

## Course Information

3 cr. Introduction to contemporary communication theories. Application of theories to communication problems. Course is required for all Communication majors and minors. Course is offered in a hybrid format in Spring 2019, with an online component hosted in Canvas. Course access begins March 25, 2019.

## Instructor Information

**Instructor:** Dr. Rhonda Sprague

**Office:** CAC 208

**Office Telephone:** 715.346.2812 (office phone cannot receive text messages)

**Email:** [rsprague@uwsp.edu](mailto:rsprague@uwsp.edu) or [Rhonda.Sprague@uwsp.edu](mailto:Rhonda.Sprague@uwsp.edu) (preferred mode of contact)

**Office Hours:** Unless I tell you differently, I will be in my office on T 9-10:30 and R 2-3. If you want to *meet with me*, please contact me at least 24 hours in advance to make an appointment. You can send me an Email at any time, but please be sure it follows the guidelines below.

## Instructor Contact Etiquette

I expect that you will communicate with me in a professional manner at all times. To that end, please attend to the following hints for engaging in professional communication with me (and all your university instructors):

<u>DO:</u>	<u>DO NOT:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be polite. Say please when you ask for help and thank you when you receive it.</li> <li>• Be brief and clear.</li> <li>• Include an informative <i>subject line</i> in Emails. I will delete Email without a subject specified.</li> <li>• Include a <i>salutation</i> (such as Dear Professor Sprague, Greetings, or Hello) and a <i>signature</i>.</li> <li>• Specify the <i>course and section</i> about which you are writing or calling.</li> <li>• Be patient. I should respond within 24 hours.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not contact me to ask about something you could find out easily on your own (e.g., something on the syllabus, on the D2L site, or the like).</li> <li>• Do not send Emails that read like text messages. Watch grammar, spelling, and formality.</li> <li>• Do not make demands. Instead, <i>ask</i> for help.</li> <li>• Do not send Email about anything complicated. Make arrangements to see me in person to discuss complicated issues.</li> <li>• Do not put anything into an Email message that you would not be willing to say in person.</li> </ul>

**I know you are inundated with Email from around campus, but it is very important that you attend to Emails from me and your other instructors. Most of us are not going to send Emails containing superfluous information. At the start of each semester, it will be helpful for you to [set up a rule](#) in your UWSP Email account that filters Email from your instructors into a special folder that you check regularly. If you remember to change the names of your instructors in that folder every semester, you should never miss an important message.**

## Personal Electronics Policy

Because I do not require attendance on lecture days, I expect you will be attentive when you do elect to be here. Personal electronics are distracting and their use leads to lower retention of information for users and others around them. If I see you using a personal electronic device during class time, I reserve the right to ask you to put it away or even to leave. Laptops or tablets are fine if they are being used for note-taking only.

## Expected Instructor Response Times

1. I will attempt to respond to student emails within 24 hours. If you have not received a reply from me within 24 hours, please resend your email. At that point, you have my permission to add one of those obnoxious exclamation points to your message, to identify it as important.
2. I will attempt to grade submitted work within one week; however, longer written assignments may take me longer to read and evaluate.

\*\*\*If you have a general course question (not confidential or personal in nature), please post it to the Course Q&A Discussion Forum found on the course homepage. I will post answers to all general questions there so that all students can view them. Students are encouraged to answer each other's questions too.

## Course Materials

**Course Text:** Dainton, M., & Zelle, E. D. (2015). *Applying communication theory for professional life: A practical introduction* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. This text is required and available from text rental.

## 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. Apply elements from theories to make sense of communication artifacts; and
3. Write a critical essay about a communication artifact.

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 200 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.

\*You should produce materials related to these learning outcomes in this course. Comm majors should save everything you produce in this course. You will need some of it when you get to the Capstone.

## Graded Activities and Grading Scale

Your grade for Comm 200 is earned through successful 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.

Syllabus Quiz	1%			
Tests (2)	50%		93% or higher = A	90 – 92% = A-
Short Paper	20%	87 – 89% = B+	83 – 86% = B	80 – 82% = B-
<u>Weekly Discussions</u>	<u>29%</u>	77 – 79% = C+	73 – 76% = C	70 – 72% = C-
TOTAL	100%	67 – 69% = D+	60 – 66% = D	59% or lower = F

**Assignment Descriptions (more information can be found in Canvas):**

Syllabus Quiz. You will take a quiz over the contents of this syllabus. You must achieve a score of 100% on that quiz to earn full credit for that portion of your course grade.

Tests. Tests will contain a combination of objective questions (matching, multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, etc.). Neither 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. Tests will be taken online.

Short Paper. You will have two opportunities to write an analytical paper, applying concepts from particular theories to a stimulus. I will count the higher of your two paper scores toward your final grade.

Weekly Discussions. Greater engagement with material promotes retention, which generally leads to better performance and higher grades. Therefore, you will engage in weekly discussions about class material.

**Course Policies****Attendance Policy**

Attendance on lecture days is not required, but is strongly encouraged. The majority of the test material will come from class lectures. It is in your best interest to come to class. *Even though I do not require attendance, you are responsible for all information presented in class, including announcements, schedule changes, assignments, and course material. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to obtain the information you need.* I do not give copies of my notes to students. You must get missed notes from a classmate; however, you may ask me to clarify information from those notes that you do not understand completely.

**Late Work Policy**

You are expected to meet all deadlines for submitting required coursework. Work that is not submitted before its deadline will not be eligible to receive credit. ***I will accept late work for extremely compelling circumstances, but only if you have told me ahead of time that you will be unable to meet the deadline.*** Unless you have documented evidence that you were completely incapacitated and unable to hold your phone or sit at a computer for long enough to leave a voicemail or send an Email telling me about your situation before the deadline, you will not be allowed to make up missed work, regardless of the reason for your inability to meet the deadline.

Allowable Extensions: "Compelling circumstances" include, but are not limited to, the following: University-sponsored activities (bring me a list of participating students, provided by most advisors or coaches); illnesses that can be documented; or attendance at a funeral (bring a funeral card or obituary). If you do have a valid excuse for being "absent" on a test day, you will be allowed to make up missed work. Recognize, however, that make-up tests might not have the same format as the one taken by your classmates (i.e., might take the form of a short-answer or essay test).

If I grant you permission to turn in late work for a non-excused reason, work will receive an automatic 20% deduction, plus a 20% deduction for each day the work is late (so, an assignment that is one day late will have its score reduced by 40%; an assignment that is 2 days late will have its score reduced by 60%, etc.). The first day starts immediately after the Dropbox closes; the second day starts 24 hours later.

**Grade Appeal Policy**

If you feel your work did not receive a fair evaluation, you may request a reconsideration of the grade you received. However, you must observe the following:

1. The appeal must be in writing, 1-2 pages in length. You must submit it via Email.
2. The appeal cannot be made before 24 hours after the grade has been posted, but must be made within 72 hours of that time.

3. You must state the grade you think you should have received and the reasons why you think you should have received that grade. Your statement must make it clear that you have read the instructor's feedback thoroughly. Your reasons must conform to the standards used on the grading rubric.

Failure to follow any of these rules will result in immediate dismissal of the challenge.

I will respond to your appeal within one week. Recognize that you will be requesting that I re-grade your work. At the conclusion of that exercise, I will do one of the following: a) adjust your grade to a higher grade; b) adjust your grade to a lower grade; or c) not adjust your grade.

## Inform Your Instructor of Any Accommodations Needed

If you have a documented disability and verification from the [Disability and Assistive Technology Center](#) and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact your instructor as soon as possible. It is the student's responsibility to provide documentation of disability to Disability Services and meet with a Disability Services counselor to request special accommodation *before* classes start.

The Disability and Assistive Technology Center is located in 609 Albertson Hall and can be contacted by phone at (715) 346-3365 (Voice) (715) 346-3362 (TDD only) or via email at [datctr@uwsp.edu](mailto:datctr@uwsp.edu)

### Statement of Policy

UW-Stevens Point will modify academic program requirements as necessary to ensure that they do not discriminate against qualified applicants or students with disabilities. The modifications should not affect the substance of educational programs or compromise academic standards; nor should they intrude upon academic freedom. Examinations or other procedures used for evaluating students' academic achievements may be adapted. The results of such evaluation must demonstrate the student's achievement in the academic activity, rather than describe his/her disability.

*If modifications are required due to a disability, please inform the instructor and contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center in 609 ALB, or (715) 346-3365.*

## Academic Integrity

*Every assignment you submit in this class must be original work.*

***I will not tolerate academic dishonesty of any sort. If you are found guilty of engaging in academic misconduct, you will fail this course and I will report you to appropriate university personnel for further disciplinary action.***

### UWSP Academic Honesty Policy & Procedures

UWSP 14.01 Statement of principles

The board of regents, administrators, faculty, academic staff and students of the university of Wisconsin system believe that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to the mission of higher education and of the university of Wisconsin system. The university has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Students who violate these standards must be confronted and must accept the consequences of their actions.

UWSP 14.03 Academic misconduct subject to disciplinary action.

- (1) Academic misconduct is an act in which a student does any of the following:
- Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
  - Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
  - Forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
  - Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;

- (e) Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance; or
- (f) Assists other students in any of these acts.

(2) Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to: cheating on an examination; collaborating with others in work to be presented, contrary to the stated rules of the course; submitting a paper or assignment as one's own work when a part or all of the paper or assignment is the work of another; submitting a paper or assignment that contains ideas or research of others without appropriately identifying the sources of those ideas; stealing examinations or course materials; submitting, if contrary to the rules of a course, work previously presented in another course; tampering with the laboratory experiment or computer program of another student; knowingly and intentionally assisting another student in any of the above, including assistance in an arrangement whereby any work, classroom performance, examination or other activity is submitted or performed by a person other than the student under whose name the work is submitted or performed.

## Religious Beliefs

Relief from any academic requirement due to religious beliefs will be accommodated according to UWS 22.03, with notification within the first three weeks of class.

## Netiquette Guidelines

Netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online. Your instructor and fellow students wish to foster a safe online learning environment. All opinions and experiences, no matter how different or controversial they may be perceived, must be respected in the tolerant spirit of academic discourse. You are encouraged to comment, question, or critique an idea but you are not to attack an individual. Working as a community of learners, we can build a polite and respectful course community.

The following netiquette tips will enhance the learning experience for everyone in the course:

1. Do not dominate any discussion. Give other students the opportunity to join in the discussion.
2. Do not use offensive language. Present ideas appropriately.
3. Be cautious in using Internet language. For example, writing in ALL CAPS suggests shouting.
4. Popular emoticons such as 😊 can be helpful to convey your tone but do not overdo or overuse them.
5. Avoid using vernacular or slang language. This could possibly lead to misinterpretation.
6. Never make fun of someone's ability to read or write.
7. People's *contributions* are up for critique; their *personalities* are not.
8. Keep an open mind; be willing to express and respect minority opinions.
9. The Internet is forever. Think and edit before you push the "Post" button.
10. Using humor is acceptable, but be sure it is relevant to the discussion.

Adapted from:

Mintu-Wimsatt, A., Kernek, C., & Lozada, H. R. (2010). *Netiquette: Make it part of your syllabus*. Journal of Online Learning and Teaching, 6(1). Retrieved from [http://jolt.merlot.org/vol6no1/mintu-wimsatt\\_0310.htm](http://jolt.merlot.org/vol6no1/mintu-wimsatt_0310.htm)  
 Shea, V. (1994). Netiquette. Albion.com. Retrieved from: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/book/>.

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

<b>Date</b>	<b>Planned Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
	<b>Week One – Introduction to Theory</b>	<b>Chs. 1, 2</b>	
T Mar 26	Introduction to Theory		
<i>R Mar 28</i>	Introduction to Theory, Part 2 <b>Last Day to Clear Drop this Course (no W grade assigned)</b>		<i>Syllabus Quiz Due by 11am</i>
<i>S Mar 31</i>			<i>Discussion 1 Due</i>
	<b>Week Two – Intrapersonal Theories</b>	<b>Chs. 3, 4</b>	
T Apr 2	Uncertainty Reduction Theory; Cognitive Dissonance Theory		
R Apr 4	Message Design Logics; Interactional Perspective		
<i>S Apr 7</i>			<i>Discussion 2 Due</i>
	<b>Week Three – Interpersonal Theories</b>	<b>Chs. 5, 9</b>	
T Apr 9	Politeness Theory; Social Exchange Theory; Relational Dialectics		
<i>R Apr 11</i>	<i>No Class Meeting – Conference</i>		
<i>F Apr 12</i>			<i>Discussion 3 Due</i>
<i>S Apr 14</i>			<i>Paper 1 Due; Test 1 Due</i>
	<b>Week Four – Group Theories</b>	<b>Chs. 6, 8</b>	
T Apr 16	Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions; Communication Accommodation Theory		
R Apr 18	Functional Group Decision-Making; Groupthink		
<i>S Apr 21</i>			<i>Discussion 4 Due</i>
	<b>Week Five – Persuasion Theories</b>	<b>Ch. 7</b>	
T Apr 23	Elaboration Likelihood Model		
<i>R Apr 25</i>	Inoculation Theory; Theory of Planned Behavior <b>Last Day to W-Drop this Course</b>		
<i>S Apr 28</i>			<i>Discussion 5 Due</i>
	<b>Week Six – Media Theories</b>	<b>Ch. 10</b>	
T Apr 30	Diffusion of Innovations Theory; Media Richness Theory; UGT		
R May 2	<i>Watch Stimulus for Paper 2 in class</i>		
<i>S May 5</i>			<i>Discussion 6 Due</i>
	<b>Week Seven – Mass Communication Theories</b>	<b>Ch. 11</b>	
T May 7	Agenda-Setting Theory; Cultivation Theory		
R May 9	Encoding/Decoding (Critical) Theory		
<i>F May 10</i>			<i>Discussion 7 Due</i>
<i>S May 12</i>			<i>Paper 2 Due</i>
	<b>Week Eight – Final Exam Week</b>		
<i>W May 15</i>	<i>08:00 – 10:00 (Assigned Final Exam Period)</i>		<i>Test 2 Due</i>