COMM-4380.001 Senior Seminar in Communication Studies
Summer I 2015
TR 6-9:45pm
Bay Hall, Room 127

Professor David Gurney
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Office Hours: M 5-6pm, T 9am-noon, W 5-6pm, and by appointment

Course Description:
The capstone course for Communication majors in the Media Studies and Comm Studies tracks offers students opportunities to synthesize information learned in other Communication and Media courses through in-depth study of a particular topic. Students will demonstrate their abilities to think and write critically, and to conduct independent research or produce media projects at an advanced level. Topics vary by instructor.

Course Topic:
This semester students will be surveying the communication and media landscapes as they exist today. Students will accomplish this by crafting a schedule of research and completing an in-depth report on a topic of their choosing.

Student Learning Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:
● Demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving abilities;
● Create individual projects that demonstrate understanding and effective use of communication strategies;
● Identify and analyze issues in media and communication ethics
● Understand and apply critical theories, research methods, and/or production skills

Recommended Materials:

Course Policies:
» Attendance is required – both physically and mentally. Unexcused absences will have a direct effect on your final grade for this course, with each one equaling a 100-point deduction (out of a possible total of 1000 points). Attendance will be taken starting exactly at 6:00 p.m. and completed within the first five minutes of class. Arrivals after that time will be considered late. Late arrivals and departures prior to the finish of the class period will count as half-absences, meaning that two of either type will be counted as a full absence.
» You are allowed no automatically excused absences throughout the semester. Only extreme hardship with back-up documentation (e.g. a doctor’s note) will allow for consideration of any absences being excused. Classes missed due to university-approved activities (athletic teams, student government, etc.) will be considered excused. For those absences, I will need official TAMUCC documentation. If appropriate, you may arrange to make up quizzes or exams missed due to excused absences, but it will be your responsibility to get any information from a missed class lecture or discussion from one of your classmates.
» Any work missed due to an unexcused absence cannot be made up.
» Late work will be penalized by a reduction of ten percent of its total possible points for each day it is late.
» A note on competing media: Laptops are permitted for note taking purposes during lecture only, but please do not abuse this privilege. While you may personally feel capable of multitasking during class while still paying attention to lecture and discussion, your surrounding classmates will more likely find your in-class extracurricular activities distracting, so please, for the sake of your peers, respect this restriction. No laptop use will be permitted during screenings.
» Please remember to check your Islander email account regularly during the week and monitor the course Blackboard site for any course updates.
» If you would like to discuss any course readings, lectures, or assignments outside of class, you should feel free to contact me via email or by arranging to visit me during my office hours. If you need to schedule a time to meet outside of office hours, please let me know.
» All writing for this course must be composed using a standard, 12-point font size, double spacing, and standard 1” margins.

Academic Integrity:
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work. For a more expansive definition of plagiarism please see the relevant passage from the University's student handbook.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a failing grade (F) for the assignment, at the very least, or a report to the Chair of the Department of Communication and Media, the Dean of the School of Arts, Media, and Communication, and the Office of Student Affairs.
» For the purposes of citation, please follow American Psychological Association (APA) Style Guide. For reference, see: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Dropping a Class:
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the class be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. June 30, 2015, is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Classroom/Professional Behavior:
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.
**Academic Advising:**
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

**Notice to Students with Disabilities**
Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible. Please have your accommodation letter from Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi Disability Services (DS) Office with you when you come see me. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Disability Services Office (located in 116 Corpus Christi Hall) at 361.825.5816.

**Grade Appeal Process:**
Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class 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.
Grade Scale:
A  900-1000
B  800-899
C  700-799
D  600-699
F  599 and below

Grade Distribution:
» Attention and Participation (100 points overall): Each student is expected to be attentive to her/his Peer Review Partner’s work and willing to participate in class discussion when appropriate. These points will reflect how well you accomplish these goals. These are this area’s components:
  » In-Class Attentiveness (20 points)
  » Peer Review of Preliminary Research Proposal (20 points)
  » Peer Review of Literature Review (20 points)
  » Peer Review of Sample Section of Data Analysis (20 points)
  » Peer Review of Rough Draft of Research Report (20 points)

Reminder: Attendance is required. It is assumed that you will be present for all class meetings unless you have a valid excuse. Unexcused absences will have a direct effect on your FINAL GRADE (not only the Attention & Participation component) for this course, with each one equaling a 100-point deduction (out of a possible total of 1000 points).

» Preliminary Research Proposal (25 points): You will create a document in which you will establish: (1) your research topic and its importance, (2) your proposed method(s) of studying the topic, and (3) what theories will most likely be utilized in analyzing your findings. Length: 500-750 words.

» Revised Research Proposal (50 points): An expanded version of the Preliminary Research Proposal with improvements based on Peer Review Partner and Instructor recommendations. Length: 750-1000 words.

» Preliminary Bibliography (25 points): An APA-formatted list of 12-15 sources (scholarly articles or books) that are relevant to your research topic, methods, and/or prospective theoretical framework.

» Literature Review (75 points): A short paper, which will ultimately be a section of your Research Report, in which you provide an overview of: (1) what scholarly work has already been done on your topic, (2) what methods that work has relied upon, and (3) what the conclusions of that body of work are. Length: 750-1250 words.

» Sample Section of Data Analysis (125 points): A short paper, which will ultimately be a section of your Research Report, in which you share and analyze some of your research findings. Length: 1000-1500 words (more if appropriate).


» Research Presentation (100 points): A summary presentation of your research project and its findings.

Course Schedule:
Recommended readings will be most helpful if read prior to their associated coursework.
Coursework must be completed as directed (prior to the class meeting under which it is listed).
This schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the professor.

Day 1 (June 2) – Introduction and Research Tutorial
Introductions and Preliminary Discussion
Peer Review Partners will be assigned.
Project Presentation schedule will be established.

Day 2 (July 4) – Preliminary Research Proposals
Recommended Readings: *The Craft of Research*, Chapters 3 and 4
Submit your preliminary Research Proposal via Blackboard before class and bring a copy with you to class.
Partners will review, evaluate, and make recommendations to each other.

Day 3 (June 9) – Revised Research Proposals and Preliminary Bibliographies
Recommended Readings: *The Craft of Research*, Chapters 5 and 6
Submit Revised Research Proposal and Preliminary Bibliography via Blackboard before class.
Class time will be spent as an open workshop.

Day 4 (June 11) – Literature Reviews
Submit Literature Review via Blackboard before class and bring a copy with you to class.
Partners will review, evaluate, and make recommendations to each other.

Day 5 (June 16) – Research Day
No Class Meeting. Extra time should be used for data collection and analysis. Dr. Gurney will be available for one-on-one consultations.

Day 6 (June 18) – Sharing of Initial Data Analysis
Recommended Readings: *The Craft of Research*, Chapters 7-11
Submit Sample Section of Data Analysis via Blackboard before class and bring a copy with you to class.
Partners will review, evaluate, and make recommendations to each other.

Day 7 (June 23) – Exchange of Rough Drafts
Recommended Readings: *The Craft of Research*, Chapters 12 and 13
Submit Rough Draft of Research Report via Blackboard before 6pm.
Email copy of Rough Draft of Research Report to Peer Review Partner.
No Class Meeting.

Day 8 (June 25) – Report Workshop
Recommended Readings: *The Craft of Research*, Chapters 14, 16, and 17
Meeting with Peer Review Partners to share feedback on Rough Drafts.

Day 9 (June 30) – Research Presentations
Project Presentations will take place based on schedule determined on first day of class.

Day 10 (July 2) – Research Presentations
Project Presentations will take place based on schedule determined on first day of class.
Final Research Reports due via Blackboard by noon on July 2.