COMM 5302: Seminar in Communication Theory
CRN 71284…Section 001…Bay Hall 128…Wednesdays 7:00pm – 9:30pm

Professor: Dr. Michael Sollitto, Ph. D. Email: michael.sollitto@tamucc.edu
Office: 327 Bay Hall            Credit Hours: 3
Office Phone: (361) 825-2443    Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday 2:00pm-4:00pm

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
Seminar in Communication Theory is a three credit course that provides an overview of the development and application of sets of systematic ideas about the process of communication. Special focus will be placed on application of theory in a variety of contexts including cognition/intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, family communication, intercultural communication, instructional communication, organizational communication, and media/mass communication.

Course Objectives
This course is in partial fulfillment of the following Communication & Media Department outcomes. Specifically, students should be able to perform the following by the conclusion of the Fall 2018 semester:
- Define communication theory.
- Describe the link between theory, research, and practice.
- Develop positions and clear arguments about theories that best explain communication in particular contexts.
- Articulate the usefulness of theory in both academic and professional lives.
- Develop and refine scholarly writing and research skills.

Recommended Texts


Required Readings
- Reading material for selected topics from a variety of sources will be placed in the “Required Readings” folder on Blackboard (See reference information for each source on pages 5-8 of this syllabus).

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 1 unexcused absences will result in automatic failure of the course*
Grading Procedure
Grades will be based on the following point values:
270-300 points = A  240-269 points = B  210-239 points = C  180-209 points = D  0-179 points = E

Grading
Grades are comprised of talking points, position papers, a theory symposium, and a final exam. There will be no opportunity to makeup in-class activities. The total amount of points possible for the course is 300. Assignments turned in late will receive a 10-percent deduction for every day it is late.

Talking Points
Beginning with the first class period on September 6, for each reading source, a series of questions will be posed to ensure foundational understanding and intellectual engagement with the course content. The answers to these questions should be thorough and showcase genuine understanding of the content and an ability to make intellectual connections between the reading sources and other topics covered in class. Answers will be evaluated based upon depth of understanding, spelling/grammar, and the ability to synthesize the readings. Each student will submit ten Talking Points during the semester, each worth 10 points, for a total of 100 points. They must be typed with Times New Roman size 12 font and physically submitted during the class session. Further directions and rubric for the Talking Points will be distributed and discussed in class at the appropriate time.

Position Papers
There will be two position papers in this course, each worth 25 points, for a total of 50 points. The purpose of the Position Papers is to encourage reflection, critical thinking, and argumentative skills. Position papers allow students to learn about an issue in the communication discipline, take a stand on the issue, and then effectively argue their viewpoint with relevant supporting evidence. Grading will be based upon the quality of information presented to defend one’s viewpoint. Further directions and rubric for the Position Papers will be distributed and discussed in class at the appropriate time.

Theory Symposium
According to Engleberg and Wynn (2003, p. 13), a symposium is when people “present short, uninterrupted speeches on different aspects of a topic for the benefit of an audience.” Theory Symposiums will take place during each discussion of a particular context of communication theory, and will involve groups of three students individually providing brief overviews of each theory within that particular context. Therefore, students will select one theory from two different contexts of communication theory to present about during the semester. Students should provide detail about the primary purpose, history, key scholars associated with, and application of each theory that they present. Presentations should be approximately ten minutes and include a one-page handout that provides useful detail about the theory to fellow students in the course. Grading will be based upon the quality and accuracy of information presented and the creativity and liveliness of the symposium. Each Theory Symposium is worth 25 points, for a total of 50 points. Further directions and rubric for the Theory Symposium will be distributed and discussed in class at the appropriate time.

Comprehensive Exam
There will be a comprehensive exam at the semester’s conclusion based on course reading sources, class discussion, in-class activities, and any supplemental information provided throughout the course. The comprehensive exam is designed to partially mimic the comprehensive exam exit requirement for the M.A. in Communication Program to help prepare students for that experience. The final exam will be a take-home exam distributed to the students after the December 5, 2018 class period consisting of several provocative questions intended to stimulate substantive and articulate answers about communication theory. The due date for the completed comprehensive exam will be December 12 at 11:59pm on Blackboard. The final exam is worth 100 points. Further directions and rubric for the Comprehensive Exam will be distributed and discussed in class at the appropriate time.
**Academic Advising**

Students pursuing the Master of Arts in Communication will be paired with a graduate faculty member advisor in their first semester. Students should contact their advisors within the first two weeks of a semester to arrange a meeting during which degree plans, tracks, and opportunities for professional development should be discussed. If there is any question regarding whom a student’s academic advisor is, the student should contact Dr. Stephanie Rodriguez, Interim Graduate Coordinator, for assistance ([stephanie.rodriguez@tamucc.edu](mailto:stephanie.rodriguez@tamucc.edu); 361-825-5753). To finalize your degree plan and register for graduation, you must also meet with the Graduate Student Academic Advisor in the Academic Advising Center for the College of Liberal Arts. This office is located in Driftwood 203E and can be reached at (361) 825-3466.

**Disability Services**

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 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.

**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 your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course 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.

**Grade Appeal Process**

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, *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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, *Student Grade Appeals*. These documents are accessible online at: [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html).

**Expectations of Graduate Students**

1. Ability to contribute engaging and thoughtful discussion points during class.
2. Demonstrated completion of all assigned reading material prior to class.
3. Proficiency in academic writing and use of APA Style.
4. Focus on learning instead of focus on grades.

**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**: All devices that distract from the learning process are prohibited.
6. **Listening/Feedback**: Devote attention during class sessions and heed advice and constructive instruction on assignments provided throughout the semester.
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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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed Aug 29</td>
<td>Welcome; Basics of Communication Theory</td>
<td>Littlejohn (2009); Berger, Roloff, &amp; Roskos-Ewoldsen (2010)</td>
<td>Talking Points 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed Sep 05</td>
<td>Philosophical Foundations of Communication Theory</td>
<td>Craig (2009); Corman (2009); Vannini (2009)</td>
<td>Talking Points 2</td>
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<td>Wed Sep 12</td>
<td>Scholarly Writing &amp; Research: Connecting Research and Theory</td>
<td>Levine (2009); Scheibel (2009)</td>
<td>Talking Points 3</td>
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<td>Wed Nov 07</td>
<td>No Class: NCA</td>
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<td>Wed Nov 21</td>
<td>No Class: Thanksgiving Break</td>
<td>Missing</td>
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<td>Wed Dec 12</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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