Spring 2020  
Course Syllabus  
COMM-3310_B01 – Communication Theory  
Tuesdays 3:30-4:45PM, OCNR 145

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Associate Professor of Public Relations  
Office: Bay Hall 329  
Hours: T 2:00-3:00PM, W 2:00-4:15PM & 2PM-2:30PM; By Appointment  
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50-84% of this course is presented online. Students must manage time and work independently to succeed.

Course Description
The foundations, processes, and effects of human communication. A survey of contemporary theory and research, including language theory, nonverbal and small group communication, persuasion, and mass communication.

Student Learning Objectives
Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:
- Understand the history and development of communication theory.
- Discuss the main components of a variety of communication theories.
- Apply theoretical principles to “real world” situations, interactions, and messages.

Required or Recommended Readings

Website: Course assignments, discussion notes, supplemental readings, and other pertinent messages will be posted on Blackboard. Students should verify that they receive Blackboard notifications and should check for messages daily.

Major Course Requirements
*Assignment descriptions appear on the 4th and 5th pages of this syllabus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locate and Share Post &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes (7 at 25 points)</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Project Mapping - Draft</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Project Mapping - Final</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation (14 days at 5 points)</td>
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Total Points: 300

Grade Calculation:
- A 90% of the total points – 270 points – 300 points
- B 80% of the total points – 240 points – 269 points
- C 70% of the total points – 210 points – 239 points
- D 60% of the total points – 180 points – 219 points
- F 50% of the total points – 000 points – 179 points

Course Policies
Am I required to attend this course?
- Prompt arrival, attendance, and participation are all vital to your success in this course. Students are expected to attend all class meetings and contribute to the classroom experience by actively listening, asking questions, sharing examples, participating in discussions, and taking part in class activities.
- Attendance and participation will be graded. Each student will earn 5 points for every class session that they attend. If students attend but do not participate in class, I reserve the right to assign 0 points for the day. In all fairness, students will be notified that their lack of participation will result in 0 points before points are assigned.
What are your expectations for my assignments?

- It should go without saying that quality work is an expectation. As a communication student, it is expected that you will have effective writing and speaking skills and that you will seek my help if you need assistance in these areas. It is also expected that your work will be free from plagiarism and will show that you are thinking “beyond the textbook.”
- All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date shown on the course syllabus, unless otherwise noted. If otherwise noted, assignments are due on the exact date and at the exact time noted on the assignment. If an assignment is late or missed, the student will not receive credit for the assignment.
- Assignments should be turned in directly via e-mail as a clearly labeled (LastName_AssignmentName) .PDF file attachment unless otherwise noted on the assignment page. If an assignment is turned in using a means other than that which is specified on the assignment page, the student will not receive credit for the assignment. Students should complete assignments on time to reduce the risk of complications, such as computer technical failure or loss of work.

What should I do if I am going to be absent?

- In the event of an absence, I must be notified before the missed class period in order for the absence to be excused. If I am not notified before the missed class period, the absence will be considered unexcused unless the student provides documentation for an excused absence (i.e., athletics, family emergencies, illness, university-sponsored travel). In this case, I reserve the right to determine whether an absence is excused.
- Late work will only be accepted for excused absences and must be completed within 7 days of the missed deadline.
- Regardless of the status of an absence, students are responsible for obtaining the information that was missed during class in a timely manner. Students should visit Blackboard to obtain notes and assignment pages. Students may also wish to select a classmate(s) at the beginning of the semester that will agree to help with this task.

I have a question about one of my grades, what should I do?

- Should a student have a question about their grade on a particular assignment, I follow the 24/7 rule: students must approach me no sooner than 24 hours and no later than 7 days after the assignment has been returned. Once 7 days have passed, the topic will be closed for discussion.

What type of citations should I use in my writing and speaking assignments?

- All assignments should adhere to the current edition of the APA style guide.

I need help with my work, what should I do?

- Should any situation arise, where I can be of assistance (i.e., you do not have a printer; you do not understand the assignment guidelines, etc.), please e-mail me or come talk to me.
- I am happy to help students with their understanding of assignments by reading one draft of each class assignment; however, I will not be able to provide adequate assistance within 48 hours of a deadline, so students should be proactive about starting their assignments and seeking feedback early.

What are the rules for classroom conduct?

- I treat my classroom as a small community; thus, we will maintain a harassment-free environment that is welcoming to different viewpoints and ideas. Any profane or inappropriate ethnic, gender, racial, age, appearance, and/or lifestyle-related comments will not be accepted. Any student who violates this policy will be asked to leave the classroom.
- 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 VIII 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, online classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.
Where can I find class notes and assignment pages?
- In line with the University’s efforts to be more environmentally responsible, you will need to access our course page on Blackboard to download class notes and assignment pages. If you have concerns about this for any reason, please come visit with me so we can identify a solution together.

Where can I reach the instructor to ask questions about class?
- You may reach me in person or by phone during office hours or via e-mail. I will respond to e-mail within 24 hours Monday-Friday. During the weekend, I will make every effort to respond to your e-mail but cannot guarantee a timely response.
- I am happy to be friends on social media, but please do not ask questions about class using social media channels.

A Successful Course Experience
A successful experience in this course will depend on your individual commitment and work ethic. I encourage all students to visit with me regularly throughout the semester, rather than waiting until the end of the semester to ask questions or express concerns. As in most courses, students should be proactive about their work and ready to discuss concepts and share examples during class. Furthermore, a professor who is familiar with their students is better able to help their students accomplish their personal goals, so make yourself known! If you have suggestions that will enrich your learning experience, please let me know.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism
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.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a failing grade (0) on the assignment. Any student receiving more than one “0” for academic dishonesty or plagiarism will fail the course and may be expelled from the program. Note: All violations of academic honesty will be reported to the Dean and Office of Student Affairs who maintains document of such offenses for at least 5 years.

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 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 Course
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.

Friday, April 10 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Statement of Academic Continuity
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.
**Grade Appeals**

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site 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).

**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.

**Assignment Descriptions**

**Please do not use these guidelines to begin your work early, as they are incomplete. Full descriptions and grading rubrics will be provided on Blackboard in advance of the respective due dates.**

*Locate and Share Post & Discussion (50 points)*

To facilitate our understanding of each unit of theories, students will be required to locate an artifact that helps explain one of the theories presented (For example: A YouTube clip of a conversation from a movie that illustrates a concept form Social Penetration Theory) and share this artifact on the class discussion board. Students will need to briefly explain the connection between the artifact and the course concept. Then, each student will be required to engage in a discussion with at least 5 members of the class throughout the semester.

*Quizzes (7 at 25 points each; 175 points)*

Students will be given online quizzes over the topics discussed in class at the end of each topic unit to ensure content mastery and to help us identify areas that we may need to discuss further. These quizzes will consist of no more than 25 questions and will be based on class discussion, video lectures, the textbook, and personal experience.

*Research Project Mapping Draft (25 points)*

Students will be required to propose a research question they are interested in studying, identify the method that should be used to examine this question, and explain how one theory from the class discussion could be used to frame the data analysis. Students will be required to develop a draft of the Research Project Mapping assignment to obtain feedback from the professor before the final version is submitted.

*Research Project Mapping Final (50 points)*

Students will be required to propose a research question they are interested in studying, identify the method that should be used to examine this question, and explain how one theory from the class discussion could be used to frame the data analysis. Students should edit their draft according to the professor’s feedback and submit for a final grade. This assignment is designed to help students begin making steps toward Senior Seminar capstone course project.

*Participation (14 days at 5 points per day = 70 points)*

Students will receive 5 points for each class period that they attend and actively participate; the professor reserves the right to assign partial or no credit should students attend, but not be actively engaged in the class. Students should download the Arkaive app in their phone’s app store or visit [http://www.arkaive.com](http://www.arkaive.com) to check in during our allotted class meeting time. The sign-up code for our class is XXXX. Students should make it a habit to check in before they leave, as the professor will not be responsible for “remembering” that a student attended a class in which they did not check in.
**COMM-3310_B01 Schedule**

**This schedule is tentative and subject to change. All changes will be to the benefit of the student.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, January 21</td>
<td>READ &amp; DISCUSS: Course Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, January 28</td>
<td>READ &amp; DISCUSS: Self: Symbolic Interaction, Cognitive Dissonance, Expectancy Violations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, February 4</td>
<td>READ &amp; DISCUSS: Relationships: Uncertainty Reduction &amp; Social Penetration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, February 11</td>
<td>READ &amp; DISCUSS: Relationships: Relational Dialectics &amp; Communication Privacy Management</td>
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<td>Tuesday, February 18</td>
<td>READ &amp; DISCUSS: PR: Situational Crisis Communication Theory &amp; Attribution Theory</td>
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<td>Tuesday, February 25</td>
<td>READ &amp; DISCUSS: PR: Corporate Apologia &amp; Image Repair Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, March 3</td>
<td>READ &amp; DISCUSS: Media: Spiral of Silence &amp; Uses and Gratifications</td>
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<td>Tuesday, March 17</td>
<td>READ &amp; DISCUSS: Media: Cultivation Analysis &amp; Cultural Studies</td>
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<td>Tuesday, March 24</td>
<td>READ &amp; DISCUSS: Public: Rhetoric, Dramatism, &amp; Narrative</td>
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<td>Tuesday, March 31</td>
<td>READ &amp; DISCUSS: N/A</td>
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<td>Tuesday, April 7</td>
<td>READ &amp; DISCUSS: N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, April 14</td>
<td>READ &amp; DISCUSS: Groups: Groupthink, Structuration, &amp; Organizational Culture</td>
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<td>Tuesday, April 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>READ &amp; DISCUSS: Culture: Face Negotiation, Communication Accommodation, Muted Group</td>
<td>Locate &amp; Share Due Sunday: Quiz 7</td>
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<tr>
<th>Tuesday, April 28</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>READ &amp; DISCUSS: Communication Theory &amp; Research</td>
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<tr>
<th>Tuesday, May 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>READ &amp; DISCUSS: N/A</td>
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<tr>
<th>Tuesday, May 12 (*Final exam schedule did not include Spring 2020 at the time this syllabus was drafted)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>READ &amp; DISCUSS: N/A</td>
<td>Research Project Mapping Due</td>
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