

COMM430: Communication Theory Syllabus

Spring 2018

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Communication Studies addresses critical thinking, communicative concepts and skills, and relational and participatory effectiveness in personal, public, and professional spheres. This is a Communication Studies course and as such, this course will give you the tools needed to dissect your experiences in our communicative world. Specifically, this course introduces you to major issues and perspectives in communication studies while helping you think about and analyze communication in a systematic way (i.e., in a theoretical way). Theories help us to make sense of the world around us. Regardless of their scope, all theories shape how we make judgments about reality, relationships, circumstances, and decisions in our lives. This course exposes you to theories of communication, both large and small, with the intention of better equipping you to make sense of the communicative aspects of your world.

ANGELA MCGOWAN, PHD

CONTACT INFORMATION

- ❖ Office: McEwen Hall 304A
- ❖ Office Phone: 716-673-3260
- ❖ Email: mcgowan@fredonia.edu

OFFICE HOURS

- ❖ MWF: 9:00-10:30 a.m.

CLASSROOM

- ❖ McEwen Hall 201

MEETING TIME

- ❖ MW: 2-3:20 p.m.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. recognize conceptual domains of communication theory and understand how the disciplinary areas of communication guide scholarly inquiry;
2. outline the essential features of theories of human communication and use that knowledge to analyze communication phenomenon from different perspectives;
3. identify and explain major communication theories by applying knowledge of communication to events happening in our daily lives;
4. conduct scholarly research in order comprehend and evaluate communication theories; and
5. compare and contrast communication theories as a means for evaluating communication behavior.

COURSE READINGS

Please complete the readings before the assigned class period.

1. **Required Text**

Griffin, E., Ledbetter, A., & Sparks, G. (2015). *A first look at communication theory*. (9th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. ISBN-13: 978-0073523927 / ISBN-10: 0073523925

2. **Supplemental Readings**

Additional readings, including journal articles and popular press articles not found in the textbook, will be available through OnCourse and Google Drive.

PREREQUISITES

- ❖ COMM 101, COMM 105, & COMM 295 (co-requisite)

COURSE POLICIES

- ❖ **Attendance:** Class begins promptly at 2:00 p.m. and the professor will take attendance at the start of class. The professor will keep track of attendance in OnCourse. Students are responsible for checking their attendance and notifying the professor of a discrepancy. Four actions that will result in an absence even if you show up to class: (1) arriving more than 10 minutes late, (2) leaving the classroom for more than 5 minutes during class, (3) sleeping, and (4) arriving late (after 2:00 p.m.) or leaving early three (3) times equals one absence. You are

permitted up to 3 absences. Upon your 4th absence, regardless of reason, your final grade will be reduced 10 points per absence. Missing class for a university sanctioned activity is the only absence that will be excused (i.e., artistic performances, attending an academic conference, intercollegiate athletic events, student government, required class trips).

- ❖ **Participation:** This course is premised on active discussion and students are expected to come to class having completed the readings and ready to discuss the content. Participation consists of more than attendance – students will be assessed on frequency of participation, quality of comments, listening skills, attitude, ability to work with others, and behavior. Regardless of whether a participation assignment is completed during or outside of class, you must be present the day it is due in order to earn credit for the assignment.
- ❖ **Class Etiquette:** The content of this class has the potential to stir up strong emotional reactions, because you will encounter ideas and theories that challenge you. A student's decision to stay enrolled in the class is an agreement to approach all course content with a critical academic lens. Above all, participants must treat each other and the professor with respect. The most fundamental way to respect class participants is to complete daily readings, listen to others, and ground your own comments in principles of critical thinking. Class discussions should take place within the context of academic inquiry and in the spirit of understanding diverse perspectives and experiences. Do not engage in private conversations, interrupt another student who has the floor, keep cell phones on, or show general signs of disrespect for the course, professor, or other students. Non-course related materials such as newspapers and items from other courses must be stowed away when class begins. (Adapted from: Palczewski, C. H. (2012). *Comm4216: Political communication syllabus*. Retrieved from <http://www.uni.edu/palczews/PolComm.htm>)
- ❖ **Late work:** Assignments are due in hard copy and/or via dropboxes in OnCourse within the first 5 minutes of class (by 2:05 p.m.). Deadlines apply even if you are not in class the day the assignment is due. Turning in an assignment late requires professor approval at least 24 hours before the assignment is due. Late assignments will only be accepted under unique and extreme circumstances. Failures of technology (e.g., “my computer crashed,” “the Internet was down,” “the file won’t open,” “the printer was broken”) and inability to complete an assignment on time because of one’s work schedule, personal life, other coursework deadlines, or extracurricular obligations are not considered dire circumstances. Assuming you have professor approval prior to when the assignment is due, late work will be accepted up to 72 hours after the due date. Regardless, a late assignment will receive a severe grade deduction.
- ❖ **Written work:** Your research should come from peer-reviewed journal articles, books written by scholars or professionals who are experts in their fields, substantive news articles that are reliable sources of information on events and issues of public concern and/or non-bias websites. The course textbook and readings available through OnCourse do not count toward the source requirement, yet, should still be cited when applying course concepts, theories, or strategies discussed in the readings. Blogs, social media posts, and/or other self-authored sites, such as Wikipedia, are considered non-credible sources and will not be accepted.

All written assignments will be submitted online using Turnitin. Turnitin will check your submission against stored student assignments that have been submitted during past sections of the course, the Internet, journals, periodicals, and publications. Then, Turnitin will run an Originality Report on each assignment. If the report exceeds the maximum percentage the professor may not accept the student's assignment.

All written work must be (1) submitted in hard copy by the start of class, (2) submitted via Turnitin by the start of class, and (3) written in APA style: justified left, 1” margins, double spaced, running head including page numbers in top right corner, stapled, contractions written out, and typed in 12-point Times New Roman font. APA resources are posted on OnCourse. Also refer to the American Psychological Association (<http://www.apastyle.org>) and Purdue Owl (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>) for the most current rules for APA.

If you would like the professor to review a draft of a written assignment or your website you must email her the complete paper or website at least 6 days before the assignment is due. She will not proofread the document but will instead discuss the merits of the submission.

- ❖ **Exams:** Once the exam has been distributed you cannot leave the room until you finish your exam. All arrangements for missing an examination must be made 24 hours prior to the time the examination is scheduled. If such arrangements are not made, then no make-up examination will be given, and you will receive a zero for the assignment. If you miss the examination and have received permission to do so, you must make it up within a reasonable time (normally 72 hours or less). Students are expected to take the final exam on the designated day and time unless there are dire circumstances that require a student to take the final exam early.
- ❖ **Team Projects:** For each project that requires you work with another student: (1) grades will be assigned to the pair as a whole and (2) each student will complete a peer evaluation form, which includes assigning a grade, to indicate the relative participation and contribution of your partner. If a group member is sick on the day of your group presentation, the pair will still deliver the presentation on the scheduled day and time while the other student will deliver his or her portion of the presentation when she or he returns to school.

The following sanctions will be imposed by group members when a peer violates the group's code of conduct: (1) give a verbal warning, (2) give a written warning through email and include the professor on the email, (3) have a group meeting with the professor to discuss the problem, and (4) the group member is dismissed from the group and will complete the assignment on his or her own. The dismissal of a group member must happen 7 days prior to the assignment's due date.

- ❖ **Technology:** Students enrolled in this course must have Internet access available to them, including e-mail and website access, and have the basic knowledge needed to efficiently use these Internet technologies. Students are responsible for retrieving documents (assignment guidelines, rubrics, handouts, readings, etc.) from OnCourse.

The professor may ask you to use your mobile phone to conduct research during class and contribute to class discussion. Regardless, technology cannot be used during in-class assignments, such as pop quizzes, to check social media, text message, or to take pictures of course content that is projected or written on the board. Laptops and tablets are not required for class but you may be asked to bring them on specific days. Information Technology services has equipment available for checkout (<http://www.fredonia.edu/its/servicecenter/equip.asp>).

- ❖ **Communicating with Professor:** The professor will communicate with you through your Fredonia e-mail account. Email is the best way to communicate with the professor, and she will check her Fredonia email between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Unless the professor is traveling, it is the weekend, or Fredonia has a university sanctioned break, the professor should reply to you within 48 hours. You also can communicate with her via Google Chat (gchat) anytime there is a green dot next to her name. Click on this link to learn how to start a chat in Gmail <https://support.google.com/chat/answer/161880?hl=en>

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

To view complete descriptions of assignment guidelines and rubrics go to: OnCourse > COMMM430 > Select the assignment you'd like to learn more about.

1. **Participation/Discussion Questions (150 total points):** This grade is comprised of three assignments:
 - (a) Online quiz of the syllabus (10 total points)
 - (b) Discussion questions (10 @ 10 points each/100 points total)
 - (c) In-class participation (40 total points)
2. **Communication Theory Website (200 total points):** Working with a partner, students will design a website that explains theories of communication discussed that week. As a website designer, students are responsible for (a) explaining the major tenets of the theories, (b) applying the theory to real-life situations, (c) discussing how the theories assigned for the week inform research and practice, and (d) engaging the reader in an interactive way to enhance their understanding of the theories. In addition to building a website, each pair will deliver a 5-7 minute presentation that explains their website to the class with the goal of receiving feedback that can be used to strengthen the website's utility. The day of the presentation, the pair is also responsible for submitting an outline that explains the website's purpose, audience, and resources.

3. **Theory Application Paper and Presentation (250 points):** This assignment is designed to help build a bridge between the practical and the theoretical while also laying the groundwork for students to assess and evaluate communication theory. Specifically, students will select a theory, research literature on the theory, and apply that theory to a “real-life” construct. Each student will select a different theory. The professor will share the theory sign-up sheet with you via Google Drive, and you cannot select a theory that you discussed on your website. Students should create understanding beyond what is covered in the textbook. This assignment includes a 1250-1500 words (5-6 page) paper that demonstrates expertise on the theory and a 4-5 minute oral presentation that summarizes the essay.

4. **Exams (200 points each/400 total points):** Two exams will be administered. Exams will include matching, multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay questions. Application and identification are stressed more than memorization of material. Exam 1 will cover content learned from January 22 – March 5. Exam 2 will cover content learned from March 6 – May 7.

COURSE GRADING

- ❖ After a grade is returned, students must wait 24 hours prior to inquiring about the grade. Then, students have 6 days to resolve questions about the grade. If you wish to discuss a grade, you must set up an appointment with the professor no later than 3 days after the assignment is returned. Prior to the meeting, you should go through the assignment, the rubric, and compare the feedback to the qualifications for the letter grade you are seeking. A grade will be finalized if unquestioned on day 7 after the time of grade distribution.
- ❖ The professor does not discuss grades over email.
- ❖ All grades are kept in OnCourse and will be updated regularly.
- ❖ Final grades are based on an absolute points total. Your final grade is a function of the number of points earned in the course divided by the total number of points, yielding a percentage. The scale shown is used to compute final grades. Borderline grades may, at the discretion of the professor, receive the next highest letter grade. Borderline cases are defined as scores within two points of the next highest grade (e.g., you earned 898 points but need 900 points to make an A-).

Final Grade		
A	940-1000	94-100%
A-	939-900	90-93%
B+	899-870	87-89%
B	866-840	84-86%
B-	839-800	80-83%
C+	799-770	77-79%
C	769-740	74-76%
C-	739-700	70-73%
D+	699-670	67-69%
D	669-640	64-66%
D-	639-600	60-63%
F	599-below	59-below

COURSE GRADING CRITERIA

- “A”— Artistic Mastery! This is an assignment that is expertly researched and exceptionally written. ‘A’ work is highly creative in synthesizing relevant concepts, uses language eloquently, and delivers polished work with original arguments and new insights. The assignment exceeds expectations and minimum requirements.
- “B”— Better’n Most! This is an assignment that is well done and above average. ‘B’ work demonstrates good research, solid conceptual synthesis, and superior writing mechanics by integrating concepts effectively and exceeding minimum requirements for analysis. The assignment suggests a decent effort but has some flaws to fix for next time.
- “C”— Competent Comprehension. This is an assignment that shows satisfactory completion of minimum requirements and guidelines. ‘C’ work demonstrates a basic comprehension of fundamental concepts and applications while meeting assignment guidelines, but shows errors in concepts, critical methodology, formatting, spelling, and/or grammar and does not synthesize information. The assignment is average, criteria was attempted but confusing, and suggests minimum effort.
- “D”— Deficient. This is a passing grade with serious deficiencies in research, conceptual understandings, or clarity. ‘D’ work shows an unsatisfactory completion of minimum requirements, does not synthesize information, and/or conceptual understandings and writing skills that are sub-par. Therefore, the assignment is deficient, below average, and indicates negligible effort.

COURSE ETHICS

Conduct that violates academic integrity includes issues such as fraud, cheating, collusion, and the following:

- ❖ **Dishonesty.** This is lack of integrity exhibited through lying, cheating, defrauding, or deceiving. Examples of dishonesty include: copying/submitting the work of another, allowing one's own work to be copied, reading without the professor's consent a copy of the examination prior to the date it is given, submitting the same work in more than one course without the express permission of the professor(s); or disclosing or accepting information if one takes a test at a different time than other students in the same course.
- ❖ **Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is stealing or using the ideas or writings of another as one's own. It involves failure to acknowledge material copied from others or failure to acknowledge one's indebtedness to another for the gist of important thoughts in a formal statement, written or oral. For instance, copying and pasting directly from a web page without using APA quotations clearly constitutes plagiarism. Charges of violating academic integrity shall be handled according to established student discipline procedures. When the professor suspects a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, she will collect necessary information and materials related to the offense and then contact the student. If the professor finds that a violation has occurred, she will use the Academic Integrity Incident Report form to report the issue to the department chair. To read about additional action, please see the Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures detailed on the "University Policies" website. Review the SUNY Fredonia Academic Integrity Policy by going to <http://www.fredonia.edu/studentaffairs/JudicialAffairs/policies.asp#academic>.

TUTORING SERVICES

- ❖ The Learning Center provides free, confidential, nonbiased, collaborative tutoring services as a way of enabling students to succeed in their course work. The goal of tutoring is to help you with your assignment in a way that will help you become more successful in all of your classes. Learning Center: Carnahan-Jackson Center, Reed Library, Fourth Floor. Phone: 716-673-3550.

LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS

- ❖ Reasonable accommodations are available to students with documented disabilities at SUNY Fredonia.
- ❖ Students who may require instructional and/or examination accommodations should contact the office of Disability Support Services for Students (DSS), located on the 4th Floor of the Reed Library (716-673-3270 or disability.services@fredonia.edu). The DSS coordinator will review documentation and determine accommodations on a case-by-case basis. DSS will notify the professor with an accommodation letter that verifies that the student has registered with the DSS office and describes any accommodations approved for the student.
- ❖ After the student has met with the DSS coordinator, she or he should contact the professor to discuss any needed accommodations. It is at that point that the professor will make accommodations.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION PHILOSOPHY

- ❖ Communication does not exist outside of relationships. With this in mind, the faculty of the SUNY Fredonia Department of Communication believes that all communicators, whether in the classroom, on the air, or within created works, have a responsibility to themselves and their audience. The faculty believes that it is our responsibility to provide perspective and structure as students make choices about their work, and consequently, about themselves and who they are as adults and scholars. We encourage students to make the effort to consider the consequences of their choices for themselves, for others, and for those relationships. The faculty encourages projects and behaviors that are undertaken with thoughtful respect and consideration for others. We support and encourage work that is both ethical and enriching to the students' community and to personal and professional relationships. All students should review the Department of Communication Ethical and Professional Standards at <http://www.fredonia.edu/department/communication/standards.asp>

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE*

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC COVERED	WHAT'S DUE
1	1/22	Course Introduction Launching Your Study of Communication Theory	Chapter 1
STUDYING COMMUNICATION THEORY			
	1/24	Talk about Theory Weighing the Words	Chapter 2 Chapter 3 <i>Bring textbook to class</i>
2	1/29	Mapping the Territory Discuss website assignment	Chapter 4 All Students: OnCourse- Syllabus Quiz (due by 11:59 p.m.) <i>Bring textbook to class</i>
THEORIES OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION			
	1/31	Burgoon, "Expectancy Violation Theory"	Chapter 7 All Students: Week 2 DQ
3	2/5	Altman & Taylor, "Social Penetration Theory"	Chapter 8 All Students: Week 3 DQ
	2/7	No Class – Professional Development Day	
4	2/12	Berger, "Uncertainty Reduction Theory"	Chapter 9
	2/14	Walther, "Social Information Processing Theory"	Chapter 10 All Students: Week 4 DQ
5	2/19	Baxter & Montgomery, "Relational Dialectics"	Chapter 11 <i>Bring textbook to class</i>
	2/20	Drs. McGowan & Lohiser host a job interviewing workshop, 1-2:30 p.m., WLM CTR S204 ABC	
	2/21	Petronio, "Communication Privacy Management Theory"	Chapter 12 Your Post Secret postcard Pair 1: Ch. 11 & 12 Website Presentation & Outline Due (finalized website due 2/23) All Students: Week 5 DQ
THEORIES OF INFLUENCE			
6	2/26	Sherif, "Social Judgment Theory"	Chapter 14
	2/28	Petty & Cacioppo, "Elaboration Likelihood Model"	Chapter 15 Pair 2: Ch. 14 & 15 Website Presentation & Outline Due (finalized website due 3/2) All Students: Week 6 DQ
7	3/5	Festinger, "Cognitive Dissonance Theory"	Chapter 16
	3/7	Exam 1 (Ch. 1-4 & 7-16)	All Students: Exam I
8	3/12- 3/16	No Class – Spring Break	
THEORIES OF MASS COMMUNICATION			
9	3/19	McLuhan, "Media Ecology"	Chapter 25
	3/21	Barthes, "Semiotics"	Chapter 26 Pair 3: Ch. 25 & 26 Website Presentation & Outline Due (finalized website due 3/23) All Students: Week 9 DQ
10	3/26	Hall, "Cultural Studies" & "Encoding/decoding"	Chapter 27 Hall, OnCourse Bring technology to locate advertisement

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC COVERED	WHAT'S DUE
	3/28	Katz, "Uses and Gratifications" Introduce theory paper assignment & discuss synthesizing research	Chapter 28 Pair 4: Ch. 27 & 28 Website Presentation & Outline Due (finalized website due 3/30) All Students: Week 10 DQ
11	4/2	No Class – Travel Day	
	4/4	Gerbner, "Cultivation Theory"	Chapter 29
12	4/9	McCombs & Shaw, "Agenda-setting Theory" Entman, "Framing"	Chapter 30 Entman, OnCourse Pair 5: Ch. 29 & 30 Website Presentation & Outline Due (finalized website due 4/11)
THEORIES OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION			
	4/11	Giles, "Communication Accommodation Theory"	Chapter 31 All Students: Week 12 DQ
13	4/16	Ting-Toomey, "Face-Negotiation Theory"	Chapter 32
	4/18	Tannen, "Genderlect Styles"	Chapter 34 Pair 6: Ch. 32 & 34 Website Presentation & Outline Due (finalized website due 4/20) All Students: Week 13 DQ
14	4/23	Harding & Wood, "Standpoint Theory"	Chapter 35
	4/25	No Class – Theory Application Paper Out-of-Class Workday	
15	4/30	Kramarae, "Muted Group Theory"	Chapter 36 All Students: Weeks 14 & 15 DQ
	5/2	Guest lecture, Dr. Amanda Lohiser presenting on "Emotions revealed: Recognizing faces and feelings"	Entman, OnCourse All Students: 2 questions to ask Dr. Lohiser
16	5/7	Theory Application Paper Presentations	All Students: Theory Application Paper & Presentation
	5/9	Exam 2 Review Day	Bring textbook, notes, & technology (e.g., a computer or tablet) to type answers
Finals Week	Th., 5/17 6:30-8:30 p.m.	Exam 2 (25-32 & 34-36)	All Students: Exam 2

*Schedule Notes:

- ❖ The course schedule is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the professor may be necessary. The schedule is tentative and may change due to the needs of the class. Should a change be necessary, the professor will let you know of the changes as soon as they are decided via email and OnCourse.
- ❖ Important Registrar Dates: Jan. 26 (final day to DROP courses), March 22 (mid-semester grades available), and April 6 (final day with WITHDRAW from course).
- ❖ Final grades will be available to students on May 24, 2018 after 3:00 p.m.