



COMM465: Communication Theory (Tu/Th, 11-12:15)

Dr. Knopf (Morey248: Tuesdays 4:45-5:30, Wednesdays 1:45-3, Thursdays 12:30-1:30, 5-6)
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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
- Understand contemporary scholarship
- Recognize the place of theory in comm research, & explain the role of comm in society
- Show knowledge of & evaluate comm theory
- Engage in lower-level theory analysis

Texts & Course Materials:

- *A First Look at Communication Theory*, 8th or 9th ed, by Em Griffin • afirstlook.com website
- Syllabus & Assignment Packet (copy permanently on Moodle)
- 4x6 index cards – strongly recommended, not required

Grading:

- 7 quizzes (lowest two dropped) = 25 points
 - Participation = 25 points
 - Midterm + Final Exam = 25 points
 - Cumulative project = 25 points
- ☆ Full assignment descriptions & instructions are in the "Assignment Packet" Use it. ☆

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)

☆ 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 25+/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:

- Wait at least 24 hours before deciding to seek reconsideration, but no longer than one week.
- 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.
- Allow two weeks for reconsideration. Accept the final decision. *I will reconsider each assignment only once.*

Extra Credit: A way to succeed throughout life, while managing stress, is to be mindful – to focus your attention and your energies and to be aware of the consequences of your actions. To help you to be present mentally and not just physically in class, you will receive 1/3 point of extra credit for every day that you turn off your cell phone, or MP3 player, or tablet, or laptop, and put it on the front desk BEFORE CLASS STARTS and leave it there for the class session (that can add up to 9 points of extra credit for the semester – which can mean making a 2.3 a 3.0!). You will not be penalized if you choose to keep and use your electronic device during class.

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.

✍ Because 2 quiz grades are dropped, there are no make-up quizzes.

All due dates are on the course calendar.

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.**

☆ 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.]

Attendance for the Final Exam/Meeting: Finals week is part of the required number of class meeting hours set by the SUNY system. Final exam times are scheduled by the school to ensure that classes do not overlap. Final exams or activities scheduled during the final exam timeslot, will not be rescheduled unless you have 3 or more exams on a single day. (If that happens, please see the policy online at <http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/registrar/exams.cfm>). **You must make travel/work/childcare arrangements around the final exam.**

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. Repeated offenses may result in course failure.

Spring 2016 Calendar for COMM465 – KEEP TRACK OF DUE DATES!

Wk 1	Tu 1/26: Intro to class focus, expectations	Th 1/28: Discuss comm research & theory
Wk 2	Tu 2/2: Ch. 1-2 due	Th 2/4: Ch. 3-4 due
Wk 3	Tu 2/9: Expectancy Violation (ch 7) due [social experiment] <u>*Quiz ch. 1-4</u>	Th 2/11: Uncertainty Reduction (ch 9) due [outsider exercise]
Wk 4	Tu 2/16: Relational Dialectics (ch 11) due	Th 2/18: Interactional View (ch 13) due [couples therapy exercise]
Wk 5	Tu 2/23: Social Judgment (ch 14) due <u>*Quiz ch 7, 9, 11, 13</u>	Th 2/25: Elaboration Likelihood (ch 15) due [political propaganda exercise]
Wk 6	Tu 3/1: Cognitive Dissonance (ch 16) due	Th 3/3: [midterm review] <u>*Quiz ch 14-16</u>
Wk 7	Tu 3/8 SPRING RECESS	Th 3/10 SPRING RECESS
Wk 8	Tu 3/15: <u>**Midterm Exam**</u>	Th 3/17 CANCELED (ESS CONFERENCE)
Wk 9	Tu 3/22: Functional Perspective (ch 17) due [problem solving exercise]	Th 3/24: Symbolic Convergence (ch 18) due [fantasy theme exercise]
Wk 10	Tu 3/29: Cultural Approach (ch 19) due [college culture exercise]	Th 3/31 CANCELED (ECA CONFERENCE)
Wk 11	Tu 4/5: The Rhetoric (ch 22) due <u>*Quiz ch 17-19</u>	Th 4/7: Dramatism (ch 23) due [Burke Bingo]
Wk 12	Tu 4/12 APRIL RECESS	Th 4/14: Narrative Paradigm (ch 24) due
Wk 13	Tu 4/19: Media Ecology (ch 25) due [discuss final projects] <u>*Quiz ch 22-24</u>	Th 4/21: Semiotics (ch 26) due
Wk 14	Tu 4/26: Com Accommodation (ch 31) due [interview exercise] <u>*Quiz ch 25-26</u>	Th 4/28: Face Negotiation (ch 32) due
Wk 15	Tu 5/3: Speech Codes (ch 33) due	Th 5/5: [participation self-eval & course evals] <u>*Quiz ch 31-33</u>
Wk 16	Tu 5/10: Final exam review, help with projects as needed	Th 5/12: submit final projects to Morey 248
Wk 17	5/16 @ 2:45-4:45: Final Exam	

LATE ASSIGNMENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTED!

COMM465 Assignment Packet

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.
- 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 generally be made up because the lowest two 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 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 questions and worth 12 points of your final grade. In cases of college-sanctioned activities or religious observances, exams must be rescheduled *in advance*.

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, 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.

Participation - This course relies on a combination of learning and instructional methods – readings, lectures, discussions, activities, and film clips. Attendance and attentiveness are necessary. Many regularly-scheduled activities mimic research efforts in the communication discipline to illustrate the theories you are learning and will introduce you to some research methods. Participation points will be earned for each activity, depending on your presence, involvement, and focus, worth a total of 10 points in your final grade. Other forms of participation will be self-evaluated (by you, using the following rubric- which will be provided to you at the end of the semester).

<i>Class Preparation</i>		<i>Class Time</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> I did the assigned readings regularly.	A	<input type="checkbox"/> I took notes regularly.	A
<input type="checkbox"/> I did the assigned readings occasionally.	C	<input type="checkbox"/> I took some notes.	C
<input type="checkbox"/> I never did the assigned readings.	F	<input type="checkbox"/> I rarely/never took notes.	F
<input type="checkbox"/> I sought assistance with difficult material	A	<input type="checkbox"/> I paid close attention in class.	A
<input type="checkbox"/> I spent extra time reviewing difficult material	C	<input type="checkbox"/> I tried to pay attention in class.	C
<input type="checkbox"/> I never worried about difficult material	F	<input type="checkbox"/> I used class time to chat with friends or do other work	F
<input type="checkbox"/> I did work not assigned.	A	<input type="checkbox"/> I participate orally in class discussions.	A
<input type="checkbox"/> I did all the assigned work on time	C	<input type="checkbox"/> I participated aurally in class discussions.	B
<input type="checkbox"/> I did some of the assigned work.	F	<input type="checkbox"/> I didn't pay much attention to class discussions.	F

Considering these factors, I rate my overall class participation effort as: (circle **one**)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

Final Project – Cumulative exams cause massive amounts of stress, but a cumulative aspect to the end of the course is the only proven way to help students review and integrate a semester's worth of content (as opposed to memorizing it temporarily for a quiz and then forgetting it), so we are using a cumulative project. You still need to go back over the entire semester and draw from everything you've learned, but you don't have to spit it out on a bubble-sheet or in a blue book. This project will also give you another way to become familiar, and fluent, in the language of the Communication discipline.

Use chapter 37 in the textbook as a starting place, as a guide, and consider all the various links/connections/similarities you can identify between and among the different theories we discuss this semester. Ask yourself, what connections, links, similarities, or overlaps do YOU see among the various theories – then complete the following chart, which is modeled on the one found in chapter 37 but asks for you to name and graph your own communication theory threads. (NOTE: You will be provided with a blank & more workable form of this chart following the midterm, in both paper and electronic format. This copy is for reference only. You also have the option of copying out the basic chart onto larger poster board if preferred.)

EXAMPLE THREADS	EVT	URT	Relational Dialectics	Interactional View	Social Judgment	ELM	Cognitive Dissonance	Functional Perspective	SCT	Cultural Approach	Rhetoric	Dramatism	Narrative Paradigm.	Media Ecology	Semiotics	CAT	FNT	Speech Codes
persuasion					✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓			✓		
Mass/public											✓			✓	✓			
Interperson.	✓	✓	✓	✓												✓	✓	✓
conflict			✓	✓			✓										✓	

Grading:

Were the theories accurately represented by the connections made?	5 pts
Were the connections made your own, and not just a copy of those presented in the book (whether in chapter 37 or through the book's organization)?	5 pts
Were the connections you made expressed clearly and concisely (including good spelling)?	5 pts
Did you make at least 5 unique connections among the theories?	5 pts
Did you recognize that some theories may share multiple connections with other theories, while some theories may share very few connections?	5 pts
BONUS! Did you make 7 or more connections among the theories?	+2 -5 pts

