

Communication Theory and Analysis (COMM 3371 – CRN: 10520)

Fall 2023

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Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 11:00 – 12:00 a.m./by appt.

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Class Location : BUSN 313

Class Sessions : Monday/Wednesday 9 :00 a -10 :20a

Course Overview:

Theory guides our behavior and ability to negotiate realities in a variety of interpersonal, organizational, and social contexts. The purpose of the course is to understand the important role that communication theory plays in the formation, development, and termination of human relationships and connection, particularly at societal levels. A thorough understanding of theories and their ability to understand the logic or rationale that underlies them helps one to analyze problems and to communicate effectively. In this class, we will specifically examine: (a) how communication affects one's view of self/society/other; (b) how the use of different communication theories affects outcomes in research and in our own views on reality; and (c) how cultural factors influence contemporary communication theory (d) how to utilize communication theory in the workplace.

We will begin by defining communication theory and examining key theories across several communication subfields (e.g., culture and communication, mass media) and learning to separate scientific knowledge from opinion. In the latter part of the course, there is an emphasis on intercultural communication vis-à-vis an examination of public memory. Throughout the semester will seek to link theory to “real life” by also examining contemporary issues using selected theories.

Course Goals:

1. To build foundational knowledge in the study of communication through an examination of the history of the discipline and through the study of landmark and contemporary theories of communication.
2. To compare theories as well as contrast, understanding how the use of one may be beneficial or limiting to a particular topic or situation.
3. To learn how we can use communication theories in applied contexts.
4. To develop presentational, research, and writing skills.
5. To apply and integrate theories into everyday situations.
6. To generate a passion for lifelong learning in writing, researching, and critical thinking.

Required Texts:

- Griffin, E. et al. (2019). *A first look at communication theory*. (10th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

NOTE: You may purchase the 9th or even the 8th edition. However, the chapter numbers may not match, and chapters may be missing in older versions. 11th Edition is available as well. I will likely have to ask you to track down or rent videos during the semester, if we move to remote instruction at any point. I will first look for something on a UTEP library database to help defray class costs.

Course Assignments:

1. All tests on Blackboard posted by 2 p.m. on Sundays and due by 11:59 p.m. 90-minute time limit. No make-up tests!
2. Test 1 150 points.
3. Test 2 Midterm Exam 150 points.
4. Test 3 Final Exam 150 points.
5. Theory Paper 250 points.
6. Define 4 Key Chapter Terms 200 points.
7. Attendance and class participation 100 points.

Total Possible Points**1000 points**

Grade Point Values

- A = 1000 to 900
- B = 899 to 800
- C = 799 to 700
- D = 600 to 699
- F = 599 – or fewer points

**INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ALTER THE COURSE
AND/OR GRADING SCHEDULE**

Theory Paper Please select a Communication Theory of your choice that you like or want to critique in a 3-page essay to analyze the theory. Use one from the textbook. This is your opportunity to “read” the theory from an academic perspective. Do not be afraid to see where this analysis takes you.

Grading: All assignments are graded using the same criteria: (a) grammar/spelling, (b) organization, (c) accuracy in using concepts, (d) originality of analysis, (e) depth of critical thinking, (f) quality of arguments—using evidence to support opinions, and (g) following instructions.

An “A” paper will be a one that is superior. It will address all of the issues assigned (i.e., directions are followed). The writer will demonstrate exceptional fluency and use of language. The paper will be distinguished by the quality of its content, the amount of detail used to support or illustrate its central ideas, and the coherency of the analysis presented. It will contain very few grammatical errors. It will include original analysis of the theories/concepts. It will accurately use and cite sources (using APA style; this means citing them in text). Ensure there is a good amount of substance from the sources, and it is accurate. The sources should be strong, academic sources. Finally, the paper will be well organized with a clear purpose/thesis statement, clear topic, sentences for paragraphs, good transitions, and good previews and reviews of main points.

A “B” paper will be above average. It will be well organized and developed, and will demonstrate a clear understanding of the assignment (i.e., all issues are addressed directions followed). Although it may contain minor flaws, the writing will exhibit an ability to use the language effectively and the analysis presented will be relatively coherent. It will include original analysis of the theories/concepts, but not quite as compelling as an A paper (e.g., not as well supported with evidence). It will accurately use and cite sources (using APA style; this means citing them in text). The amount of substance is strong, but not as well developed as an A paper and there may be minor flaws in the evidence. The sources are strong academic sources. Finally, the paper will be well organized, but with some minor flaws in organization.

A “C” paper will be an average paper. It will demonstrate an adequate level of organization and development. It will contain enough specific information to illustrate a described experience or a proposed argument. Although the paper may contain writing errors, they will not be serious or frequent enough to distract the reader from the content. All issues must be addressed for it to receive a “C” (i.e., you must follow directions to get a C). The analysis is largely repetitive with what is presented in class or texts and thus is not original. Sources are not cited properly or the amount of substance from the sources is limited (An example of limited substance is using one quotation—usually a definition—from the source to show you used it in order to count as one of the required sources.). All of the sources are not strong academic ones. Finally, the organization has some flaws. For example, main points may not be clear, the paper lacks a thesis, etc.

A “D” paper will be below average. It will reveal one or two of the following weaknesses: (1) all objectives of the assignment are not addressed (you did not follow directions), (2) serious problems of organization or focus, (3) insufficient information to illustrate experiences or support the arguments, (4) serious problems in sentence structure, (5) errors in writing that are sufficient to distract the reader from the content of the paper, (6) not enough outside sources (or none), and (7)

lacking original analysis.

An “F” paper will demonstrate little understanding of the assignment or the mechanics of writing. Essentially, it will include three or more of the weaknesses presented in the “D” paper.

I expect you to contribute your original ideas to class discussions and in assignments.

Late Papers: I do not accept late papers unless there are circumstances beyond your control that you can document. If you need to submit a late assignment or to complete a test on an alternate day, please let me know ahead of time. You will lose 10 points of the final grade for late papers, unless the tardiness is due to an illness or death. University-approved absences are exempt from this policy but must be reported to me ahead of the absence.

Participation: This class relies extensively on readings, discussions, and tests. It is imperative that you keep up with these assignments. Participation makes the class sessions much more engaging.

Define 4 Key Terms – from the first 10 chapters you have a choice of defining 4 key terms. Assignments will be titled 1 through 10. Due on Saturdays, opens at 2 pm and closes at 11:59 pm.

Class Policies

Academic Honesty: Students caught in acts of academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with UTEP policy. I will report the incident and submit the assignment/exam to the Dean of Students, and they will determine your punishment. If consulted, I will recommend you fail the class.

Approaching the Professor: You can approach me any time before or after class. Also, text, call or email me with your questions or concerns. If after that you would still like to meet, I am glad to do so via telephone, in the library or student union. Thank you for your consideration and understanding.

Disabilities: Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure that their needs are met in a timely manner. Please also register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS), UTEP Union East, Room 106. You may reach them via telephone (915) 747-5148 or email cass@utep.edu. If you need any accommodation, CASS registration will protect you and help ensure that you receive the accommodation(s) you need to excel in your studies. I am always glad to help in any way I can. However, CASS staff members are the only individuals who can validate and authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

Sexual Harassment: Texas state law requires that any university employee that learns of any act(s) of sexual harassment must notify the appropriate university officials. If I am told of any such allegations or overhear any such discussions, I am legally bound to report such information.

A Note about Readings: The readings for the week are posted in the syllabus.

Final Grades: I do NOT provide students with final grades via email or telephone. Final grades are posted on Goldmine once they are processed by the Registrar’s Office. Please do NOT contact me for grades prior to their official posting on Goldmine. After the last day of classes, I will not return to campus until the start of the summer or fall semester. If you have any concerns regarding your final grade, contact me at your earliest convenience via email during Summer I or at the start of the fall semester. In the event of any errors, I will submit a grade change via email and the new grade should post in about two weeks. Professors may change grades at any time; there are no time limits.

Fall 2023 Calendar
(Instructor reserves the right to alter the class readings and/or assignments)

Class Meeting	Topic Activity	Reading-Assignments-Tests
Week 1 - 8/28 and 8/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus • Overview • Chapter 1 Communication Theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 Launching Your study of Communication theory • Assignment 1 due Saturday September 2
Week 2 - 9/4 and 9/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor Day • Chapter 2 Talk about Theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 2 • Talk About Theory • Assignment 2 due Saturday September 9
Week 3 - 9/11 to 9/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3 Weighing the Words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3 Weighing the Words • Assignment 3 due Saturday September 16
Week 4 - 9/18 – 9/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4 Mapping the Territory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4 Mapping The territory • Assignment 4 due Saturday September 23
Week 5 - 9/25 – 9/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 7 Expectancy violations Theory • Test 1 Chapters 1,2,3,4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 7 Expectancy Violations Theory • Assignment 5 due Saturday September 30 • Test 1 Sunday Oct. 1 opens at 2pm closes at 11:59pm. NO make-up
Week 6 - 10/2 – 10/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 8 Social Penetration Theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 8 Social Penetration Theory • Assignment 6 due Saturday October 7
Week 7 10/9 – 10/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 11 Relational Dialectics Theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 11 Relatioanl Dialectics Theory • Assignment 7 due Saturday October 14
Week 8 - 10/16 – 10/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 13 Media Multiplexity Theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 13 Media Multiplexity Theory • Assignment 8 due Saturday October 21
Week 9 - 10/23 – 10/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 26 Semiotics • Test 2 Chapters 8,11,13,26, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 26 Semiotics • Assignment 9 due Saturday October 28 • Test 2 Sunday October 5 opens at 2pm closes at 11:59 pm. NO make-up.
Week 10 - 10/30 – 11/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 29 Cultivation Theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 29 Cultivation Theory

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment 10 due Saturday November 4
Week 11 - 11/6 - 11/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 32 Standpoint Theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 32 Standpoint Theory
Week 12 - 11/13 – 11/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 35 Face Negotiation Theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 35 Face Negotiation Theory
Week 13 - 11/20 – 11/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 25 Media Ecology • Test 3 Chapters 29,32,35,25 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 25 Media Ecology • Test 3 Sunday December 3 opens 2pm closes 11:59pm. NO make-up.
Week 14 - 11/27 – 11/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's your Theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select your Theory
Week 15 - 12/4 – 12/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's your Theory Discussion. Theory paper due Dec.7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe Theory • Theory Paper due Dec.7
Week 16 – 12/11 – 12/15	Finals	Finals

Guidance on Artificial Intelligence: The use of generative AI tools such as Chat GPT is permitted in this course for the following activities, which must be noted or cited:

[Use for research and further explanation of theories, models, and concepts. Do not copy and paste. Use your own words and perspective.]

However, you may not use AI tools to complete the following activities:

[Use to complete tests, composition of essays or other written assignments. Do not copy and paste. Use your own words and refer to the textbook or outside source(s) to complete these tasks.]

Students must cite any borrowed content sources to comply with all applicable citation guidelines, copyright law, and avoid plagiarism. Instances that violate these guidelines will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.

Where you can go for assistance

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support:

Technology Resources

- [Help Desk](#): Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus.

Academic Resources

- [UTEP Library](#): Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
- [University Writing Center \(UWC\)](#): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.

- [Math Tutoring Center \(MaRCS\)](#): Ask a tutor for help and explore other available math resources.
- [History Tutoring Center \(HTC\)](#): Receive assistance with writing history papers, get help from a tutor and explore other history resources.
- [RefWorks](#): A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.
- [The Miner Learning Center](#): Join peer-led study sessions in person or online to review content and discover study strategies in core curriculum courses.
- [UTEP Edge](#): UTEP's cross-campus framework for student success and empowerment – develops students' assets through high-impact experiences made possible by the expertise and dedication of faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners.

ILLNESS PRECAUTIONS

Please stay home if you have symptoms of a communicable illness. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations.

Drop Courses or Excused absences: according to UTEP Catalog, “At the discretion of the instructor, a student can be dropped from a course because of excessive absences or lack of effort. A grade of “W” will be assigned before the course drop deadline and a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.” See Policies and Regulations in the UTEP Undergraduate Catalog for a list of excuse absences. Therefore, if I find that, due to non-performance in the course, you are at risk of failing, I will drop you from the course. I will provide 24 hours advance notice via email.

OR

I will not drop you from the course. However, if you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the [Registrar's Office](#) to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an “F” for the course.