COMM 1370: INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

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Office: BH 325, 825-5986
Office Hrs: M 6-7pm; TU 3:30-5:30; W 5-7pm
(Other office visits by appointment.)

Spring, 2014
Section 001: 2:00-3:15pm TTH, BH 126

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the discipline of Communication, sometimes referred to as Comm Studies or Speech Comm. This is a survey or intro course, meaning that we will examine a breadth of topics which are explored more in depth in other courses within the Communication curriculum.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: At the end of the course, students should be able to
1. summarize areas of specialty within the field of Communication;
2. identify and explain basic theories, issues, and trends in Communication, related to three primary contexts—interpersonal communication, interviewing, and group communication;
3. relate their knowledge of the discipline to their own experience and to contemporary life.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS: The required textbook for this course is Communication: Principles for a Lifetime (5th ed.), by Beebe, Beebe, & Ivy. E-versions of the textbook are acceptable. Students are expected to keep current in assigned readings, even if chapter material is not directly covered in class. Quizzes will be drawn primarily from assigned readings. Bring the guidebook of materials handed out on the first day of class with you to each class session.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS: One expectation I have for students is that you keep up with the reading. Plan ahead and at least scan the material before coming to class. If you don’t read, we’ll have no substance for discussions and the course will degenerate into merely an exchange of personal stories and opinions. A secondary expectation is that you openly discuss the material. I understand some people are shy, but I seek balanced participation. We need everyone’s involvement for the course to be successful. I appreciate all points of view and encourage an open exchange of ideas.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE: Please turn off all pagers, cell phones, watches that beep, etc. before the start of class and KEEP THEM OFF. If you must keep your phone on because you’re on call or have an emergency, turn off the sound so that only you’ll be aware of a call. If you have to answer an emergency call, please leave the room quickly and quietly. Be respectful of your instructor and classmates during class sessions. While I appreciate and encourage discussion, I won’t allow someone to dominate or show disrespect for another person’s contribution. I won’t tolerate talking among yourselves when I am presenting information, during classmates’ presentations, or while classmates are offering comments. I expect you to listen to me as well as one another, and not to work on things for other classes or your personal life during my class. No texting or checking emails on laptop computers, cell phones, etc. I don’t allow students to use laptop computers during class for 3 reasons: (1) They’re distracting to students around you; (2) I can’t be assured that you’re working on class material versus checking email or playing solitaire; and (3) students working on laptops tend not to engage in class discussion because they’re engrossed in their computers. Class discussion is a key element in a communication course. If you have a problem with this policy, talk to me.
ATTENDANCE POLICY: Attendance is imperative and will be checked at each class. If you do miss a class, it’s your responsibility to get the info from a classmate. The following policy will be enforced:
1. Your first 2 absences are without penalty. Use these absences for illness and emergencies.
2. Each subsequent absence will lower your final course average by 3 points.
3. You must attend at least 65 minutes of each 75-minute class to be counted present.

MISSED WORK: Please realize that if you miss class the day you are expected to make a presentation, turn in an assignment, or take a quiz, you will not be allowed to make up that activity on a subsequent date. The grade is a ZERO. There are only two exceptions to this policy: (1) you’re admitted to a hospital (not just seen by someone in an ER) and unable to attend class; or (2) you’ve experienced a death in your family. In both of these situations you must provide documentation supporting the reason for the missed activity. You or someone you know should get in touch with me, preferably by phone, as soon as the emergency arises. Contacting me before an absence is always preferable to contacting me after the fact. In extreme situations, you may also contact Student Affairs (825-2612) and request that a written memo be sent to all your instructors. Anyone traveling for a school-related event must turn in assignments or take quizzes before your travel, not after.

GRADING SCALE: Here is my approach to letter grades: a “C” is average; a “D” is below average, and an “F” is way below average (a bomb out). A “B” is above average and an “A” is way above average. As and Bs are rewards for above-average performance, not minimal or average work.

ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION: Your final grade is based on your performance on the following assignments and quizzes. All written assignments must be typed. Point values are shown below. Your final grade is based on a percentage of 400 points, minus deductions for excessive absences. Roughly 90% of 400 points (approx. 360 points) will earn you an A, 80% (approx. 320 points) a B, and so forth.

- Reaction Paper 1 (short paper in reaction to a chapter topic) 50 points
- Reaction Paper 2 (short paper in reaction to a chapter topic) 50 points
- Quiz 1 (25 multiple-choice questions over 3 chapters) 50 points
- Quiz 2 (25 multiple-choice questions over 3 chapters) 50 points
- Quiz 3 (25 multiple-choice questions over 3 chapters) 50 points
- Quiz 4 (25 multiple-choice questions over 2 chapters) 50 points
- Group Project (30-min. oral presentation over a topic of your choosing) 100 points

400 points max

ACADEMIC ADVISING: The College of Liberal Arts requires students to meet with an Academic Advisor once they’re ready to declare a major. The Advisor will set up a degree plan which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E; call 825-3466.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: TAMU-CC complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you need disability accommodations in my class, please see me as soon as possible. Please have your accommodation letter from the Disability Services Office with you when you see me. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), contact the Disability Services Office (CCH 116, 825-5816). All discussions will remain confidential and should occur within the first two weeks of class.
EQUITY STATEMENT: All people, regardless of sex/gender, age, class, race, ethnicity, religion, physical/learning ability, sexual orientation, veteran status, etc., shall have equal opportunity without harassment in this course. Any problems can be discussed confidentially with your instructor.

PLAGIARISM POLICY: Please understand that plagiarism is grounds for suspension from the university. Any student caught plagiarizing someone else’s paper, presentation, or speaking notes; lifting information from sources without citing those sources; attempting to turn in or present the same work in multiple classes; or cheating on a quiz may be given an automatic F for the course. Do not even think about using material that is not your own—this includes website material. If you’re uncertain about the university’s policy on academic misconduct, refer to the Student Handbook or University catalog. If you’re uncertain as to what actions constitute plagiarism in communication courses, ask me.

GRADE APPEAL PROCESS: Students who feel they haven’t been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

COURSE SCHEDULE: The tentative schedule below details assigned readings, information to be covered during each class session, presentation and quiz dates, due dates for assignments—roughly everything you need to know to stay on top of this class. I use the word “tentative” because this schedule might change; however, students will be informed well in advance of any changes in schedule. Check the schedule before you come to each class so that you’ll be prepared.

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TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Week 1
TH 1/23
Syllabus & Course Overview
Read: Syllabus & Degree Info (Guidebook pp. 1-14) by TU 1/28
Read: Pathways to Careers (Guidebook pp. 15-28) by TU 1/28

Week 2
TU 1/28
Discuss Communication Degree & Careers in Communication
Read: Ch. 1 by TH 1/30
Read: Guidebook p. 29 (Reaction Paper 1) by TH 1/30

TH 1/30
Discuss Ch. 1: Foundations of Human Communication
Assignment: Reaction Paper 1 (DUE TH 2/20)
Read: Ch. 2 by TU 2/4

Week 3
TU 2/4
Discuss Ch. 2: Self-Awareness and Communication
Read: Ch. 3 by TH 2/6

TH 2/6
Discuss Ch. 3: Understanding Verbal Messages
Review Reaction Paper 1 Assignment
Read: Guidebk pp. 36; 40-50 (Quiz 1 Rev. & Group Project) by TU 2/11

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<td>Review for Quiz 1 (Chs. 1, 2, &amp; 3)</td>
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<td>TH 2/13</td>
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<td>Read: Ch. 4 by TU 2/18</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>TU 2/18</td>
<td>Discuss Ch. 4: Understanding Nonverbal Messages</td>
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<td>DUE: Reaction Paper 1</td>
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<td>Group Project Work Session—Library Research Basics; Screen Topics</td>
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<td>TH 2/20</td>
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<td>Read: Ch. 5 by TU 2/25</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>TU 2/25</td>
<td>Discuss Ch. 5: Listening and Responding</td>
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<td>Group Project Work Session—Presentation Reminders</td>
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<td>TH 2/27</td>
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<td>Groups 1 &amp; 2 Presentations</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>TU 3/4</td>
<td>Read: Ch. 6 &amp; Guidebook p. 37 (Quiz 2 Review) by TH 3/6</td>
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<td>DUE: Peer Evaluations, Groups 1 &amp; 2</td>
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<td>Discuss Ch. 6: Adapting to Others; Review for Quiz 2 (Chs. 4, 5, &amp; 6)</td>
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<td>SPRING BREAK, March 10-14</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>TU 3/18</td>
<td>Quiz 2 (Chs. 4, 5, &amp; 6)</td>
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<td>Group Project Work Session (Groups 3-8 only)</td>
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<td>TH 3/20</td>
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<td>Groups 3 &amp; 4 Presentations</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>TU 3/25</td>
<td>Group Project Work Session (Groups 5-8 only)</td>
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<td>Read: Ch. 7 by TU 4/1</td>
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<td>TH 3/27</td>
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<td>DUE: Peer Evaluations, Groups 3 &amp; 4</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>TU 4/1</td>
<td>Discuss Ch. 7: Understanding Interpersonal Communication</td>
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<td>Read: Ch. 8 by TH 4/3</td>
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<td>Discuss Ch. 8: Enhancing Relationships</td>
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Read: Appendix A & Guidebk pp. 30-35 (Rec. Letters) by TU 4/8

**Week 11**

TU 4/8

Guest: Nancy Salinas, Career Services
Discuss Appendix A: Interviewing & Rec. Letters
Read: Guidebk pp. 29 & 38 (React. Paper 2 & Quiz 3 Rev.) by TH 4/10

TH 4/10

**Assignment: Reaction Paper 2 (DUE TH 4/24)**
Review for Quiz 3 (Chs. 7, 8, & Appendix A)
Group Project Work Session

F 4/11

University Deadline to Drop a Class

**Week 12**

TU 4/15

Quiz 3 (Chs. 7, 8, & Appendix A)
Group Project Work Session
Review Reaction Paper 2 Assignment

TH 4/17

Guest Speaker for Comm Week: Sandra Petronio

**Week 13**

TU 4/22

Groups 5 & 6 Presentations
Read: Ch. 9 by TH 4/24

TH 4/24

**DUE: Reaction Paper 2**
**DUE: Peer Evaluations, Groups 5 & 6**
Discuss Ch. 9: Understanding Group and Team Performance

**Week 14**

TU 4/29

Group Project Work Session

TH 5/1

Groups 7 & 8 Presentations
Read: Ch. 10 by TU 5/6
Read: Guidebook p. 39 (Quiz 4 Review) by TU 5/6

**Week 15**

TU 5/6

**DUE: Peer Evaluations, Groups 7 & 8**
Discuss Ch. 10: Enhancing Group and Team Performance
Review for Quiz 4 (Chs. 9 & 10)

**Week 16**

TU 5/13

Final Class Meeting—Quiz 4 (Chs. 9 & 10)