COMM 4380.B01  
Senior Seminar in Communication Studies  
Spring 2020  
Corpus Christi Hall Room 118  
Tuesdays 2–3:15pm

Dr. Kellie W. Smith  
Kellie.Smith@tamucc.edu  
Office Hours: Mon. 2-4 p.m. (& by appt)  
Office: Bay Hall 353, (361)825-6060

EMAIL IS PREFERRED CONTACT METHOD

Email professionalism is strictly enforced in this class.  
Use formal greetings, correct grammar, and proper etiquette in  
all communication with professor and classmates.

50-84% of the content of this course may be 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.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: At the end of this 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 his/her 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 collective goals; and
• Develop and refine scholarly writing and research skills.

REQUIRED TEXT:


Recommended:

Major course requirements

Reflection about Favorite Topics—50 points Each of you has taken many hours of communication courses. In 500 words or more, reflect on one or two areas (i.e., romantic relationships, work groups, crisis communication, nonverbals, etc.) within the discipline that have really stuck with you. Perhaps you just really liked a reading, discussion, or lecture. What questions regarding communication are left unanswered for you when it comes to those topics? What research needs to be conducted in your opinion? These reflections will be the jumping-off point for our library research workshop on January 22nd.

Garden Party and Elevator Pitch – 50 points We will meet in a location (hopefully not the classroom) and simulate a networking event. You will be prepared to introduce yourself to your peers and Dr. Smith with your elevator speech, which will include not only your professional interests but also some of your research interests. Most of you have created an elevator speech in Business & Professional Communication, so this is an opportunity to make updates and add your research areas. Dr. Smith will then group the students in common research areas to help facilitate potential collaboration on projects throughout the semester.
Research Reading Reflections and Online Discussions—200 points Throughout the semester, you will work your way through the textbook about reading and understanding research. This text has been selected to guide your own research projects, as well as inform you about particular methodologies for your desired project. Research reading reflections should be about 2 paragraphs of original thought, including what you learned from the material and how you can apply the content of the text to your own personal communication research projects. You will also be required to reply to at least three students (one astute paragraph each). Please note that two sentences is not a paragraph and restating “yes I agree with XYZ said” and basically repeating them does not warrant a reply. Think your own thoughts and use your own words! These posts are due on Thursdays at 11:59 p.m. as indicated in the semester schedule. Every original post MUST use proper APA style or will receive a Zero for that assignment.

Outline for Literature Review—100 points Please see below for an explanation of the Literature Review assignment. The outline must include information about the introduction, literature review, theoretical lens used to examine topic, research question(s) and methods. At least 15 references in APA style. Do not list articles one by one and call it an outline. You will need to SUMMARIZE AND SYNTHESIZE what these articles have in common and group them by topic in a natural flow toward your research question. You will be given a template in a word document that you can use to organize your materials.

Lit Review Analysis presentations – 100 points This presentation will focus entirely on the lit review portion of your research project, and will give you practice with succinctly summarizing the literature that you have gathered over the first several weeks of the semester. Depending on how many individual vs groups we have presenting, we will determine the time limit to allow every one ample time to present (this will be done around February 5). You will have turned in your lit review outline the week prior, so you should be very familiar with what the existing research says about your topic. In your presentation you will need to explain 2-3 major topical areas of research (and some sources that support these areas) as well as a brief overview of the theory you plan to use for your project.

Research Presentation to Peers – 150 points This presentation will be delivered in groups or individually, depending on the preferences of the students in the class. The research presentation will mimic a research conference presentation, and will be 15-20 minutes in length (time amount may vary depending on how many groups vs individuals conduct research projects). During this presentation, you will need to introduce your topic, give an overview of the literature, explain the theory that you will use to examine this topic, and a brief overview of how you would design the study (methods, participants, etc). You will need to dress professionally and use well-developed and edited visual aids.

Literature Review—100 points One of the major assignments in this course is the literature review. We will spend most of the semester working on it. Your reflection about favorite topics will help us formulate a Research Question (RQ) for you. From there, we will know what topics you need to research in more depth. At the end of the literature review, you will need to include a few paragraphs of how you would go about answering the RQs (interviews, surveys, observation, etc.). We cannot actually conduct the research because you will not have IRB approval. The final draft (this is a formal paper, not an outline) should be formatted in APA style and should be a minimum of 2,000 words.

Research Poster Presentation with COMM/ Media Faculty —150 points 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’x4’ and approved by the instructor before it is printed. You will need to pay to have your own poster printed, which costs about $20.

Reflection on the Department of Communication & Media—50 points Your time as an undergraduate at
TAMU-CC is drawing to a close, and we would like your feedback in a minimum of 500 words. Reflect on the department's mission, objectives, and the courses we required you to take. Did we fulfill the promise of the mission and the objectives? What did you think of the required courses? Are there courses we should require that we do not? Do you feel ready for the next professional adventure in your life, whether that is a job or graduate school?

Class Participation—50 points. Students are expected to show up on time, prepared, in a positive frame of mind, and ready to make intelligent verbal and nonverbal in-class contributions. A student's discourse should reflect his/her knowledge of the material and his/her ability to synthesize that knowledge with further theoretical implications and application. Students may receive a maximum of 50 points for class participation during the semester. Students will receive fewer points as a result of rudeness, ill preparedness, tardiness, or for being a classroom distraction.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADE CALCULATION:

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<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>POINT VALUE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection about Favorite Topics</td>
<td>50 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garden Party &amp; Elevator Pitch</td>
<td>50 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Reading Reflections, APA Style, &amp; Online Discussion</td>
<td>200 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lit Review Analysis presentation</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lit Review Outline</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Research Presentation</td>
<td>150 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Literature Review</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty Research Poster Presentation</td>
<td>150 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department Reflection</td>
<td>50 points</td>
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<td>Class Participation</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000 points</strong></td>
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Grade Calculation:  
A 90% of the total points  
B 80% of the total points  
C 70% of the total points  
D 60% of the total points  
F Lower than 60% of points  

Note: in the event that an assignment is dropped, and the total number of points is less than 1000 points, then your grade will be calculated as a percentage of the final total points. i.e. if you have 890 points out of a total of 975, then you will have a 91.2%.

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 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**
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 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 zero on the assignment and reporting of the incident to the Chair of Department of Communication and Media, and the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

**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.

**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. Students who are regularly absent in this class will not be eligible for class participation points. Class participation points are entirely subjective and will be determined at the end of the semester by Dr. Smith.

**Statement of Civility**
Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

**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.
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Jan 21</td>
<td>Syllabus, Intro to Course Post Communication Reflections by Monday at 11:59 p.m.</td>
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| Jan 28 | Library Research Resources  
Meet in 1st Floor Computer Lab Library Room 109  
*Research Reading Reflections and Replies on Chapters 3 & 5 due by 11:59 p.m. on Blackboard  
*Draft and REHEARSE Elevator Speech incorporating your professional and academic research interests! |
| Feb 4  | Comm Senior Seminar Garden Party (Location TBD)  
Be prepared with Elevator Speech that includes professional and research interests.  
*Research Reflections and Replies on Chapters 1 & 2 due Thursday by 11:59 p.m. |
| Feb 11 | Lit Review Discussion, Theory Review, & Brainstorm  
(Students will begin working in groups based on common research interests).  
*Research Reading Reflections Chapters 6 & 7 due at 11:59 p.m. on Blackboard  
Think ahead! Lit review outlines are due and students will be required to share their lit review findings on Tuesday. Each group should have at least 15 articles and a theory identified for their research project for both assignments |
| Feb 18 | How to Organize Poster & Presentation  
Lit Review Outline Discussion  
*Research Reading Reflections and Replies Chapters 10 & 11 due at 11:59 p.m. on Blackboard |
| Feb 25 | Outline for Literature review due on Blackboard 11:59 p.m. |
| Mar 3  | Lit Review Analysis Presentations  
(Time Limit for each presentation will be determined based on # of groups and individuals presenting).  
Receive Feedback on Lit Review Outlines |
| Mar 17 | *Group Work Day – Individual meetings with Dr. Smith to discuss progress on projects and presentations. |
| Mar 24 | *Peer Research Presentations* |
| March 31 | *Peer Research Presentations* |
| April 7 | *Peer Research Presentations*  
Poster Drafts Due on Blackboard 11:59 p.m. |
| April 14 | *Peer Research Presentations*  
Receive Feedback on Poster Drafts |
| April 21 | FINAL LITERATURE REVIEW DUE 11:59 p.m. |
| April 28 | Poster Rehearsal – CCH 118 |
| May 5  | Poster Presentation – PAC Lobby |
| TBD    | Department Reflections & Career Packets Due 11:59 p.m. |