

**Academic Program Assessment Plan:  
Communication & Rhetoric (minor)**

**Department of English & Foreign Languages  
College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHASS)  
Colorado State University-Pueblo**

Plan developed by Yvonne J. Montoya, Assistant Professor of Communication & Rhetoric (COMR) and Coordinator of COMR minor (August, 2016)

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**The Relation of the Communication & Rhetoric Program to College Mission and Departmental Expectations<sup>1</sup>**

The Communication & Rhetoric minor advances the mission of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Students will “develop critical thinking skills” in each course, will focus on various “ethical perspectives” in the development and communication of messages, be able to function as “responsible citizens and professionals” through the development of professional communication and they will learn how to be “responsive to challenges of a diverse society” by taking courses that teach students how to communicate across genders and cultures (CSU-Pueblo Catalog, 2013-14, p. 144). A minor in Communication & Rhetoric will also provide CSU-Pueblo students within CHASS, and other colleges that require a minor or 18 credit hours outside of their major, a new option to help them matriculate toward graduation.

Additionally, the Communication & Rhetoric minor advances the expectations of the Department of English & Foreign Languages by helping students develop their communication, language, listening, speaking and compositions skills. Communication & Rhetoric minors are expected to think critically about their surrounding contexts, communicate effectively in various environments with numerous stakeholders, and effectively articulate information about their careers and/or disciplines (see English & Foreign Languages Descriptions in CSU-Pueblo Catalog, 2013-14, pp. 148-152).

**Communication & Rhetoric Program Description**

The Communication & Rhetoric minor at CSU-Pueblo is designed for students interested in developing effective written and verbal communication skills. It provides a course of study that emphasizes both a theoretical understanding and practical application of communication that prepares students technically, professionally, and personally to successfully navigate a variety of challenges.

The Communication & Rhetoric minor consists of 18 credits, comprised of required and elective courses. Six credits must be earned at the 300-400 level. Acceptance of transfer courses is contingent upon approval by the faculty program coordinator. No more than three credits of an independent study can count toward the minor. Students must complete this minor with a grade of C or better in all required and elective courses.

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<sup>1</sup> CSU-Pueblo 2013-14 Catalog. (2013-14). CHASS Mission Statement. Retrieved August 13, 2013 from <http://www.colostate-pueblo.edu/catalog/Documents/Catalog2013-2014.pdf>

## **Communication & Rhetoric Program Goals**

1. To provide individual courses as well as an academic minor in Communication & Rhetoric that foster students' abilities to describe, analyze, critique, explore, create and produce ideas and content in various contexts.
2. To cultivate students' abilities to construct and respond to messages effectively utilizing various modes of communication.
3. To develop students' understanding of demographics and cultures and how these factors influence the communication context.
4. To prepare students to communicate in professional contexts as well as in more informal ones.
5. To prepare students to better communicate their academic, personal, and civic knowledge.

## **Expected Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Adapt appropriately to a variety of communication contexts
2. Develop and achieve communication goals
3. Produce and deliver content and messaging appropriate for a variety of audiences, goals, contexts, and media
4. Address conflict to facilitate collaboration, relationship development and maintenance, and to function well in organizations
5. Engage and respond to information critically and in ways that respect different ideas and backgrounds
6. Communicate academic, personal, and civic knowledge

**Relation of Curriculum to Expected Student Outcomes**

Curriculum map—forthcoming.

## **Dissemination of Program Goals & Outcomes**

To inform the public and the university community at large, written accounts of current program goals, expected student outcomes, and assessment activities are published in the Colorado State University-Pueblo Catalog which is available on the University's website.

The program goals will also be made available through our departmental webpage which is linked to the University's homepage. The Communication & Rhetoric coordinator will provide program faculty with electronic copies of the goals, outcomes, and curriculum map.

## **Outcomes Assessment Activities**

Faculty advisors of the Communication & Rhetoric Program will maintain a file for each student with a declared minor in Communication & Rhetoric and/or a COMR 493 course file if students' final project was a team project. Files could include a student's capstone paper, or copy of graded oral presentation, videos documenting progress, transcripts, meeting notes, or other pertinent information (because the seminar course is experiential in nature, the final project may vary). Minors will also be surveyed on a biennial basis and these surveys along with students' files will be direct measures of evaluating expected outcomes.

Advisors will meet with students regularly to discuss their schedules, career trajectory, and matriculation toward graduation. Advisors will write a short summary of meetings when program outcomes are discussed and include a copy in each student's file. As such, indirect measures of assessment could include student comments during faculty/student meetings and/or feedback from organizational members who oversee students' capstone projects.

At the end of each academic year, the files (or class projects) of graduating students, or those completing the minor, will be evaluated by a team of reviewers to determine if the program is meeting its goals. The review team will include a Communication & Rhetoric faculty member and at least one other full-time faculty member from the Department of English & Foreign Languages.

After independently evaluating each file against a rubric, the team members will discuss the results. If necessary (e.g. if the evaluations diverge widely) a third faculty member will be added to the review team.

Also at that time instructional methods, course-, and program-level curriculum are reviewed to evaluate alignment of individual course goals, content, and instructional methods with the overall program goals and outcomes. If necessary an action plan for improvement will be designed and implemented. The program coordinator will then submit a report of the assessment findings, as well as any related action plans, to the chair of the Department of English & Foreign Languages, as well as the Assistant Provost for Assessment and Student Learning.

The first round of evaluations will occur in the spring of 2017, by which time a rubric with concrete performance criteria will be developed for the expected outcomes under evaluation. At least 80% of students completing the minor should be proficient or better in each SLO. The Communication & Rhetoric coordinator holds primary responsibility for ongoing program assessment activities as well as for revision of the plan itself.