Communication 4350: *Gender & Communication*
[Communication 5350 CRN 27788: Directed Study Spring 2014]

**Instructor:** DeAnna K. Varela  
**Office:** EDU 110  
**Telephone Number:** 747.7065  
**E-Mail:** Use Blackboard  
**Office Hours:** After class or by appointment  
**SECTION:** 13435 Tuesdays 10:20-11:50AM, UGLC 338, Thursdays online via Blackboard [BB]  
**Directed Study Contact:** Dr. Stacey Sowards, COTT 202, 747.8854, ssowards@utep.edu

*The best way to reach the instructor with questions or comments is through Blackboard’s “help board” or Blackboard e-mail.*

**Course Description**  
The purpose of this course is to understand and discuss the relationship between gender and communication. This course examines the assumptions of traditional communication practices and the perspectives of feminist thinkers who have written extensively about rhetoric and language. This course is also designed to connect theories to women’s and men’s gendered experiences in the world, through self and practical observations as well as intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and class.

**Course Goals**  
1. To develop an understanding and working knowledge of communication and feminist theories.  
2. To explore the relationship between gender and communication.  
3. To understand how gender influences communication in various communication contexts.  
4. To apply theories about gender and communication to everyday situations.  
5. To increase sensitivity toward others and communities.  
6. To emphasize lifelong learning and critical self-reflexivity.

**Course Prerequisite**  
There is no course prerequisite, but a background in communication theory and/or courses in women’s studies or feminist theory would be helpful.

**Required Reading, Equipment, Hardware, Software, etc.**

- Readings as assigned in class and posted on Blackboard.  
  - You MUST purchase and use the current 11th edition. Electronic or a hardcopy of this textbook may be ordered online here: [http://www.cengagebrain.com/shop/isbn/9781285075938](http://www.cengagebrain.com/shop/isbn/9781285075938)  
- A reliable computer with appropriate hardware, software and internet service to complete course work.  
- **Grading and Performance Evaluation**

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<tr>
<th>Grade Scale</th>
<th>Reading Analysis &amp; Portfolio [RAP]</th>
<th>Discussion Board [DBP]</th>
<th>Graduate Level Activities [GLA]</th>
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**TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS**  
100
Assignments

Specific instructions and due dates on all assignments will be given in class and/or on Blackboard Learn. Please use this syllabus as an overview of the course. I highly recommend that you save electronic and hard copies of all your coursework. No late work is accepted.

Reading Analysis & Portfolio [RAP]

You are required to complete a brief analysis for EACH separate assigned reading/author pertaining to the course theme. The RAPs demonstrate completion and comprehension of the assigned material and help build an annotated bibliography of new research. Each RAP must be submitted on Blackboard as an attached .docx only in order to preserve your formatting. In addition to submitting RAP’s online you must bring a hardcopy to class on the due date for discussion. RAP’s must be cover all readings in order to receive credit. No partial or incomplete credit will be offered. Directions, details, and due dates will be given on Blackboard.

Discussion Board Posts [DBP]

You will be expected to discuss, demonstrate, and connect your understanding of the assigned material. Questions will be provided to focus your attention on the important elements. Discussion board postings are NOT a summary of course materials, debates, or your opinion. They are critical analysis and academic discussions among students. You will complete three posts per module at 500 words total. Your initial post must be 200 words minimum that makes an original statement and analysis based on the questions given. In addition you must respond to at least two different classmates’ initial postings with a 150 word minimum response per post. The instructor will participate with replies to some, but not all, of your postings. Please see the course calendar for due dates and individual modules for more details. Late or incomplete posts will not earn credit.

Graduate Level Activities [GLA]

Graduate students will prepare two class lectures along with an interactive student activity per lecture. Outlines and activities must be prepared and approved by the course instructor no later than three days in advance of the scheduled lecture.

Final Project [FP]

A final project will be due at the end of the semester. This will include a research paper, visual representation of your research, and a class presentation. Final project directions and details will be provided to you in the "Final Project" module.

Due Dates

All work must be submitted by the specified time. Late postings and/or assignments will not be accepted.

Resources

Academic Writing

For help with writing any assignments for this course, please visit the University Writing Center in person located in the UTEP library Room 227, or online at http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=57766. For further information on the writing centers services and hours please call 915.747.5486.
Research

UTEP librarians are here to help you so please visit them in person for assistance or online at http://libraryweb.utep.edu/

Technical Support

Having your computer requirements checked and all software up to date is essential to access online course content.

Please use the Browser Checker located at the top of the Blackboard Portal to ensure you have all of the right plugins for this and other courses.

Browser Performance Hints

1. Clear browser cache
2. Allow pop-ups
3. Make sure your Java is up-to-date

Recommended Software

Adobe Acrobat
Adobe Flash Player
Java
QuickTime
Windows Media Player

If you have technical problems with the course, please contact the UTEP Helpdesk at 915.747.5257: M - F: 7AM - 8PM
Sat: 9AM - 1PM

You may also visit the ATLAS lab located within the Undergraduate Learning Center (UGLC building) for additional technical assistance.

Computer Labs

There are several computer labs on campus that you may use to access the course materials, complete assignments, print readings, directions, and assignments, as well as communicate with your peers and the instructor via the Blackboard course shell. Please call the main number at 747.5000 for information on lab locations and hours. Using the computer labs on campus and the Blackboard course shell allows you to complete and submit all work on time and keep up to date with communication and the course.

Policies

Course Syllabus & Calendar Change Policy

Except for changes that substantially affect the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

Attendance & Participation Policy

In order to be successful in this course attendance as well as face to face and online participation is mandatory. Doctor, work, or other personal appointments should be scheduled around class times and will not be excused. Being absent does not pardon a student from missing assignments or due dates. This syllabus only provides a general description of
assignments—specific details or any changes that will enable the student to succeed in this class will always be given verbally in class or online. Missing instructions or due dates is not an excuse, and may cause the student to not understand what is required; consequently, causing poor grades.

Attendance will be taken daily and you must sign in up front before the start of each class. Not signing in equals an absence. As for the online portion of this course, not logging into Blackboard for more than seven days is grounds for being dropped from the course. Points will be taken off of your final grade for absences, tardies and/or early leaves from class as follows:

1. One absence over the course of the semester = no penalty; however late work is not accepted.
2. 5 points off for the second and third absence [not in attendance or more than 15 minutes late to class equals an absence].
3. 2 points off for each tardy [within 15 minutes of class start time].
4. 2 points off for each early leave [any time before the dismissal of class].
5. If you have more than three absences total you will be dropped from the course.

The only “excused” absences are those identified in the UTEP catalogue under university-sanctioned functions, religious holidays, and military service. However, late work will not be accepted and must be submitted before the due dates. In class assignments cannot be made up when absent. For more information please visit:

http://catalog.utep.edu/content.php?catoid=7&navoid=245&hl=excused+absences&returnto=search

Cell Phone/Technology Policy

The use of cell phones, MP3 players, laptops, netbooks, etc is not permitted during class time. All electronics must be turned off and stowed away. If you need to communicate with someone outside of the classroom, you must leave the room to do so. The penalty for using technology during class is one point off of your final grade per incident. If you violate this policy more than three times you will be asked to drop the course.

Drop Policy

The instructor reserves the right to drop a student for lack of attendance [more than three absences total] or not logging into Blackboard for more than seven days, excessive tardies or early leaves, lack of class participation face to face or online, lack of work turned in, or inappropriate behavior in class or online, classroom disruptions such as talking out of turn, using computers, cell phones or other electronics in class. If at any time a student decides to drop the course, it is the student’s responsibility to do so. If you drop before the UTEP drop deadline, you will receive a "W". If you drop yourself or are dropped by the instructor after the deadline, you will receive an "F". No incompletes will be given for this course.

Final Exam Policy

Policy for final exams [From the online Schedule of Classes] Exemption from final examination may not be given. Final examinations are scheduled to be two hours, forty-five minutes in length and take place during the final examination period. It is the policy of the university not to administer a second final examination in the course. It is also university policy that students shall not have more than two final examinations in a single day. In the unlikely event that the examination schedule results in a student having three final examinations on a single day, the faculty member upon the request of the student shall reschedule the second of that student’s three examinations.

Effective Electronic Communication

When communicating electronically, many of the feelings or impressions that are transmitted via body language in face-to-face communications are lost. Consequently, interpreting emotions and innuendos is much more difficult. Only what is written, or drawn, carries the message. Often, excitement can be misinterpreted as anger or insult. It is important that
we all keep this in mind as we communicate. Words in print may seem harmless, but they could emotionally injure us when working at a distance. Hence, it is vitally important that we are conscious of how we communicate while working at a distance. For example, avoid the use of caps in your electronic messages, as wording in caps comes across as shouting.

The standard practice ("Netiquette") for participation in networked discussion requires that all participation be focused on the topic at hand, not become personalized, and be substantive in nature. (Translation: you may certainly disagree with others, but you must do so respectfully; you may express strong beliefs or emotions, but you may not get so carried away that you lose all perspective on the course itself.) For more information on Netiquette (the etiquette of Internet communication) please see: www.albion.com/netiquette.

Please observe the following:

1. You are required to check the Blackboard course shell daily for messages, updates and assignments.
2. Respect and courtesy must be provided to fellow classmates and the instructor at all times, in all contexts. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
3. Be professional and careful in what you say about others.
4. When reacting to someone else's message, address and focus on the ideas, not the person who posted them.
5. Be careful when using sarcasm and humor. Without face-to-face communications your joke may be viewed as criticism.

**Scholastic Dishonesty**

It is the official policy of the University that all suspected cases or acts of alleged scholastic dishonesty must be referred to the Dean of Students for investigation and appropriate disposition. It is contrary to University policy for a faculty member to assign a disciplinary grade such as an "F" or zero to an assignment, test, examination, or other course work as a sanction for admitted or suspected scholastic dishonesty in lieu of normally charging the student through the Dean of Students. Similarly, students are prohibited from proposing and/or entering into an arrangement with a faculty member to receive a grade of "F" or any reduced grade in lieu of being charged with scholastic dishonesty. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

**Plagiarism**

"Plagiarism" means the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's own academic work offered for credit, or using work in a paper or assignment for which the student had received credit in another course without direct permission of all involved instructors.

**Copyright Notice**

Some of the materials in this course are copyrighted. Violation of US copyright law can result in civil damages up to $100,000 for each work copied. Copying of textbooks is not "fair use" under the Copyright Act. The "fair use doctrine" only permits non-commercial copying of part (in general, not more than 10%) of a copyrighted work. Do not bring a copied textbook to this class. Your cooperation is expected.

**Center for Accommodations and Support Services Policy (CASS)**

If you have or suspect a disability and need an accommodation you should contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148 or at cass@utep.edu or go to Room 106 Union East Building.
**Student Conduct**

Each student is responsible for notice of and compliance with the provisions of the Regents Rules and Regulations, which are available for inspection electronically at http://www.utsystem.edu/bor/rules/homepage.htm.

**Equity Statement**

All persons, regardless of gender, age, class, race, religion, physical disability, sexual orientation, etc., shall have equal opportunity without harassment in this course. This includes inappropriate comments about the above mentioned online, in person, or in confidence. Any problems with or questions about harassment can be discussed confidentially with your instructor.

**Letters of Recommendation**

Letters will be written upon request at the discretion of the instructor. The following criteria must be met before a request is made. 1. The student has completed at least one course with Professor Varela and maintained an "A" average. 2. The request is made at least 30 days in advance. 3. The student provides Professor Varela with their resume, statement of purpose, the contact information for who the letter is to be written to including: the program name, the point of contact name, full mailing address, and what exactly the student is applying for.