

COMM 5308.01 & SPCM 4320.01

COMMUNICATION THEORY

Spring 2019

Professor: **Dr. Dennis Robertson**

Classroom: HPR 253

Office: HPR 263

Office Hours: MWF 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

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Course Description

This graduate course in Communication Theory provides an examination and critical analysis of the major theories of communication processes, including behaviorism, social construction, symbolic interactionism, and other theoretical approaches to the study of communication. Students will survey the major theories and concepts that inform the scholarly study of human and mass communication, and they will apply communication theory and practice to a broad range of communication phenomena in interpersonal, public, and mass communication settings.

Course Objectives

- Develop an understanding of, and appreciation for, theories relevant to interpersonal, group, public, and mass communication.
- Examine the nature of theory development in communication.
- Understand and apply major theoretical perspectives in communication and related fields.
- Compare and contrast theories across an assortment of theoretical contexts.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to

1. Discuss the importance of communication theory from multiple philosophical perspectives including the specific influences of various epistemic traditions and schools of thought on the development of theories used in communication research.
2. Trace the historical development, conceptual framework, and current status of several key communication theories in multiple contexts from major philosophical perspectives.
3. Relate theory and research methods, including standards for evaluation and analysis of theories through discussion and critique of current communication theories.
4. Analyze and critique theory at a high level, using appropriate criteria.

Program Learning Outcomes

- Appropriately apply communication theory to the communication rules, norms, listening skills, and rhetorical strategies used by the people around them.
- Access and analyze appropriate scholarly sources necessary to answer communication-based research questions and problems.

Texts

Griffin, E. (2019). *A First Look at Communication Theory (10th ed.)*. New York: McGraw-Hill
American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.)*. Washington, DC

Major Requirements

- Six reading quizzes worth 20 pts. each (you may drop your lowest score). 100 pts.
- Three research papers worth 50 pts. each and one final paper worth 100 pts. 250 pts.
- Three section Exams worth 100 pts. each. 300 pts.
- Class Participation and four Presentations worth 25 pts. each. 150 pts.
- **Total Points Possible** **800 pts.**

Evaluation & Grade Calculation

Quizzes = 15%, Papers = 30%, Exams = 35%, Presentations = 15%, and Participation = 5%.
A = 90 to 100 pts.; B= 80 to 89 pts.; C = 70 to 79 pts.; D = 60 to 69 pts.; F = 59 or below.

Assignment Policy

Assignments will be given throughout the semester. Students are responsible for all course materials, including class lectures, handouts, and textbook reading assignments. Assignments are due on the date specified in the syllabus, prior to the beginning of class. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.** Assignments and due dates may be changed at the instructor's discretion with fair notice to students. **ALL PAPERS MUST BE TYPED USING THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION MANUAL AS A GUIDE.**

Course Withdrawal

The last date to withdraw from one or more classes is April 1, 2019.

Final Examination Date

Monday, April 29, 2019, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Attendance and Tardiness Policy

Students are expected to and should attend class. Obviously circumstances sometimes prohibit perfect attendance, so here's what you should keep in mind:

- Two absences are allowed for illness, university-sponsored activities, family emergencies, etc.
- A third absence will lower the final grade by 5 percentage points.
- A fourth absence will lower the grade by 10 percentage points.

- See the current UT Tyler catalog for the university's policy on student responsibility for missed classes and assignments. **Be familiar with the university's drop policy.** Students who anticipate being absent from class due to religious observance or university-sponsored activities should inform the instructor by the second class meeting.
- Students over 20 minutes late are considered absent. If a student must be absent the day an exam is scheduled, he/she must notify the instructor before class time. **No make-up tests will be allowed if the instructor is not given a legitimate excuse before the time of the exam or presentation.**

Use of Electronic Devices

Turn off all electronic devices including cell phones and MP3 players at the beginning of class. Allowing a cell phone or other device to ring during class is unacceptable. No text messaging or checking the time on your cell phone during class. Keep these devices in your backpack or pocket during class.

- Computers may be used in class for taking notes.
- Do not use computers during class for reading/writing e-mail, surfing the Web, playing games, working on assignments for other classes, or writing letters.

University Policies

UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace Honor and Integrity, thus disallowing lying, cheating, or stealing, or accepting the actions of those who do.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>.

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>.

UT Tyler: A Tobacco-Free University

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors. Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products. There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit <http://www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free>.

Academic Honesty Policy

Students will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Anyone caught cheating will earn a "0" for that assignment and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action. Plagiarism (the use of written and oral words or ideas of another person, including another student, without the expressed acknowledgment of the speaker's or writer's indebtedness to that person) will not be tolerated. This includes the use of papers or other materials previously submitted to instructors in other classes, as well as video and audio recordings. Students caught plagiarizing will fail this class and be subject to academic and disciplinary action.

Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but 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. "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying from another student's test paper;
- Using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- Failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- Possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes". The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
- Using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an un-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
- Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
- Discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- Divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructor has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
- Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
- Paying or offering money or other valuable things to, or coercing another person to obtain an un-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an un-administered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
- Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
- Taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct;

- Misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.
 - “Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the submission of it as one’s own academic work offered for credit.
 - “Collusion” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.
- All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

U-T Tyler Writing Center

The Center provides professional writing tutoring for all students in all disciplines. If you wish to use the Writing Center, you should plan for a minimum of two hour-long tutorials per assignment: the first to provide an initial consultation and drafting plan, and the second to follow up. Be prepared to take an active role in your learning, as you will be asked to discuss your work during your tutorial. While Writing Center tutors are happy to provide constructive criticism and teach effective writing techniques, under no circumstances will they fix, repair, or operate on your paper. Location: CAS 202. Appointments: 903-565-5995.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, go to <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler>. Fill out the New Student application.

- The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices>. The SAR office is located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (STE 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. (For Spring, the Census Date is January 28, 2019.) Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester’s Census Date can be found on the

Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date (January 28, 2019) is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a “W” grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

- Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time, the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security Numbers and FERPA Statement

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students

have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

UT Tyler Resources for Students

- UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
- UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)

Dates that Affect You

- March 1 – Final Filing Deadline for Spring 2019 Graduation

Tentative Schedule (May be adjusted as the semester progresses)

Monday, January 14

Read: Chapters 1-3, pages 2-23

Discussion: What is theory? What does it do? What is communication? How does it work? What's the difference between Objective and Interpretive approaches to communicative texts? Determinism or Free Will? What's the purpose of theory. What makes an objective theory good? What makes an interpretive theory good?

Reading Quiz #1

Assignment 1: Theory Paper I (any theory of your choice). **Due Monday, February 11**

Monday, January 21. **NO CLASS.** Martin Luther King holiday.

Monday, January 28

Read: Chapters 4 & 5, pages 36-64

Discussion: Know the seven traditions in the Field of Communication Theory. What is Interpersonal Communication, and how do bowling, ping pong, and charades pertain to it? What is Symbolic Interactionism? How does Symbolic Interaction work? What are the four interpretive criteria?

Reading Quiz #2

10 Essay Questions for Your Consideration (three of which will make up Exam 1)

Monday, February 4

Read: Chapters 6 & 7, pages 65-92

Discussion: What is CMM? What are the four claims of CMM? Know personal space, proxemics, and the core concepts of EVT.

EXAM 1. Essay-based, from 10 essay questions handed out in class.

Preview of Theory Paper I

Monday, February 11

Read: Chapters 25-27, pages 309-342

Discussion: What is Media Ecology and how do symbolic environments fit into the theory? Define the five “ages” or eras unveiled in Chapter 25. Is McLuhan right? What is Semiotics? Is the homogeneous society real? What about the semiotics of mass communication? How do corporations control mass media? What is hegemony? What cultural factors affect the selection of news? Do media control the dominant ideology of our culture?

Theory Paper I Presentations.

Assignment 2. Theory Paper II

Monday, February 18

Read: Chapters 28-30, pages 346-379

Discussion: Uses and Gratifications Theory, Cultivation Theory, and Agenda-Setting Theory.

Reading Quiz #3

10 More Essay Questions for Your Consideration (three of which make up Exam 2)

Monday, February 25

Read: Chapters 8-10, pages 93-125

Discussion: What is Social Penetration Theory? Know Self-Disclosure, Dialectics, and Social Penetration. What is Uncertainty Reduction Theory? Know Coping with Uncertain Responses, Theorems, and reducing uncertainty. Describe Social Information Processing Theory. Verbal cues versus nonverbal cues. Variables in online communication. The online communication process (sender, receiver, etc.).

EXAM 2. Essay-based, from 10 essay questions handed out in class.

Preview of Theory Paper 2

Monday, March 4

Read: Chapters 11 & 12, pages 131-156

Discussion: What is Relational Dialectics Theory? What is an utterance chain and why is it important? Know: Three Common Dialectics (that shape relationships); How meaning emerges from struggles; Diachronic and Synchronic Interplay; and the principle of veracity.

Reading Quiz #4

Theory Paper II Presentations

Monday, March 11

SPRING BREAK. Enjoy your time away!

Monday, March 18

Read: Chapters 13 & 14, pages 158-180

Discussion: What is Media Multiplexity Theory? Mapping social networks. Strongly tied pairs use more media to sustain their relationships than do weakly tied pairs. True or False? What is Social Judgment Theory? Contrast and Assimilation errors. Boomerang effect. Attitudes on sleep, booze, and money. Kant's categorical imperative.

Reading Quiz #5

Assignment 3. Theory Paper III

Monday, March 25

Read: Chapters 15 & 16, pages 182-205

Discussion: What is the Elaboration Likelihood Model? Central and Peripheral Routes to persuasion. The power of elaboration. Peripheral cues as an alternative route of influence. Ethical reflection. What is Cognitive Dissonance Theory? How do you deal with dissonance, and how do you reduce it? The Cause and Effect of Dissonance. Persuasion through Dissonance.

Reading Quiz #6

10 Essay Questions for Your Consideration (three of which will make up Exam 3)

Monday, April 1

Read: Chapters 17 & 18, pages 210-233

Discussion: Four functions of effective decision making. How do you prioritize these functions? The role of communication in fulfilling the functions. What are Discourse Ethics? Describe the Symbolic Convergence Theory. Fantasy chain reactions and fantasy themes. Judging SCT as a scientific theory and as an interpretive theory.

EXAM 3. Essay-based, from 10 essay questions handed out in class.

Preview of Theory Paper III

Monday, April 8

Read: Chapters 19 & 20, pages 237-257

Discussion: What culture is, what culture isn't. What do ethnographers do? Metaphors, symbols, and rituals: that's the way it is, isn't it? Is the cultural approach useful? Communication and the organization. The four flows of CCO (what is CCO?). Four principles of the four flows.

Theory Paper III Presentations

Monday, April 15

Read: Chapters 22 & 24, pages 275-285 and 297-304

Discussion: What is rhetoric? Rhetorical proof: logos, pathos, ethos. The five canons of Rhetoric. The Golden Mean. What is the Narrative Paradigm? From a rational-world paradigm to a narrative one. What is narrative rationality? Coherence and fidelity.

Assignment 4. Final Paper (tie your first three papers together into one final paper. Needs new introduction, added references, new conclusion).

Monday, April 22

Diffusion of Innovation Theory

(Bring discussion points on the theory: its history; its author; its impact)

Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory, developed by E.M. Rogers in 1962, is one of the oldest social science theories. It originated in communication to explain how, over time, an idea or product gains momentum and diffuses (or spreads) through a specific population or social system. The end result of this diffusion is that people, as part of a social system, adopt a new idea, behavior, or product. Adoption means that a person does something differently than what they had previously (i.e., purchase or use a new product, acquire and perform a new behavior, etc.). The key to adoption is that the person must perceive the idea, behavior, or product as new or innovative. It is through this that diffusion is possible.

Adoption of a new idea, behavior, or product (i.e., "innovation") does not happen simultaneously in a social system; rather it is a process whereby some people are more apt to adopt the innovation than others. Researchers have found that people who adopt an innovation early have different characteristics than people who adopt an innovation later. There are five established adopter categories, and while the majority of the general population tends to fall in the middle categories, it is still necessary to understand the characteristics of the target population. When promoting an innovation, there are different strategies used to appeal to the different adopter categories.

Innovators - These are people who want to be the first to try the innovation. They are venturesome and interested in new ideas. These people are very willing to take risks, and are often the first to develop new ideas. Very little, if anything, needs to be done to appeal to this population.

Early Adopters - These are people who represent opinion leaders. They enjoy leadership roles, and embrace change opportunities. They are already aware of the need to change and so are very comfortable adopting new ideas. Strategies to appeal to this population include how-to manuals and information sheets on implementation. They do not need information to convince them to change.

Early Majority - These people are rarely leaders, but they do adopt new ideas before the average person. That said, they typically need to see evidence that the innovation works before they are willing to adopt it. Strategies to appeal to this population include success stories and evidence of the innovation's effectiveness.

Late Majority - These people are skeptical of change, and will only adopt an innovation after it has been tried by the majority. Strategies to appeal to this population include information on how many other people have tried the innovation and have adopted it successfully.

Laggards - These people are bound by tradition and very conservative. They are very skeptical of change and are the hardest group to bring on board. Strategies to appeal to this population include statistics, fear appeals, and pressure from people in the other adopter groups.

Monday, April 29

Final Paper Due:

Final Paper presentations. What did you add? How did you tie it together? How well do you think you know the theory now?