

COMM465: Communication Theory

Dr. Knopf (Morey248: Tuesdays & Thursdays 10-10:45, Wednesdays 12:30-3)
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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*, 9th ed, by Em Griffin • afirstlook.com website
- Syllabus (copy permanently on Moodle)
- 4x6 index cards – strongly recommended, not required

Grading: • 7 quizzes (lowest two dropped) = 25 points • Midterm + Final Exam = 25 points
• Participation = 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)
- ☆ 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 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:

- 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. It is *only* available as indicated in the assignments.

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.

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. Repeated offenses may result in course failure.

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

	TUESDAY	THURSDAY
Wk1	8/30: Intro to Theory, chapters 1-2	9/1: Intro to Theory continued, chapters 3-4
Wk2	9/6: Symbolic Interactionism [5]	9/8: Coordinated Mngmt of Meaning [6]
Wk3	9/13: Expectancy Violations [7]	9/15: Social Penetration [8] Quiz ch. 5-7
Wk4	9/20: Uncertainty Reduction [9]	9/22: Social Information Processing [10]
Wk5	9/27: Relational Dialectics [11] Quiz ch. 8-10	9/29: Comm. Privacy Mngmt [12]
Wk6	10/4: Interactional View [13]	10/6: Social Judgment [14] Quiz ch. 11-13
Wk7	10/11: <u>Fall Recess, no class</u>	10/13: Midterm ch. 5-13
Wk8	10/18: Elaboration Likelihood [15]	10/20: Cognitive Dissonance [16]
Wk9	10/25: Functional Perspective [17] Quiz ch. 14-16	10/27: Symbolic Convergence [18]
Wk10	11/1: Cultural Approach [19]	11/3: Comm. Con. Of Org [20]
Wk11	11/8: Uses & Gratifications [28] Quiz ch. 17-20	11/10: <u>No class, National Communication Assoc.</u>
Wk12	11/15: Cultivation [29]	11/17: Agenda-Setting [30]
Wk13	11/22: Comm Accommodation [31] Quiz ch. 28-30	11/24: <u>Thanksgiving Recess, no class</u>
Wk14	11/29: Face Negotiation [32]	12/1: Speech Codes [33]
Wk15	12/6: Last-minute project assistance Quiz ch. 31-33	12/8: Final exam review Projects due
Wk16	12/13 @ 5:00-7:00: Final exam, ch 14-20, 28-33	

Assignments are due by the start of class on the day specified.

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 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 25-33 questions and worth 12 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 13 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.

Participation - This course relies on a combination of learning and instructional methods – readings, lectures, discussions, activities, and film clips. Attendance and attentiveness are necessary. Attendance counts for 15% of your course grade, determined as how many classes you attended divided by the number of class meetings. Barring bad weather, this should be {# classes attended ÷ 27 class meetings}. In the case of sporting events, college-sanction events, or religious observances, the baseline of class meetings will be adjusted. But being in your seat is not enough. You should be an active participant, at least mentally, in the course. Late arrivals, early departures, texting, surfing the web, listening to music, lengthy personal conversations, use of class time to get and/or eat full meals, sleeping, and not participating in classroom activities – all of which are behaviors that can be disruptive to others and have a negative impact on classroom dynamics – can and will be considered in your attendance grade.

There are many ways to engage in a course, so at the end of the semester, you will also be given the following rubric to **self-evaluate** your class participation, worth 10% of your course grade.

<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

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.

You will be provided with a blank chart in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint format on Moodle following the midterm. The theories will be provided across the top of the chart. Your task is to fill in the Threads column with your own, original, connections among theories (at least 5) and to then check off the theories that share that characteristic (see example).

Your threads should NOT be the same as those identified in chapter 37. They should NOT be the traditions or approaches to communication theory. They should NOT be the same as the textbook's section headings. And, they should NOT be the same as another classmate's – if two or more people turn in identical work the grade will be divided among you (so, work that is worthy of 100% but is shared by two people means each person gets 50%, shared by three people = 33%, etc).

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