

COMM465: Communication Theory

Dr. Knopf (Morey248: Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30-1:30, Wednesdays 10:00-11:00)
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Course Description: We will consider the nature, elements, and functions of theory in the social scientific and humanistic studies of communication, and explore a sample of major theories in interpersonal, organizational, public, intercultural, media, and influence communication.

Course Objectives: In taking this class, you will be able to:

- Understand the history of the discipline
- Show knowledge of & evaluate comm theory
- Understand contemporary scholarship
- Engage in lower-level theory analysis
- Recognize the place of theory in comm research, & explain the role of comm in society

Texts & Course Materials:

- *A First Look at Communication Theory*, 9th ed, by Em Griffin • afirstlook.com website
- Syllabus (copy permanently on Moodle)
- 4x6 index cards – strongly recommended, not required

Grading:

- 9 quizzes (lowest four dropped) = 25 points
- Midterm + Final Exam = 25 points
- Application logs = 25 points
- Final project = 25 points

☆Full assignment descriptions & instructions are below. Use them. ☆

Final Grades are broken down **in this class** as follows:

- 4.0 = 94-100
 - 3.7 = 88-93
 - 3.3 = 82-87
 - 3.0 = 76-81
 - 2.7 = 70-75
 - 2.3 = 64-69
 - 2.0 = 58-63
 - 1.7 = 52-57
 - 1.3 = 46-51
 - 1.0 = 40-45
 - (0.0 = 0-39)
- ☆ Course grades start at 0 points, with each completed assignment adding to that number. A 2.0 is a "satisfactory" grade that indicates the *minimum* has been achieved, or that the work is of an average acceptable quality. A 4.0 is attainable but will require much more than minimal effort. ☆

How to earn a minimum 2.3 in the course, guaranteed:

- Attend 26+/27 class sessions
 - Arrive late/leave early ≤4 times
 - Complete *all* work, including quizzes, on time
- You can still earn up to a 4.0 if you do these things, and if you don't or are unable to do these you can still earn a 2.3 or higher in the course. If, however, you are worried about passing, this is the basic route to success.*

Assignment Descriptions: All assignments and their due dates are established at the start of the semester. This way you know what to expect, and when. You can plan ahead, both for time management and learning strategies. All due dates are indicated on the course calendar at the end of this syllabus. Due dates are absolute and non-negotiable. Details, instructions, rationales, and grading criteria for all assignments are outlined in the Assignment Packet section that follows the calendar. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with that information.

Challenging a Grade: If you identify an error in grading, I am always willing to admit to a mistake and correct it. If you want me to *reconsider* a grade, follow these steps:

- Write a 1-2 page explanation of why the grade should be reconsidered identifying what type of change you seek and providing a reasoned argument and evidence in support of that change. The burden of proof in any disagreement over evaluation of your performance rests with you.
- Resubmit the original work (complete with grade & comments) along with the rationale.

Extra Credit: Extra credit will **not** be available as an end-of-semester option to make-up-for or replace work that you did not do throughout the semester. It will never be given on an individual basis.

Due Dates/Late Work: LATE ASSIGNMENTS ARE **NOT ACCEPTED.**

✍️ *If you know in advance you will not be in class when an assignment is due, turn it in early.*

✍️ *If you wake up sick when something is due, please email it by class time as a document or image file.*

Attendance: This is a live, non-virtual, non-mediated, communication course. Being present on time (and AWAKE) is necessary. **If you cannot consistently be present, on time, for class, you should withdraw.** Please note, on time attendance means that you, and not just your things, are in the classroom when it starts.

☆You are solely responsible for catching up on work that you miss (always refer to the course calendar and to the potential kindness of classmates). Absences are not an excuse for late work or for being unaware of course expectations. Make-ups for assignments will only be granted in rare instances and usually only with documentation of an unavoidable emergency.

In the case of **college-sanctioned activities or religious observances**, arrangements should be made prior to/in advance of the absence. [Note: Grades that factor in attendance will be adjusted for such events as long as notice is given.]

Incompletes: Incompletes, or other arrangements for course completion, can be planned only in advance to the semester's end when there is an emergency that makes completing the course otherwise impossible.

Academic Integrity & Dishonesty: A pledge of academic honesty is made by all students at SUNY Potsdam, indicating that you understand & comply with the requirements set forth by instructors the Academic Honor Code. To plagiarize is to pass off ideas or words of someone else as your own without crediting the source, no matter what the source is or if you make some changes to the wording or add in some of your own words/ideas. ***In the event of plagiarism on an assignment in this course you will have 24 hours to correct or authenticate your work or receive a zero on the assignment. Other forms of academic dishonesty, such as cheating on an exam, or attempting to cheat, will result in a 33% lower grade on the work.***

Etiquette: The success of this course is directly related to the sense of community that we develop in the classroom. Any communication or behavior that potentially interferes with the learning environment of other students will not be tolerated. Disruptive behavior - even minor disruptions - may result in your being told to leave class.

Success, Assistance, and Accommodations: Assignments and policies have been developed in a way to help you succeed and to treat all students fairly and as responsible adults preparing for a career. Sometimes, though, life is particularly challenging. If you need particular course accommodations made for any situation, need assistance working through any problems, or have questions or concerns, please talk with me as soon as possible. You need to only provide enough information for me to provide or seek help.

Spring 2017 Calendar for COMM465 – Assignments due by start of class on day specified.

	TUESDAY	THURSDAY
Wk1	1/24: Intro to Theory, chapters 1-2*	1/26: Intro to Theory cont., chapters 3-4*
Wk2	1/31: Symbolic Interactionism [5] Quiz, ch. 1-4 (*read ch1-4 by today)	2/2: Coordinated Mngmt of Meaning [6]
Wk3	2/7: Expectancy Violations [7]	2/9: Social Penetration [8] Quiz ch. 5-7
Wk4	2/14: Uncertainty Reduction [9]	2/16: Relational Dialectics [11]
Wk5	2/21 – FEBRUARY RECESS	2/23: Interactional View [13]
Wk6	2/28: Comm Accommodation [31] Quiz ch 8-9, 11, 13	3/2: Speech Codes [33]
Wk7	3/7: Genderlect [34] Discussion of Infographic Project	3/9: Muted Group [36]
Wk8	3/14: Functional Perspective [17] Quiz: ch. 31, 33-34, 36	3/16: Symbolic Convergence [18]
Wk9	3/21: Cultural Approach [19] Quiz ch 17-18	3/23: MIDTERM 1-9, 11, 13, 17-18, 31, 33-34, 36
Wk10	3/28 – SPRING RECESS	3/30 – SPRING RECESS
Wk11	4/4: Communication Constitution [20]	4/6: Critical Theory of Comm [21]
Wk12	4/11: Social Judgment [14] Quiz ch 19-21	4/13: Elaboration Likelihood [15]
Wk13	4/18: Cognitive Dissonance [16]	4/20: The Rhetoric [22] Quiz ch 14-16
Wk14	4/25: Dramatism [23]	4/27: Narrative Paradigm [24]
Wk15	5/2: Media Ecology [25] Quiz ch 22-24	5/4: Cultural Studies [27]
Wk16	5/9: Quiz ch 25, 27	5/11: Infographic Project Due
FINALS		FRIDAY, 5/19, 10:15-12:15 FINAL EXAM 14-16, 19-25, 27

COMM465 Assignments

Readings

Nearly every class day, one or more chapters will be due. To maximize our class time and your learning, you should read the chapters *before* coming to class. This way, our discussions in class will make more sense to you and you will be better prepared to ask questions or contribute to dialogues. As an added bonus for keeping up with the reading, you have to following *option*:

On the day a chapter is due you may turn-in one 4x6 index card with handwritten notes (front & back) from the chapter, which you will be able to use as a cheat sheet on the quizzes/exams:

- You may have only **1 card per chapter** (both sides).
- Cards must be **no larger than 4x6 inches**.
- Notes must be **handwritten**, not typed.
- Your **name** must be on the card. **Without a name, the card won't be kept.**
- Cards will be accepted **only on or before the day the chapter is due**, no exceptions.

This is approximately a 4x6" box.

If you don't have index cards, you may cut paper to this size to use.
If you do not have index cards or a ruler, trace this box.

It may not be any larger than 4x6"
Larger notecards WILL NOT be accepted.

One chapter = one card (front & back) – absolutely no more than 1 card.
If you don't put your name on it, it will be thrown out.

Note card "cheat sheets" are always optional.
The card must be submitted on or before the day its chapter is due.
Late cards are not accepted under any circumstances.

Quizzes: For each unit, there will be a quiz of roughly 5-10 multiple-choice questions. The quizzes will cover the readings, lectures, and discussions since the previous quiz (see course calendar for exact chapters included on each quiz). **In cases of college-sanctioned activities or religious observances, quizzes must be rescheduled *in advance*.** Otherwise, **missed quizzes cannot be made up** because the lowest four grades will be dropped anyhow

There are several ways to prepare for the quizzes:

- Read the chapters. (Each day a chapter is due you may choose to turn-in one 4x6 notecard for each chapter with handwritten notes from the chapter; these notecards will be returned to you for use on quizzes and exams as cheat sheets; see the section in this Assignment Packet about *Readings*.)
- Listen carefully and take notes in class.
- Use the practice quizzes on the textbook website at www.afirstlook.com

Midterm & Final Exams: To help reinforce the theories and their similarities, differences, and connections two major exams will be used to encourage you to maintain good study and work habits throughout the semester.

The midterm exam will be a combination of short-answer and multiple-choice questions, taken from the quizzes at the midpoint of the semester. The midterm will be approximately 25-33 questions and worth 13 points of your course grade. The final exam will be a combination of short-answer and multiple-choice questions, taken from the quizzes since the midterm. The final will be approximately 25-33 questions and worth 12 points of your final grade. In cases of college-sanctioned activities or religious observances, exams must be rescheduled *in advance*.

Exams contain bonus questions which provide you with extra credit opportunities.

In addition to the preparation you do for the quizzes, you can be ready for exams by:

- Listening carefully and taking notes in class.
 - Reviewing, studying, and learning from your quizzes
 - Attending class regularly:
 - ★ Good attendance will pay off in having credit that you can use to "buy out" of exam questions. *For every full week of attendance (arriving on time & being in your seat when class starts, not leaving early), credit will be earned toward being able to skip questions on the exams.*
- NOTE:** Sleeping in class, reading or doing work for other classes, and other disruptive behaviors can reduce the attendance credit you may earn for exams.

Why tests? Psychological research on the science of successful learning has demonstrated that the act of preparing for a test and actually taking the test and retrieving information is a great boost to memory. This is your major – it's important to know the language of the discipline. Exams are not just a measurement instrument, they are also an important learning instrument. Exams are a clinically proven way to help students keep up with classwork – they encourage attendance, preparation and review in ways that less traditional or structured means don't, and the use of frequent quizzes or tests is likely to promote regular, moderate, work, whereas a few larger assignments tend to produce short bursts of cramming, often at the last minute. Furthermore, the quizzes and exams will push you to learn the language of Communication discipline.

Application Logs – At the end of each class meeting, you will be given 5-10 minutes to write a short journal-type entry in which you will apply the theory discussed, or some aspect of the theory to your own life. For example:

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM – I can vividly picture an example of how others reactions to me made me take more of the looking glass self on, often to the exclusion of the true "I." One day at track we were in the weight room and as I weighed myself, the girl behind me said in apparent disbelief, "You weigh 145 lbs?!" For a moment I verged on mortification, though I was athletic, tall and lean. Through her eyes I saw myself as huge and cumbersome. Moments after, she caught herself and added, in our track terminology, "but that's okay because you're butch—that makes you good." In trying to find coherence between the "I" that I was comfortable and satisfied with and these comments I allowed myself to become a "butch" - which for us meant super-strong athletic girl. But in the process, as I shrank into accepting myself as what others saw of me, I lost part of myself that isn't reflected in their reactions. The past few years I have been salvaging my "girlie" side—I have been trying to uncover the "I" that has been buried under what other people perceive me as. Since being at school, I have begun to see the dramatic importance of surrounding myself with people who enjoy or bring out in me the things I love to do and be.

The complete log is worth 25% of your course grade. Each individual log entry, however, will be worth only 1% of your total grade – making them a low-stress, low-stakes way of learning the material. Half a point will be awarded just for completing the entry, the other half will be awarded for showing or approaching accurate understanding of the theory.

Final Project: Infographic

At the midterm, each student will be assigned a theory, either randomly or according to interest, as class size permits. Using the following template example, you will develop your own 1-page infographic on your assigned theory. (The purpose of this is to understand a single theory in such depth that you not only know it, but can represent it in both words and images in a way that would explain the theory to someone else.) As indicated by the template, this will include:

- (L1): The name of a theory and a simple icon/image that represents it
- (L2): A large image or set of images that visually explain/summarize the theory.
- (L3): A bibliographic listing of 2-3 SIGNIFICANT sources about the theory, in APA form
- (L4): The name of the scholar/scholars credited with the developing the theory & the date of development (no barcode needed) and a simple icon(s) indicating the primary type(s) of communication it involves. (See samples that you can use on the next page.)
- (R1): A set of 1-3 icons that indicate the areas of communication in which the theory is applicable. (Again, see samples that you can use on the next page.)
- (R2): A one paragraph description/summary of the theory in your own words.
- (R3): A secondary graphic that adds further insight into the theory
- (R4): Any model that the theory uses (such as those you will find in the textbook), or a model of your own developing.

GRID SYSTEM
 Used for structure & repetition between theories

<p>L1: INFOGRAPHIC TITLE Bold / Largest text on page to attract viewer</p>	<p>NAME OF THE THEORY</p>	<p>COMMUNICATION APPLICATIONS:</p>	<p>R1: APPLICATION KEY Displays the areas of communication where the theory applies (e.g. politics)</p>
<p>L2: MAIN INFOGRAPHIC Largest graphic / limited text, 2-3 colors</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p>	<p>THEORY EXPLANATION. This paragraph will include a brief and descriptive explanation about the theory. It will use information from the original's theorist, as well as supplementary text found by the researcher. If the student still doesn't understand the theory, they can reference the accompanying textbook or sources list.</p>	<p>R2: EXPLANATION Briefly explains theory and / or infographic.</p>
<p>L3: SOURCES LIST Cited in APA format for quick reference</p>	<p>SOURCES: LITTELL, J.W., & POOL, F.A. (2011). <i>Theories of Human Communication</i>. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc. www.wavelandpress.com/category/theory/spiral-of-silence/ www.communicationtheory.org/the-spiral-of-silence-theory/</p>	<p>R3: SECONDARY GRAPHIC Further explains / emphasizes theory components</p> <p>This theory suggests that people fear ISOLATION from those around them.</p>	<p>R4: MODEL GRAPHIC Used to display pertinent graphics for the theory</p>
<p>L4: BASIC INFO KEY Symbol key will be located on a separate page</p>	<p>THEORY GRID SHAPE:</p> <p>DEVELOPED BY: GISELE NOELLE-NEUMANN Country of Origin: GERMANY</p>	<p>The Spiral of Silence Model</p> <p>If the theory contains a model, that graphic will be featured here.</p>	<p>R4: MODEL GRAPHIC Used to display pertinent graphics for the theory</p>
<p>L5: DATE BARCODE Includes the year the theory was introduced</p>	<p>L6: THEORIST(S) NAME & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN</p>	<p>L7: COMMUNICATION EMPHASIS i.e. "Broadcasting"</p>	

FIELDS OF COMMUNICATION STUDY:

Media Studies



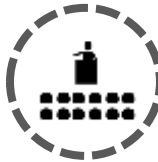
Interpersonal



Strategic



Public



Organizational



Intercultural



Areas of Communication Key:

Group:



Interpersonal:



Political:



Strategic:



Nonverbal:



New Media:



Grading Rubric:

- All Portions of the Infographic are Complete (2 pts)
- Infographic Format is as Requested (2 pts)
- Student Name is on Paper (1 pt)
- Identified the Correct Fields of Communication Study (2 pts)
- Identified the Correct Areas of Communication (2 pts)
- Bibliography is Complete and Accurate (2 pts)
- Written Summary is Well-Written (2 pts)
- Written Summary is Accurate (2 pts)
- Date is Correct (2 pts)
- Creator is Correct (2 pts)
- Primary Graphic is Insightful (2 pts)
- Secondary Graphic is Insightful (2 pts)
- Model is Correct (2 pts)