

Summer Course Spotlight: Leadership in Communication

What is leadership? How do leaders influence others? Why are some people perceived as leaders more than others?

These are some of the questions considered in the COM 3402 Leadership in Communication course available this summer. Course instructor Beth Talbert says the course is focused on understanding leadership in the context of both theory and practice. Students will examine how leaders use power and influence, manage conflict and crisis, and also how leadership plays out in groups and teams, organizations and public spheres.

“When we understand theories and behaviors of leaders from the past and present, we can use that to guide our own decision-making and behaviors” said Talbert. “The class looks at writings of Plato, Aristotle and Machiavelli, as well as current research from publications such as the Harvard Business Review. Students get a full span of perspectives, and I think they're surprised at how so much of what was written in the past is still applicable today.”

The class consists of lecture and small group activities, and assignments include papers, tests and group presentations. The course has no prerequisites and is open to students of all majors. The course also counts toward the Applied Leadership minor in OU's Communication program.

Talbert brings extensive leadership experience to the classroom. Her 29-year career at OU includes a variety of leadership roles in faculty and administration. Currently, she is a special instructor of communication, chief adviser for the communication program and co-chair of the Experienced Professionals subgroup of OU's Women's Employee Resource Group. She is also a past recipient of the Phyllis Law Googasian Award, which recognizes members of the OU community for outstanding contributions to the advancement of women.

Outside OU, Talbert has served on the Rochester Board of Education, Rochester Downtown Development Authority, Rochester Area Youth Assistance, Rochester Community Schools Foundation and the Young Leaders Initiative. She is active with the Women Officials' Network, a community-based advocacy organization dedicated to encouraging women to become involved in public policy through elected and appointed office.

“I think I bring a lot of examples from my own experience of how leadership really works and how it might differ from a textbook,” she said. “Leadership is complicated and contextual. There's not an 'A-B-C' formula that will work in every situation.”

Talbert said that students are encouraged to draw from their own experiences, whether they've been a leader themselves or observed the leadership of others.

“I think students come to appreciate the complexity of leadership and have more realistic expectations of what a leader can accomplish,” she said.

Communication major Adam Dabaldo took the course with Talbert last summer and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

“I learned how leaders present themselves not only in everyday life, but specifically within organizations,” said Dabaldo. “As a junior here at OU, and searching for jobs, the course had a lot to teach me about what it means to be a leader, and also what it means to be a follower.”

Senior Communication major Erin Herner, who also took the course last summer, added, “Professor Talbert had us explore the broad topic of leadership from



Offered this summer, OU's Leadership in Communication (COM 3402) course examines a host of topics, including how leadership plays out in groups and teams, organizations and public spheres.



Course instructor Beth Talbert is a recognized leader on Oakland's campus and in the surrounding community.

COM 3402: Leadership in Communication meets from 8:30 a.m.-12:25 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, beginning on Monday, May 1 and ending on Monday, June 1. Students can register for the course online via [SAIL](#).