COMM430: Communication Theory Syllabus
Spring 2019

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.

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> *OFFICE HOURS*
> * MWF: 9:00-10:30 a.m.
> *CLASSROOM*
> * McEwen Hall 201
> *MEETING TIME*
> * MW: 2:00-3:20 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-13:978-125944536-1 [9th ed. Paperback]

2. **Supplemental Readings**
   Additional readings, including journal articles and popular press articles not found in the textbook, will be available through OnCourse.

PREREQUISITES

* COMM 101, COMM 105, & COMM 323 (pre- or 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 being marked as absent even if the student comes to class: (1) arriving more than 10 minutes late, (2) leaving the classroom for more than 5 minutes during

class, (3) sleeping during class, and (4) arriving late (after 2:00 p.m.) or leaving early three times. **You are permitted up to 3 absences.** Upon your 4th absence, regardless of reason, your final grade will be reduced 10 points (1% of final grade) per absence. Missing class for a university sanctioned activity is the only absence that will be excused (e.g., artistic performances, attending an academic conference, intercollegiate athletic events, student government, required class trips). Students should notify Enrollment and Student Services staff member Ms. Deborah Lanski <deborah.lanski@fredonia.edu> if they will have three or more consecutive days of absences due to serious health issues or personal reasons.

- **Participation:** This course is premised on active discussion and students are expected to come to class having completed the readings and assignments. 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 the participation assignment is due in order to earn credit for the assignment. 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. Whether in the classroom or online, you must treat each other with respect. Racist, sexist, and heterosexist comments are jokes are unacceptable, as are derogatory, profane, and sarcastic comments and jokes directed at religious beliefs, disabilities, and age. Disrespectful behavior will be dealt with severely.

- **Late Work**: Assignments are due in hard copy and/or through online means within the first 5 minutes of class (by 2:05 p.m.). Deadlines apply even if you are not in class or on campus 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 wouldn't open," "I forgot my computer in x town and didn't finish it," "the printer was broken") and inability to complete an assignment on time because of one's work schedule, personal life, fear of public speaking, procrastination, other coursework deadlines, or extracurricular obligations are not considered dire circumstances. Once you have approval to turn in the assignment late, the professor will use her own discretion when determining a new deadline. Regardless of reason, a late assignment will receive a significant grade deduction.

  There will be a deduction of 5% for failing to submit an assignment in print <u>or</u> online on time. For instance, if you submit an assignment in print but fail to also submit it via an online dropbox there will be a 5% point deduction. If, however, you fail to submit the assignment in print <u>and</u> online by the established deadline and have not received professor approval to submit the assignment late you will receive a zero for the assignment.

- **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 or theories 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. When going above an assignment's source requirements, keep in mind that websites should not exceed the total number of scholarly sources cited in the assignment.

  Students must account for all sources cited in a paper by using in-text citations and turning in a reference page. Failure to site sources in-text will result in a significant grade deduction as it is a sign of plagiarism. Sources only count if cited both in the paper and the reference page.

  All assignments must be (1) submitted in hard copy by the established deadline, (2) submitted via an online platform by the established deadline, and (3) written in APA style. Turnitin will run an Originality Report on each assignment. If the report significantly exceeds a maximum percentage there will be a 10% point deduction or the professor may not accept the assignment.

You must use APA format to cite in-text citations, reference pages, and papers. APA requires that papers align text left, have 1" margins, are double spaced, have running head that includes page numbers in top right corner, stapled, and typed in 12-point Times New Roman font. APA resources are posted on OnCourse, and Reed Library has copies of the APA manual on the first floor (call number: BF76.7 .P83 2010). You may also refer to the American Psychological Association (http://www.apastyle.org) and Purdue Owl (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/) for APA rules.

If you would like the professor to review a draft of an assignment you must email her the complete assignment at least 6 days prior to the assignment due date. She will not proofread the document but will instead discuss the merits of the project.

- **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 presentation, the other student(s) 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 steps will be taken if a group member fails to assist with the assignment: (1) receive a verbal warning from partner (2) partner gives a written warning through email and includes 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).

  With the exception of students requiring an accommodation (an approved accommodation plan is required before audiotaping/video/digital photos are allowed), students creating unauthorized audio or video recording of lectures violates the professor's intellectual property rights and if posted online may break copyright laws. Therefore, students may not take photographic, video, or audio recordings of any course material or during meetings without the professor's verbal permission. Any permission granted will be for one-time only and does not extend to other class sessions, meetings, or materials. Any materials recorded with permission may be used only for the personal study purposes of the individual to whom permission was granted and may not be shared with other individuals or entities for any purpose. If the professor suspects that a student is recording her without her mission the student will be asked to turn off the recording device immediately. Additionally, anything that the professor posts on OnCourse and discusses or distributes in the classroom or via email is considered her intellectual property. Therefore, you must ask for the professor's permission prior to sharing the materials with anyone outside the class. (Adapted from: Marafiote, T. (2016). COMM321: *Environmental communication syllabus.* Retrieved from http://home.fredonia.edu/sites/default/files/section/communication/_files/Syllabi/COMM_321.pdf)

- **Communicating with Professor**: The professor will communicate with you through your Fredonia e-mail account. All emails should be written using a standard professional formatting. This includes a clear subject heading, courteous greeting, proper spelling, mechanics, and grammar, respectful content, and an identifying signature. 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

Em Griffin (2012) argued that a major challenge of a teaching a comm theory course is that "many college students regard theory as obscure, dull, and irrelevant" (p. 2). To overcome this negative preconceived notion, the professor has designed assignments that use Web 2.0 tools. These web-based assignments should inspire students to recognize the theoretical underpinnings of their own everyday experiences as communicators and to develop the language to explain such experiences through theory. To view complete descriptions of assignment guidelines and rubrics go to: OnCourse > COMMM430 > Select the assignment you'd like to learn more about.

1. **Syllabus Quiz (10 points):** To demonstrate your understanding of course policies and expectations, you will take a 10-question syllabus quiz via OnCourse. The questions include multiple choice, true/false, and matching.

2. **Communication Theory Blog (15 points each/120 total points):** This assignment asks you to design a blog that addresses topics related to communication theory and comment on one peer's blog posting per week. Specifically, you will use Blogger to make 8 blog posts that are between 200-500 words. Blog prompts may ask you to identify summarize the theory in your own words, identify and define key vocabulary pertinent to the theory, evaluate the theory, share an example of an instance in which you can apply this theory to your life, etc. You will also comment on at least one peer's blog post each week. Each comment should be on a different person's blog.

3. **Theory Comic, Documentation Outline, Presentation, and Peer Review (220 points/**Comic = 125 points, Documentation Outline= 55 points, Oral presentation = 25 points, & Peer review = 15 points**):** Working with a partner, you will design a comic that includes 5+ frames and 2 or 3 characters engaging in a dialog that illustrates the theories discussed that week. As a comic designer, you are responsible for (a) explaining the major tenets of the theories, (b) using a situation and characters to demonstrate the theory's core ideas, and (c) engaging the reader in an interactive way to enhance their understanding of the theories. In addition to building a comic, each pair will deliver a brief (4-6 minute presentation) that explains their comic to the class with the goal of receiving feedback that they can implement before the comic is due. The pair is also responsible for submitting a documentation outline that explains the choices made in the comic frame by frame and a peer evaluation form.

4. **Theory Infographic, Documentation Essay, and Presentation (250 points/**Infographic = 150 points, Documentation Essay = 70 points & Oral presentation = 30 points**):** The theory application project is designed to help you build a bridge between the practical and the theoretical while also laying the groundwork for you to assess and evaluate communication theory. This assignment includes a 4-panel infographic, a 500-750 word essay explaining the choices you made while designing the infographic, and a 3:30-4:30 minute oral presentation in which you share your infographic with the class. During all parts of the assignment, you will select a theory, research literature on the theory, and apply that theory to a real-life construct. Your emphasis should be on creating understanding beyond what is covered in the textbook.

5. **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 23 – March 4. Exam 2 will cover content learned from March 18 – May 6.

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.
- Academic Advising: This course is part of a Fredonia initiative that utilizes the Starfish Student Success Network. It is designed to promote student success through coordination and communication between students, instructors, and support staff. Throughout the semester, you may receive emails regarding your attendance, course grades or academic performance. To benefit, it is important that you check your Fredonia email regularly and take recommended actions. You may be contacted directly by an Academic Advisor or Campus Support Professional.

LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS

- Reasonable accommodations are available to students with documented disabilities at SUNY Fredonia.
- Students who may require instructional and/or public speaking 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. The professor will not make accommodations for students until she has received documentation from DDS; therefore, students must turn-in assignments on their assigned days, no exceptions.

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.
- As the semester progresses, the professor reserves the right to modify the syllabus to fit the needs of the specific class.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE*

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC COVERED	WHAT'S DUE
1	1/23	Course Introduction Launching Your Study of Communication Theory	Chapter 1
		STUDYING COMMUNICATION THEORY	
2	1/28	Talk about Theory Weighing the Words	Chapter 2 Chapter 3 *Bring textbook to class* **All Students:** OnCourse- Syllabus Quiz (due by 11:59 p.m.)
	1/30	Mapping the Territory	Chapter 4 *Bring textbook to class* **All Students:** Email prof your blog web address
		THEORIES OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION	
3	2/4	Burgoon, "Expectancy Violation Theory" Discuss website assignment	Chapter 7
	2/6	Altman & Taylor, "Social Penetration Theory"	Chapter 8 **All Students:** Blog assignment 1 **All Students:** Sign-up for theory comic topic
4	2/11	Berger, "Uncertainty Reduction Theory"	Chapter 9
	2/13	Walther, "Social Information Processing Theory"	Chapter 10 **All Students:** Blog assignment 2
5	2/18	Baxter & Montgomery, "Relational Dialectics"	Chapter 11 *Bring textbook to class*
	2/20	Petronio, "Communication Privacy Management Theory"	Chapter 12 Your Post Secret postcard **Pair 1:** Ch. 11 & 12 comic presentation (finalized comic, documentation outline, & peer review form due 2/22 @ 2:00 p.m.) **All Students sans pair 1:** Blog assignment 3
6	2/25	Sherif, "Social Judgment Theory"	Chapter 14
		THEORIES OF INFLUENCE	
	2/27	Petty & Cacioppo, "Elaboration Likelihood Model"	Chapter 15 *Bring technology to class* **Pair 2:** Ch. 14 & 15 comic presentation (finalized comic, documentation outline, & peer review form due 3/1 @ 2:00 p.m.) **All Students sans pair 2:** Blog assignment 4
7	3/4	Festinger, "Cognitive Dissonance Theory"	Chapter 16
	3/6	**Exam 1** (Ch. 1-4 & 7-16)	**All Students:** Exam I
8	3/11-3/15	No Class – Spring Break	
		THEORIES OF MASS COMMUNICATION	
9	3/18	McLuhan, "Media Ecology"	Chapter 25 *Bring technology to class*

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC COVERED	WHAT'S DUE
	3/20	Barthes, "Semiotics"	Chapter 26 **Pair 3:** Ch. 25 & 26 comic presentation (finalized comic, documentation outline, & peer review form due 3/22 @ 2:00 p.m.) **All Students san pair 3:** Blog assignment 5
10	3/25	Hall, "Cultural Studies" & "Encoding/decoding"	Chapter 27 Hall, OnCourse *Bring technology to class*
	3/27	Katz, "Uses and Gratifications" Introduce theory paper assignment & discuss synthesizing research	Chapter 28 **Pair 4:** Ch. 27 & 28 comic presentation (finalized comic, documentation outline, & peer review form due 3/29 @ 2:00 p.m.) **All Students sans pair 4:** Blog assignment 6
11	4/1	Gerbner, "Cultivation Theory"	Chapter 29
	4/3	McCombs & Shaw, "Agenda-setting Theory" Entman, "Framing"	Chapter 30 Entman, OnCourse **Pair 5:** Ch. 29 & 30 comic presentation (finalized comic, documentation outline, & peer review form due 4/5 @ 2:00 p.m.) **All Students sans pair 7:** Blog assignment 7 *Bring technology to class*
THEORIES OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION			
12	4/8	Giles, "Communication Accommodation Theory"	Chapter 31
	4/10	Ting-Toomey, "Face-Negotiation Theory"	Chapter 32 **Pair 6:** Ch. 31 & 32 comic presentation (finalized comic, documentation outline, & peer review form due 4/12 @ 2:00 p.m.) **All Students sans pair 6:** Blog assignment 8 **All Students:** Post theory used for infographic assignment & join Easely.ly group
13	4/15	Tannen, "Genderlect Styles"	Chapter 34
	4/17	Harding & Wood, "Standpoint Theory"	Chapter 35 **Pair 7:** Ch. 34 & 35 comic presentation (finalized comic, documentation outline, & peer review form due 4/19 @ 2:00 p.m.) **All Students sans pair 7:** Blog assignment 9
14	4/22	No Class – Travel Day	
	4/24	Guest lecture, Dr. Amanda Lohiser presenting on "Emotions revealed: Recognizing faces and feelings" (begins @ 2:30)	Enkman, OnCourse **All Students:** 2 questions to ask Dr. Lohiser
15	4/29	In-class workday on infographics	Meet in story lab – McEwen 106

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC COVERED	WHAT'S DUE
	5/1	Infographic Presentations	**All Students:** Infographic, documentation essay, reference page, & presentation
16	5/6	Kramarae, "Muted Group Theory"	Chapter 36 **All Students:** Blog assignment makeup (optional redo)
	5/8	Exam 2 Review Day	Bring textbook, notes, & technology (e.g., a computer or tablet) to type answers
Finals Week	Th., 5/16 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.