

Comm 200

Communication Theory

Fall 2017

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| Professor Rhonda Sprague | Class Time/Place: TR 12:30 - 1:45 (Section 1) CAC 300 TR 2:00 - 3:15 (Section 2) CAC 300 |
| Office: CAC 208 | Office Hours: TR 11-12, W 2:15-3:15 (and by appointment) |
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TURN OFF ALL PERSONAL ELECTRONICS (CELL PHONES, SMART PHONES, AUDIO PLAYERS, LAPTOPS, TABLETS, ETC.) BY THE TIME CLASS STARTS. IF YOU ARE CAUGHT USING A PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICE DURING CLASS TIME, YOU WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE. SEND YOUR SCHEDULE TO IMPORTANT PEOPLE SO THEY WILL KNOW NOT TO BOTHER YOU OR EXPECT YOU TO ANSWER DURING CLASSES AND OTHER IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES.

Learning Outcomes for this Course

Students receiving a passing grade in this course will be able to do the following:

1. Explain the development of and key ideas related to contemporary communication theories;
2. Identify parts of a theory present in a communication artifact and apply those to write a formal critique of the artifact from the perspective of that theory;
3. Use ideas related to theories to propose solutions to communication problems in personal and professional settings; and
4. Reflect about your success in achieving the above learning outcomes, using evidence presented in an ePortfolio presentation.

This course is required for all Communication majors and minors. As it is a core course, we expect the objectives of Comm 200 to fit within the larger program competencies established for the Division of Communication.

Learning Outcomes for the Division of Communication

By the time they complete all major requirements, students will be able to do the following:

1. Communicate effectively using appropriate technologies for diverse audiences;*
2. Plan, evaluate and conduct basic (quantitative and qualitative) research;
3. Use theories to understand and solve problems;*
4. Apply historical perspectives to contemporary issues and practices; and
5. Apply principles of ethical decision making in a variety of contexts.

Note: Items with an asterisk (*) are supported by this course. See the Graphic Syllabus (in the D2L Content area) for more information about the relationship between course requirements, course learning outcomes, and DivComm outcomes.

Course Text: Dainton, M., & Zelle, E. D. (2015). *Applying communication theory for professional life: A practical introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. This text is required and available from text rental.

Assessment:

Your grade for Comm 200 is earned through completion of the following assignments. You must earn a grade of C- or higher in this course for it to count toward Communication major or minor requirements.

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| *Tests (3 @ 20%) | 60% |
| *Short Paper | 20% |
| Applications | 10% |
| *ePortfolio Presentation | 10% |
| TOTAL | 100% |

*Required. See assignment descriptions for additional information.

Assignment Descriptions:

Tests. The tests will contain a combination of true/false, matching, and multiple choice items. None of them will be comprehensive. In other words, the content of each test will reflect theories and issues learned in that particular section of the course. *You must take all tests to be eligible to earn a passing grade for the course.*

Short Paper. Three papers are assigned; I will count the highest grade you earn toward your final course grade. *You must turn in at least one short paper to be eligible to earn a passing grade for the course.* Each of these will require you to apply concepts from particular theories to a particular movie, article, or other communication event. Specific assignment descriptions for these papers are in the Content area of our class D2L site. In addition, each paper should follow the guidelines set out in the “Writing Papers for Rhonda Sprague” handout, which also is in the Content area of the D2L site.

Applications. You will be assigned an application from each of the first 11 chapters in your textbook. Your highest 7 will count toward your final grade. In these applications, you will need to do 4 things: 1) select one specific concept or idea from the assigned chapter; 2) summarize the relevant theoretical idea or concept in your own words; 3) provide a paragraph doing your best to illustrate a time when you observed the idea or concept in action (in your real life, on television or in a movie, book, article, etc.); and 4) summarize what you are taking away from the application of theory to your life. I grade these according to three criteria: completion of the assignment at the time assigned, whether it addresses the instructions, and a third criterion I call a “Good Faith Effort.” You earn a GFE when your assignment demonstrates an honest attempt to meet the assignment’s parameters. The purpose of collecting these is to assure that members provide potential input into that day’s discussion or exercise, and to provide practical application of class theories. Applications will receive one of four grades: **Full Credit** (completed correctly – 2 points); **Most Credit** (complete, but containing some inaccuracy [e.g., if you tried hard but just didn’t understand the term you were working with] – 1.5 points); **Half Credit** (turned in but deficient [e.g., if you do not provide a *specific* application of the theory] – 1 point); or **No Credit** (did not turn in or very obviously did not make a GFE to address requirements – 0 points).

D2L ePortfolio Presentation. You will construct an ePortfolio presentation to demonstrate your ability to present and reflect about your work in this class. Specific instructions for doing so, along with requirements and guidelines about what to include, are in the Content area of our D2L class site. I will “push” a template to your ePortfolio for you to use. *You must submit an ePortfolio presentation to be eligible to earn a passing grade for the course.*

Attendance:

Although I hope you will want to attend class on a regular basis, I will not require attendance on lecture days. You are responsible for all information presented in class, including announcements, schedule changes, assignments, and course material.

You must take all tests on the assigned day. If you do not take a test and you do not have an excused absence, you will receive a grade of Zero for the test, and you will be ineligible to earn a passing grade for the course. If you do have a valid excuse for not taking a test, you will be allowed to take a make-up test. Recognize, however, that test might not have the same format as the one taken by your classmates (i.e., it might take the form of a short-answer or essay test).

I will accept late work if you have a University-accepted reason for it being late. These include University-sponsored activities, illnesses that can be documented, or attendance at a funeral (bring a funeral card or obituary). **In any of these cases, you must inform me before the deadline that your work will be late. Unless you have documentable evidence that you were completely incapacitated and unable to hold your phone or sit at a computer for long enough to send an e-mail telling me about your circumstances ahead of time, you will not be allowed to make up missed work if you do not tell me you will be absent before it is due.**

If you do miss an assignment because of an excused absence, the assignment will be due *the class period following your return.*

Accommodations:

If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability and Assistive Technology Center at the beginning of the course and then contact me. I am happy to help in any way that I can. For more information, please visit the Disability and Assistive Technology Center, located on the 6th floor of the Albertson Hall.

My General Philosophy:

- I approach education as a two-way street. You will get as much out of class as you are willing to put in. Paying your tuition does not guarantee you a good grade; it guarantees you a spot in the class, and the opportunity to learn something valuable. Please be prepared to take an active role in the learning process. Ask questions, offer examples, or do whatever it takes to make sense of the material.
- I dearly love the material I teach in my courses. I will put as much energy as I can into making class interesting enough that you want to be there. Please respect my efforts by being prepared for – and attentive in – class when you are here.
- I expect that you will spend between 3 and 6 hours per week working on course material, *outside of class*.

A few student behaviors make me grumpy. Please attend to the following hints:

- Do not ask me about a grade within 24 hours of receiving it. Wait a day and come see me in my office. All formal grade appeals must be in writing (see instructions in D2L), but I am happy to talk with you informally.
- DO NOT LIE TO ME about anything related to this class – attendance, homework, study habits, etc. If I catch you in a lie and the lie is significant, I will refer you to the Dean of Students office for possible disciplinary action. Take responsibility for your actions, both good and bad.
- Do your own work. *If you are caught displaying any form of academic dishonesty, you will receive an F for the course.* If you have questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please ask. University guidelines about academic misconduct are in the Content area of our D2L site.
- Do not use technology as an excuse for not turning in your work on time. Get started early, so you can recover if you have problems.
- *If you have any question about an assignment, ask me.* I am happy to spend time in class going over assignment descriptions and making clarifications. Do not turn in work, get a bad grade, and *then* complain that you did not understand the assignment. If I do not hear any questions, I assume that you understand everything (I do not write vague assignment descriptions intentionally.).

Tentative Schedule (I reserve the right to deviate from this schedule with appropriate notice.)

| <u>WEEK</u> | <u>DATES</u> | <u>LECTURE UNIT</u> | <u>READING DUE</u> |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Sept 5, 7 | Introduction to Class; Competence; Intro to Theory | Chapter 1 |
| 2 | Sept 12, 14 | Theoretical Traditions and Development | Chapter 2 |
| 3 | Sept 19, 21 | Cognitive Theories | Chapter 3 |
| 4 | Sept 26, 28 | Individual and Social Theoretical Approaches to Communication | Chapter 4 |
| 5 | Oct 3 | Review for Test 1 | Short Paper #1 due to Dropbox by 5PM |
| 5 | Oct 5 | Test 1 | Chs. 1-4 and notes to date |
| 6 | Oct 10, 12 | Theories about Interpersonal Communication | Chapter 5 |
| 7 | Oct 17, 19 | Theories about Communication and Culture | Chapter 6 |
| 8 | Oct 24, 26 | Theories about Group Communication | Chapter 8 |
| 9 | Oct 31, Nov 2 | Theories about Organizational Communication | Chapter 9 |
| 10 | Nov 7 | Review for Test 2 | Short Paper #2 due to Dropbox by 5PM |
| 10 | Nov 9 | Test 2 | Chs. 5, 6, 8, 9 and notes since Test 1 |
| 11 | Nov 14, 16 | Theories about Persuasion | Chapter 7 |
| 12 | Nov 21 | Theories about Mediated Communication | Chapter 10 |
| 12 | Nov 23 | <i>No Class – Thanksgiving</i> | |
| 13 | Nov 28, 30 | Theories about Mediated Communication, cont.; ePortfolio | |
| 14 | Dec 5, 7 | Theories about Mass Communication | Chapter 11 |
| 15 | Dec 12 | Comm Theory Wrap-Up | Short Paper #3 due to Dropbox by 5PM |
| | Dec 14 | Review for Test 3 | Chapter 12 |
| | Dec 15 | ePortfolio Presentation due to D2L Dropbox by 5PM | |
| | 8-10 Tues Dec 19 (Section 1) 2:45-4:45 Wed Dec 20 (Section 2) | Test 3 | Chs. 7, 10, 11, 12 and notes since Test 2 |