

**COMM465: Communication Theory** with Dr. Knopf

Morey248: Mon 2-3:00 & Tue/Thu 3:30-4:30 – please make an appointment if possible  
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**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
- Show knowledge of & evaluate comm theory
- Understand contemporary scholarship
- Engage in lower-level theory analysis
- Understand how communication knowledge & theory are developed through research
- Learn basics of communication research methods
- Recognize the place of theory in comm research, & explain the role of comm in society & your own life

**Texts & Course Materials:**

- *A First Look at Communication Theory*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed, by Em Griffin
- Syllabus & Assignment Packet (on Moodle)
- 4x6 index cards –recommended, not required

**Grading:** ☆Full assignment descriptions & instructions are in the "Assignments Packet" Use it. ☆

- Quizzes: 15% total
- Midterm Exam: 20%
- Final Exam: 20%
- Final Project: 20%
- Class & Home Work: 25% total

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

- 4.0 = 94-100
- 3.7 = 89-93
- 3.3 = 85-88
- 3.0 = 81-84
- 2.7 = 77-80
- 2.3 = 71-76
- 2.0 = 66-70
- 1.7 = 60-65
- 1.3 = 55-59
- 1.0 = 50-54
- (0.0 = 49 & below)

Note: If you keep track of your grades, you are as capable as I am of figuring out your current grade at any point of the semester – it just takes basic math and these charts.

☆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 beyond the minimum standards & reflects superior intellectual effort. ☆

**Challenging a Grade:** If you identify an error in grading, I will 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.*

**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 .doc, .pdf, or .jpeg file.* All due dates are on the course calendar. Conflicts due to religious observances or college sanctioned events must be worked out before the missed class.

**Extra Credit:** Extra credit will not be available as an option to make-up-for incomplete work, or for a lack of effort, throughout the semester. Please, seek help (not “extra” credit) early!

**Attendance:** This is a live, non-mediated, communication course. Being present on time (and AWAKE) is necessary, but **coming to class is always your choice**. Good attendance may be rewarded. Poor attendance will create problems for you.

☆ 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 or late with any course assignment or expectation.

**Attendance for the Final Exam/Meeting:** 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. 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 of the semester’s end in extreme 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:** 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.** Any time you incorporate the words, ideas, &/or organization of another person into your work, no matter what the medium/source, without giving their creator the credit, you have plagiarized - even if you make some changes to the wording or pepper it with some of your own words/ideas. (You can & should use a variety of sources in your work – but you must cite the sources)

**\*\*If you plagiarize,** whether deliberately or accidentally, you will be notified of a limited amount of time in which you can redo or correct your work. If the adjustments are not made on schedule, or if plagiarism still exists, the assignment grade will automatically become a zero.

**\*\*If you use unauthorized notes or devices during an exam,** or exchange information with another student during an exam, your grade will be reduced by 25-100%, depending on the violation.

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

- Your usage is polite, does not bother your neighbors, & does not interfere with your performance
- 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

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-idk wuts du 2mrw. tia”

**Etiquette:** The success of this course is directly related to the sense of community that we develop in the classroom. Any communication or behavior– 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.

	Tuesdays	Thursdays
Wk1	1/21: Reading of the Syllabus	1/23: Intro to scholastic resources, & Web site
Wk2	1/28: Intro to Theory <i>Read Chapters 1 &amp; 2 for today.</i>	1/30: Comm Theory and research <i>Read Chapters 3 &amp; 4 for today. Bring a print or printed ad</i>
Wk3	2/4: Methods and Ethics Intro, IRB training begins – meeting place TBA	2/6: IRB training continues – meeting place TBA <i>*Intro Quiz ch. 1, 2, 3, 4</i>
Wk4	2/11: <u>Expectancy Violations Theory</u> <i>Read Chapter 7 for today</i>	2/13: <u>Uncertainty Reduction Theory</u> <i>Read Chapter 10 for today</i>
Wk5	2/18: <b>No class</b> February Recess [2/15-2/18]	2/20: <b>This class cancelled</b> (Dr. K. @ Eastern Sociology Society, Baltimore)
Wk6	2/25: <u>Relational Dialectics</u> <i>Read Chapter 12 for today</i>	2/27: <u>Interactional View</u> <i>Read Chapter 14 for today</i>
Wk7	3/4: <u>Social Judgment Theory</u> <i>*Relationships Quiz ch. 7, 10, 12, 14 Read Chapter 15 for today</i>	3/6: <u>Elaboration Likelihood Model</u> <i>Read Chapter 16 for today</i>
Wk8	3/11: <u>Functional Perspective</u> <i>*Influence Quiz ch. 15, 16 Read Chapter 18 for today</i>	3/13: Review/Study Help
Wk9	3/18: <u>Midterm Ch. 1-4, 7, 10, 12, 14-16</u> [W & S/U deadline]	3/20: <u>Symbolic Convergence Theory</u> <i>Read Chapter 19 for today</i>
Wk10	3/25: <b>Spring Break</b> [3/22-3/30]	3/27: <b>Spring Break</b> [3/22-3/30]
Wk11	4/1: <u>Cultural Approach</u> <i>Read Chapter 20 for today. Bring an upload-ready camera-equipped device, if you have one.</i>	4/3: <u>Dramatism</u> <i>*Groups Quiz ch. 18, 19, 20 Read Chapter 23 for today</i>
Wk12	4/8: <u>Semiotics</u> <i>Read Chapter 26 for today</i>	4/10: <u>Uses &amp; Gratifications</u> <i>*Language Quiz ch. 23, 26 Read Chapter 28 for today. Bring calculator.</i>
Wk13	4/15: <u>Cultivation</u> <i>Read Chapter 29 for today</i>	4/17: <u>Agenda-Setting</u> <i>Read Chapter 30 for today</i>
Wk14	4/22: <u>Communication Accommodation</u> <i>*Media Quiz ch. 28, 29, 30 Read Chapter 31 for today</i>	4/24: <u>Speech Codes</u> <i>Read Chapter 33 for today. Bring web-ready device, if available, to go online.</i>
Wk15	4/29: <u>Genderlect</u> <i>Read Chapter 34 for today. Bring calculator.</i>	5/1: <i>*Culture Quiz ch. 31, 33, 34</i>
Wk16	5/6: <u>Questions/Help on Final Project</u> <i>Extra credit due: NCA-Wikipedia Initiative</i>	5/8: <u>Review</u> <i>Final Project Due.</i>
Wk17	<b>12:30-1:45 section:</b> <b>Final Exam -&gt; Wed, 5/14, 8-10am</b>	<b>2-3:15 section:</b> <b>Final Exam -&gt; Wed, 5/14, 10:15-12:15</b>

## COMM465: Communication Theory Spring 2014 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.

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.

To be used, the card must be submitted on or before the chapter is due.

Late cards are not accepted under any circumstances.

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### **Quizzes: total 15% of final grade**

For each unit, there will be a quiz of roughly 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 can only be made-up in cases of documented (ie: proven) emergencies.

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](http://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: 20%, each, of the final grade**

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.

The final exam will be a **cumulative** short-answer and multiple-choice test, consisting of questions pulled from all quizzes. The final will be approximately 40-50 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](http://www.afirstlook.com)
- Carefully review your quizzes throughout the semester.
- Attend 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 extended or frequent texting or web browsing will be treated as an absence and reduce the attendance credit you may earn for exams.

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**In-Class and Take-Home Assignments, 25% of final grade:**

This course is structured to include regularly scheduled small-group activities that mimic research efforts in the communication discipline. These activities will help to illustrate the theories you are learning and will introduce you to some research methods.

The majority of these activities will take place in, or during, class time – so as long as you come to class, pay attention, and participate, completing the work will be easy.

Occasionally, preparation for the activities does require you to do something outside of class – and these tasks are clearly marked on our course calendar.

To help me account for your participation in, and attention to, these activities, you will write, in-class, following the activity, a short (1-5 sentence) account of what concept(s) the activity taught/illustrated and what you learned.

Full credit for an activity will be awarded if: a) you participated in it b) wrote a follow-up about it c) demonstrated that you know what the activity was about

If you miss an activity for a religious observance or college-sanctioned event, alternative arrangements in the form of a comparable homework assignment can be made *in advance*.

Otherwise, missed activities can only be made-up in the case of documented (ie: proven) emergencies.

**Final Project, 20% of final grade:**

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. Then, develop a visual way of representing those links – a web made of string, a Prezi presentation, a connect-the-dots game, a puzzle... whatever. Make sure the relationships between theories you identify are made clear (Is it a similar concept? A parallel idea? The same kind of communication? A research method?)

Grading:

In addition to the project, you will also develop a grading rubric, outlining what standards or criteria by which you believe your work should be evaluated.

You will provide 4 criteria, each worth 1 to 4 points. It should be phrases as either a statement or a question. (Ex. Project showed creativity in its presentation. or Did I show creativity with my presentation?)

I am providing the fifth criteria for your individualized grading rubric:

*\*Were the theories accurately represented by the work?*

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