COMM-4380_B01 – Senior Seminar in Communication Studies

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Office: Bay Hall 329  
Hours: TR 3:30-4:30PM, W 11AM-12:50PM, & By Appointment  
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50-84% of the content of this course is presented online.  
Students must manage time and work independently outside of class to succeed in this course.

Course Description

This course serves as the capstone for the Communication Studies track. It offers students opportunities to synthesize information learned in other communication courses and demonstrate abilities to think critically, conduct independent research linked to appropriate communication theories, create individual and collaborative projects that demonstrate effective use of communication strategies, and present written and oral work at an advanced level.

Student Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Participate in scholarly discussions regarding communication studies;
- Create a position on the applicability of a communication studies degree and defend it;
- Use their communication expertise to instruct others about topics related to communication;
- Read and synthesize empirical research in communication studies;
- Demonstrate ability to effectively work in groups to achieve goals; and
- Develop and refine scholarly writing and research skills.

Texts/Readings


Major Course Requirements

*Assignment descriptions appear on the 5th page of this syllabus*

Research Development Discussions (10 at 10 points) 100 points  
Literature Review Draft 50 points  
Literature Review 100 points  
Method Draft 50 points  
Method 100 points  
Research Presentation to Peers 25 points  
Research Poster Presentation 100 points  
Participation (11 days at 5 points) 55 points

Total Points: 580

Grade Calculation:

- A 90% of the total points 522 points – 580 points
- B 80% of the total points 464 points – 521 points
- C 70% of the total points 406 points – 463 points
- D 60% of the total points 348 points – 405 points
- F 50% of the total points 000 points – 347 points
A Successful Course Experience

A successful experience in this course will depend on your individual commitment and work ethic. Tips:

- Visit with me regularly during the semester, rather than waiting until finals to ask questions or express concerns
- Be proactive about your work; complete course readings and spend time familiarizing yourself with current events
- Discuss concepts, share real-world examples, and ask questions during class
- Talk to me about your professional goals
- Lift each other up; if you or a peer are struggling, communicate and work together to find a solution
- Be organized; make note of deadlines and avoid procrastination
- Communicate openly, honestly, and in a timely manner with me and your team(s)
- Put the client first: Our work will be used by a real company and this project should be taken seriously

If you have suggestions that will enrich your learning experience, please let me know.

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 student in a Communication course, 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 assignment page, 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 using the method (hard copy, e-mail copy, etc.) noted on the assignment page. If an assignment is turned in using a method other than what is specified, the student will not receive credit for the assignment. Students should complete assignments on time to reduce the risk of emergencies, such as running out of ink, paper, losing their work, or not having access to a printer or computer.

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 notified after the missed class period, the absence will be considered unexcused unless the student provides documentation for the absence (i.e., athletics, family emergencies, illness, university-sponsored travel). In this case, I reserve the right to determine whether an absence is considered excused.
- Late work will only be accepted for excused absences and must be completed within 7 days of the missed deadline to receive credit.
- Regardless of the status of an absence, students are responsible for obtaining the information that was missed during class and communicating with their team members 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 that require scholarly citations should adhere to the most current edition of the APA Stylebook.
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 in advance of the deadline.
- I am happy to help students with their understanding of assignments by reading through 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.
- 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 in my office 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.

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. The last date to drop a course this semester is Friday, November 8.

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.

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.
**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 automatic failure (grade of “0”) of 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 whom maintains documentation of such offenses for at least 5 years.

**Academic Honesty/Plagiarism**

**Definition:** In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. Plagiarism is a violation academic expectations, but it is sometimes difficult to understand what plagiarism actually is. Often, students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example), because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Plagiarism includes:

- Using the work of another as your own,
- Downloading or purchasing ready-made essays off the web and using them as your own,
- Using resource materials without correct documentation,
- Using the organization or language of a source without using quote marks and proper citation.
- Turning in a researched project without citing sources in an appropriate documentation style.

When you are confused about citation of quotes or ideas, please visit the Writing Center or me to get help. Information on MLA documentation rules and APA documentation rules is available at Purdue University’s OWL: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/), and from our local Writing Center at CASA.

**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.

**Grade Appeals 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).
Assignment Descriptions

**Please do not use these guidelines to begin your work early, as they are incomplete and subject to change. Full descriptions and grading rubrics will be provided to you closer to the respective due dates.

Research Development Discussions [RDD] (10 at 10 points = 100 points)
To facilitate and ensure that you are comprehending the research process, you will be given a series of prompts to respond to using Blackboard’s discussion feature. You should respond to these prompts with 1-2 paragraphs of original thought. At times, you will be asked to reference the textbook or other supplemental sources. You will also be required to reply to your peers and engage in quality discussion. These posts are due on Fridays at 11:59pm as indicated on the schedule.

Literature Review Draft (50 points)
The first steps of developing a research study include writing the Introduction and Literature Review. As a result, you will be required to read academic research on your topic and compose a literature review. Your assignment will include an introduction, literature review, discussion of theory, and proposed research question(s). You will need to synthesize at least 15 references. Proper use of APA style will be emphasized in this assignment. You will receive feedback on this draft and will be asked to make the appropriate revisions to submit as a final version of the assignment.

Literature Review (100 points)
This assignment is the final version of the literature review. Your assignment should be a minimum of 2,000 words (approx. 7 double-spaced pages).

Method Draft (50 points)
The third step of developing a research study includes identifying the Method that will be used to collect and analyze data to ultimately answer the research question(s). In this assignment, you will be asked to identify the paradigm/method your paper will use and describe the process for data collection and analysis. Proper use of APA style will be emphasized in this assignment. You will receive feedback on this draft and will be asked to make the appropriate revisions to submit as a final version of the assignment.

Method (100 points)
This assignment is the final version of the method. Your assignment should be a minimum of 750 words (approx. 3 double-spaced pages).

Elevator Pitch (25 points)
You will be asked to introduce yourself with your elevator pitch, which will include not only your professional interests but also some of your research interests. Many of you have created an elevator speech in Business & Professional Communication, so this is an opportunity to make updates and add your research interests.

Research Presentation to Peers (25 points)
This presentation is designed to be a dress rehearsal for your formal research poster session presentation. You will need to introduce your topic, give an overview of the literature, explain the theory that you would use to examine the topic, and a brief overview of how you would design the study (methods, participants, etc.). You will need to dress professionally and be prepared to answer questions from your classmates.

Research Poster Presentation (100 points)
The poster session is a 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. During the poster session you will be expected to answer questions asked by those in attendance. The poster must be 3’x 4’ and approved by the instructor before it is printed. You will need to pay to have your own poster printed, which costs about $20.

Participation (20 days at 5 points = 100 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 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-4335_001 Schedule**

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Discuss</th>
<th>RDD Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, August 28</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Class Introduction</td>
<td>RDD #1 Due Friday at 11:59PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 4</td>
<td>Chapters 3 &amp; 5</td>
<td>Selecting and Reading Research</td>
<td>RDD #2 Due Friday at 11:59PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 11</td>
<td>Chapter 7 &amp; Chapter 9</td>
<td>Reading Quantitative Research</td>
<td>RDD #3 Due Friday at 11:59PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 18</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Reading Qualitative Research</td>
<td>RDD #4 Due Friday at 11:59PM</td>
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<td>Wednesday, September 25</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Outlining the Literature Review</td>
<td>RDD #5 Due Friday at 11:59PM</td>
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<td>Wednesday, October 2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Literature Review Draft Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, October 9</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>Quantitative Research</td>
<td>RDD #6 Due Friday at 11:59PM</td>
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<td>Wednesday, October 16</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
<td>Qualitative Research</td>
<td>RDD #7 Due Friday at 11:59PM</td>
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<td>Wednesday, October 23</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Methods Workshop</td>
<td>Methods Draft Due</td>
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<td>Wednesday, October 30</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Revision Workshop</td>
<td>Literature Review Due</td>
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<td>Wednesday, November 6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Revision Workshop</td>
<td>Methods Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, November 13</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Research Presentation to Peers Due</td>
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<td>Wednesday, November 20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, November 27</td>
<td>Research Presentation to Peers Due</td>
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<td>RDD #9 Due Friday at 11:59PM</td>
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<td>Wednesday, December 4</td>
<td>Research Poster Presentation Due</td>
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<td>RDD #10 Due Friday at 11:59PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, December 11</td>
<td>Wrap Up</td>
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