DIFFICULT COMMUNICATIONS

PGP II
Credit: 1 unit

Instructor: **Prof. Sunil Unny Guptan**
Course Associate:

Course objectives:

1. *Understanding and dealing with communication under stress, duress and difficulty, particularly in managerial situations.*
2. *Understanding and imbibing the skills and competencies required to work through difficult communication and communication situations*
3. *Understanding and formulating individual communication strategies to cope with and manage complex situations.*

Course content:

Number of sessions

1. Talking tough

Suggested Readings:

1. Mendleson, Jack L and Mendleson, C. Dianne (1996) 'An action plan to improve difficult communication', in *HR Magazine* (Vol. 41 Issue 10, pp 118-125)
2. Skinner, Merna L (2003) 'Confrontational Communication', in *The Pfeiffer Book of Conflict Management Tools* (Jack Gordon, ed.) (pp 81-85) New Jersey : Wiley
3. Benjamin, Mark, 'Strategies and tips for dealing with a difficult employee' in *Hospitality Crossing* (pp 1-3)

2. Navigating through tough negotiation and persuasion

And managing furtive and manipulative communication   2

Suggested Readings:

4. Bielaszka-Du Vernay, Christina (2008) How to take a strategic approach to persuasion', in *Harvard Management Update* (vol 13 issue 7 pp 3-5)
5. Morgan, Nick (2008) 'Speaking persuasively', in *Financial Planning* (vol 18 issue 1 pp 109-112)
6. Morley, Ian E. (1997) 'Negotiating and Bargaining', in *The Handbook of Communication Skills* (Owen DW Hargie, ed.) (pp 339-357) London : Routledge
7. Forrest, Clare (2008) 'How to say no', in *Training Journal* (November 2008) (pp 32-35)

8. Jones, John E (2003) 'Dealing with Disruptive People in Meetings', in *The Pfeiffer Book of Conflict Management Tools* (Jack Gordon, ed.) (pp 75-80) New Jersey : Wiley
9. Morgan, Nick (2001) 'When your boss is a bully', in *Harvard Management Communication Letter,* (Vol. 4 Issue 7, pp 10)

3. Inspiration and motivation   2

Suggested Readings:
10. Boohar, Dianne (2007) 'There is no communication around here', in *The Voice of Authority – 10 Strategies Every Leader Needs to Know* (pp 1-14) New Delhi : Tata McGraw Hill
11. Wachtman, Edward (2009) 'The persuasive power of story', in *Marketing Management* (vol 18 issue 1 pp 28-34)
12. Lasley, Matha (2007) 'Difficult conversations: Authentic communication leads to greater understanding and team work', in *Group Facilitation* (no. 7) (pp 13-20)

4. Listening for hidden/unsaid meaning   2

Suggested Readings:
13. Cesario, Joseph & Higgins, Tory E (2008) 'Making message recipient 'feel right': How non-verbal cues can increase persuasion', in *Psychological science* (vol 19 issue 5 pp 415-420)
14. Pacalli, Lonnie (2006) 'The truth about informal communication', in *The Truth About Getting Your Point Across – and Nothing But the Truth* (pp 199-216) New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley
15. Pacalli, Lonnie (2006) 'The truth about being a good listener', in *The Truth About Getting Your Point Across – and Nothing But the Truth* (pp 185-198) New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley

5. Working with aggression and assertiveness   2

Suggested Readings:
16. Kelley, Colleen (2003) 'Assertion theory', in *The Pfeiffer Book of Successful Communication Skill Building Tools* (Jack Gordon, ed.) (pp 91-97) New Jersey : Wiley
17. Rakos, Richard F (1997) 'Asserting and confronting', in *The Handbook of Communication Skills* (Owen DW Hargie, ed.) (pp 289-320) London : Routledge
18. Rayner, Charlotte; Helge, H and Cooper, C.L., (2002) 'What can individuals do', in *Workplace Bullying* (pp 145-162) New York: Taylor and Francis
19. Townsend, Anni (2008) 'How to tackle workplace bullies', in *British Journal of Administrative Management,* (pp 26-27)

6. Handling Feedback Process   2

Suggested Readings:
20. Karp, Hank (2003) 'The lost art of feedback' in *The Pfeiffer Book of Successful Communication Skill Building Tools* (Jack Gordon, ed.) (pp 13-26) New Jersey : Wiley
21. Raffoni, Melissa (2009) 'Leaders : Frame your message for maximum impact' in *Harvard Management Update* (vol 14 issue 1 pp 3-4)
22. Veagie, Judy I (2005) 'Conflict in communication : Is assertion the right choice ?' in *Health Care Biller* (Vol 14 issue 8 pp 10-12)

7. Handling bad news and negative messages   2

Suggested Readings:
23. Falcone, Paul (2003) 'Bearer of bad news' in *HR Magazine* (pp 99-102)
24. Pfeiffer, William J., (2003) 'Conditions that hinder effective communication' in *The Pfeiffer Book of Successful Communication Skill Building* (pp 5-11) New Jersey : Wiley
25. Richardson, Peter, and Denton, Kieth D., 'Communicating Change', in *Human Resource Management* (Summer 1996, vol. 35(2)) pp 203-216)
26. Maggart, Lisa, (1994) 'Bowater Incorporated – A lesson in crisis communication' in *Public Relations Quarterly* (Fall 1994) (pp 29-31)

8. Writing tough and difficult messages   2

Suggested Readings:
27. Chenoweth, Ann N., and Hayes, John R., (2003) 'The inner voice' in *Written Communication,* (vol 20 pp 99-118)
28. Casagrande, June, (2007) 'The case of the jilted comma: Addressing the top grammatical and usage mistakes' in *Public Relation Tactics* (Feb. 2007) (pp 19-21)
29. Priest, Joseph, 'Proof positive : When u have to edit your own copy', in *Public Relations Tactics* (Feb. 2007) (pp 21)

9. Communicating extreme emotions   2

Suggested Readings:
30. Bolton, Robert (1979) 'Conflict prevention and control' in *People Skills – How to Assert yourself, Listen to Others and Resolve Conflicts* New York : Simon & Shuster
31. McMohan, Gladeana (2008) 'Anxiety at Work' in *Training Journal* (Nov 2008, pp 63-67)

11. Project   4

Pedagogy / Teaching methodology:

Principally workshop methodology and experiential learning to be used with role play, caselets, simulation, situation analysis, etc.

Evaluation:

Evaluation will include peer evaluation and be participative. Some of the components will be graded in groups depending on the nature of tasks and assignment.

Grade weightage

1. Class participation   20 %
2. Review of article in suggested reading   10 %
3. Component-wise total (9 components)   55 %
    i. Navigating through tough negotiation and persuasion, and managing furtive and manipulative communication
    ii. Inspiration and motivation
    iii. Listening for hidden/unsaid meaning
    iv. Working with aggression and assertiveness
    v. Handling Feedback Process
    vi. Handling bad news and negative messages
    vii. Writing tough and difficult messages
    viii. Communicating extreme emotions
4. Project   15 %

In item 3, each component has a minimum weightage of 5%. Each student may hike the weightage of any 3 component of choice to 10%. The evaluation will be based on the participation and performance in the exercises and activities in the sessions indicating a demonstrable grasp and understanding of the concepts and of skills imbibed.