COMM 4380: Senior Seminar in Communication Studies  
CRN 62145…Section 001…202 Bay Hall…Monday & Wednesday 1:00pm – 1:50pm

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Credit Hours: 3
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Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday 11:00-1:00pm

TAMUCC Department of Communication and Media Mission Statement
“Our mission is to develop students who are effective and ethical communicators with the creative, critical, and collaborative skills necessary to succeed in a diverse global environment.”

Course Title and Description
Senior Seminar in Communication Studies is a three credit course that serves as a capstone for the Communication Studies track. Students will have the opportunity to synthesize information learned in other communication courses and demonstrate their ability to apply communication theory and research to everyday life. Special focus will be placed on developing skill sets relevant for scholarly and career endeavors.

Course Objectives
The course is designed to further develop students’ abilities to find the practicality and usefulness of a communication studies degree. This course is in partial fulfillment of the following Communication and Media Department outcomes. Specifically, students should be able to perform the following by the conclusion of the Fall 2015 semester:
- Define communication and explain its practicality in everyday life.
- Create a position on the applicability of a communication studies degree and defend it.
- Differentiate between interpersonal, organizational, instructional, and media/mass communication as areas of study.
- Read and synthesize empirical research in communication studies.
- Demonstrate ability to effectively work in groups to achieve collective goals.
- Produce a scholarly research paper.
- Develop and refine scholarly writing and research skills.

Recommended Materials

Reading material for selected topics from a variety of sources will be distributed in class and/or Blackboard.

Attendance
Student attendance in class is essential to learning. Assignments and tests are expected to be delivered on the day assigned. Exceptions will be made only in extreme circumstances at the discretion of the instructor. When absences are due to a University activity, it is the student’s responsibility to notify the instructor of these absences at least one (1) week in advance of the occurrence to allow adequate time for rescheduling. Definitions of excused and unexcused absences will reflect university guidelines. **Only formally documented, “university excused” absences will be allowed.**

*More than 4 unexcused absences will result in automatic failure of the course*

Grading Procedure
Grades will be based on the following scale:
100-90% - A  
89-80% - B  
79-70% - C  
69-60% - D  
Below 60% - E
Grading
Grades are comprised of classroom engagement activities, three position papers, a spotlight on scholarship abstract assignment, and various classroom activities. There will be no opportunity to makeup in-class activities. Assignments turned in late will receive a 10-percent deduction for every day it is late.

Classroom Engagement Activities/Participation
Each day, an interactive classroom culture will be cultivated in which students will be expected to attend class each day and contribute to the progression of the class. It is the students’ responsibility to fully participate and engage in these activities. Classroom Engagement Activities will be used for direct application and discussion of course topics and discussion. These activities are designed to integrate course material and help apply course content useful for deeper understanding and learning. The activities may involve writing discussion questions about selected readings, engaging in activities, quizzes, and discussing and debriefing afterword. Students will be graded based on attendance, participation, making it to class on time, and attentiveness in class. There will be ten classroom engagement activities in this course, each worth 5 points, for a total of 50 points.

Friday (re)Flections
On several Fridays throughout the semester, students will complete a writing assignment that will be submitted on Blackboard. These writing assignments are meant to further develop student writing and serve the dual purpose of integrating class content with practical experience. Each Friday (re)Flection will be worth 10 points for a total of 100 points. Further directions and rubric will be distributed and discussed in class at the appropriate time.

Position Papers
There will be three Papers Papers in this course, each worth 25 points, for a total of 75 points. The purpose of Position Papers is to encourage reflection, critical thinking, and argumentative skills. Position papers allow students to learn about an issue in the communication studies discipline, society, or in contemporary workplaces, take a stand on the issue, and then effectively argue their viewpoint. Grading will be based upon the quality of information presented to defend one’s perspective. Further directions and rubric for the Position Papers will be distributed and discussed in class at the appropriate time.

Spotlight on Scholarship
Spotlight on Scholarship involves students familiarizing themselves with empirical research and notable scholars who have contributed to the study of communication. Four major areas of study will be represented, with scholars representing each area of study being represented. The areas of study represented are interpersonal communication, organizational communication, instructional communication, and media/mass communication. The assignment will involve students locating two (2) empirical research articles written by a notable communication scholar, reading the articles, abstracting each one separately, and integrating insight from class discussions into an implication section of the paper. The Spotlight on Scholarship Abstract is worth 100 points.

Abstracts will be approximately 2-3 pages in length and adhere to the sixth edition of the APA style guide. Further directions and rubric for the Spotlight on Scholarship will be distributed and discussed in class at the appropriate time. Students will be provided one (1) of the following scholars: James C. McCroskey (instructional communication), Scott Myers (instructional communication), Alan Goodboy (instructional communication), Patricia Kearney (instructional communication), Fred Jablin (organizational communication), Michael Kramer (organizational communication), Patricia Stas (organizational communication), Linda Putnam (organizational communication), Mark Knapp (interpersonal communication), John Daly (interpersonal communication), Charles Berger (interpersonal communication), Brant Burleson (interpersonal communication), Joseph Walther (media/mass communication), Ron Tamborini (media/mass communication), Steven Chaffee (media/mass communication), Jennings Bryant (media/mass communication). Further directions and rubric for the Spotlight on Scholarship assignment will be distributed and discussed in class at the appropriate time.

Research Poster Presentation
There will be a poster presentation of a topic of research which will consist of the visual presentation of your basic topic area, literature review of the topic area, the creation of hypotheses and/or research questions, proposed method for conducting the study, and the use of communication theory to guide and answer the research question. Students will present their posters during the week of November 2 to a public audience of faculty, staff, and students in a competent and articulate manner. The Research Poster Presentation is worth 100 points. Further directions and rubric for the Research Poster Presentation will be distributed and discussed in class at the appropriate time.
Research Paper
Students will choose a major topic area within the discipline of communication and then choose a subtopic in each area to write their research paper about. The research paper will include a literature review, rationale for hypotheses/research question(s), proposed method for conducting the study, and a discussion section in which the hypotheses/research question(s) are answered through the use of two communication theories. The research paper is worth 100 points. Further directions and rubric will be distributed and discussed in class at the appropriate time.
Topic Areas (suggested research paper ideas):
- Instructional Communication (Instructor Clarity, Instructor Immediacy, or Instructional Dissent)
- Organizational Communication (Peer Coworker Communication, Supervisor-Subordinate Communication, or Organizational Assimilation)
- Interpersonal Communication (Relationship Development, Relational Maintenance, or Social Support)
- Media/Mass Communication (Social Networking, News Media, Media Effects)

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.

Disabilities Accommodations
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Grade Appeals
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, http://cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.
Student Conduct

1. **Know the syllabus:** Be informed on what is to be read, discussed, and submitted for each class meeting.
2. **Respect:** Be courteous of the professor and fellow students and refrain from talking amongst yourselves during lecture and discussion. This also means that proper professional communication is also required.
3. **Preparation:** Attend class ready to contribute and interact with material presented in class.
4. **Punctuality:** Please make best effort to arrive to the classroom before class begins.
5. **Electronic Devices:** Items such as cell phones, and IPods should be put away during class.
6. **Listening:** It is absolutely essential and expected for students to pay attention to class discussions and lectures because the information is vital toward successfully completing the course.
7. **Effort:** This class will be fun and enlightening, yet challenging. Please put forth your best effort each day in the course.
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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Assignment Due/Reading</th>
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<td>Wed Aug 26</td>
<td>Welcome; Syllabus</td>
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<td>Wed Sep 02</td>
<td>Major Areas of Study in Communication</td>
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<td>Wed Sep 09</td>
<td>Selection of Topic; Individual Meetings</td>
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<td>Mon Sep 14</td>
<td>Scholarly Writing: Review of APA Format</td>
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<td>Wed Sep 16</td>
<td>Scholarly Writing: Clear Writing</td>
<td>APA (2010), Ch. 3</td>
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<td>Mon Sep 21</td>
<td>Scholarly Writing: Literature Reviews</td>
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<td>Wed Sep 23</td>
<td>Finding Scholarly Sources</td>
<td>Frey, Botan, &amp; Kreps (2000, Ch. 3)</td>
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<td>Mon Sep 28</td>
<td>Finding Scholarly Sources</td>
<td>APA (2010), Ch. 6</td>
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<td>Wed Sep 30</td>
<td>Spotlight on Scholarship Presentations</td>
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<td>Mon Oct 05</td>
<td>Communication Research Methods</td>
<td>Frey, Botan, &amp; Kreps (2000), Ch. 4</td>
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<td>Wed Oct 07</td>
<td>Communication Research Methods</td>
<td>Literature Review Rough Draft</td>
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<td>Mon Oct 12</td>
<td>Developing Research Questions</td>
<td>Frey, Botan &amp; Kreps (2000), Ch. 2</td>
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<td>Mon Oct 19</td>
<td>Scholarly Writing: The Discussion</td>
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<td>Wed Oct 21</td>
<td>Communication Beyond College</td>
<td>Method Rough Draft</td>
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<td>Mon Oct 26</td>
<td>Communication Beyond College</td>
<td>Garner &amp; Barnes (2013)</td>
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<td>Wed Oct 28</td>
<td>Poster Work Day</td>
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<td>Mon Nov 02</td>
<td>Poster Presentation</td>
<td>Position Paper 3: Skills Most Important to Your Career Choice</td>
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<td>Wed Nov 04</td>
<td>Group Presentation: Instructional Communication</td>
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<td>Mon Nov 09</td>
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<td>Group Presentation: Interpersonal Communication</td>
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<td>Mon Nov 16</td>
<td>Group Presentation: Media/Mass Communication</td>
<td>Discussion Rough Draft</td>
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<td>Wed Nov 18</td>
<td>No Class: NCA Convention</td>
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<td>Mon Nov 23</td>
<td>Individual Meetings</td>
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<td>Wed Nov 25</td>
<td>No Class: Thanksgiving Break</td>
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<td>Mon Nov 30</td>
<td>Future of Communication</td>
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<td>Wednesday Dec 09 11:00am-1:30pm</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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References


