

# Organizational Communication

Preface and Chapter One—  
Cheney, Christensen, Zorn &  
Ganesh (2004)



# Preface: Introductory Qs

- Why Study Organizations?
- Why Study Work?
- Why Study Communication?
- Why Should We Care?



# Preface: Themes for the Text & the Course

- The “disciplinarity” and multi-disciplinarity of organizational communication
- The interdependence of “internal” and “external” org. comm.
- Global and multi-cultural perspectives on org. comm.
- The unity of theory and practice
- Thinking critically about organizational messages



# Preface: The Meanings of “Practical”

- The development and refinement of basic skills (e.g., public speaking, interviewing, written message composition)
- The development and refinement of analytical and critical abilities (e.g., to construct an effective persuasive campaign)
- Work for positive social change (e.g., in promoting ethical professional practices)



# Chapter One: Thinking Critically

- What does this phrase *mean*?
- Does it involve always being *negative*?
- Does it mean we can't endorse the *status quo*?
- In what sense is it "radical"?
- Our favorite sense of thinking critically:  
*getting beyond the taken-for-granted assumptions governing our (work) lives*



# Chapter One: The “T” Word

- What is theory?
- Why do we need theory?
- What are lay or implicit or everyday theories?
- What are characteristics of a *good* theory?
- Let’s take the example of reengineering as a theory of organizational performance?



# Chapter One: Metaphors for Organizations and Communication

- What are some *common metaphors for organizations*?
- Why do you think the *machine* metaphor is so popular? How is it both good and bad?
- Why do we use *metaphors to understand communication*?
- How are metaphors both *necessary in and limiting* to our thinking?



# Chapter One: An Influential Metaphor—The “Corporate Person”

- Why were corporations granted “person” status in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century?
- What does this mean for liability and responsibility? Rights and Privileges? Ethics?
- Think of the equivalent of “Inc.” in Spanish or French: it is translated as “anonymous society.”
- What happens when we apply the idea of the corporate person to all types of organizations, not just to literal, legal corporations?



# Chapter One: Another Influential Metaphor—Business as War

- How does this metaphor *appear in everyday messages*?
- How is it used to *make decisions*?
- How is it used to *justify decisions*?
- How can “All’s fair” morph into “It’s just business”
- What are the *ethical implications* of relying on this metaphor?

