

Chesapeake Project Course Revision Plans

Oral Communication, INAG 110, Fall 2015
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Linking Communication and Sustainability

Excellent communication skills are highly valued by employers and are “career enhancers” that may be considered a factor in a student’s career success or failure. At UMD, Oral Communication is a core course for undergraduate students that bring together students from a broad spectrum of disciplines, backgrounds, and interests providing a rich and diverse learning experience. This interdisciplinary learning situation is ripe for giving voice to new ideas, new understandings, and findings, with an audience-centered perspective.

Similarly sustainability is a content area that has interdisciplinary reach and significant relevance to global communities and environments. Linking sustainability issues to communication studies provides a shared agenda to better develop students’ overall perspective on a subject (sustainability) while fostering logical argument, discourse, and presentations. It also strengthens perceptual and perspective thinking using a pertinent common topic.

Modifications to INAG 110

Oral Communication INAG 110 uses an active and engaging scaffolding learning process to develop communication skills. Throughout the semester students complete weekly exercises and major assignments to gain competence and confidence in public speaking. To prepare students for their final formal presentation which will have a sustainability focus, I will use sustainable topics as “themes” for their weekly communication exercises. For example, in an exercise in learning how to mingle, I will include a mingle discussion about “what is sustainability.”

INAG 110 culminates with a business presentation. Beginning with the Fall 2015 semester my five INAG 110 courses will research and connect their business presentations to a sustainability issue. Students can select a presentation focus from one of the following three categories:

- Social justice,
- Sustainable economies,
- Environmental Sustainability.

Students will be required to read as widely as possible about their project and from their interpretation of their research provide a formal presentation (with visuals) of the sustainable impact/s the project has on an organization. Students will limit scope to have a specialized focus, and will analyze only two or three impacts of the project providing documented evidence, which debates the effectiveness of their sustainable project.

The presenter’s goal will be to persuade a particular audience within an organization company, or community to take specific steps to become more sustainable or implement

or improve a sustainability program/project. The audience may be internal or external. Students will take on a specific “company” or “community” role/position. For example, a business major may take a role as a marketing manager of local Boys and Girls Club who approaches a company for a partnership to create a community garden. An engineering student may want to convince a potential clientele to use new “green” materials that may be used to pave roads and driveways.

New Course Learning Objectives

- Recognize the integration of sustainability issues across multiple disciplines, interest groups, and communities.
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze and synthesize the impact of a sustainable issue on a company, agency, or organization.
- Increase the level of communicative competence related directly to a sustainability issue.

Assessment of learning goals

My rubric for this final business presentation already includes points for background, research documentation, and scope of topic, creativity, and other presentation elements. I will, however, dedicate the point values under the research requirements to include analysis

Students will also record their presentations and conduct their own self-assessment of their presentations. Points are awarded for the self-assessment in the weekly class participation grade.