 10 sections per semester. Concurrently with these changes, we also developed online versions of English 302 and English 309. In addition, with the aid of an internal grant from our college, we developed the online version of English 314 with an eye toward Quality Matters certification. Quality Matters is a nationally recognized peer-review process that certifies an online course follows research-based best practices for student learning (Quality Matters, 2017). After we receive QM certification for the English 314 online course, we will redesign the online English 302 and the online English 309 courses to make sure that they too receive certification. Finally, although the English Department currently offers just 2 or 3 sections of English 312 each semester, we intend to redesign the course's LOs to make them more broadly appropriate for students majoring in the sciences other than biology.

1. Routine Syllabi, Course Policies, and Textbook

All sections of each of the AdvComm courses now share a week-by-week syllabus, course policies, and textbook. Because all sections of a course follow the same schedule, all students move through a given course's material together, complete the assignments together, take the pretest and the posttest together, and meet with their instructors in conferences at the same time. The syllabi delineate schedules that we consider

rigorous yet feasible for all stakeholders and, in general, they follow a pattern that instructors already knew and used pre-routine: individual, shorter assignments in the first half of the semester and longer, collaborative assignments in the second half of the semester. Appendix A supplies the syllabus that all sections of English 302 followed in spring 2017.

In addition, all courses in the program adhere to the same policies for attendance (e.g., excused absences for university-sponsored events), late work (e.g., number of points off for each day of tardiness), revision of assignments (e.g., number of assignments per course that students can revise for a higher grade), accommodations (e.g., for testing situations), and academic misconduct (e.g., the procedure for dealing with incidents). Because we based the program's policies on university and ISUComm policy, administrators up the chain of command can readily support instructors in their decisions. Appendix C shows the course policies that applied in English 302, but these policies applied across all sections of AdvComm courses as well.

2. Routine LMS

Although the English Department supports the open-source LMS Moodle for English 150 and English 250 (the courses that comprise the Foundation program for first- and second-year writing), we decided to use the LMS supported at the university level: Blackboard.¹ Upper-division students enrolled in AdvComm courses use the university-supported LMS in their other coursework. By using this LMS to build our course templates, then, we made it possible for students' AdvComm coursework to integrate with students' other coursework in one platform. In addition, Blackboard facilitates use of SafeAssign, software that checks students' submissions for similarity to papers in a database of Iowa State papers, secondary sources, and a database of papers from other universities.

Finally, Blackboard (like other LMSs) is compatible with the adaptive-learning materials that we chose for the program's courses: McGraw-Hill's LearnSmart and, in the case of English 302, Connect exercises. The AdvComm program's partnership with McGraw-Hill generated an in-house help position, what McGraw-Hill calls a "digital faculty consultant." The person assigned to this role creates and organizes the adaptive-learning materials for instructors, runs workshops, trains new instructors in use of the McGraw-Hill materials, holds office hours to help both instructors and students, and troubleshoots when problems arise.

1. In 2016, Iowa State University decided to shift from Blackboard to another LMS. In summer 2017, university administrators had chosen Canvas, and the AdvComm program began converting from Blackboard to Canvas.

3. Routine Major Assignments

Each AdvComm course now shares the same major assignments and, as noted above, all four courses balance individual projects with collaborative projects. The course assignments stem from assignments that instructors have used with success. We adapted them to ensure that they were feasible to implement across multiple instructors and across multiple sections. For example, the first iterations of the routinized English 302 course included a “messages-packet” assignment, created by a GTA and used by other instructors pre-routinization. This assignment asked students to compose seven messages to different audiences about a shipping error (e.g., a customer who had been sent a product more expensive than the one the customer had ordered). The first iteration of English 302 did not include, however, assignments that required students to interview local experts because we determined that setting over 1,300 English 302 students loose on local businesses each semester was not sustainable or good for the AdvComm program’s credibility. This move toward routine assignments meant that all students in a course produce about the same amount of writing and produce the full range of communication that the course intends: written, oral, visual, and electronic (WOVE). For example, all students in English 314 produce a feasibility report that demands: “In addition to verbal language, you must also incorporate visual language (for example, technical drawings, photographs, charts, and graphs) into your report.” In 2016, with the help of a newly formed AdvComm Advisory Committee, we solicited proposals for changes to existing assignments or entirely new, alternative assignments. The six-member AdvComm Advisory Committee reviews instructors’ proposals for changes to assignments and new assignments and recommends programmatic changes for the upcoming semester to us. So far, we have implemented nearly all of instructors’ proposals either in their entirety or in some modified form.

Through the proposal and review process that we implemented, we are able to give instructors options for some required assignments, with the intent to eventually provide equivalent options for all assignments. For example, in English 302, students practice writing a positive and informative message by writing either an online review of a satisfactory product or by writing their own profile for LinkedIn. No matter which option an instructor chooses, students receive practice in electronic communication, the E component of WOVE. Providing options reduces the possibility that the course content will become stale for instructors, particularly lecturers and senior lecturers, who teach multiple sections of a course across multiple (and often many) years. In addition, students are more likely to see their coursework as fair; they complete the same assignments as that of their friends enrolled in another section of the course. The major assignments comprise a critical component of ostensible aspects of each course and of the AdvComm program in general.

4. Routine Rubrics

Discussing “a programmatic ecology of assessment,” Burnett et al. (2014) point out that “a program necessarily creates an environment of consistency when everyone uses the same outcomes and the same rubric in multiple sections of the same course” (p. 55). Considering the value of “signature assignments” and their associated rubrics, Garfolo et al. (2016) too have found that rubrics provide “consistency across instructors/ graders in multiple sections of a course” (p. 14). Similarly, each AdvComm course now shares the rubrics for assessing that course’s major assignments. The rubrics reside in the LMS, where students can access them before and during their work on their assignments. Instructors are able to use a rubric’s radio buttons to assess each student’s assignment on the preset criteria. Instructors can also provide feedback. For example, each rubric cell provides a place for a comment.

We based the routinized rubrics on instructors’ original rubrics for their assignments, but we modified them for use across multiple sections, often with the help of the instructors who created the assignments. Original rubrics used a variety of criteria, weights, and scales for assessing students’ work; now, rubrics for AdvComm courses use the same criteria for evaluation for each assignment, the same weight for each rubric line, and the same scale for evaluating students’ work. We have organized the criteria for evaluation into five categories, and the categories are standard across all assignments for all four courses (as well as consistent with the criteria used in the Foundations program): context, content, organization, style, and delivery. Each of these categories receives an assessment along this scale: formative, developing, competent, mature, exemplary, perfect (i.e., 100% of the points for that rubric line). Each cell in each rubric provides a detailed description, for example, for the content line in the English 302 appraisal (product-review) assignment, the formative cell reads as follows: “Criteria for evaluating not clear; emphasis is negative and not on product’s benefits; fails to build goodwill.”

These shared rubrics help norm grading across each course’s sections and across instructors. In addition, we have held norming sessions with instructors, looking at samples of students’ work and using the assignment’s rubric together. We have yet, however, to hold these norming sessions regularly and consistently during the semester. We recognize the importance of such norming sessions, particularly given that new instructors join the AdvComm program each year. That said, because we have access to instructors’ LMS sections, we know that the routinized rubrics have helped AdvComm instructors use a broader spectrum of grades. It appears that instructors are now better able to make the challenging discernments, for example, between B and B- work and between C and C+ work.

Further, with these routinized rubrics, students are more likely to see the assessment of their work as fair—their instructors evaluate their work on the same criteria

as that of their friends enrolled in different sections of the course. Several advisors have already reported their appreciation of this consistency. Facilitating consistent grading, rubrics comprise another component of ostensible aspects of each course and the AdvComm program.

5. Routine Adaptive-Learning Materials

In redeveloping the AdvComm courses by implementing routine, we wanted to ensure that we positioned instructors to make the most of their time in class with students. To do so, we wanted to move instruction in grammar and mechanics from class time to homework time. To make this move, we added adaptive-learning materials to each AdvComm course. Students complete modules (due at the end of each week) about topics such as the following:

- Punctuation (e.g., commas; hyphens)
- Parts of speech (e.g., adverbs and adjectives; verbs and verbals)
- Sentence structure (e.g., fused sentences and comma splices; phrases, clauses, and fragments)
- Clarity (e.g., parallelism; wordiness)
- Research (e.g., evaluating information and sources; using information ethically and legally)

An added benefit of these assignments is that they allow students to learn at their own pace. Students will spend as much or as little time as they need to learn the material; for example, a student who already knows all seventeen rules for commas can complete the comma exercise in five minutes whereas a student who struggles may need two hours to complete the module. Students who come to the class with a command of a concept get a refresher, and students who need more help receive the instruction they require. In addition, instructors can track students' progress in the modules to determine which concepts require more coverage in class and determine which students might benefit from tutoring in the university's Writing and Media Center.

Of course, determining the extent to which instruction in grammar and mechanics—whether delivered by an instructor or by an adaptive-learning module—transfers to students' writing is critically important; thus, one of our goals for the AdvComm program is to conduct programmatic assessment of the McGraw-Hill adaptive-learning materials in order to determine whether students who have completed the online lessons on commas and other grammar and mechanics issues actually transfer that learning to their writing.

The Benefits of Routine

The ostensive aspects of routine discussed above have generated some important benefits for the program. First, for GTAs, time not spent on developing their own curriculum means more time spent on their studies—their primary reason for entering the English Department's Rhetoric and Professional Communication program. And for all AdvComm instructors, time not spent on curriculum development means more time to give feedback on students' writing or to develop fun and useful daily activities for class. It also means extra time to develop an assignment for potential use across the sections of an AdvComm course. As mentioned previously, soon after we began the process of redeveloping the AdvComm program, we instituted an AdvComm Advisory Committee and charged the group with evaluating proposals for changes to current assignments as well as proposals for alternative assignments. This process of proposal and evaluation generates instructor buy-in and helps keep the curriculum fresh.

Second, colleges across the university know what their students will encounter in an AdvComm course: they know that students move toward the LOs through carefully considered assignments. They see that their students advance together through a course's curriculum. In fact, the certainty that colleges have about the content and quality of AdvComm courses has played a role in generating additional opportunities for the program. For example, the College of Engineering asked us to develop a section of English 314 for an ongoing study-abroad program in Sydney, Australia. In fall 2016, the first study-abroad section of English 314 met for a fifty-minute class on Mondays and Wednesdays, but not on Fridays. During winter break, the students completed the remaining class hours during two weeks in Sydney, where they met with communications experts and studied cross-cultural communication. After the success of that program, the College of Engineering asked us to develop another study abroad program—one that travels to Panama City, Panama, over spring break. In addition, the AdvComm program's ability to deliver consistent quality across multiple sections helped support our argument for building a dedicated classroom and user-experience lab for English 314 sections. The new classroom/lab opened in fall 2017.

Third, because course sections use the same assignments and the same rubrics for evaluation, students have an increased sense that the work they do is on par with all other students in the course. A sense of fairness reigns. In addition, students in different sections of a course can talk to each other about their assignments. One English 302 instructor, for example, said that she overheard students talking about their recommendation reports on the bus, and an engineering professor overheard students talking about their topic proposals for English 314 before their upper-level engineering course.

Fourth, a common textbook (in the case of English 312, two small books) has generated additional benefits. A common textbook used across sections makes ordering and organizing textbooks easier for staff in the university bookstore and for the English Department's program assistant. It also places us, as program directors, in a stronger position to negotiate with publishers.

Drawbacks of Routine

In this section, we outline some of the main drawbacks to establishing routine across a large-scale writing program. One drawback that we have already discussed is the possibility for instructors to grow bored with a curriculum that they may use in multiple sections across multiple years. As we noted, we have sought to mitigate this potential drawback by instantiating an AdvComm Advisory Committee and charging that committee with reviewing proposals for changes to assignments and proposals for entirely new assignments.

Another important drawback to establishing routine in a program like the AdvComm program is the sheer amount of effort involved in the (Herculean) task. Particularly in the first few semesters of the process of implementing routine, we encountered a great deal of development and detail work. Most notably, we developed the LMS templates for the English 302 and English 314 courses. In addition, we developed the assignment sheets, rubrics, and supplementary materials (such as videos and presentations) for those courses. We also developed the Connect/LearnSmart templates that pair with each section's copy of the LMS template. In addition, on an ongoing basis, we edit and copy the LMS templates for the four courses' sections, edit the assignment sheets, and develop and add supplementary materials. In addition, we continue to refine the existing online courses in order to move them towards Quality Matters certification. We also continue to follow our timeline for programmatic redevelopment by creating a routine for the curriculum of English 312, the fourth and last course in need of overhaul. All of these tasks have required a great deal of administrative effort.

We have, however, found some ways to ease the burden. For example, as alluded to above, we negotiated with McGraw-Hill, the publisher of the textbooks for English 302, 309, and 314, for a digital faculty consultant who would work exclusively for the AdvComm program. The instructor who fills this role performs a variety of tasks such as making copies of the Connect/LearnSmart templates, holding office hours for instructors and students, and creating workshops to help instructors with the adaptive-learning materials.

In addition to the two important problems described above, a program that implements routine may fail to take full advantage of instructors' expertise. Routine may inhibit instructors who have a great deal of specialized expertise, for example,

industry-specific expertise, from putting that knowledge to full use. That is, in trying to improve the quality of the average student experience in an AdvComm course, we may have lowered the quality of experience of the students who encounter these instructors. Once again, though, the proposal process for changing existing assignments and proposing entirely new assignments can help mitigate this drawback. We encourage instructors to propose assignments that showcase their expertise and to teach other instructors how to use assignments that they developed. In this way, instructors use their expertise to make everyone better.

Another concern that arose from the programmatic redevelopment stemmed from student evaluations. Some instructors' ratings on semester-ending evaluations decreased as instructors got used to the LMS, assignments, and other course materials. At universities like Iowa State, universities where course evaluations play a substantial role in annual reviews (and thus contract renewal), the possibility of lower ratings on evaluations is a serious one. Our solution has been to work with English Department administrators, particularly the Associate Chair for Curriculum, to make student evaluations less weighty in instructor assessment and to make clear that instructors using curricula that they did not generate themselves and encountering it for the first time might very well receive lower evaluations from students at semester's end.

Finally, within a routinized program, the possibility of student cheating rises. Students working on the same assignments, assignments that the program uses each semester, raises the potential that students will attempt to reuse their friends' work from previous semesters. To mitigate this potential problem, as noted above, the program uses SafeAssign. That said, though, not all instructors pay close attention to the SafeAssign reports, so we continue to discuss the benefits and nuances of reading SafeAssign's results.

Conclusion

Writing studies scholars have decried changes such as ours as neglecting the creative capacity of instructors, particularly GTAs and lecturers. Heard (2014), speaking in particular about new instructors, argues that all instructors should participate in program design and that attempts at templates and other standardization "may keep them from contributing to the disciplinary community in inventive ways" (p. 317). He claims that "our best intentions to make curriculum design easier for instructors may in this way encourages passivity and deference rather than engagement and participation" (p. 319). We understand the concerns of scholars such as Heard. However, as we have delineated above, the benefits of creating and maintaining routinized ostensive aspects for a writing program outweigh the drawbacks.

We have attempted to balance the routinized ostensive aspects with performative aspects of routine—those specific actions that people in real times and places carry out. The performative aspects of a program's routine, we have argued, allow for change and growth. While implementing routine meant standing firm when long-time instructors resisted changes, our redevelopment of the AdvComm program has also allowed us to advocate for and mentor instructors who have diligently developed daily assignments and activities, pointed out discrepancies or errors in course materials, suggested changes to assignments and to curricula, and, critically, helped other instructors along.

In sum, we believe that working within routine can be a creative process onto itself. Consider the musical fugue, “a contrapuntal composition in which a short melody or phrase (the subject) is introduced by one part and successively taken up by others and developed by interweaving the parts” (*Oxford Dictionary*, 2017). Routinized ostensive aspects allow all instructors—not just a few—to perform efficiently, competently, and creatively, interweaving ostensive aspects of routine such as assignments and tests into an intricate and elegant composition.

Appendix A: Week-by-Week Schedule of Readings and Assignments.

| Week | Topic | Deliverable(s) Due |
|---|--|--|
| <p>1 9–13 Jan</p> | <p>Review the course syllabus (objectives, schedule, and schedule).</p> <p>Concepts: Benefits of good communication skills; costs of ineffective communication; basic criteria for effective messages; role of conventions in communication; English 302 Library Guide</p> <p>Reading due first class day: <i>Chapter 1: Succeeding in Business Communication</i></p> | <p><i>Analysis of workplace communication (memo format) assigned</i></p> <p>Connect homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chapter 1: Drag and Drop “Costs of Poor Communication”</i> <p>LearnSmart homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apostrophes |
| <p>2 17–20 Jan (no class 16 Jan)</p> | <p>Concepts: Identifying and analyzing levels of audience; creating positive emphasis and you attitude; tone, power, and politeness; building trust; reducing bias</p> <p>Reading due first class day: <i>Chapter 3: Building Goodwill</i></p> | <p>Pretest</p> <p>Analysis of workplace communication (memo format) due</p> <p>Connect homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chapter 3: Drag and Drop “Creating You-Attitude and Positive Emphasis”</i> • <i>Chapter 3: Drag and Drop “Reducing Bias”</i> <p>LearnSmart homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commas |
| <p>3 23–27 Jan</p> | <p>Concepts: Purpose and organization of informative, positive, and negative messages; managing information and using benefits in informative and positive messages; parts of a negative message; using narrative and humor; choosing medium for messages; choosing and developing tone</p> <p>Readings due first class day: <i>Chapter 9: Sharing Informative and Positive Messages with Appropriate Technology</i> <i>Chapter 10: Delivering Negative Messages</i></p> | <p><i>Appraisal assigned</i></p> <p>Connect homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chapter 9: Sequencing “Informative Message on Changing a Deadline”</i> • <i>Chapter 10: Drag and Drop “The Parts of a Negative Message”</i> <p>LearnSmart homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence Types |
| <p>4 30 Jan–3 Feb</p> | <p>Concepts: Continue concepts from last week; importance of effective design; conventions and guidelines; levels of design</p> <p>Reading due first class day: <i>Chapter 6: Designing Documents, pp. 158–167</i></p> | <p>Analysis of workplace communication revision due <i>Message packet assigned</i></p> <p>Connect homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chapter 1: Case Analysis “Stale Cookies”</i> • <i>Chapter 6: Drag and Drop “Understanding of Design”</i> <p>LearnSmart homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semicolons • Fused (Run-On) Sentences and Comma Splices |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">5 6–10 Feb</p> | <p>Concepts: Continue to work on concepts from weeks 1–4</p> | <p>Appraisal due</p> <p>Connect homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chapter 9:</i> Case Analysis “Communicating at Drake Orthopedic • <i>Chapter 10:</i> Sequencing “Negative Message on Reducing Health Benefits” <p>LearnSmart homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phrases, Clauses, and Fragments |
| <p style="text-align: center;">6 13–17 Feb</p> | <p>Concepts: Purpose of persuasive messages; analyzing persuasive message; choosing strategies and tone; making direct requests; effectiveness of positive strategies over threats and punishment</p> <p>Reading due first class day: <i>Chapter 11:</i> Crafting Persuasive Messages</p> | <p>Connect homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chapter 11:</i> Drag and Drop “Choosing the Right Strategy” <p>LearnSmart homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colons |
| <p style="text-align: center;">7 20–24 Feb</p> | <p>Conferences; no class</p> | <p>Appraisal revision due</p> <p>LearnSmart homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbs and Verbals • Parallelism |
| <p style="text-align: center;">8 27 Feb–3 Mar</p> | <p>Concepts: When to use visuals and data displays; guidelines for effective visuals and data displays; integrating visuals and data displays; conventions</p> <p>Reading due first class day: <i>Chapter 16:</i> Designing Visuals and Data Displays</p> | <p>Message packet due</p> <p>Connect homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chapter 16:</i> Drag and Drop “Choosing the Right Data Display <p>LearnSmart homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pronoun Reference |
| <p style="text-align: center;">9 6–10 Mar</p> | <p>Concepts: Team interactions; effective meetings and use of technology; writing collaboratively; conflict resolution; working on diverse teams</p> <p>Reading due first class day: <i>Chapter 8:</i> Working and Writing in Teams</p> | <p>Connect homework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chapter 8:</i> Case Analysis “Resolving a Team Conflict at Madison Inc.” <p>LearnSmart homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pronoun–Antecedent Agreement |
| <p style="text-align: center;">10 20–24 Mar</p> | <p>Concepts: Using grids to design documents; effective use of highlighting, color, decoration; using software; testing design for usability; defining proposals; developing and organizing proposals; progress reports</p> <p>Readings due first class day: <i>Chapter 6:</i> Designing Documents, pp. 168–179 <i>Chapter 17:</i> Writing Proposals and Progress Reports</p> | <p><i>Proposal assigned</i></p> <p>Connect homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chapter 6:</i> Case Analysis “Panum’s Quarterly Newsletter” <p>LearnSmart homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject–Verb Agreement • Adjectives and Adverbs |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <p>11 27-31 Mar</p> | <p>Concepts: Progress reports (review of section from Chapter 17); analyzing data and information; choosing effective information; organizing, presenting, and documenting information; "How to Recognize Plagiarism" tutorial and certificate; review English 302 Library Guide</p> <p>Readings due first class day: <i>Chapter 18:</i> Analyzing Information and Writing Reports <i>Appendix C:</i> Citing and Documenting Sources</p> | <p>Proposal due <i>Progress report and collaborative report assigned</i></p> <p>Connect homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chapter 17:</i> Sequencing "Reporting on Team Progress" • <i>Chapter 18:</i> Drag and Drop "Understanding Components of Formal Reports" <p>LearnSmart homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating Truth and Accuracy in a Text • Integrating Source Material Into a Text |
| <p>12 3-7 Apr</p> | <p>Progress reports and conferences</p> | <p>Progress report due</p> <p>Connect homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chapter 18:</i> Drag and Drop "Choosing Effective Organization Patterns" <p>LearnSmart homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating Information and Sources • Using Information Ethically and Legally |
| <p>13 10-14 Apr</p> | <p>Concepts: Effective oral presentations</p> <p>Reading due first class day: <i>Chapter 19:</i> Giving oral presentations</p> | <p>Collaborative report due <i>Presentation of report assigned</i></p> <p>Connect homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chapter 19:</i> Drag and Drop "Delivering Effective Presentations" <p>LearnSmart homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wordiness • Eliminating Redundancies and Recognizing Sentence Variety |
| <p>14 17-21 Apr</p> | <p>Oral presentations (one or two days of the week); review concepts as needed to prepare for the final exam</p> | <p>Presentation of report due</p> <p>LearnSmart homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyphens • Coordination and Subordination |
| <p>15 24-28 Apr</p> | <p>Review concepts as needed to revise the recommendation report</p> | <p>Final Exam (Posttest)</p> <p>LearnSmart homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dashes • Parentheses |
| <p>Finals week 1-5 May</p> | | <p>Collaborative report revision due at final-exam period</p> <p>During the final exam period, your group will give an informal presentation that describes and supports the changes that you made from the first version of the Recommendation Report to the final version. For the final-exam schedule, look on the left-hand navigation: http://registrar.iastate.edu/students/exams/</p> |

Appendix B: Variety of Majors Taking AdvComm Courses, 2016–2017.

| | 302 | 309 | 312 | 314 | Total | | 302 | 309 | 312 | 314 | Total |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|------|-----|-----|------|-------|
| BUS U | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | ANTHR | 6 | 14 | 0 | 5 | 25 |
| POL S | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 5 | HORT | 25 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 28 |
| ADVRT | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 | LING | 0 | 0 | 0 | 29 | 29 |
| BSE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 | MICR | 7 | 2 | 16 | 6 | 31 |
| OPEN | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6 | AST | 23 | 3 | 0 | 9 | 35 |
| P R | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 6 | LA | 0 | 14 | 0 | 22 | 36 |
| PERF | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 6 | MATH | 20 | 1 | 0 | 15 | 36 |
| ARC | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 7 | PSYCH | 27 | 6 | 0 | 8 | 41 |
| F C P | 6 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 7 | CHEM | 0 | 0 | 0 | 43 | 43 |
| I DES | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 7 | ENGL | 7 | 21 | 0 | 23 | 51 |
| BIOCH | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 8 | COMST | 51 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 57 |
| BIOLA | 2 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 8 | I TEC | 16 | 3 | 0 | 42 | 61 |
| NS H | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 8 | MAT E | 12 | 6 | 0 | 45 | 63 |
| PBPMI | 5 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 8 | L ST | 43 | 13 | 0 | 8 | 64 |
| SP CM | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 8 | COM S | 27 | 4 | 0 | 41 | 72 |
| ENSCA | 2 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 9 | AG ST | 72 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 78 |
| P LST | 8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | MGMT | 78 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 78 |
| A E | 0 | 2 | 0 | 8 | 10 | CON E | 28 | 21 | 0 | 39 | 88 |
| BUSEC | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | AGRON | 67 | 16 | 0 | 8 | 91 |
| GEN | 2 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 11 | E E | 0 | 0 | 0 | 97 | 97 |
| PHYS | 1 | 2 | 0 | 8 | 11 | INDIS | 59 | 28 | 0 | 11 | 98 |
| A TR | 11 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 12 | A ECL | 24 | 21 | 26 | 28 | 99 |
| JL MC | 6 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 12 | S E | 0 | 8 | 0 | 96 | 104 |
| GEOL | 0 | 3 | 0 | 10 | 13 | MIS | 113 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 117 |
| STAT | 11 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 14 | AG B | 117 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 120 |
| TCOMM | 4 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 14 | CH FS | 99 | 15 | 0 | 6 | 120 |
| MTEOR | 0 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 17 | I E | 0 | 1 | 0 | 122 | 123 |
| AER E | 1 | 1 | 0 | 17 | 19 | CPR E | 2 | 0 | 0 | 122 | 124 |
| AGLSE | 12 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 19 | C E | 60 | 15 | 0 | 50 | 125 |
| FOR | 6 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 20 | CH E | 0 | 0 | 1 | 144 | 145 |
| GEN S | 6 | 1 | 10 | 3 | 20 | SCM | 151 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 151 |
| GLOBE | 4 | 15 | 0 | 2 | 21 | ACCT | 152 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 152 |
| SOC | 11 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 21 | FIN | 173 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 173 |
| BIOL | 3 | 2 | 15 | 2 | 22 | MKT | 178 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 181 |
| DES | 13 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 22 | M E | 104 | 22 | 0 | 96 | 222 |
| ECON | 17 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 23 | AN S | 161 | 23 | 33 | 16 | 233 |
| C R P | 0 | 14 | 0 | 10 | 24 | P BUS | 235 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 239 |
| CJ ST | 19 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 24 | KIN H | 195 | 18 | 0 | 32 | 245 |
| P CS | 13 | 1 | 0 | 10 | 24 | TOTAL | 2535 | 391 | 114 | 1337 | 4377 |

Appendix C: English 302 Course Policies, Spring 2017.

English 302: Course Policies

Overview

During this semester, you will work individually and with your classmates to address and solve several communication problems typically encountered by professionals. By the end of the term, you should have developed the communication skills to excel at creating and delivering successful documents in your chosen field, in part by analyzing your reader's existing knowledge base, resulting needs, and his or her attitudes and values as they reside in the existing communication context.

Learning Objectives

Through readings, class discussions, and assignments, you will learn to:

- Apply rhetorical principles to business communication.
- Implement principles of effective document design and the display of quantitative data.
- Understand the influences of organizational settings in the composition of business documents.
- Understand the conventions of your discipline and be aware of the variety of conventions across disciplines.
- Participate in the collaborative planning and executing of a project.
- Understand how ethical issues influence research and application in your discipline.

Texts and Materials

You are required to have a copy of the required course materials: (1) a print or online copy of Locker and Kienzler's *Business and Administrative Communication* (11th ed.) and (2) a Connect+ code for the course's McGraw-Hill's Connect/LearnSmart online materials. You should buy your materials at the ISU Bookstore. The bookstore has negotiated a reduced price for you. **You need both the book and the Connect+ code to pass this class.**

Performance Evaluation

The following is a grade breakdown of the work you will complete this semester:

| | |
|--|------------|
| Pretest | +5% |
| Multiple-choice exam, 50 extra-credit points possible. | |
| Analysis of Workplace Communication | 10% |
| Analysis of a genre written in memo format (individual). | |
| Appraisal | 10% |
| Positive and informative evaluation (individual). | |
| Message Packet | 15% |
| Series of messages based on a scenario (individual). | |
| Topic Proposal | 12% |
| Topic proposal for the report (collaborative). | |
| Progress Report | 3% |
| Progress-report presentation (individual). | |
| Collaborative Report | 20% |
| The report on your study (collaborative). | |
| Presentation | 10% |
| Presentation on the report (collaborative). | |

Posttest 5%

Multiple-choice exam.

Online Assignments 10%

These assignments are provided on Blackboard; it will be your responsibility to complete them on time.

Professionalism, Homework, In-Class Work 5%

See the box at the end of this document.

Grading and Evaluation

Your assignments will be assessed in five major categories: context, substance, organization, style, and delivery. These categories are further delineated into specific expectations. To earn an A in this course, you must demonstrate exemplary accomplishment of all assigned tasks. To earn a B, your work must be mature.

Major assignments will be penalized **one letter grade for each day they are late** (including weekend days) and will not be accepted if they are more than four days late. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me well in advance. You must successfully complete all major assignments to receive a passing grade at the end of the semester.

You may revise assignments the memo, the appraisal, and the collaborative report. Your grade may increase by a maximum of one letter grade (e.g., B- to A-).

Letter Grades and Corresponding Percentages

The scale below will be used when assigning grades.

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| A 93 – 100 | B- 80 – 82 | D+ 67 – 69 |
| A- 90 – 92 | C+ 77 – 79 | D 63 – 66 |
| B+ 87 – 89 | C 73 – 76 | D- 60 – 62 |
| B 83 – 86 | C- 70 – 72 | F 00 – 59 |

Grading Criteria

All major projects will be assigned letter grades according to the following criteria:

- A** **Exemplary Accomplishment.** Shows excellent analysis of the assignment and provides an imaginative and original response. Successfully adapts to the audience, context, and purpose of the assignment. Contains very few mechanical errors and requires little or no revision. The piece is ready to be presented to the intended audience.
- B** **Mature Work.** Shows judgment and tact in the presentation of material and responds appropriately to the requirements of the assignment. Has an interesting, precise, and clear style. Contains minor mechanical errors and requires revision before the assignment could be sent to the intended audience.
- C** **Competent.** Meets all the basic criteria of the assignment and provides a satisfactory response to the rhetorical situation. There is nothing remarkably good or bad about the work, and equivalent work could be

sent out in the professional world following revisions to the organization, style, or delivery of the assignment.

D **Developing.** Responds to the assignment but contains significant defects in one of the major areas (context, substance, organization, style, or delivery). The assignment could not be presented to the intended audience without significant revision.

F **Formative.** Provides an inadequate response to the assignment and/or shows a misunderstanding of the rhetorical situation. Contains glaring defects in one or more of the major areas (context, substance, organization, style, or delivery). The project could not be presented to the intended audience without intensive revision or completely starting over.

Percentages are not rounded: You will have ample opportunities to bolster your grade through homework and professionalism. Therefore, when you have earned 89.75 percent of the points possible, your course grade will be a B+, not an A-.

Attendance and Grades

The attendance policy for the ISUComm Advanced Communication program is consistent across courses and sections. Absences damage your grade and create the probability that you will need to drop the course. Much of what occurs in Advanced Communication courses cannot be rescheduled, made up, or accepted late—regardless of the reason for missing class. To ensure that you stay on schedule individually and as a team-project member, the codirectors of the Advanced Communication program enforce these policies:

- **Missing more than four classes (MWF) or three classes (TTH) will lower your grade, and excessive absences (three weeks of classes) will result in a failing grade for the course.** Specifically, if your absences total 5 to 8 MWF classes or 4 to 5 TTH classes, your class grade will decrease two increments. For example, a B+ becomes a B-; a C becomes a D+. This decrease happens for the *range* of 5 to 8 MWF absences or 4 to 5 TTH absences, not for each individual absence within the range. Even so, the impact on your grade is significant once you exceed your allotted absences (4 on MWF or 3 on TTH).
- **After a total of 9 MWF absences or 6 TTH absences, you must drop the course, or you will receive an F.** Even with a valid reason to miss, you can accumulate so many absences in a semester that your work and classroom experience are too compromised for you to remain in the class.
- **If you are more than 15 minutes late to class, you will be counted absent.**
- **If you have medical condition that will affect your attendance, you must speak to the Disability Resources Office (DRO) at the beginning of the semester to officially request an accommodation;** however, we cannot approve an *indefinite* number of absences or late arrivals. We will work with the DRO to arrive at an accommodation that allows you to be successful without altering the rigor and basic requirements of the class.
- **Do not schedule travel that requires you to leave campus early for fall break or for semester break,** as leaving early could conflict with your class or your final-exam session. Your instructor cannot make individual arrangements for you.
- **If you will have athletic absences, you must present them to your instructor at the beginning of the semester;** your instructor will consult with the codirectors of the Advanced Communication program. If your absences will be numerous and will interfere with your participation in the class, your instructor will advise you to drop the class and enroll in it during a semester when you can attend regularly.
 - Remember that missing 3 MWF classes or 2 TTH classes means missing a week of class. Absences add up fast and do compromise your ability to be successful in the course. You may need to take the class in a semester when your sport is not active.
 - If the time of day for the class is not convenient for you, speak to your adviser immediately about changing to another section. **If you are more than 15 minutes late to class, you will be counted absent.**
 - **Missing during group work or on the day of your oral presentation means taking an**

- **F for that activity.**
- When classes are cancelled for scheduled conferences, **missing a scheduled individual or group conference counts as an absence.**

Validating Enrollment

To validate your enrollment in each course at the beginning of the semester, you must attend the first or second meeting (first meeting if the class meets only once a week). If you add a course after the term begins, you must attend the next class meeting. If you do not validate your enrollment, you must drop the course, or you will receive an F grade. (See the bottom of this webpage:

[http://catalog.iastate.edu/registration/.](http://catalog.iastate.edu/registration/))

University Policies

Academic Misconduct

All acts of dishonesty in any work constitute academic misconduct. Online courses are not an exception. The Student Disciplinary Regulations (<http://policy.iastate.edu/policy/SDR>) will be followed in the event of academic misconduct. Depending on the act, a student could receive an F grade on the test/assignment, F grade for the course, and could be suspended or expelled from the University.

Academic misconduct includes all acts of dishonesty in any academically related matter and any knowing attempt to help another student commit an act of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to each of the following acts when performed in any type of academic or academically related matter, exercise, or activity:

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of representing directly or indirectly another person's work as your own. It can involve presenting someone's speech, wholly or partially, as your own; quoting without acknowledging the true source of the quoted material; copying and handing in another person's work with your name on it; and similar infractions. Even indirect quotation, paraphrasing, etc., can be considered plagiarism unless sources are properly cited. Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and students could receive an F grade on the test/assignment or an F grade for the course.

Obtaining Unauthorized Information

Unauthorized information is information that is obtained dishonestly, for example, by copying graded homework assignments from another student, by working with another student on a test or homework when not specifically permitted to do so, or by looking at your notes or other written work during an examination when not specifically permitted to do so.

Tendering of Information

Students may not give or sell their work to another person who plans to submit it as his or her own work. This includes giving their work to another student to be copied, giving someone answers to exam questions during the exam, taking an exam and discussing its contents with students who will be taking the same exam, or giving or selling a term paper to another student.

Misrepresentation

Students misrepresent their work when they hand in the work of someone else. The following are examples: purchasing a paper from a term paper service; reproducing another person's paper (even with modifications) and submitting it as their own; having another student do their online homework or having someone else take their exam.

Bribery

Offering money or any item or service to a faculty member or any other person to gain academic advantage for yourself or another is dishonest.

Religious Accommodation

Please address any religious accommodations or potential conflicts on the basis of closely held religious beliefs with me at the beginning of the semester, or at the earliest possible time. It is advisable to address any potential conflicts as early as possible to allow time to consider alternatives. You or I may seek further guidance from the Office of Equal Opportunity (<http://www.eoc.iastate.edu/>).

Disability Accommodation

Please address any special needs or special accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your needs. Those seeking accommodations based on disabilities should obtain a Student Academic Accommodation Request (SAAR) form from the Student Disability Resources office, located in the Student Services Building, Room 1076. Phone (515) 294-7220 to set an appointment. Email: disabilityresources@iastate.edu. Website: <http://www.dso.iastate.edu/dr/>.

Diversity Affirmation

Iowa State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran. Inquiries can be directed to the Office of Equal Opportunity, 3350 Beardshear Hall, (515) 294-7612.

Harassment and Discrimination

Iowa State University strives to maintain our campus as a place of work and study for faculty, staff, and students that is free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and harassment based upon race, ethnicity, sex (including sexual assault), pregnancy, color, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, or status as a U. S. veteran. Any student who has concerns about such behavior should contact me, Student Assistance at 515-294-1020 or email dso-sas@iastate.edu, or the Office of Equal Opportunity at 515-294-7612.

Department Policies

Reporting Grievances

If you become concerned about my class management, please communicate your concerns with me. Concerns sometimes relate to grading methods, paper turnaround time, and course policies, as examples. If you feel uncomfortable speaking with me, contact the Co-Directors of Advanced Communication, Jenny Aune (jeaune@iastate.edu) or Jo Mackiewicz (jomack@iastate.edu).

Grade Appeal

If you feel that your final grade does not reflect the quality of the work you produced this past semester, please discuss the issue with me. If, after talking with me, you still feel that your final grade does not reflect the quality of your work, you can file a grade appeal with Deanna Stumbo (229 Ross Hall). For a grade appeal, you will need to submit the following materials:

- A memo explaining why your final grade does not reflect the quality of work you produced
- All the work you completed during the semester
- The course policies with grade breakdown
- The assignment sheets

A panel of instructors will review your materials blindly and assign a grade based on the quality of the work. If the grade the panel assigns is higher than the grade you received, your grade will be change accordingly. If, however, the grade the panel assigns is lower than the grade you received, your grade will remain the same.

Professionalism

Respect for others. In agreement with ISU's policies on student conduct, you are to carry yourself with respect for others and in ways conducive to maintaining a positive learning environment. In this course, you will restrict your oral commentary to class-specific activities and discussion, will refrain from profane or offensive outbursts or from disruptions, and will not engage in behavior that is demeaning, threatening or harmful to either yourself or class members. For further details, see ISU's policies: <http://policy.iastate.edu/policy/SDR#a4>

Turn off or silence cell phones. When you come to class, turn your phone off or set it to vibrate.

Participate. Participation means being present mentally as well as bodily; it means among other things: (1) thoughtfully contributing to any online discussions or other work; (2) preparing for class, having your materials with you in class, and actively engaging in class discussions; (3) carefully completing any in-class assignments. *Just showing up is not enough.*

Send complete email messages. Provide a subject line, a statement of the email's purpose, a specific request, your name, and any other content your audience (including me) needs.

Follow directions. Directions are there for a reason, whether they are in-class directives, instructions for submitting work, or genre conventions. Ignoring directions, even small ones, can signal you don't take your work seriously.

Proofread. Proofread *everything*, including emails. Word-processing programs have built-in spell- and grammar-check functions. Use them. Then check your work for mistakes the software program didn't catch.

If you miss class, find out what you missed. When you must miss class, actively seek out what you've missed. Ask your peers or send me an email and ask, "What can I do to catch up?" or something similar. This question shows awareness of the time I spend creating useful class activities, lectures, and discussions.

Arriving Late/Distractions. Although at times (not frequently) unavoidable, coming into the classroom late or leaving early is not only distracting but also shows disrespect for others' involvement in the course. Get here on time, stay for the entire class, or do not remain in the course. If you must leave early from a specific class meeting, see me before that class. **Students who arrive late or leave early will accrue marks against participation.**

Team work/Collaboration. Members of work groups should be prepared, reliable, enthusiastic, helpful, open-minded, and supportive. You should resolve conflicts with tact. Every group member should participate and complete peer evaluations honestly.

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