CONTACT INFORMATION
Instructor: Stephanie S. Rollie
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E-mail: stephanie.rollie@tamucc.edu
Office hours: M 12-2 PM, T 4-5 PM, W 1-2 PM

COURSE INFORMATION
Course number: 5315.001 CRN: 90104
Meeting times: TR 6-9:45 PM
Course location: 202 Bay Hall
Credits: 3

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Description. This course is designed to introduce graduate students to theory and research on communication in the family. During the semester, we will investigate various definitions of “family” and the implications of those definitions for conducting research and creating policy, study communication at various family life course stages, examine various family systems and subsystems, and analyze key communication processes within the family. Special consideration will be given to theoretical and methodological issues relating specifically to family communication research. Students are expected to critically examine what it means to study communication in the family, to critique current theory and research, and to identify areas for future research growth.

Student Learning Outcomes:
At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to:

- appraise the various ways to define family and articulate how each shapes research directions and outcomes.
- evaluate research in terms of its approach, rigor, and contribution to our understanding of family communication patterns and processes.
- analyze the family development perspective and the family systems perspective and how each shapes family communication research.
- illustrate how theories can be used to advance family communication research.
- critique current family communication research directions and findings
- identify directions for future family communication research.
- synthesize family communication research and develop a proposal for future research.

Course Text:
- Required and presentation supplemental readings will be available through blackboard.
**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

I. Discussion Participation. (20 points) Critical discussion is an essential component of a graduate seminar. Students are expected to arrive to class having read all of the assigned class material with *at least one question and/or topic to discuss* relating to the readings for that day. Students will be called on to lead discussion at various points.

Good discussion at the graduate level includes several important components: listening to and respecting others’ opinions, sharing ideas and thoughts, posing questions to classmates, responding to and building off of others’ comments, making connections between disparate thoughts and concepts, and encouraging others to share their ideas. Questions, comments, and answers should not be directed to the instructor. Instead, good critical graduate-level discussion involves actively listening to and engaging other students in the classroom. Monopolizing conversations, disrespecting or criticizing others, and creating a discordant atmosphere are unacceptable participation techniques. As a courtesy to others, please turn off cell phones and put away computers during discussion.

Consider the following questions when reading the course materials:
- What the main point(s) of the reading? What does this reading say about family communication?
- Where is the communication? How does one study this topic from a communication perspective?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the article/reading?
- What have the authors missed or overlooked?
- What are some directions for future research?

II. Reading Responses. (40 points) Over the course of the semester, students complete four reflective reading responses. Each response should be a one- to two-page, single-spaced analysis of the readings for that day.

III. Article Presentation. (30 points) Each student will formally present a research article or assigned reading to the class.

IV. Research Project. (50 points) Each student will have an opportunity to get involved in a research project focused on family communication. More information will be provided.

V. Take Home Exam (100 points). Students will answer questions about content from readings, research, discussion, and presentations.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Participation</td>
<td>Each Class</td>
<td>30 points</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Responses</td>
<td>Tuesdays</td>
<td>40 points</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article Presentations</td>
<td>To be Assigned</td>
<td>30 points</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Project</td>
<td>Each Week</td>
<td>50 points</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take Home Exam</td>
<td>July 5</td>
<td>100 points</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>250 points</td>
<td>100%</td>
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**COURSE EVALUATION**

**Method of Evaluation:**
Students’ grades are based on written papers, oral presentations, and in-class participation.
Grades are based on demonstration of mastery of course material. Work that meets the minimum requirements of an assignment, is done on time, and displays average involvement with the course content is deserving of a 'C.' Higher grades are awarded to work that goes above and beyond the minimum standards to produce products that reflect superior intellectual effort, excellence in critical analysis, and overall creativity in the approach to any given assignment.

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<tr>
<td>224-250</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>199-223</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>165-198</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>149-164</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>fewer than 149</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
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**Academic Honesty:** Students unaware of the university’s statement on academic honesty should review it in the Undergraduate Catalog or Student Handbook. Examples of academic dishonesty and plagiarism are using someone else’s ideas and not giving them credit; presenting a paper or speech that is not originally yours; handing in assignments that are not originally yours; presenting “facts” or lifting ideas from sources without crediting the source; presenting falsified opinions and figures; cheating on an exam; and/or not participating in group activities, but taking credit for the product. If you are uncertain as to what actions constitute plagiarism or dishonesty, please ask your professor. Students who violate the code of honesty in this class will receive a “0” on that assignment. Any student receiving more than one “0” for academic dishonesty or plagiarism will fail the course and could be dismissed from the program. Note: All violations of the academic honesty are reported to the college dean and Office of Students Affairs who maintains documentation of such offenses for at least 5 years.

**Equity Statement:** All persons, regardless of gender, age, class, race, ethnicity, religion, physical disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, nationality, etc., shall have equal opportunity without harassment in this class. Any problems with or questions about harassment can be discussed confidentially with your professor or department chair.

**Notice to Students with Disabilities:** Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi complies with the American with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Driftwood 101, at 361-825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

**Academic Advising:** The College of Liberal Arts requires that graduate students meet regularly with their Academic Advisor. For students with less than 18 hours, your advisor is the Graduate Coordinator for the Communication program.

**Grade Appeal Process:** As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with
the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE***

**WEEK 1**

**June 4**

Course Overview
The Shape of America's Families
Defining the Family
Overarching Perspectives

Braithwaite et al (2010)
Klein & White (1996)
Galvin, Dickson, & Marrow (2006)

**June 6**

Transition to Parenthood
Early Family Communication

*Readings*: Chapter 5: Becoming Parents
Chapter 24: Discourses on Diapers and Dirty Laundry

**WEEK 2**

**June 11**

Family at Midlife
Family in Later Adulthood

*Readings*: Chapter 15: Middle Childhood
Chapter 16: Parent-Child Communication During Adolescence
Chapter 7: Marital and Family Issues of the Later-Life Adult
Ganong, Coleman, & Rothrauff (2009)

*Reading Response Due*

**June 13**

Family Subsystems: Sibling Relationships & Parent-Child Relationships

*Reading*: Chapter 13: Mothers and Fathers Parenting Together

*Article Presentations*: Myers & Bryant (2008) (sibling)
Connidis (2001) 207-224 (sibling)
Penington (2004) (mother-daughter)
Morman & Floyd (2002) (father-son)

**WEEK 3**

**June 18**

Intact Family Systems
Divorced & Single-Parent Systems
Readings: Chapter 8: Communication in Intact Families
        Chapter 9: Communication in Divorced and Single-Parent Families
        Rollie (2006)
        Barber & Demo (2006)

Reading Response Due

June 20

Expanded Systems: Social Networks & Extended Family
Family Culture & Support
Reading: Chapter 17: Extended Family and Social Networks

Chapter 23: Imagining Families Through Stories and Rituals
Chapter 22: Social Support and Communication in Families

WEEK 4

June 25

Stepfamily Systems
Readings: Chapter 10: Communication in Stepfamilies
        Ganong, Coleman, & Hans (2006)
        Braithwaite, Olson, Golish, Soukup, & Turman (2001)
        Braithwaite et al (2008)

Reading Response Due

June 27

Conflict, Violence, and Abuse
Reading: Chapter 19: Communication, Conflict, & Family Relationships
        Roloff & Miller (2006)

Article Presentations: Chapter 28: Violence and Abuse in Families
        Kassing, Infante, & Pearce (2000) (corporeal punishment)

WEEK 5

July 2

Gay and Lesbian Family Systems
Adoption
Readings: Chapter 11: Family Lives of Lesbians and Gay Men
        Bergen, Suter, & Daas (2006)
        Goldberg, Downing, & Richardson (2009)
        Galvin (2006)

Reading Response Due

July 5

Take Home Exam Due (5 pm)
**REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTAL & PRESENTATION READINGS**

(Ordered by reading sequence)


