



COM 3401

Business and Professional Communication

DAVID LEE, PHD

COM 3401 Business and Professional Communication



Welcome to Business and Professional Communication!



Inequality



BY
2016 THE TOP 1%
WILL BE
RICHER
THAN THE REST OF
THE WORLD
COMBINED



Focus on problem of rising inequality.

Introduce historical context "crisis of accumulation" 1970s.

Neoclassical economics (Friedman)

Reagan and Thatcher

Weakening of labor movement

Facts about executive compensation/ tax dodges/ shell corporations

Economic crisis of 2008

Political movements in response (Occupy)

Speak Up

Empowerment



What to do in response?

Do we try to play the game, make money, and go along with status quo?

Or do we try to offer alternatives to systems of oppression/ extremes of wealth distribution?

I believe the answer in either case is effective communication.

Education as closely correlated with income/ health outcomes.

The role of communication—making informed criticism/ empowerment/ activism

But without education/ without flexing speaking and writing skills, we are too busy trying to survive, pay the bills. Stuck in low wage jobs, living from paycheck to paycheck. Not wanting to rock the boat.

In short, education and communication skills can lead to better jobs, which is a better position to be in when trying to tackle inequality.



Models of Communication

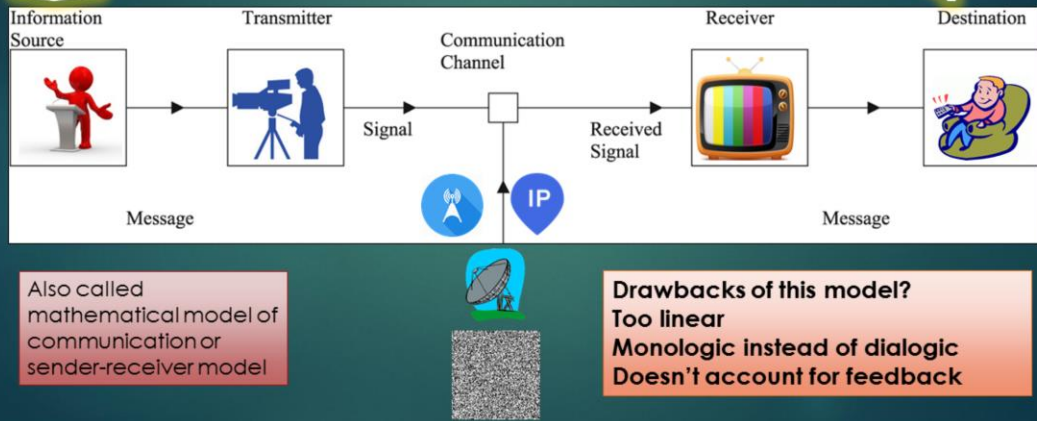
What is a model?



What we need are alternatives to the status quo. We need to have imagination to picture different forms of social organization. We need to study other societies and take note of differences.

In other words, we need models. What do you think of when you think of models? The term has a variety of connotations, from the runway, the architecture, to urban planning—We even use models in this class, such as sample outlines, sample resumes, etc. We consciously try to emulate what works.

The Linear Model Communication

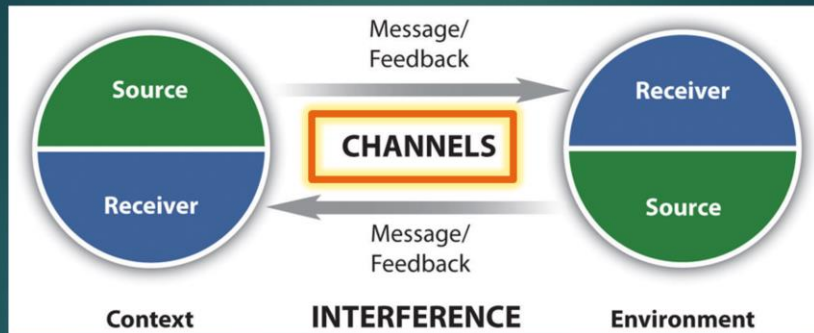


Lets look at some models of communication. The most well known model (Shannon and Weaver, 1949) imagines communication as a line, starting with the sender and ending in the receiver.

While this model is appropriate for one-way communication systems such as broadcasting, it does have some limitations. Can you guess which ones?

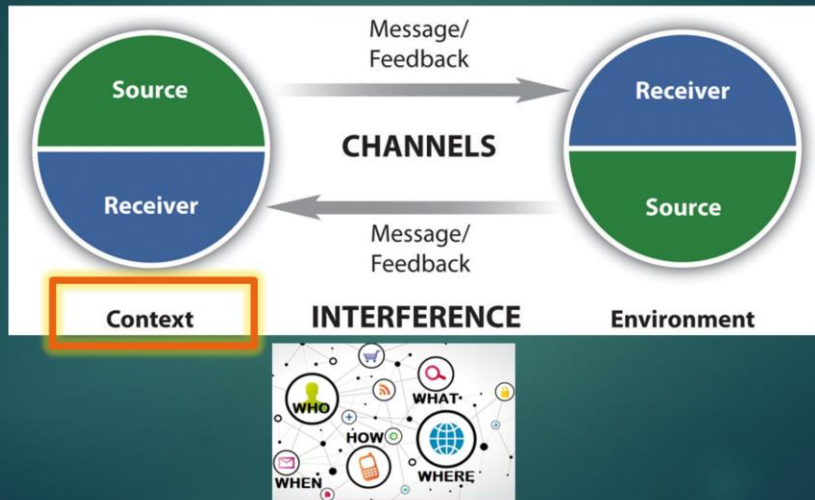
For one, it is linear. It doesn't consider dialogue, or that back and forth we were talking about last week.

How about a back and forth model?



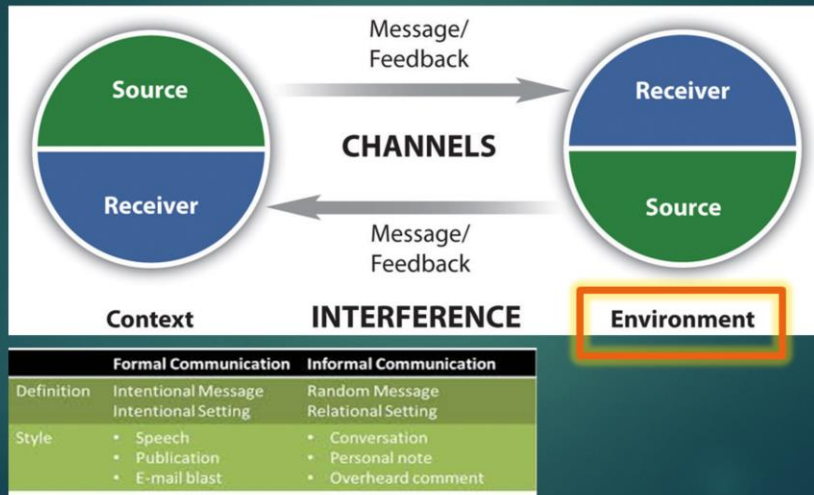
One of the breakthroughs about IT is that it gives the 'receiver' a channel to respond and talk back. Where web 1.0 was "read only" Web 2.0 gave us social media, blogs, comments sections in news articles and videos, and other ways we can engage in 'dialogue' and conversation using electronic medias.

How about a back and forth model?



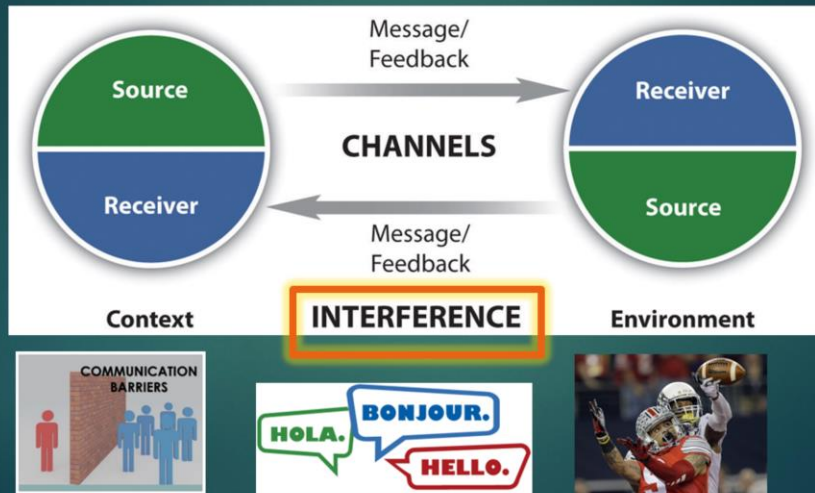
Context refers to the who, what, where why and when that makes every instance of communication unique unto itself, and not only a particular instance illustrating a general rule.

How about a back and forth model?



Environment refers to the setting and purpose of a communicate, such as the institutional setting. For example, text to an employer should be more grammatical, polite and reserved than a text to your best friend.

How about a back and forth model?



Interference is another word that has different meanings according to the setting and context. In terms of communication, it refers to those barriers (linguistic, interpersonal, institutional, etc.) that we discussed last class.

COM 3401 Business and Professional Communication

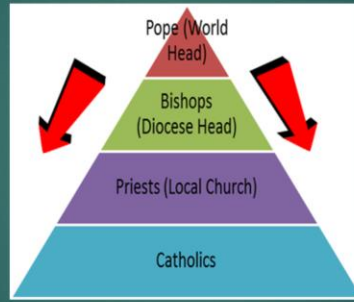
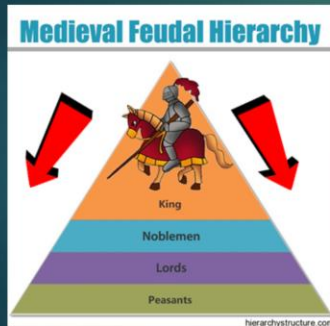


Models of Social Organization

So now we have two mental models of the communication process, the latter emphasizing the conversational or dialogical aspect more. What about social organizations? Institutions? Organizations?

I used to think of a business as a brick and mortar building such as a store. But these days an organization can be a website.

Hierarchy



To understand organizations, let's look at how societies are organized. Before capitalism, society was even more stratified than it is presently. The ruler was the king or queen, and underneath them, the aristocracy.

Similar with the Roman Catholic Church, a rigidly stratified system, from the pope on down to the laity.

Under capitalism, we have a less rigidly stratified system. But hierarchy is still the preferred form of organization. Yes, we elect Presidents and Congress, but did you have a say about who runs Chase Bank? Unless you are a shareholder, the average person does not elect their bosses.



Hierarchy

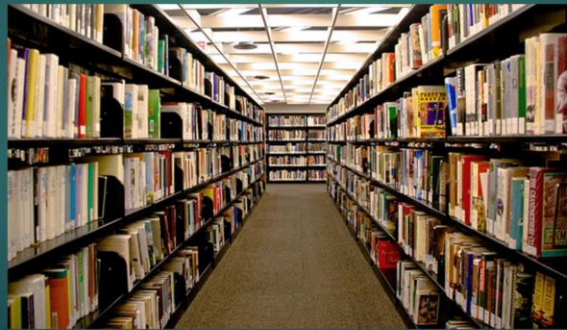


Returning to the diagram from last class, one of the challenges to top down, one way systems are self-organizing systems, where members of an affinity group or “community of practice” negotiate systems of power and control, sometimes amicably but often through struggle and contention.



The **World** is Changing

MULTICULTURALISM

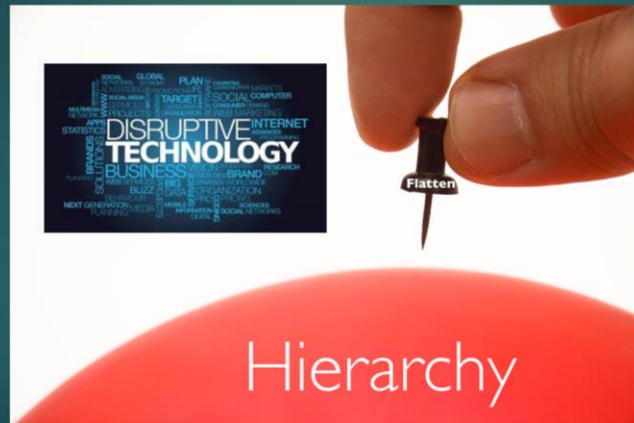


When it comes to systems of information, knowledge and education, there has been, arguably, a great leveling and destratification that started with the printing press. Once books could be mass produced, literacy became a possibility for the masses and not just select knowledge workers.

The ideal of the internet is an open, unstratified system where everyone has equal access to knowledge and information. The internet falls short of this noble ideal. Those purveyors of information who can afford it can pay search engines to have their results listed first, which effectively allows them to set the agenda and frame the way that we learn and talk about issues.

Wikipedia is, in my view, a prodigious achievement of information technology, and it's a "disruptive technology" because it threatens to disembody the historic gatekeepers of information, the library. Nevertheless, scholarly literature often sits behind pay walls, making the general population, without institutional credentials (such as being a college student) porous to lesser forms of information and misinformation.

Hierarchy



amazon



NETFLIX



Lets talk about disruptive technologies. A real game changer with the potential to wash away established companies. Returning to NYC after a decade, I was shocked to see Tower records on Broadway had closed. Even though I understand the reasons behind it. This is affecting how we consume media and information, in some ways for the better but often for the worse. For example, “citizen journalism” is, in principle, a great opening up of the floodgates, making consumers of media into purveyors. But the unintended negative consequences are pretty staggering. For one, many long standing news papers and magazines have folded, and along with them, we have almost lost a more rigorous standard for reporting (such as fact checking, providing empirical evidence, etc.) But most citizen journalists provide content for free, making content provision an unremunerated pastime. The frothy enthusiasm for “user generated content” can be considered as “loser generated content” —because media makers have taken a steep pay cut.



**How will challenges to
'business as usual' play
out in this class?**

COM 3401 Business and Professional Communication



Communication Challenge	Skills required
Diverse customer base, workforce, globalization	Intercultural Communication, International Communication, Strategic Communication, Multilingualism
Increasing complexity of business world, mergers, outsourcing, subcontracting	Organizational Communication, Intercultural Communication
Multiple platforms for customer feedback (reviews, tweets)	Strategic Communication (PR), Marketing
IT in the workplace, telecommuting, digital content and commerce	Electronic communication, information literacy

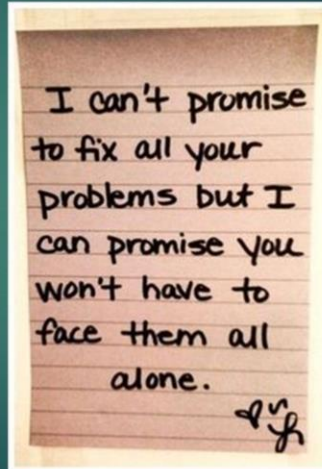
This chart can help us realize that Business and Professional Communication is heading into uncharted territory.

Globalization has meant the “Americanization” of media. Countries around the world are often familiar with the same movies and TV shows as we are. US brands have gone international.

Downtown Brooklyn, for example. Fulton street used to be an amazing, funky strip of mom and pop shops. Now the stores that can afford the rent are often multinational brands: Nordstrom, H & M, etc.

But even as American brands have dominated, globalization has also brought people from all over the world to the US. Look no further than this classroom. As a result, the same old, “WASP” culture that has characterized mass media and Madison Avenue is changing. More diversity in companies. With cultural diversity comes the need for companies to adapt; tailor their message and pitch to niches.

Meanwhile, every company has social media presence, opening the doors to negative reviews.



What do you think?

Is globalization overall positive or negative?

Is the face of corporate America adapting to new multicultural realities?

Or are we still a white, male dominated society?

What is the role that communication technologies play in our changing world?

Lets open up the discussion.