



**Course Title:** Workplace Communication for Non-Native English Speakers

**Course Code:** COM 87

**Instructor Name and Bio:** Shunyao Li, Founder of Communicate at Work; Ex-Google Product Manager; PhD, UC Santa Barbara

Shunyao grew up in China and moved to the US for PhD in 2013. When she first arrived, she had to rely on others to translate in conversations with her advisor. It took many years but she was able to improve her communication skills enough to become a product manager at Google (as one of the 45 people around the globe accepted in the Google APM program).

Over the years, she has seen numerous pitfalls that lead to miscommunication at work, and developed frameworks that work the best for non-native English speakers. She started Communicate at Work to help more people like her. This course is a distillation of everything she learnt along the way.

### Class Sessions and Recording

Meeting days and times: Mondays at 5:30 - 7:30 pm PT

Meeting location: Zoom

The class sessions will not be recorded, but slides and worksheets will be shared after each session.

### Course Features

- Live session
  - Lecture, demonstration, breakout room practice for students
  - Requires interaction and active participation
- Assignments & Coursework
  - Course materials posted in Canvas
  - (Optional) Additional take-home exercises and discussions
  - Instructor will provide feedback on the exercises

### Course Summary

This course aims to unblock your career by helping you master workplace communication.

This course is designed for:

- **Team leaders.** You want to communicate and get to alignment with your team more effectively.
- **Career pivoters.** You are transitioning to a role that requires more intense communication.

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- **Driven individuals.** You want your voice to be heard loud and clear, and aim to take on a leadership role soon.

The students from past cohorts are primarily working professionals in tech, with a variety of roles (e.g.: Engineers, PMs, UX, Marketing, Data Scientists, etc). Regardless of the seniority, communication is the common need.

This course will not be a good fit if:

- You are struggling with day-to-day conversations in English
- Your main goal is to learn more phrases in English
- You do not work in an English environment

All the exercises and case studies will be in English and based on workplace scenarios primarily in North America.

Note: **This is not an English course.** It is a communication course designed for non-native English speakers. That means we will dive into the reasons behind the communication challenges non-native speakers have, but not how to speak English.

*\*Please see course page for full description and additional details.*

## Grade Options and Requirements

- No Grade Requested (NGR)
  - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  - Students must attend at least 3 class sessions and participate in the breakout room practice.

*\*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*

## Textbooks/Required Materials

There is no required reading, but during the course the instructor will provide optional reading material relevant to each class session.

## Tentative Weekly Outline

### Week 1: Orientation and Meet your Cohort

How to get the most out of the course  
Speed networking with your cohort

**Week 2: Summarize to get on the same page**

“I am lost in the conversation.”

“I tried to explain something but people don’t seem to understand.”

“I can’t find the right word. How can I express myself clearly?”

You will be able to get on the same page, and adapt your message to the amount of details needed.

**Week 3: Structure your message**

How often do people not care about what you say?

How often do you have nothing to say, but your colleague can answer with a lot of information?

We will deep dive into how to structure your message based on your audience, and expand your answers when you don’t know what to say

**Week 4: Deal with conflicts**

How often do you disagree but cannot seem to convince others?

Conflicts are on the surface. To resolve conflicts, you need to understand the other party on the “why”. We will do a lot of role playing exercises on aligning goals and reaching resolutions.

**Week 5: Give feedback**

If there is something that bothers you, do you talk about it or avoid it? Do you worry about saying it out aloud will hurt your relationship?

We will practice effective ways to deliver feedback without hurting others’ feelings.