Statement of Purpose: This course will provide students with the minimum topics of Strategic Communications required in the POST Perishable Skills Program (PSP). The intent of this course is to improve the student’s ability to generate voluntary compliance through the art of persuasion and utilizing the tools of interpersonal and tactical communication. This course consists of practical hands-on strategic communications training for in-service personnel.

I. Course Goals and Objectives
   a. Goals
      i. Safety
      ii. Enhanced professionalism
      iii. Decrease in complaints
      iv. Decrease in liability
      v. Lessen personal stress
   b. Objectives
      i. The student will:
         1. Demonstrate basic components of communication skills and techniques.
         2. Demonstrate the importance of listening and persuasion skills as they relate to effective strategic communication.
         3. Demonstrate the skills needed to communicate effectively.
         4. Demonstrate a minimum standard of strategic communication skills with every technique and exercise, to include:
            a. Officer Safety
            b. Listening/Persuasion
            c. Judgment and Decision Making
            d. De-escalation, Verbal Commands
            e. Effectiveness under Stress Conditions
      5. Discuss:
         a. Reasonableness of contact (Why)
         b. Knowledge of person to be contacted (Who)
         c. Intent of event: (Why)
            i. Probation/Parole
            ii. Crime in Progress
            iii. 981/Consensual Contact
         d. Desired outcome: (What)
            i. Resolved on scene/Arrest
            ii. Services offered/accepted
         e. Perceived law enforcement biases

II. Officer Safety
   a. Control the Environment
      i. Tactical Pause
      ii. Slow Down
      iii. Gather Information
      iv. Develop a plan
v. Time + Distance = Options

b. Make Sound Decisions
   i. What’s important right now?
   ii. Set priorities
   iii. Think through your choices

III. Understanding Escalation vs De-Escalation is Affected by Communication Strategies

   a. Professionalism
      i. Stay in control of your emotions and keep your ego in check
         1. The more the ego is involved, the more difficult the situation
         2. The less ego, the more influence
      ii. Appropriate Language
         1. What you say
         2. How you say it
         3. How communications affect the outcome
   b. How you treat others
      i. Golden Rule – Treat others how you want to be treated
      ii. Platinum Rule – Treat others the way they want to be treated
   c. Four Tenets of Procedural Justice
      i. Voice
      ii. Neutrality
      iii. Respectful treatment
      iv. Trustworthiness

IV. Communication Elements

   a. Phases of Communication
      i. Approach – Impact of physicality
      ii. Greeting – Initiating the conversation
      iii. Engagement – Strategies to promote communication
      iv. Adaptation – Being flexible
      v. Repair – Re-establishing rapport
      vi. Incident closure - How we end a contact today could influence a future contact
   b. Message Delivery
      i. Content
      ii. Tone/Voice
      iii. Non-Verbals
   c. Active Listening
      i. Listening with all senses
      ii. Why is listening important?
         1. The most fundamental component of communication skill
         2. Active process that takes a conscious decision
         3. More time listening than speaking
      iii. Benefits of Active Listening
         1. Builds Trust
2. Broadens perspective  
   a. Strengthens your patience  
   b. Makes you approachable  
   c. Increases competence and knowledge  
   d. Saves time and money  
   e. Helps detect and solve problems

iv. What makes a good listener: Listening vs. Hearing
   1. Non-verbal and Verbal signs of Active Listening skills
      a. Non-verbal  
         i. Smile  
         ii. Eye contact  
         iii. Posture  
         iv. No distractions
      b. Verbal  
         i. Positive reinforcement  
         ii. Remembering  
         iii. Questioning  
         iv. Clarification

2. Listening Styles
   a. People-Oriented  
   b. Action or Task-Oriented  
   c. Content  
   d. Time

v. Examples of Active Listening/Questioning Techniques
   1. Paraphrasing  
   2. Verbal Affirmation  
   3. Opened ended questions  
   4. Asking specific questions  
   5. Summarizing Questions  
   6. Effective Pauses

vi. Barriers to Effective Listening
   1. Attention Span  
   2. Receiver Biases  
   3. Listening Apprehension

vii. Tips for Effective Listening
   1. Eye contact  
   2. Attentive and relaxed  
   3. Open mind  
   4. Don’t interrupt  
   5. Clarifying questions  
   6. Summarize  
   7. Try to feel what the speaker is feeling  
   8. Regular feedback  
   9. Attention to non-verbal cues

viii. Tips for Active Listening
   1. Affirmations
2. Open ended questions
3. Mirroring
4. Paraphrasing
5. Avoiding “You” messages
6. Effective pauses
7. Listen to understand not to respond

d. Empathy
  i. Empathy vs. Sympathy
     1. Empathy – The ability to understand and share the feelings of another
     2. Sympathy – Feelings of sorrow and pity for someone else’s misfortune
  ii. Establish Rapport
e. Questioning techniques
  i. Intentional closed-ended questions
  ii. Open ended questions
  iii. Question Types
     1. Fact-Finding
     2. Leading
     3. Opinion-Seeking

f. Persuasion
  i. Rational appeal
  ii. Personal appeal
  iii. Ethical appeal

V. People with Disabilities
a. Individuals with physical, mental health, developmental, or intellectual disabilities may have difficulty communicating, understanding, or complying with commands from peace officers.
b. Recognize appropriate methods of communication with people experiencing:
   i. Mental Illness
   ii. Substance Use Disorders
   iii. Intellectual Disabilities
   iv. Physical Disabilities
   v. Emotional Distress
c. Potential Strategies
   i. Pace
   ii. Tone/Voice
   iii. Reduce distractions
   iv. Content
   v. Non-Verbal
d. Special Relationships/Community Caretaking

VI. Team Communications during a Critical Incident
a. Coordinated effort
   i. Planned Response (when feasible)
ii. One voice
   1. Single point of contact with subject(s)
   2. Single point of contact with dispatch

iii. Force options
   iv. Continuous Assessment

b. Potential Resources
   i. Mental Health Resources
   ii. Community Resources

c. Debriefs
   i. Effective - examples
   ii. Ineffective - examples

VII. Event Prologue & Introduction to Crisis Decision-making Model (CDM)

a. Event Prologue (Defined)
   i. An opening to a story that establishes the setting and gives background
details.

b. Goals of Event Prologue:
   i. Increased use of BWC
   ii. Establish the setting for a contact
   iii. Give reason for contact
   iv. Safety: Officer/Public
   v. Enhance Professionalism
      1. Use appropriate language
   vi. Decrease complaints
      1. Use of inappropriate language

c. Implicit Bias (Defined)
   i. Unconscious attitudes/stereotypes that affect:
      1. Understanding
      2. Actions
      3. Decisions

VIII. Class Exercises / Student Evaluations / Testing

a. TacCom Refresher Quiz

b. **Learning Activity:** Students will be provided various scenarios in which tactical
communication and active listening skills will be utilized and demonstrated. The
instructor will proctor the exercise and provide direct/immediate feedback.