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Teaching Philosophy

As an individual who overcame academic challenges during my undergraduate experience, my teaching philosophy is oriented around enabling students in and out of the classroom. Primarily, this is achieved through a staunch focus on accessibility: all of my materials are available to students, lectures are recorded, and optional resources are provided (e.g., podcasts, videos, articles) so students may learn at their own pace. In my teaching experience, I've found that students are often unaware of the resources their university provides, so I have relevant offices (e.g., the career design center, the center for excellence in writing, tutoring and academic support) visit in class and encourage their participation in such offices with extra credit.

A primary tenet of my teaching philosophy is that students will engage with the material if the instructor displays competence and enthusiasm toward the practical nature of course concepts. I express this in the classroom by asking open-ended questions toward students and displaying nonverbal immediacy to their responses. This ideal resonates with students as my course evaluations rate highest in instructor quality and enthusiasm. Further, enthusiasm toward the relevance of course concepts is expressed in my assignments: I encourage students to consider their own lives and current events when completing assignments. For example, my first assignment each semester tasks students with critically thinking about return-to-office mandates in the United States and consider how it relates to our discussion on work/non-work issues.

As an instructor, I evaluate students on their ability to grasp and think critically about course concepts. In particular, I evaluate their surface-level understanding of course concepts with exams and their critical thinking skills with written assignments. I structure my assignments in a way that my expectations are clear on the quantity and focus of their writing, but their ability to critically examine course material is not diminished. At the end of the course, students submit

a final paper tasked with connecting a course concept of their choice to an event that interests them.

Allowing students an opportunity for second chances is a deeply held value of mine. For example, when a student does poorly on their first exam and has an issue with attendance, I allow them to earn a clean slate on attendance if they show up to every class before the next exam. I also encourage students to attend meetings with an academic coach. If they do so weekly, I change the way their final grade is calculated to more accurately reflect their upward trajectory as a learner. These methods of evaluation were chosen to allow students who have temporary setbacks the ability to continue learning and excel in my course.

Sample Course Materials

COM217 – Assignment 2 Workplace Surveillance

Surveillance is a primary concern of the 21st century. In some ways, surveillance is ubiquitous; when traveling, shopping, exercising, learning, or working, we can be seen by other people. However, in organizations, surveillance is more than simply monitoring an employee's behavior. Instead, it is the act of observing and *evaluating* an employee's behavior regarding established policies, procedures, rules, and performance targets. Workplace surveillance is a fundamental aspect of modern organizations.

Recently, with the rise of hybrid work and artificial intelligence, scholars and journalists have placed more scrutiny on practices of workplace surveillance. Currently, workplace surveillance goes beyond cameras in warehouses and being observed by management. Surveillance software is embedded in the applications we use (e.g., [Microsoft Teams](#)) and in the hardware employees *must* use (e.g., [Amazon's scanners and trucks](#))¹. Is this a concerning rise in power among US organizations which violates employee rights? Or, is this simply organizations leveraging current technology for optimal use in the workplace?

For this assignment, you will write a 2-page paper on workplace surveillance in the US. Specifically, you will synthesize information from the articles below and present an opinion on whether you think current practices of surveillance are harmful to employees. Your grade will depend on the following criteria:

Did you discuss these articles in your paper ([GAO](#), [WCEG](#), [SSIR](#))?

Did you discuss your opinion on surveillance? Is it a value-neutral practice in organizations or is it a violation of employee rights and self-determination?

Is your paper a full² two pages?

Should you answer all of these questions sufficiently and the paper is 2 pages double-spaced, you will receive full credit. Partial credit will be assigned to papers which are not 2 pages or do not answer all of the questions. No credit will be assigned to late submissions (without prior notification) or work that simply does not follow the instructions. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to the instructor: kylehene@buffalo.edu. Submit a pdf file to UBLeads, no other files will be available as an option for submission.

¹ For more information on recent practices of surveillance in the US, *Coworker* has a helpful [database and report](#).

² A *full* 2-pages means 2-pages of written content. If you have any questions, simply ask!

COM217 – Assignment 5

The 5-day work week

Work is a central human activity not only in terms of the total amount of time spent in it, but also in its relation to social and personal identity – Dennis Mumby & Stanley Deetz

The 5-day, 40 hour work week has a long history in the US. In the 19th century, it wasn't uncommon for an American to work more than 60 hours a week on average. Various labor movements of the 19th and early 20th centuries advocated for 8-hour workdays. However, such conditions were not the norm until the Ford Motor Company officially adopted a 40-hour work week in 1926. Eventually, the 40-hour work week became law in 1938 under the *Fair Labor Standards Act*, establishing a minimum wage, overtime pay, and restrictions on child labor³.

Other countries have experimented with reducing the work week further (e.g., [Iceland](#), and other [organizations](#) in the UK), and have mostly seen increases in satisfaction with no cost to productivity. In the US congress, representative Mark Takano [introduced](#) a bill to reduce the hours stipulated in the *Fair Labor Standards Act* to 32, though it has not been scheduled to vote, and is unlikely to pass⁴. Further, there is currently a [bill in committee](#) in Washington's state congress to reduce the standard workweek to 32 hours.

This raises an important question. Americans have been more productive than ever since 1938 with the vast improvements to technology (e.g., computers, email, Microsoft office) in the last century, why haven't there been any changes to the American work week? Why haven't [wages](#) kept up with such improvements to the workforce?

For this assignment, you will write a 2-page paper on the 5-day work week in the US. Specifically, I want you to gather articles to help understand this issue and give me your take on why you think this is. Your grade will depend on the following criteria:

Is your paper a full two pages?

Did you gather and cite⁵ at least three articles?

Did you state why you think the work week hasn't changed?

Did you answer: Do you think the 5-day work week should be reduced?

Should you satisfy the above criteria, you will receive full credit. Partial credit will be assigned to papers which are not 2 pages or do not complete the above criteria. No credit will be assigned to late submissions (without prior notification) or work that simply does not follow the instructions. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to the instructor:

kylehene@buffalo.edu.

³ Of course, you can still work more than 40 hours, but your employer must pay overtime. See [History.com](#) for more detail.

⁴ This is merely my own opinion, I encourage you to look into this issue yourself.

⁵ In-text citations and a references page. See [APA guidelines](#) for details.

Student Evaluations

University at Buffalo

Spring 2026, COM 217LEC Communication in Organization Section

Instructor: Heneveld, Kyle (Primary)



	Question Text	N	RR	Top Two	Avg	SD	COMSpring 26	DivSpring 26	UBSpring 26	V Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excel	
1	Overall course rating	27	61%	89% (24)	4.5	0.7	4.4	4.2	4.1	0% (0)	0% (0)	11% (3)	30% (8)	59% (16)	
										Str Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Str Agree	
2	Course was well organized	27	61%	93% (25)	4.5	0.9	4.4	4.2	4.2	4% (1)	0% (0)	4% (1)	26% (7)	67% (18)	
3	Course was intellectually challenging	27	61%	78% (21)	4.0	0.9	4.3	4.2	4.2	0% (0)	7% (2)	15% (4)	44% (12)	33% (9)	
4	Work load was reasonable	27	61%	89% (24)	4.4	0.8	4.5	4.3	4.2	0% (0)	4% (1)	7% (2)	33% (9)	56% (15)	
										Str Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Str Agree	N/A
5	Fair methods of evaluation	27	61%	100% (27)	4.7	0.4	4.5	4.3	4.3	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	26% (7)	74% (20)	0% (0)
										Str Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Str Agree	
6	Course content helped learning	27	61%	81% (22)	4.1	0.7	4.3	4.1	4.1	0% (0)	0% (0)	19% (5)	48% (13)	33% (9)	
										V Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excel	N/A
9	Overall instructor rating	27	61%	96% (26)	4.7	0.5	4.7	4.4	4.4	0% (0)	0% (0)	4% (1)	19% (5)	78% (21)	0% (0)
										Str Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Str Agree	N/A
10	Instructor clearly presented learning expectations	27	61%	100% (27)	4.7	0.4	4.6	4.4	4.4	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	26% (7)	74% (20)	0% (0)
11	Instructor enthusiastic about course	27	61%	100% (27)	4.9	0.3	4.7	4.5	4.5	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	7% (2)	93% (25)	0% (0)
12	Instructor welcomed students to seek help	27	61%	96% (26)	4.7	0.5	4.7	4.4	4.4	0% (0)	0% (0)	4% (1)	22% (6)	74% (20)	0% (0)
13	Instructor presented material clearly	27	61%	93% (25)	4.7	0.6	4.6	4.3	4.3	0% (0)	0% (0)	7% (2)	15% (4)	78% (21)	0% (0)

Instructor	Text Responses
	Question: Comments on most effective elements
	(COM 217LEC) most of it was easily applicable to real life and made learning the concepts easier
	(COM 217LEC) everything
	(COM 217LEC) I found the lectures to be particularly effective.
	(COM 217LEC) Good mix of writing and exams
	(COM 217LEC) Good assignments. Kept me engaged in the topics I was writing about.
	(COM 217LEC) The elements I found effective in this course were the class discussions and references to real world events. These helped both me and my classmates better absorb the content presented in the course.
	(COM 217LEC) The work was easy to follow along with
	(COM 217LEC) i love the structure of the assignments and how clear the instructions are for each of them, they don't leave any room for misinterpretation. also liked the series of speakers that would come into class and speak about resources like the career and design center
	(COM 217LEC) I found the 5 writing assignments throughout the semester interesting.
	(COM 217LEC) powerpoint weren't flooded with words, and the professor did a good job keeping it concise
	(COM 217LEC) One thing I found effective was that our assignments all related to the real world and basically had us connect what we learned in class to current real world things like ai
	(COM 217LEC) I loved the way the assignments were planned out. It was very manageable but still educational.
	(COM 217LEC) n/a
	(COM 217LEC) Professor Heneveld uses a lot of examples which were very helpful to demonstrate concepts. He is also a very generous grader.
	(COM 217LEC) Everything
	(COM 217LEC) I liked the split between exams and papers as I struggle with exams and enjoy papers.
	(COM 217LEC) Slides were well made and easy to understand
	(COM 217LEC) It's a good course, boring, but everything was organized
	Question: Suggestions to improve course
	(COM 217LEC) some of the multiple choice questions seem up for interpretation
	(COM 217LEC) exams on paper

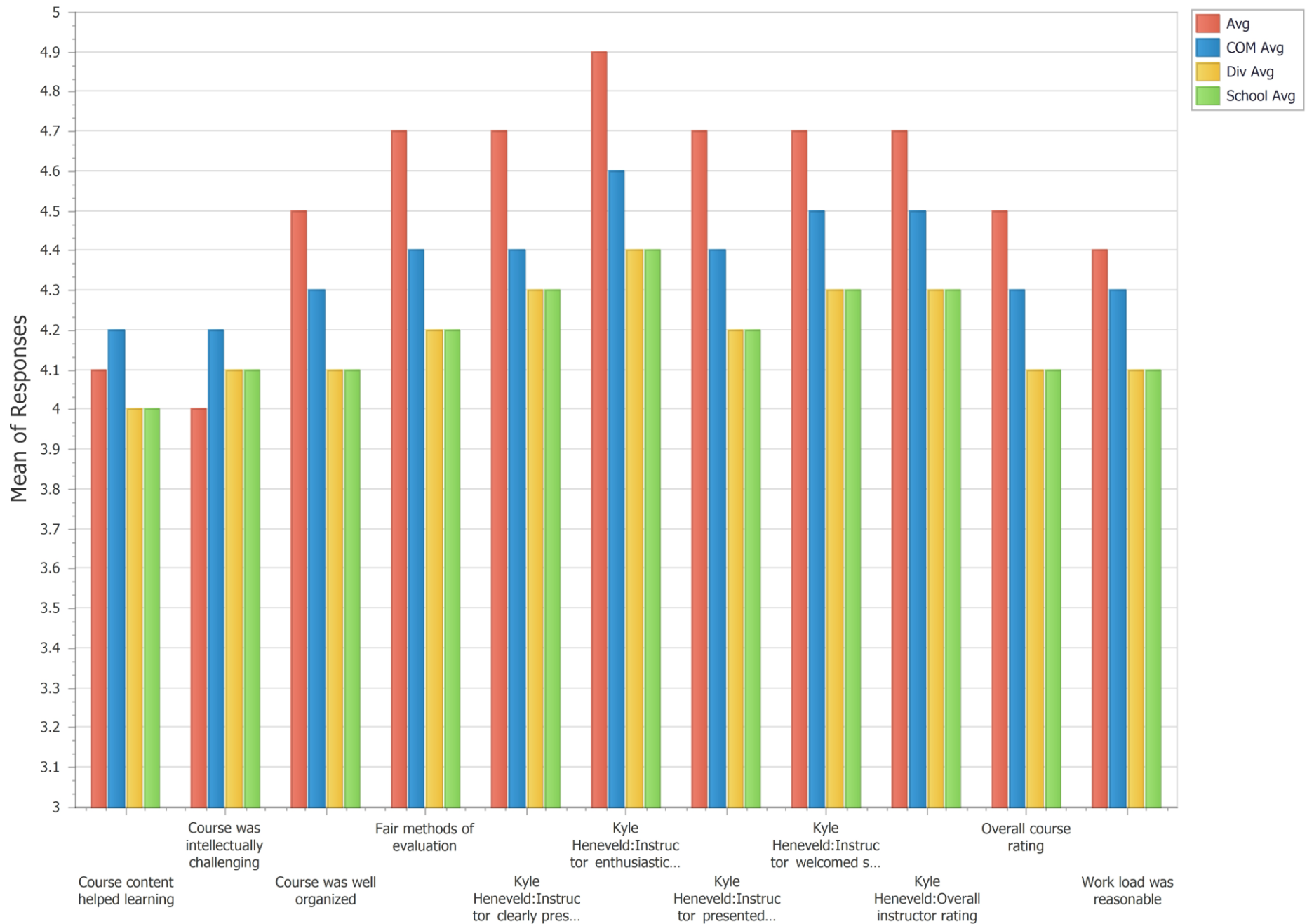
	(COM 217LEC) Something to improve this course would be the speed of going through the slides. Most times it felt like we were going through the content really fast.
	(COM 217LEC) Maybe instead of a third exam just a longer final paper.
	(COM 217LEC) the tests
	(COM 217LEC) One thing I would improve on is including more visual learning through video clips or podcasts to listen/watch that allow the class to talk about as a group.
	(COM 217LEC) One thing I would change is having assignments 1-5 be due on Sunday's instead of Friday's. Just because alot of students have alot of work throughout the week and papers are easier to get done when you can focus on them properly instead of scrmabling to get them done at the last day of the school week.
	(COM 217LEC) None!
	(COM 217LEC) Wouldn't change anything
	(COM 217LEC) None
	(COM 217LEC) I really enjoyed this class so there really wasn't anything I would say to improve on. Maybe just more engaging activities but it's hard because most college students don't participate lol.
	(COM 217LEC) n/a
	(COM 217LEC) I'm going to be brutally honest. This course was too much. I feel bad saying this because you are an amazing professor who is so passionate but for a 200 level course, you taught it at a 400 level. Assignments were reasonable but the volume of content you expected us to learn and retain was astronomical and most often disorganized. Each point you made had like 3 sub points, and then each sub point would have a sub-sub-point. I really think you just needed to make these things simpler.
	(COM 217LEC) Nothing to improve
	(COM 217LEC) N/A
	(COM 217LEC) Maybe more specific study guides
	(COM 217LEC) Instead of having lectures every class, have the students work in groups, and have them complete projects, and have group discussions on class topics.
	Question: Comments on teaching effectiveness
Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) very effective

Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) very effective
Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) The instructor was sort of effective in teaching the course he would just go through the material a little fast.
Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) Very effective
Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) Very good professor. He seemed to enjoy what he was teaching and doing and that positive energy was contagious.
Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) This instructor was very clear and concise with their teaching, and made it so that the slides presented during class could be easily comprehended and taken down in one's notes.
Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) He was awesome. Super enthusiastic and knowledgeable. If he ever wanted to come back and teach full time after completing his Phd i wouldnt hesitate to register for one of his Comm classes again. He was incredibly approachable and understanding about deadlines and I felt his grading system was consistently fair.
Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) He was very attentive and present when lecturing

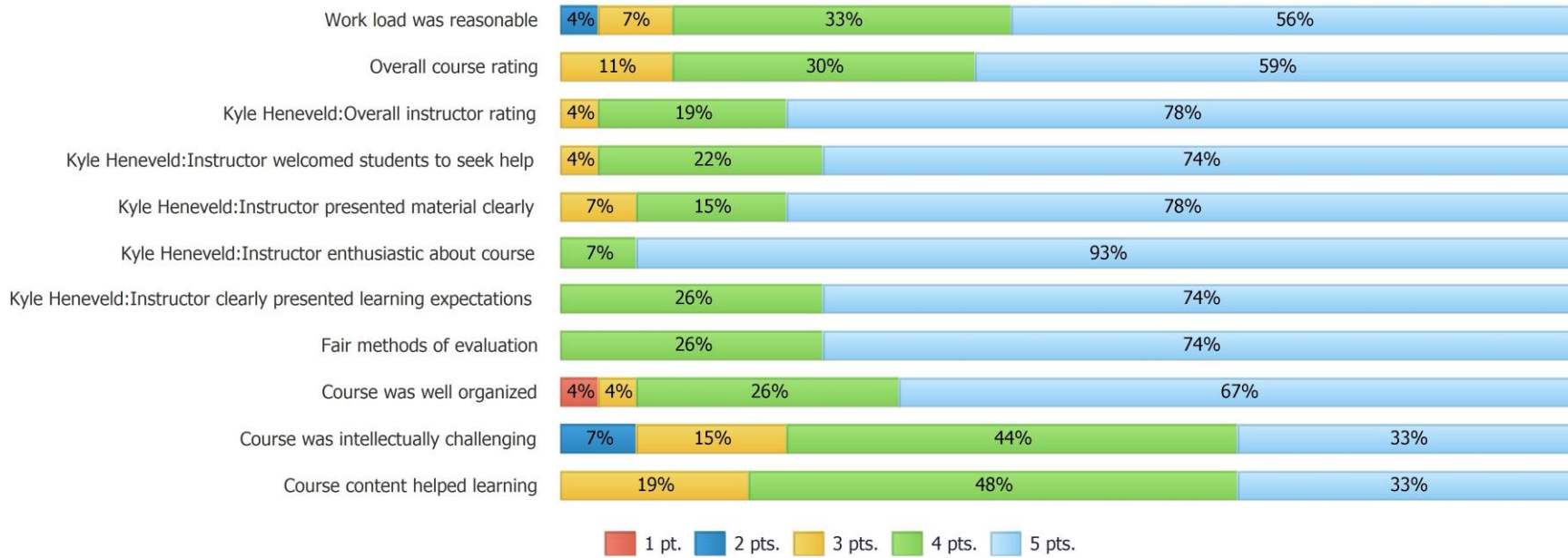
Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) Was always clear.
Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) he is truly the best. i appreciate the fact that he's strict about deadlines yet can still be understanding about them when he knows everyone is struggling with exams and other things going on outside of class. i can tell how much he enjoys teaching about org com and wants all of us to succeed in his class.
Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) I liked how the professor made everyone in the class be seen, by asking personal questions about our job history while also connecting it to the course.
Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) Used interesting examples to explain things and I overall felt his slideshows and classes were effective and interesting
Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) n/a
Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) Very effective. Enjoyed this class.
Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) Again, you are a very passionate professor and that is great. But you are just doing too much for a 200 level class. If this was 300 I would have been more understanding.

Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) Very!
Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) He knows very well of the topics discussed and implemented a lot of real world examples of different scenarios.
Heneveld, Kyle	(COM 217LEC) - great professor - super organized - clear homework instructions

Question Averages



Distribution of Scores



Peer Evaluations

TA name: Kyle Heneveld

Course: COM 217 Communication in Organizations

Observation date: November 12, 2025

Observed by: Art Raney

Department of Communication Instructor Review

Teaching prep

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	Very poor	Did not observe
Planning and preparation	x							
Clarity of slides/materials	x							
Organization of class/flow	x							

Comments on teaching prep: I've seen you teach before, and as always, it was super clear that you were well prepared for the class. And you started right on time. Great! Also, the slides were great. Excellent job with transitions and animations. Really helped to "build" the information presentation well.

Class content

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	Very poor	Did not observe
Thoughtfulness and creativity	x							
Quality/accuracy of information presented	x							
Appropriateness for course/level	x							
Clarity of explanations provided/questions answered	x							

Comments on class content: The class was organized exceedingly well. The material you presented was great. Right on the expected level of instruction. Technical enough but not overly jargon-y. Nice job of explaining terms that they might not understand. In particular, I thought you did a great job differentiating enabling and constraining work-life boundaries. Also, great job using your own personal experiences, as well as relating the students' experiences, to the class material. Excellent!

Class management

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	Very poor	Did not observe
Classroom control	x							
Time management	x							
Review/debrief at end of class								x

Comments on class management: As before, you started with a preview slide of the chapter, followed by a verbal recap of previous material; you then asked for questions, and then launched into a verbal preview of the day. This is textbook class management. Great work!

Instructor presentation

Instructor used appropriate ...	Always	Almost always	Frequently	Sometimes	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Did not observe
nonverbal cues when presenting material	X							
speech cadence (neither too fast nor too slow)	X							
facial expressions	X							
body language	X							
speech volume	X							
Comments on instructor presentation: As I've told you before: You are a natural instructor. Just a joy to watch you teach. Approachable, engaging, comfortable yet commanding attention and respect. Excellent. Just excellent.								

Instructor-student interactions

Instructor ...	Always	Almost always	Frequently	Sometimes	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Did not observe
was approachable	X							
had an appropriate demeanor	X							
engaged students throughout the class	X							
Comments on instructor-student interactions: Perhaps could have asked a few more questions of the students/elicited a bit more feedback, though you were patient to take several responses when you posed a question. In truth, the session was clearly a bit more focused on communicating specific content rather than discussion; so, no worries at all. Overall, good job.								

Overall

Most positive attributes of class: Your presentation style is great. You were obviously well prepared and "knew your stuff." Flow of the class was great.
Area(s) to improve: Just see the few notes included above. Nothing major for sure!
Additional comments: Keep doing what you are doing! Super impressed!