



DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED COMMUNICATION
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

ACOM 7329/PADM 7329: Mediation Seminar

ACOM/PADM 7329 – 991
ACOM/PADM 7329 – 9U1
PADM 7329 – 01

Spring 2024 - Online

Required Synchronous Virtual Meetings using Zoom on:

Wednesday, February 21 from 6 to 8 PM
Thursday, February 22 from 6 to 8 PM
Wednesday, March 27 from 6 to 8 PM
Thursday, March 28 from 6 to 8 PM
Wednesday, April 17 from 6 to 8 PM
Thursday, April 18 from 6 to 8 PM

3 Credit Hours
Syllabus subject to change

Instructor: Dr. Bailey Oliver Blackburn (Preferred title & pronouns: Dr. Blackburn; she/her)

Email: boblackburn@ualr.edu

Please note this is the only way to contact me - do NOT use Blackboard Messages as those do not notify me when a message is waiting. Contact me via email only.

Office: Virtual Office via Zoom

Business Hours Contact: (501) 916-6027

Weekends Contact: via email

Office Hours: Online by appointment, contact me via email to set up

Course Objectives/Rationale

Simulated mediations will deal with a range of subjects of disputes. Class presentations and readings will cover theoretical discussions of mediation goals, opening statements, ethical duties, questioning techniques, identifying issues and interests, caucusing procedures, negotiation tactics, and dealing with emotions. We will also address the role mediation plays (or does not play) in regards to Arkansas laws and policies.

Catalog Course Description

Examines current research and theories regarding conflict and their application to the practice of mediation in a variety of conflict situations. Teaches skills necessary to serve as an impartial third-party, such as listening, questioning, creative problem-solving, moving beyond impasse, negotiation, and caucusing. Addresses various mediation styles and types of mediation. Cross listed as PADM 7329.

Blackboard/UALR Email/Zoom

As an online class, a large required part of this course is accessing announcements, updates, assignments, video lectures, and grades through Blackboard. The Blackboard website provides vital announcements, assignment handouts/rubrics, and a course calendar—information that may not be discussed in emails. You should check our Blackboard page daily. You should access the Blackboard website within the first two days of the start of our semester.

In order to get key course announcements, you also **MUST** regularly access your UALR-sponsored email address. If you want to use an alternate email, you must redirect your UALR email address. Furthermore, students must regularly clean out their email accounts so that they are able to receive course announcements. ***Do not send emails to me through Blackboard.*** The only way to contact me is by emailing boblackburn@ualr.edu

For synchronous meetings, we will be using Zoom. Please set up a username and password using your UALR email address. You should do this in advance to our first virtual meeting. You can download Zoom to your laptop or phone and set up a free account at <https://zoom.us> Links to access our virtual class meetings using Zoom will be posted to our Blackboard page and emailed to you. If you have any questions about using this virtual tool, please reach out to me via email.

Required Texts

- ***Mediation: Theory & Practice*** (3rd edition) by Suzanne McCorkle and Melanie J. Reese
 - ISBN 9781506363523
 - Feel free to rent or purchase
- **Required Supplemental Readings** (will be available on Blackboard)

Assignments

Grades will be calculated based on the following assignments. There are 300 total possible points for this course with the following grade breakdown:

Personal Journals	40 points
In Class Mediation Role Plays & Participation	60 points
In Class Activity/Discussion Participation	30 points
Mediator Statement	15 points
ADR/Mediation Type Presentation	65 points
Final Exam	90 points
<i>Total:</i>	<i>300 points</i>

Personal Journals:

40 points.

You will be asked to keep a personal journal throughout your time in this course, where you reflect on what you are learning and how course concepts apply to your experiences. Entries should not be class notes or a list/bullet point summary of class activities or concepts. Rather, entries should be thoughtful reflections on what you are learning and the important concepts from readings and lectures that resonate with you and your lived experiences at home/work/within your community or relationships. For example, a news article, current event, social media post, or television show might trigger a thought on

how it relates to mediation practice or conflict theory. Or a comment or an encounter with a friend or stranger might cause you to reflect on what you recently learned in lecture or in a course reading. You will be required to submit at least 8 entries total and journals will be handed in midway through the course and at the end of the course for review (see specific due dates below in your course calendar). Quality not quantity matters most for journals – and despite the personal nature of these journals, you should still show your academic understanding of course concepts by academically defining concepts you are writing and reflecting about and writing in full sentence/paragraph format. Each journal entry should be dated and at least 1 page, double-spaced, 12-point font. Think of these journals as part of your preparation for the class and your analysis during and after the class. Your first set of journals (at least four entries) should be focused on content between Weeks 2-6 and your final set of journals (at least four additional entries) should be focused on content between Weeks 7-12. Further details, a rubric, and an assignment overview video for this assignment will be posted to Blackboard.

In Class Mediation Role Plays & Participation:

60 points.

We will be engaging in multiple mediation role plays during our virtual class meetings. Students will serve both as mediators and clients during these role plays and will be expected to illustrate knowledge of mediation theories and practices when playing the mediator role. Students will receive information about their client roles prior to a virtual class meeting and students will role play as the mediator in at least 3 mediation simulations/role plays during virtual class meetings.

In Class Activity/Discussion Participation:

30 points.

In addition to mediation simulations/role plays, we will be engaging in a variety of other class activities and discussions during virtual class meetings. This grade is made up of general participation and attendance across virtual class meetings, including when we are not holding role plays but conducting other class activities and whole-class discussions. It is useful to bring your journal or notes you have taken while completing course readings/lecture videos to virtual class meetings to aid in your contribution to these discussions. Please also note in the attendance section of this syllabus below that you must attend/be present at all six virtual class meetings in order to pass the course unless otherwise discussed with the instructor.

Mediator Statement:

15 points.

Across the first few weeks of the course, you will learn the importance of crafting a mediator statement. Around Week 5-6 (see specific due dates below in your course calendar), you will be asked to submit your own mediator statement, that includes all mediator statement requirements (that you will learn about during lecture videos/readings), as well as your own unique contributions to make the statement uniquely yours. Further details, a rubric, and an assignment overview video for this assignment will be posted to Blackboard.

ADR/Mediation Type Presentation:

65 points.

During the third Thursday of Zoom class, students will work in pairs and give an 8 to 10-minute presentation to the class regarding an ADR technique or mediation type/topic of their choice. Pairs may

choose a topic from the instructor's list, and topics will be first come, first serve (email instructor to reserve topic). Students get to choose their partner as well, but must confirm with their partner first before notifying the instructor of their partner choice via email (and CCing their partner). The presentation should inform the class on the topic, define important concepts related to the topic, detail what strategies/mediation techniques are most useful for this type of mediation/ADR, and provide ample examples throughout the presentation to help the class understand and apply this knowledge. The presentation content should be supported by multiple academic citations/sources as well. Pairs should utilize a PowerPoint to deliver their presentation and should not be reading directly from a prompt during delivery. Further details, a rubric, and an assignment overview video for this assignment will be posted to Blackboard.

Final Exam:

90 points.

A final exam will assess students' understanding of mediation theory and practice, and will include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. This exam will be accumulative (will cover content from Weeks 1-15), but a study guide will be provided to assist with preparation. Exams will be administered online via Blackboard.

Grading Policy

Generally, in the course, 'excellent' work earns "A" grades, 'good' work earns "B" grades, 'average' work earns "C" grades, 'below average' work earns "D" grades, and 'unacceptable' work earns an "F" or "0" grade. [More specific guidelines as to what counts as 'excellent' and 'good' will be explicated in class or presented to you on a handout before each assignment.] **Due to course policy, I cannot offer extra credit.**

A -	90-100 Percent	269-300 points
B -	80-89 Percent	239-268 points
C -	70-79 Percent	209-238 points
D -	60-69 Percent	179-208 points
F -	0-59 Percent	0-178 points

Course Policies

Participation and Attendance:

We will be engaging in a number of in-class activities via Zoom (such as in small group work, live negotiations, breakout room activities, and main room/whole group discussions) for which participation is **REQUIRED**. **Due to the need for all participants to take part in mediation role-plays, it is especially essential that you attend each virtual class session.** Your participation in this class includes every assignment, from your presence during synchronous Zoom meetings, virtual class discussions and activities, to online assignment submissions and live virtual small group and whole class activities. Students who are not present during virtual meetings, do not contribute to class activities or discussions, or who are tardy for those virtual meetings or activities will not receive credit for them and their final grade will be negatively impacted as a result, likely in a "F – failure" in the course overall. **In sum, you must be present for all virtual Zoom meetings (6 total) and actively participate in them in order to pass the course.**

Makeup Polices:

All written assignments will be submitted online via Blackboard. As such, papers will **not** be accepted late for full credit or via email. Assignments may be turned in to Blackboard the following day for half credit (50% less credit) at most. Papers will not be accepted after two days from the original due date. I do not accept papers via email, so please do not ask. Blackboard is the only acceptable place to turn in online assignments. All papers must be typed and include a name for grading. All papers must be also be submitted in either PDF or Word Doc format. Google Doc links, Pages, or any other file format are NOT accepted on Blackboard. In-class virtual assignments and attendance cannot be made up (see above section on Participation and Attendance). If you miss one of these assignments or a virtual meeting and have an *excused absence* (note from a physician, attorney, police, judge, or an obituary/funeral program), you will be provided with an alternative assignment and will have 1-week from the missed day to submit the assignment in full.

Regular and Substantive Contact:

I am dedicated to interacting with my students to ensure their academic success. As such, I will remain in regular and substantive contact with you all throughout the semester by: posting video class lectures, sending weekly emails, and providing online feedback and grades hopefully within two weeks of an assignment submission. I will also be available for virtual office hours and via email throughout the semester.

Video Lecture/Course Content Sharing Policy:

Please note that lecture videos, assignment overview videos, handouts and rubrics, etc are accessible to and available for current students in this class only. **You are NOT permitted to share video/lecture links or any other course material with anyone outside this course.** Submitting assignments in this course confirms your commitment/that you agree to all course/university policies as outlined in the syllabus, including this one.

Accepted Assignment File Types:

All assignments in this course must be submitted as **.doc, .docx, or PDF** files only. Blackboard will NOT accept links to Google Drive documents (Google Sheets or Google Docs), image files, or .pages files. If you utilize Google Docs, you must download your assignment as a PDF or .docx first and submit that file. As a UALR student, you can also download Microsoft Word directly to your computer for free using the following link - <https://ualr.edu/itservices/applications/v/office365/>

Academic Integrity:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the deliberate use of another's work as your own. This means lifting passages from books, journal articles, or other scholarly material without proper citations. I read these types of articles regularly and recognize the type of writing. Please also be advised that all work for this class must be **original** to this class. You may not recycle papers or work from other courses you've taken, including if you are taking this course over again. This behavior is considered to be academically dishonest and/or plagiarism as well. You should also not be taking online exams with others – all work, including exam answers, should be original. If you have any questions about these policies, please contact me. All material in this course- exam answers, any discussion board comments and posts, and paper submissions will be reviewed for plagiarism. Lastly, teachers are notified when a student has submitted a paper written by a for profit paper writing service, AI Generator, or BOT. Any form of recognized plagiarism will result in at least an

immediate deduction of 20% of the assignment's points, and possibly a failure for the assignment, for the course, and a report made to the disciplinary dean depending on the extent of plagiarism.

Student Conduct:

I want to build a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. In a communication class, it is *especially* important that we (1) display respect for all members of the classroom – including the instructor and students, (2) pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities; (3) avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading other course work or outside materials, surfing the internet, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, social media, leaving the room instead of focusing and engaging the in virtual meetings, etc.); and (4) avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom. This is *not* an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, it represents examples of the types of things that can have a dramatic impact on the class environment. Your final grade may be reduced by 1% *each time* you engage in these sorts of behaviors (via discussion boards, submitted assignments, or in-class virtual discussions). Further, students who are verbally or physically aggressive towards the instructor or another student before, during, or after class, or virtually will have their grade lowered by 25% *each time* they engage in this sort of behavior (and, if needed students engaging in such behaviors will be permanently removed from the class and the proper authorities notified). A breach of any of these student conduct expectations may also result in being sent to an academic disciplinary dean.

Please note that my office, our virtual classroom meetings, and all of our online spaces are all Safe Zones. Safe Zone spaces are locations where there is support and understanding, where bigotry and discrimination are not tolerated. I am a trained Safe Zone supporter and will not tolerate discrimination.



Non-Attendance (or Non-Participation in an Online Course) Drop:

In compliance with federal financial aid regulations, students **can be dropped for non-attendance (or non-participation in an online course)**.

In order to be considered “active” in a face to face course, and therefore not be dropped, you must:

- attend classes
- submit academic assignments in class and/or online via Blackboard
- participate in online discussions posted to our Blackboard
- initiate contact with your instructor via email to ask questions about the course or the academic subject studied in the course

In order to be considered “active” in an online course, and therefore not be dropped, you must*:

- submit academic assignments online via Blackboard
- participate in online discussions posted to our Blackboard
- initiate contact with your instructor via email to ask questions about the course or the academic subject studied in the course (34 CFR 668.2 (1) (7))
- *Please note that logging into Blackboard or watching pre-record lecture videos is NOT sufficient enough to be considered “active”

UA Little Rock Care Team

Having trouble with class (or life!) and not sure where to find help? The [UA Little Rock Care Team](#) is here to help!

- The Care Team comprises student-focused administrators who collaborate to understand the complete view of the student's situation. Communication, care, concern, and coordination are all hallmarks of the Care Team.
- Our Mission: The Care Team exists to assist current UA Little Rock students with situations that can potentially disrupt a student's academic progress. Our goal is to intervene early, connecting students with campus and community resources to maintain academic and social wellbeing. The team reviews each case and coordinates appropriate outreach and follow-up. The Care Team understands that student life (no matter one's background or pathway) is stressful and helping students successfully navigate UA Little Rock is one way to show we care! Check out our website linked above.

Assessment:

Please note that artifacts from this course (assignments, instructor completed rubrics, pre and post surveys, recorded mediations, etc) may be used for programmatic assessment. However, student names will not be used in this process and no identifying information will be used in the reporting of findings.

Students with Disabilities:

Students with Disabilities: Your success in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have a documented disability (or need to have a disability documented), and need an accommodation, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as soon as possible to discuss how to meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. The DRC offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process among you, your instructor(s), and the DRC. Thus, if you have a disability, please contact the DRC, at 501.569.3143 (V/TTY) or 501.683.7629 (VP). For more information, please visit the [DRC website](#).

Inclement Weather*:

During inclement weather, UA Little Rock will make a decision whether or not to close based on all available information. The chancellor will decide whether or not conditions warrant canceling classes and activities and closing the campus or whether classes and activities will be canceled but with specified campus offices open. Online or web-enhanced classes will continue as scheduled at the discretion of the faculty member. The [UA Little Rock website](#), UA Little Rock email, the university's main telephone number (501.569.3000), and the Rave campus alert notification system are the official means of communicating information concerning weather-related closings. When necessary, the university will announce a separate decision about canceling night classes (those classes starting at 4:20 p.m. or later) by 2 p.m., if possible. The Policy Advisory Council of the University Assembly will recommend to the chancellor if and when missed undergraduate and graduate class days should be made up. In the event that the university is closed during a final examination day, the provost, in consultation with the Faculty Senate president, will reschedule any missed graduate or undergraduate final examinations with the exception of online exams which will continue as scheduled. Weather and road conditions vary from place to place. Employees and students are expected to exercise good judgment regarding the safety of travel when road conditions are affected by the weather.

**As a fully online class, the above weather policy likely does not affect us as we are not meeting on campus nor face to face. However, if inclement weather prevents you from accessing the internet or power in general, please reach out to me and we can adjust deadlines that occurred during that time.*

Class Rules

- All readings will be completed prior to the corresponding virtual class meeting day/time
- All students will be present during virtual synchronous meetings and engage in the class actively. This means you will not engage in distracting activities such as surfing the internet, engaging with others, talking on the phone, or leaving the room during a virtual meeting. Your video and microphone should be turned on during all virtual meetings unless the instructor manually mutes the class. It is suggested that you be in a private room when engaging in virtual class meetings. Please reach out if there are extenuating circumstances barring you from this class policy.
- All written assignments will be typed, free of grammar/spelling errors, composed in APA format, submitted as either .PDF or .doc/.docx file, and submitted electronically through our course Blackboard page
- All students will be professional and considerate of others and act in an appropriate and mature manner within our virtual classroom and throughout online class interactions.
- Emails will be composed using proper language and grammar, and will include a proper greeting. Failure to do so will result in the deletion of the email without a response.
- Emails sent after 5 PM may not be responded to until after 8 AM the following morning and emails sent on the weekend may not be responded to until the next weekday
- Questions about grading will be asked during virtual office hours, not through email or during class time

Tentative Course Calendar

OL = Watch Online Lecture; AOV= Assignment Overview Video

Week	Dates	Topic(s)	Readings	Assignments (due dates in red bold)
Week 1	Tuesday, Jan 16 - Sunday, Jan 21	Syllabus & Course Overview	Chp 1 & 2 in textbook. <i>-Introduction to Mediation</i> <i>-The Basic Components of Mediation</i>	OL “Welcome Video” OL “Defining Mediation & the Mediation Process” AOV “Personal Journals”
Week 2	Monday, Jan 22 - Sunday, Jan 28	Defining Mediation Overview of the Mediation Process	Chp 3 in textbook. <i>-Essential Skills for Mediators</i>	OL “Defining Conflict & Perspectives of Conflict” AOV “In Class Mediation Role Plays”
Week 3	Monday, Jan 29 - Sunday, Feb 4	Ethics in Mediation Pre-Mediation Work	Chp 4 & 5 in textbook. <i>-Premeditation Activities</i> <i>-Ethical Considerations and Tactical Preparations</i>	OL “Ethics” OL “Pre-Mediation” AOV “ADR/Mediation Topic Presentation”
Week 4	Monday, Feb 5 - Sunday, Feb 11	Mediator Statement (S)	Chp 6 in textbook. <i>-The Mediator’s Opening Statement</i>	OL “Mediator Statements (S)” AOV “Mediator Statement Assignment”
Week 5	Monday, Feb 12 - Sunday, Feb 18	Opening Structure (O)	Chp 7 & 8 in textbook. <i>-Storytelling & Issue Identification</i> <i>-Setting the Agenda for Negotiation</i>	OL “Opening Structure (O)” OL “Reframing Tactics & Agenda Setting”
Week 6	Monday, Feb 19 - Sunday, Feb 25	Mediation Structure & Questioning Strategies	None	OL “Mediation Questioning Structures” Zoom Class – Wed., Feb 21 from 6-8PM Zoom Class – Thurs., Feb 22 from 6/8PM Mediator Statement due by 11:59 PM on Sunday, Feb 25

Week 7	Monday, Feb 26 - Sunday, March 3	Negotiation in Mediation (N)	Chp 9 in textbook. <i>-Problem Solving & Negotiation</i>	OL “Negotiation Pt. 1 (N)”
Week 8	Monday, March 4 - Sunday, March 10	Negotiation in Mediation Continued	None	OL “Negotiation Pt. 2 (N)” First Four Journals (for Weeks 2-6) due by 11:59 PM on Sunday, March 10
Week 9	Monday, March 11 - Sunday, March 17	Agreement & Exit (A)	Chp 10 in textbook. <i>-Settlement and Closure</i>	OL “Agreement (A)”
Week 10	Monday, March 18 - Sunday, March 24	NO CLASS/ASSIGNMENTS – SPRING BREAK		
Week 11	Monday, March 25 - Sunday, March 31	Resolution (R)	None	OL “Resolution (R)” Zoom Class – Wed., March 27 from 6-8PM Zoom Class – Thurs., March 28 from 6/8PM
Week 12	Monday, April 1 - Sunday, April 7	Mediation Careers	Chp 11 in textbook. <i>-The World of the Mediator</i> 3 short Articles from Mediation.com <i>-Part 1</i> <i>-Part 2</i> <i>-Part 3</i>	OL “Mediation Careers” Final Four Journals (for Weeks 7-12) due by 11:59 PM on Sunday, April 7
Week 13	Monday, April 8 - Sunday, April 14		None	
Week 14	Monday, April 15 - Sunday, April 21			Zoom Class – Wed., April 17 from 6-8PM Zoom Class – Thurs., April 18 from 6-8PM <i>(mediation topic presentations during Wednesday and Thursday virtual class)</i>
Week 15	Monday, April 22 - Wednesday, May 1			Final Exam due by 11:59 PM Wed., May 1