

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

Morey248: Mon 1-3:00 by appointment & Tue/Thu 3:30-4:30 (also alternating Thursdays 9-10:30)

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

**Texts & Course Materials:**

- *A First Look at Communication Theory*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed, by Em Griffin (older editions do not have the same 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 are in the "Assignments Packet" Use it. ☆

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.

**Attendance:** This is a live, non-virtual, non-mediated, speech communication course. Being present on time (and AWAKE) is necessary. 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. 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.

**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/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.** 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 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) ***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. 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, 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.

Course Calendar: You are responsible for keeping track of what is due when. Expect no reminders.

Wk1	Tu 8/27: Chapters 1-2	Th 8/29: Chapters 3-4
Wk2	Tu 9/3: Chapters 5-6	Th 9/5: Chapters 7-8 <i>Logs 5-6 (all will be collected)</i>
Wk3	Tu 9/10: Chapter 9 <u>Quiz ch. 1-8</u>	Th 9/12: Chapters 10-11 <i>Logs 5-9 (names randomly selected for collection)</i>
Wk4	Tu 9/17: Chapter 12	Th 9/19: Chapters 13-14 <i>Logs 5-12 (names randomly selected for collection)</i>
Wk5	Tu 9/24: Chapter 15 <u>Quiz ch. 9-14</u>	Th 9/26: Chapter 16-17 <i>Logs 5-15 (names randomly selected for collection)</i>
Wk6	Tu 10/1: Chapters 18-19	Th 10/3: Chapters 20-21 <i>Logs 5-19 (names randomly selected for collection)</i>
Wk7	Tu 10/8: Chapter 22 <u>Quiz ch. 15-21</u>	Th 10/10 Chapters 23-24 <i>Logs 5-22 (names randomly selected for collection)</i>
Wk8	Tu 10/15 – Fall Recess	Th 10/17 <b><u>Midterm ch. 1-21</u></b>
Wk9	Tu 10/22: Chapter 25	Th 10/24 – <i>Dr. Knopf @ conference (GIC)</i>
Wk10	Tu 10/29: Chapters 26-27	Th 10/31: Chapter 28 <u>Quiz ch. 22-27</u>
Wk11	Tu 11/5: Chapters 29-30 <i>Logs 5-28 (names randomly selected for collection)</i>	Th 11/7 – <i>Dr. Knopf @ conference (ISA-NE)</i>
Wk12	Tu 11/12: Chapter 31	Th 11/14 Chapters 32-33 <i>Logs 5-31 (names randomly selected for collection)</i>
Wk13	Tu 11/19 – <i>Dr. Knopf @ conference (NCA)</i>	Th 11/21 – <i>Dr. Knopf @ conference (NCA)</i>
Wk14	Tu 11/26 Chapter 34 <u>Quiz chapters 28-33</u>	Th 11/28 - Thanksgiving
Wk15	Tu 12/3 Chapter 35-36	Th 12/5 <u>Quiz 34-36</u> (graded & returned in class) <i>Logs 5-36 (all will be collected)</i>
Finals	Tue 12/10, 8:00-10:00am (this room) <b>Final exam, ch 1-36</b>	

**Though quizzes are typically on Tuesdays and Logs are usually collected on Thursdays, there are exceptions, so make sure you follow the calendar closely.**

## THE ENGAGED STUDENT BONUS

At the start of each semester, everyone has 6 bonus points that will be added on to their final grade – unless they become disengaged from the course. To keep this bonus, you must practice the best behaviors of an engaged student.

*The engaged student...*

- Is familiar with the course policies outlined in the Syllabus
  - Does not ask the professor questions about policies (such as due dates, attendance, or extra credit) until first looking at the syllabus to find the answer – & might also check the Undergraduate Catalog on topics like Incompletes, Withdrawal, etc.
- Keeps track of the course calendar & due dates – because they are your responsibility
- Turns assignments in on time, and does not ask for extensions
  - Understands the difference between emergency situations (such as severe illness or a death in the immediate family), bad luck (crashed computers, printer problems, getting sick, roommate problems, breakups, family issues), and poor planning; life is filled with "little" setbacks and we simply must learn to deal with and take responsibility for them. For example, don't wait until 5 minutes before class to print the work that's due...
- Reads the assignment information completely and carefully in the Assignment Packet
  - Does not ask the professor questions about the assignments until having read all the provided information
  - Checks Moodle for additional information, if appropriate
- Makes use of the provided grading rubrics to enhance assignment completion and course performance
- Makes use of the grading rubrics and additional grading comments to understand a grade before approaching the professor about it
- Misses no more than 4 classes during the semester, and makes appropriate and *timely* arrangements for absences (such arrangements do not include lengthy emails detailing fights with roommates or bathroom habits by way of explanation, asking for make-up opportunities more than a week after the fact, or seeking extra credit)
  - Submits work early when an absence is planned
  - Drops off or makes arrangements for submitting work if suddenly called away from campus
  - Immediately contacts the professor if an assignment, test, or project is unavoidably missed
- Rarely arrives late, and takes a seat quietly without disrupting the class if late.
- Rarely leaves early, and exits quietly without disrupting class if it's necessary
- Pays attention during class time and refrains from distracting/disrupting behaviors, such as texting, Facebooking, web browsing, doing other course work, eating large meals, or talking during class, and does not use class time to sleep/nap, get food or drink, or to regularly use the bathroom
- Participates in class activities, and puts good effort into those activities, while staying on task
- Comes to class prepared to take notes
  - Takes at least some notes during class – as deemed appropriate by the student
- At least occasionally takes part in class discussion with comments, answers, or questions
- Gives the course his or her best effort from the start, rather than panicking and seeking special loopholes or extra credit later in the semester after having brushed off assignments and/or studying for too long
  - Seeks help or guidance from the professor as soon as it's needed, understanding that the professor has office hours and contact information for that purpose
- Works politely with the professor, and college if appropriate, to overcome any challenges that could interfere with course performance or completion
- Recognizes that academic honesty/integrity is not only a matter of ethics and law, but also one of fairness to self, professor, peers, and friends and, therefore, does not cheat or take shortcuts on work under any circumstances (this includes sloppy citations, copy-and-paste plagiarism, changing a few words of someone else's paper, article, webpage, etc. & submitting it as your own work, looking at others' work or at prohibited notes/books during a test, trying to submit late work attached to on-time work, doing an assignment during class time the day it was due)

**The first time you become disengaged from the course, you will forfeit 2 of the 6 bonus points. The second time you become disengaged from the course, you forfeit the remaining 4 bonus points.** Becoming disengaged means displaying behaviors that are contrary to those of the engaged student, as outlined above. Most grades are earned, starting from 0. The Engaged Student Bonus starts with the extra credit of 6 points because everyone has the potential to be an engaged student. As an added benefit, these behaviors of engagement will improve your chances for overall course success, even without the 10 bonus points.

## COMM465: Communication Theory Fall 2013 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.

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### **Quizzes: 25% of final grade**

For approximately every two units covered in the textbook, 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 schedule for exact chapters included on each quiz).

If you have to miss a quiz, refer to the syllabus for circumstances under which in-class work can be made up from an absence.

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: 25%, 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 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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## Theory Application Logs: 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.

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](http://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.*

★ This assignment takes the place of a term paper; treat it appropriately. ★

Logs will be collected weekly by lottery selection (see calendar for exact dates). **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.)

**NOTE:** Keep your entire Log (all entries) together. You will submit all old and all new entries every time it is collected.

Each log will be collected and assessed 5 total 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 (keep these pages in your Log at all times). *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.*