

Negotiating Work/Life Through Communication

COM 691: The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication, ASU

Mondays 3:15-6 p.m. Stauffer 431A SLN 10509

Professors & Contact Information

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Course Description

In this graduate seminar, we explore the increasingly blurred intersections of “public” work and “private” lives. We focus on the myriad challenges and joys faced in navigating organizational, family, community and individual responsibilities/opportunities.

The course explores work-life at the meso, macro and micro levels, all the time recognizing that such categories are fluid and overlapping. In doing so, we will read about organizational policies, family practices, and larger discourses such as gender, class, consumption, and entrepreneurialism. Such discourses both enable and constrain the ways individuals, families and organizations manage various roles through micro-practices and communication.

We envision this seminar to be a space in which participants can critically reflect on how the work-life literature impacts their own lives, as well as analyze how scholarship can help us to elucidate and create responses to the challenges faced by organizations, individuals and the larger culture.

This class is a graduate seminar, and as such, students will spend significant time reading and analyzing advanced texts, generating discussion based upon these texts, and bringing in their own ideas from outside research. As instructors, we will structure class periods by highlighting main ideas and key points while serving as moderators of discussion and sounding boards for student reflections.

Course Readings (available for order from Amazon.com)

Drago, R. W. (2007). *Striking a Balance: Work, Family, Life*. Boston, MA: Dollars & Sense.

Evans, E., & Grant, C. (2008). *Mama Ph.d.: Women write about motherhood and academic life*. Picataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Hansen, K. V. (2005). *Not-so-nuclear families: Class, gender, and networks of care*. Picataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Williams, J. (2000). *Unbending Gender: Why family and work conflict and what to do about it*. NY: Oxford University Press.

Articles (available on the password protected Blackboard site and/or passed out in class).

Grading

Your total number of points will determine your final grade and will follow the following scale:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	D	E or XE
97-100	93-96	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	70-76	60-69	59 & below

Class requirements (out of 100 pts total):

1. Discussion Question Posting (up to 5 pts)

Each student will choose a week to design and post discussion questions for the day's readings. For this assignment, you will prepare 3-5 discussion questions for students to think about and respond to in writing on blackboard and/or verbally in class. Post these discussion questions to the COM 691 Blackboard discussion board (and preferably also email them to class members) four days in advance (e.g., by Thursday) so that other students can consider key issues as they read the materials (and respond to them on Blackboard). On the day of discussion leading, the leader should bring these questions to class, and be prepared to take a leadership role in helping the instructor facilitate discussion.

Supervising Instructors: All

2. Attendance and Participation (up to 20 pts)

We'll expect students to complete assigned readings before class and participate in an enthusiastic and informed manner. To do so, students should make notes as they read about questions and issues they will pursue in discussion. They should also be active in our Blackboard discussion, responding to questions posted as well as simply noting issues/ideas that they found most interesting in the readings and what they might like to discuss further in class.

We will evaluate participation by making weekly notations regarding the quality and quantity of evidenced preparedness and participation. Students should strive to 1) clearly evidence their close reading and thinking about the unit's materials, 2) be physically and intellectually present for the entire course period (avoiding late arrivals and early departures), and 3) avoid dominating the conversation and/or going on tangents that are either peripherally or non-related to class readings.

If there is an extenuating emergency or illness that interferes with your attendance or ability to keep up with work, please let us know. If you must miss a single class (for any reason), you can make up the points by choosing a reading that is connected to course concepts, and providing an outline of it for all class members.

Supervising Instructors: All

3. Book Review (up to 25 pts)

Each of you will choose a book related to work-life (see list of suggestions at end of syllabus), write a review and give an in-class presentation. Reviews will be approximately 1250-1500 words (roughly 5 pages) in length.

The goal of a scholarly book review is not to summarize. Rather, the review should situate the merit of the book from a communication disciplinary viewpoint. In doing so, critically evaluate the book's purpose, thesis, primary arguments, methods and analysis—pointing out both strong points and shortcomings. The majority of the essay will be an evaluation of the book's merit and commentary on the book's contribution to understanding important work-life issues. In short, the review explains how this book impacts the way readers (especially communication scholars) should theorize, think about and research work-life.

Take care in your writing style—especially your opening—so that the review immediately gains the attention of readers (and potential editors). Along the way, make reference to specific portions of the book to illustrate your points. The challenge, of course, is to provide examples in a limited space. You will need to find creative methods for communicating in a concise format.

Up to 5 points will be awarded for an 8-minute class presentation (presentations spread over weeks 2-5). Up to 20 points will be awarded for the written review, due no later than week 5.

Supervising Instructor: Tracy

4. Tutorial on Contemporary Work-Life Issues (up to 25 points)

This assignment is designed to respond to a work-life issue or problem that is being discussed or highlighted in the public sphere. While we are covering several “hot topics” in this class, there are many others we simply do not have the time to address. This assignment will provide all of us with a set of tutorials or expanded lesson plans that we may use in future classes or as resources for research projects. Specifically, this 10-12 page assignment asks you to:

1. Identify a work-life topic that has been addressed in the public sphere. Possible topics might include the impact of the recession on work-life practices, the consequences of an aging population for managing work-life issues, the increase in women as primary bread winners, work-life discourses and practices in other cultures, and others. Please make a case that your topic has received some public attention (in the media, the blogosphere, magazines, scholarship).
2. Provide a rationale for exploring this topic from a communication perspective.
3. Identify a set of readings from our discipline that help to explain or situate the issue you are addressing.
4. Explain how the concepts in your selected readings inform a fuller understanding of the topic at hand.
5. Suggest future directions for communication scholarship on the issue and articulate what potential benefits such scholarship might provide.
6. Provide a set of discussion questions or classroom activities that can bring this concept to life.

Paper is due no later than week 9.

Supervising Instructor: Tretthewey

5. Policy/Best Practices Paper (up to 25 pts)

Although scholarship on work/life issues is valuable in and of itself, its value is further enhanced by the degree to which researchers, practitioners and lay people can use its results to understand and/or improve their lives. For this assignment, we are asking you to do just this – create a product based on research that can improve the work/life of your readers. To fulfill the requirements of this paper you should select 1) existing cultural, organization or family policies or practices and revise them OR 2) create new policies or practices for one of these groups.

For example, you might select the current work/life policies or practices of

- a specific organization (such as ASU, an organization of which you are a member, or a well known organization)
- a federal or state agency
- a church group or congregation
- family/families

and, based on the research literature, revise those policies or practices so that they better serve the diverse peoples within that organization, agency, group or family/ies.

Alternatively, you could select one of the above groups and create a new set of policies or practices--once again based on the literature--that would serve the work/life needs of diverse members of those groups. For example, you might know of or belong to an organization, church group or agency that does not currently have a set of policies or practices. Or you might find it useful to develop a “best practices” set of strategies for families or, more probably, a specific type of family (where family refers to a broad array, including individuals who live alone, roommates, and cohabitating same-sex and cross-sex couples with or without children, among others).

(assignment description continued on next page)

Policy/Best Practices Paper (*continued from previous page*)

This paper should be 5-to-7 pages in length and minimally include the following:

- a rationale statement that describes the need for your proposed policy/ies or practices and the reason the current one(s) are not sufficient/effective (if applicable) -- or the reason why no such policy/ies or practices exist (if applicable)
- a description of existing policies or practices (if any),
- delineation of the policy/ies or practices you have developed/revised,
- and a justification (grounded in research, of course) for the policies/practices you have developed.

As always, your writing is expected to be clear, fluid and engaging, and your arguments should be well developed and supported by existing research. Overall your recommendations should be useful and applicable to your designated audience as well as realistic!

Up to 5 points will be awarded for a 10-minute class presentation (presentations spread over weeks 10-13). Up to 20 points will be awarded for the policy paper, due no later than week 13.

Supervising Instructor: Alberts

Fine Print

Assignments, Due Dates & Incompletes:

Assignments are due at the beginning of class and will be penalized up to 10% for each day they are late. Discussion-leading receives credit only when completed on the day scheduled. All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. No assignments will be accepted after May 10. Incompletes can only be given to students who: 1) have finished more than half the coursework, 2) experience serious illness or personal emergency, 3) negotiate the incomplete before April 26.

Unique Needs:

Students with **disabilities** should document their needs with the ASU Disability Resources Center and meet with instructors the first week of class to discuss options. Likewise, those with **religious holiday** course conflicts should alert instructors the first week to discuss alternatives for doing make-up work.

Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty: Your 691 assignments should be original work devised for this class. If you plan on using material prepared for a different course in your 691 assignments, you must consult with us regarding appropriateness. In this graduate course, you are expected to know APA style for citing outside sources. The University and School's academic integrity policies are applicable to work in this course.

Weekly Schedule—Subject to change via an announcement in class or discussion board

Week-Date	Topic / Readings
<p>1-1/25</p>	<p>Introduction Kirby, E. L., Wieland, S., McBride, M. C. (2006). Work-life communication. In J. Oetzel and S. Ting-Toomey (Eds.) <i>Handbook of conflict communication</i> (pp. 327-357). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Golden, A. G., Kirby, E. L., & Jorgenson, J. (2006). Work-life research from both sides now: An integrative perspective for organizational and family communication. In C. S. Beck (Ed.), <i>Communication Yearbook 30</i> (pp. 143-195). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Drago, R. W. (2007). <i>Striking a Balance: Work, Family, Life</i>. Boston, MA: Dollars & Sense.</p>
<p>2-2/1</p>	<p>Framing and Polic(y)ing Work-Life Golden, A. G. (2009). Employee families and organizations as mutually enacted environments: A sensemaking approach to work-life interrelationships. <i>Management Communication Quarterly</i>, 22, 357-384. Kirby, E. L., & Krone, K. J. (2002). “The policy exists but you can’t really use it”: Communication and the structuration of work-family policies. <i>Journal of Applied Communication Research</i>, 30, 50-77. Martin, J. (1990). Deconstructing Organizational Taboos: The suppression of gender conflict in organizations. <i>Organizational Science</i>, 1, 339-359. Trethewey, A., Tracy, S. J., & Alberts, J. K. (2006). Crystallizing frames for Work-Life. In the special issue “Communication and the Accomplishment of Personal and Professional Life” in <i>Electronic Journal of Communication</i>, 16:3,4.</p>
<p>3-2/8</p>	<p>Organizational Work-Life Practice Tracy, S. J., & Rivera K. D. (In Press, February, 2010). Endorsing equity and applauding stay-at-home moms: How male voices on work-life reveal aversive sexism and flickers of transformation. <i>Management Communication Quarterly</i>. Hewlett, S. A. (2005). Off-ramps and on-ramps: Keeping talented women on the road to success. <i>Harvard Business Review</i>, 1-12. Medved, C. E., Brogan, S., McClanahan, A. M., Morris, J. F., & Shepherd, G. J. (2006). Work and family socializing communication: Messages, gender, and power. <i>Journal of Family Communication</i>, 6, 161-180. Weiland, M. B. S. (In Progress). Struggling to manage work as a part of everyday life: Complicating resistance and contextualizing work/life Studies. Unpublished Paper.</p>
<p>4-2/15</p>	<p>Intersections of Mothering, Care and Organizational Life Dow, B. J. (2008). Does it Take a Department to Raise a Child? <i>Women's Studies in Communication</i>; 31, 158-165. Hochschild, A. R. (2000). The nanny chain. <i>The American Prospect</i>, 11, 1-4. Medved, C. E. (2009). Positioning breadwinning mother identities. <i>Women’s Studies Quarterly</i>, 37(3&4), 136-152. Meisenbach, Rebecca J., Remke, Robyn V., Buzzanell, Patrice and Liu, Meina (2008). “They allowed”: Pentadic mapping of women’s maternity leave discourse as organizational rhetoric. <i>Communication Monographs</i>, 75, 1-24. Tracy, S. J. (2008). Care as a Common Good. <i>Women Studies in Communication</i>, 31, 166-174</p>
<p>5-2/22</p>	<p>Work-Life For Whom? Brooke, L., & Taylor, P. (2005). Older workers and employment: Managing age relations. <i>Ageing & Society</i>, 25, 415-429. Thane, P. (Accessed January, 2010). The work-life balance in an ageing society. <i>History and Policy</i>. Available: http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-02.html Reynolds, J., Wetherell, M. and Taylor, S. (2007). Choice and chance: Negotiating agency in narratives of singleness. <i>Sociological Review</i>, 55, 331–351. Ward, J., & Winstanley, D. (2003). The absent presence. Negative space within discourse and the construction of minority sexual identity in the workplace. <i>Human Relations</i>: 56, 1255-1280.</p> <p>Due: Book Reviews</p>

6 3/1	Gendered Discourses and Work-Life Williams, J. (2000). <i>Unbending Gender: Why family and work conflict and what to do about it</i> . NY: Oxford University Press. (\$13) Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. <i>Gender and Society</i> , 4(2), 139-158.
7 3/8	Consumption and Work-Life Medved, C. E., & Kirby, E. L. (2005). Family CEOs: A feminist analysis of corporate mothering discourses. <i>Management Communication Quarterly</i> , 18, 435-478. Lair, D. J., Sullivan, K., & Cheney, G. (2005). Marketization and the recasting of the professional self: The rhetoric and ethics of personal branding. <i>Management Communication Quarterly</i> , 18, 307-343. Gill, R., & Ganesh, S. (2007). Empowerment, constraint, and the entrepreneurial self: A study of white women entrepreneurs. <i>Journal of Applied Communication Research</i> , 35, 268-293. Trethewey, A. (2001). Reproducing and resisting the master narrative of decline: Midlife professional women's experiences of aging. <i>Management Communication Quarterly</i> , 15, 183-237.
3/15	Spring Break – No Class
8 3/22	Work-Life and Class/Race Hansen, K. V. (2005). <i>Not-so-nuclear families: Class, gender, and networks of care</i> . Picataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press. (\$24) Woodward, K. (2008). The multiple meanings of work for welfare-reliant women. <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> , 31, 149-168. Hennessy, J. (2009). Choosing work and family: Poor and low-income mothers' work-family commitments. <i>Journal of Poverty</i> , 13, 152-172.
9 3/29	The Discourse of “Work” and “Family” Crawford, M. (2006). Shop Class as Soulcraft. <i>The New Atlantis</i> . http://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/shop-class-as-soulcraft Cheney, G., Zorn, T. E., Jr., Planalp, S., Lair, D. J. (2008). Meaningful work and personal/social well-being: Organizational communication engages the meanings of work. <i>Communication Yearbook</i> , 32, 137-185. Broadfoot, K., Carlone, D., Medved, C. E. Aakaus, M., Gabor, E., & Taylor, K. (2008). Meaningful work and organizational communication: Troubling boundaries, questioning positionality and empirical engagements. <i>Management Communication Quarterly</i> , 22, 152-161. Galvin, K. (2006). Diversity's impact on defining the family: Discourse dependence and identity. In L. H. Turner and R. West (Eds.) <i>The Family Communication Sourcebook</i> (pp. 3-20). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Floyd, K., Mikkelson, A. C., & Judd, J. (2006). <i>Defining the family through relationships</i> . In L. H. Turner and R. West (Eds.) <i>The Family Communication Sourcebook</i> (pp. 21-42). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage <i>Due: Tutorial on Contemporary Work-Life Issues</i>
10 4/5	Women, Children & Work/Life Evans, E., & Grant, C. (2008). <i>Mama Ph.d.: Women write about motherhood and academic life</i> . Picataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press. Jorgensen, J. (2006). Seeing work-life from children's standpoints. <i>Electronic Journal of Communication</i> 16, 3-4. Available at http://www.cios.org.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/getfile/01638_EJC .
11 4/12	Men, Home & Work/life Collinson, D. L. (1998). 'Shift-ing lives': Work-home pressures in the North Sea oil industry. <i>Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology</i> , 52, 301-324. Golden, A. G. (2007). Fathers' frames for childrearing: Evidence toward a "masculine concept of caregiving." <i>The Journal of Family Communication</i> , 7, 265-285. Petroski, D., & Edley, P. Stay-at-home fathers: Masculinity, family, work, and gender stereotypes. <i>Electronic Journal of Communication</i> , 16(3-4). At http://www.cios.org.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/getfile/01638_EJC . Medved, C. E. (2008). "When do I get a break?": Unexpected emotions of a stay at home dad. In E. L. Kirby & M. C. McBride (Eds.), <i>Gender actualized: Cases in Communicatively Constructing Realities</i> (pp. 66-67). Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Press.

<p>12 4/19</p>	<p>Division of Domestic Labor Alberts, J. K., & Trethewey, A. & Tracy, S. J. (Submitted June, 2008; Invitation to Revise and Resubmit September 2008; Resubmitted December 2009). Social organizing and sensemaking: An integrative theory of the division of domestic labor. <i>Journal of Family Communication</i>. Medved, C. E. (2007). Special Issue Introduction: Investigating family labor in communication studies: Threading across historical & contemporary discourses. <i>Journal of Family Communication</i>, 7, 1-19. Lynch, O. (2008). How Domestic Labor Practices are Maintaining Masculine Privilege and Hindering Gender Equality. Paper presented at the ICA. Conference, Montreal, Canada. Medved, C. E. (2009). Crossing and transforming occupational and household divisions of labor: Reviewing literatures and deconstructing divisions. In C. Beck (Ed.), <i>Communication Yearbook</i> (pp. 457-484). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage</p>
<p>13 4/26</p>	<p>Navigating Work-Life Through Talk Becker, P., & Moen, P. (1999). Scaling back: Dual-earner couples' work-family strategies. <i>Journal of Marriage and the Family</i>, 61, 995-1007. Gerson, K. (2002). Moral dilemmas, moral strategies, and the transformation of gender: Lessons from two generations of work and family change. <i>Gender and Society</i>, 16, (1), 8-28. Moen, P., & Yu, Y. (2000). Effective work/life strategies: Working couples, work conditions, gender and life quality. <i>Social Problems</i>, 47(3), 291-326. Zvonkovic, A. M., Schmiede, C. J., Hall, L. D. (1994). Influence strategies used when couples make work-family decisions and their importance. <i>Family Relations</i>, 43(2), 182-188. <i>Due: Policy/Best Practices Paper</i></p>
<p>14 5/3</p>	<p>Where do we go from here? Langer, E. (2009). <i>Counterclockwise: Mindful health and the power of possibility</i>. NY: Ballantine.</p>
<p>15 5/10</p>	<p>Final Time – A Work-life Integration Experience (Details TBA)</p>

Potential Books for Book Review

This is just a starting list. If you choose a book off this list, please propose it by week #2

- Bianchi, S. M., Robinson, J. P., & Milkie, M. A. (2006). *Changing rhythms of American family life*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Crawford, M. (2009). *Shop Class as Soulcraft: An inquiry into the meaning of work*. Penguin Press.
- DePaulo, B. (2006). *Singled Out: How Singles Are Stereotyped, Stigmatized, and Ignored, and Still Live Happily Ever After*. NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Douglas, S. J. & Michaels, M. W. (2004). *The mommy myth: The idealization of motherhood and how it has undermined all women*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Fine-Davis, M., Fagnani, J., Giovannini, D., Hojgaard, L., & Clark, H. (2004). *Fathers and Mothers: Dilemmas of the Work-Life Balance: A Comparative Study in Four European Countries*. Norwell, MA: Springer.
- Gambles, R. & Lewis, S. (2006). *The Myth of Work-Life Balance: The Challenge of Our Time for Men, Women and Societies*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons.
- Gilbert, N. (2008). *A mother's work: How feminism, the market, and policy shape family life*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Goldberg, B. (2000). *Age works: What corporate America must do to survive the graying of the workforce*. New York: Free Press.
- Hansen, K. V. (2005). *Not-so-nuclear Families: Class, Gender, And Networks of Care*. Picataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Hewlet, S. A. (2007). *Off-ramps and on-ramps: Keeping talented women on the road to success*.
- Hirshman, L. R. (2006). *Get to work: A manifesto for women of the world*. New York: Viking.
- Jones, F., Burke, R. & Westman, M. (2005). *Work-life Balance: A Psychological Perspective*. London: Psychology Press.
- Korabik, K., Lero, D., & Whitehead, D. (Eds.) (2008). *Handbook of Work-family Integration: Research, Theory and Best Practices*. Academic Press.
- Stone, P. (2007). *Opting out?: Why women really quit careers and head home*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Thurman, D. (2010). *Off Balance on Purpose: Embrace Uncertainty and Create the Life You Love*. Austin, TX: Greenleaf Book Group Press.
- Warner, J. (2005). *Perfect madness: Motherhood in the age of anxiety*. NY: Penguin.