

COMM465: Communication Theory with Dr. Christina Knopf ("Dr. K.")

Contact: Morey248 M 2:15-3:15, T/H 3:45-4:45 {knopfcm@potdam.edu, facebook.com/profknopf, 267-2883}

Course Description:

This course examines several broad genres of communication theory & discusses a selection of key theories from interpersonal, intercultural, public, media, and gender communication areas. By the end of the course you should be better able to understand & critically examine what you think you know about communication. For those considering graduate study in communication, this course may help you select a direction and will give you a taste of the kinds of reading and work that are often expected at the graduate level.

Course Objectives:

In taking this class, you will be able to:

- Understand the history of the discipline
- Read & understand contemporary scholarship
- Engage in data collection & analysis of theory
- Recognize and explain the role of communication in society & your own life
- Show knowledge of & evaluate comm theory
- Write in scholastic form/style
- Recognize the place of theory in comm research

Texts & Course Materials:

- *A First Look at Communication Theory*, 8th ed, by Em Griffin (if you use an earlier edition, you are solely responsible for keeping track of what chapters are different and acquiring copies of the missing chapters)
- Syllabus & Assignment Packet (on Moodle)
- Application Log (provided by instructor)
- 4x6 index cards – strongly recommended, not required

Grading: Quizzes: 25% Midterm Exam: 25% Final Exam: 25% Application Log: 25%
Full assignment descriptions, instructions, explanations, and grading procedures are found in the accompanying "Assignments Packet"

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

- 4.0 = 95-100 • 3.7 = 90-94 • 3.3 = 86-89 • 3.0 = 82-85 • 2.7 = 78-81
- 2.3 = 72-77 • 2.0 = 67-71 • 1.7 = 61-66 • 1.3 = 56-60 • 1.0 = 51-55 • (0.0 = below 51)

☆Work that meets the minimum requirements of an assignment, is completed on time and displays average involvement with the course content is deserving of a 2.0. A 2.0 is a "satisfactory" grade that indicates the minimum has been achieved. Higher grades are awarded to work that goes above and beyond the minimum standards to produce papers or presentations that reflect superior intellectual effort, excellence in critical analysis and overall creativity in the approach towards any given assignment. A 4.0 is attainable but will require much more than minimal effort. ☆

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: **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.* All due dates are on the course calendar. Any in-class work – whether it is a speech or an exam – should be treated seriously. Make-ups for such assignments will only be granted in rare instances and usually only with documentation of an unavoidable emergency, or with advance notice of college-sanctioned activities or religious observances.

Attendance: This is a live, non-virtual, non-mediated, speech communication course. Being present is necessary to communicate. Regular, timely, attendance is expected. Attendance is a job skill: failure to report to work on time can result in lost income, inability to be promoted, or termination. **If you cannot consistently be present, on time, for class, you should withdraw.** I do not tally absences as part of your grade, but I do reserve the right to adjust your grade if I believe your attendance has been problematic for you and/or for your classmates.

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).

I will not accept an absence as an excuse for being unaware of any course assignment or expectation. Work will not be accepted late because of an absence, except as indicated above.

Absences of two or more straight weeks: If you miss, or will miss, two straight weeks of class (4 consecutive class meetings), you must contact me before or within those two weeks. Four or more consecutive absences without contact will result in an automatic failure of the course.

Absences of four or more total weeks: If you miss, or will miss, four or more total weeks of class, particularly if the absences are close together, you must choose one of these options: Withdrawing from the course, or; Taking an Incomplete in the course.

Attendance for the Final Exam: Finals week is part of the required number of class meeting hours set by the SUNY system. 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**, just as you do for normal class meetings. If you do not attend the final exam, be prepared to accept the consequences to your grade. Final exam times are scheduled by the school to ensure that exams do not overlap, therefore the full week is needed – do not blame your professors or the school for end-of-the-week exams; even though regular classes are not in session, the week is part of the semester.

Incompletes: Incompletes, or other arrangements for course completion, can be planned only in advance to the semester's end in extenuating circumstances with documentation. To receive an incomplete, there must be a serious *emergency* so late in the semester that there isn't time to make up what you miss.

Academic Integrity & Dishonesty: As stated in the Undergraduate Catalog, a pledge of academic honesty is made by students at SUNY Potsdam. This pledge is regarded as an indication that you understand and have complied with the requirements and assignments as set forth by the course instructor and as stated in the Academic Honor Code. **To plagiarize is to pass off ideas or words of someone else as your own without crediting the source. Any time you incorporate the words &/or ideas of another person into your work, no matter what the medium/source, without giving their creator the credit, you have plagiarized. Plagiarism includes copying another source without credit, even if you make some changes to the wording, or using someone else's ideas or structure without credit. (You can and should incorporate a variety of sources into your work – but you must give the creators/authors/ sources the credit!) . I have a zero tolerance policy on plagiarism. In the event of plagiarism on an assignment in this course you will A.) Definitely fail the assignment. B.) Possibly fail the course.** Therefore, you will be responsible for authenticating any assignment submitted in this course. I recommend that you keep copies of all drafts of your work, make photocopies &/or careful notes of research materials, save drafts or versions of assignments under individual file names on computer disks, etc. Other forms of dishonesty or cheating are also not tolerated and will result in a failure of the assignment and/or class. If you think you are engaging in questionable behavior, you probably are, so either don't do it or seek clarification.

Technology/Electronic Devices: Technology use is permissible in the classroom IF:

- Your usage is polite.
- Your usage does not interfere with your performance in class.
- Your usage does not, and cannot, bother your neighbors.
- You are willing to apply your technology use to course materials in productive ways.
- You do not secretly record any portion of a class without seeking permission from all involved parties.

Consider your technology use outside of class, too. If contacting me via email, be professional: use an appropriate and informative subject, address me politely, and use good Standard English. Many (potential) employers will not be impressed by communication like, "hey-idx wuts du 2mrw. tia"

Etiquette: The success of this course is directly related to the sense of community that we develop in the classroom. Participation is essential to this process. I encourage you to share your views and listen to those of others. Debate and discussion are an important part of the learning process. While there will no doubt be disagreements, I expect the members of this community (including myself) to challenge ideas in a manner that reflects respect and recognition of opposing viewpoints without attacking individuals.

Any communication – digital or live – that potentially interferes with the learning environment of other students will not be tolerated. Disruptive behavior - even minor disruptions - will result in your being told to leave class. Repeated offenses may result in course failure.

Course Calendar:

Tu. 1/22: Course overview & Intro lectures (on Ch. 1-2, read ASAP)	Th. 1/24: Chapters 3-4
Tu. 1/29: Chapters 5-6 <i>quiz ch. 1-4</i>	Th. 1/31: Chapters 7-8 <i>Application Log submission – all students</i>
Tu. 2/5: Chapter 9 <i>quiz ch. 5-8</i>	Th. 2/7: Chapters 10-11
Tu. 2/12: Chapter 12 <i>quiz ch. 9-11</i>	Th. 2/14: Chapters 13-14
Tu. 2/19 – February recess.	Th. 2/21 – Class success strategies <i>quiz. ch. 12-14</i>
Tu. 2/26: Chapter 15	Th. 2/28: Chapter 16-17
Tu. 3/5 – Midterm review <i>quiz ch. 15-17</i>	Th. 3/7: <u>Midterm ch. 1-17</u>
Tu. 3/12: Chapters 18-19	Th. 3/14: Chapters 20-21
Tu. 3/19: Chapter 22 <i>quiz ch. 18-21</i>	Th. 3/21: Chapters 23-24
Tu. 3/26 – Spring recess.	Th. 3/28 – Spring recess.
Tu. 4/2: Chapter 25 <i>quiz ch. 22-24</i>	Th. 4/4: Chapters 26-27
Tu. 4/9 – No class. Dr. Knopf will be at a conference in NYC.	Th. 4/11 – No class. Academic Festival.
Tu. 4/16: Chapter 28 <i>quiz ch. 25-27</i>	Th. 4/18: Chapters 29-30
Tu. 4/23: Chapter 31 <i>quiz ch. 28-30</i>	Th. 4/25: Chapters 32-33
Tu. 4/30: Chapter 34 <i>quiz ch. 31-33</i>	Th. 5/2: Chapters 35-36
Tu. 5/7: <i>quiz ch. 34-36</i>	Th. 5/9: Ch.37 & Final Exam Review <i>Final App Log submission – all students (ch. 5-36)</i>
Mo. 5/13 @ 12:30-2:30 (T/H 12:30) @ 2:45-4:45 (T/H 2:30)	Tu. 5/14 @ 5-7 (T/H 5:30)

Reminders:

- Every Thursday, a random selection of Application Logs will be collected. Be prepared to submit yours.
- Because the lowest 3 quiz grades will be dropped, there are absolutely no make-up quizzes for any reason.

COMM465: Communication Theory, with Dr. K. Fall 2012 Assignment Packet

This packet is designed to provide you with all the basic information and instructions to succeed at the graded portions of this course. Instructions and grading schemes for every assignment in this class, for the entire semester, are provided here for you. Use this resource in conjunction with the Syllabus and class meetings. You are responsible for reading the information in this packet just as you are responsible for reading any other assignment in class.

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 the day the chapter is due**, no exceptions.

This is approximately a 4x6" box.

If you do not have index cards available, you may cut paper to this size to use.

It may not be any larger than 4x6"

Larger notecards **WILL NOT** be accepted.

If you don't put your name on it, it will be thrown out.

If you do not have index cards or a ruler, trace this box.

Quizzes (8 quizzes @ approx. 3 pts, 25 possible points, 25% of final grade)

There will be eleven 5-10 minute, multiple-choice, quizzes at the start of class each Tuesday (see schedule for exceptions) – one quiz for each unit in the textbook.

Quizzes will be approximately 6 questions each.

The quizzes will cover the readings, lectures, and discussions since the previous quiz (see schedule for exact chapters included on each quiz). We will start the class session with the quiz before moving on to new material.

Please be prepared to start the quiz promptly at 5:30; our class time is extremely valuable and limited.

You may skip or disregard 3 quizzes; in other words, your three lowest quiz scores will be dropped. Because of this flexibility **no make-up quizzes will be given** under any circumstances.

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

Questions for the midterm and final exams will be adapted from these quizzes. You should keep each quiz when it is returned and carefully study what you got wrong and what you got right. When a quiz is over, you can't just forget the information and move on to the next thing.

Midterm & Final Exams (25 pts, or 25% of the final grade) each

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 25 questions.

The final exam will be a **cumulative** short-answer and multiple-choice test, consisting of questions pulled from 11 quizzes. The final will be 50 questions.

There are several ways to prepare for the exams:

- 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
- Carefully review your quizzes throughout the semester.

★ *Good attendance will pay off in having credit that you can use to "buy out" of 1 or more questions on an exam. For every full week of attendance (arriving on time, not leaving early), credit will be earned toward being able to skip questions on the midterm and final.*

Exams can only be made up when they are missed because of DOCUMENTED emergencies or college-sanctioned events, or for religious observances with notice.

Theory Application Logs (25 possible points, 25% of final grade)

For each theory chapter (chapters 5-35 in the text), you will write 1-2 paragraphs making a specific application of the theory to your own life. Assume for this assignment that the theory has practical value. What insight does it provide to help you understand the previous communication behavior? What prediction does it make or advice does it offer for the future?

These entries must be made in the Logs provided by the instructor. Use only the space provided. Do not lose your journal. Do not use the pages in it for other purposes.

Entries should demonstrate that you grasp the theories practical implications and that you can apply them in specific situations. To help, you do not have to write an entry until *after* the theory has been reviewed, discussed, and explained in class. (See the example below. Additional examples of Application Log entries can be found at www.afirstlook.com.)

All entries must be original. Direct or indirect use of theory applications found at AFirstLook.com, on other websites, or from friends or other sources, is plagiarism and will result in an immediate failure of the course.

Plagiarism occurs when you use another person's work and pass it off as your own or simply fail to give the creator credit; this includes direct copying, copying with minor changes, using the same structure/organization, using the same ideas (even in your own words) – without providing credit to the source.

If you think you might be so heavily influenced by reading examples of others' Application Log entries that you would be tempted or likely to replicate them, do not seek out such examples. If I suspect that any form of plagiarism has occurred, you will be confronted and expected explain or verify your work. *Again, any type and any amount of plagiarism will result in immediate failure of the course. It is acceptable, even encouraged, to refer to outside work in academic writing, but credit must be given.*

All Logs will be collected at the beginning and end of the semester (see schedule for exact dates).

Approximately 5 Logs will be randomly collected each Thursday. Make sure to always have your log with you each week in case yours is selected. (You will receive one pass to use in case of emergency.)

Each log will be collected and assessed 5 times during the semester (you will earn up to 5 points each time, based on completion, clarity, and accuracy). Instructor feedback & suggestions will be inserted on colored pages for your easy reference. *When your Log is collected, be sure to remove the unused pages so you can keep up on your entries while your Log is being assessed.*

Log Example - Adaptive Structuration Theory: *I'm in an intro theatre class & many of our assignments involve group decision-making. Once we were put into groups of 6 to reenact 'Mary had a Little Lamb.' Our group's spoken rules were 1) the skit could use only monologue from the actual nursery rhyme & no other dialogue, 2) it could be only 5 minutes & needed a unique twist. We also had several unspoken rules because each group member brought a set of personal rules & resources. Most members were quiet & reserved. However, one was obnoxious, because he always had to take charge, & immediately started telling everyone what to do. No one liked his ideas, no one wanted to voice their own opinion & so we continued to let him take charge. Finally, I got tired of this procedure because the group wasn't making any positive progress. My decision to act answers the first question of the two group-related questions that Poole seeks to answer with his theory. The first question involves group stability vs. group change. The negative direction that the group was in would have continued in that same negative direction unless something changed. I believe that this is also an example of the second question, which involves members' free choice vs. members' behavior determined by social structures. I freely chose to intervene.*