COMM 4380-W01
Senior Seminar in Communication Studies
Fall 2020 – Online; https://bb9.tamucc.edu/
Tuesdays 2–3:15pm

Dr. Kellie W. Smith
Kellie.Smith@tamucc.edu
Office Hours: Mon. 1-3 pm (& by appt)
Office: CCH 118 (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.

100% of this course will be presented online.
Students must manage time and work independently to succeed in this course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course serves as the capstone for the Communication Studies track. It offers opportunities for students to synthesize information learned in other communication courses and demonstrate abilities to think critically, conduct independent research linked to appropriate communication theories, create individual 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, you 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 your communication expertise to instruct others about topics related to communication;
• Read and synthesize empirical research in communication studies;
• Develop and refine scholarly writing and research skills.

REQUIRED TEXT:


Recommended:

Major course requirements

Reflection about Favorite Topics—50 points You have taken many hours of communication studies courses. In 500 words or more, reflect on one or two areas (i.e., intercultural communication, romantic relationships, work groups, crisis communication, nonverbal, 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? This reflection must include at least two questions that will serve as a launching point for our semester-long projects.

APA Format Quizzes – 100 points You will take five short quizzes on APA style formatting online. Each of these quizzes will focus on proper in-text citations, reference lists, and general style. An online APA resource guide will be posted in Blackboard for your reference. Arriving late to class will disqualify you from taking these quizzes, and makeups will only be offered for university-excused absences.
Research Reflections—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 supplement each week’s reflection posts with accruing research sources and citations that you will continuously gather throughout the semester to build your final literature review and research project.

Garden Party and Elevator Pitch—100 points We will meet online and break into groups to simulate a networking event. You will be prepared to introduce yourself to your peers and Dr. Smith with your elevator speech, which will include your professional and research interests. Most of you have created an elevator speech in Business & Professional Communication, so this is an opportunity to make updates to professional talking points, and also add your research areas. In additional to preparing you for real networking events, this assignment will also help you answer the “why did you choose this topic?” question during your poster presentation.

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 Presentation to Peers – 200 points The research presentation will mimic a research conference presentation and will be 6-7 minutes in length. 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. 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 —100 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.

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? In this reflection, be sure to include your answer to the following statement: “The most valuable lessons I learned while earning my degree in Communication are...”
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>APA Format Quizzes</td>
<td>100 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 Outline</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lit Review Presentation to Peers</td>
<td>200 points</td>
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<td>Final Literature Review</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty Research Poster Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department Reflection</td>
<td>50 points</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.
**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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<tr>
<th>Week 1: Syllabus, Intro to Course</th>
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<tr>
<td>Post Communication Reflections</td>
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<td>Review “In-Text Citations” for APA quiz</td>
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**Week 2: APA Quiz #1**

Share Comm Reflection Topics with Class

Discussion: Literature Review Overview

Research Reflection #1: Chapters 3 & 5 (How to select & read research; Types of Research) due Thursday Jan 30 by 11:59 p.m.

**Week 3: APA Quiz #2**

Discussion: Theory Review & Topic Brainstorm

Research Reflection #2: Chapters 6 & 7 (Quant Research) and Reference List of at least 5 sources for Lit Review due at 11:59 p.m. on Blackboard

**Week 4: APA Quiz #3**

Research Workshop in Library – Room TBD

Research Reflection #3: Chapters 10 & 11 (Qual Research) and Reference List of at least 10 sources for Lit Review due at 11:59 p.m.

**Week 5: APA Quiz #4**

Discussion: How to Organize Poster & Presentation

Quant vs. Qual Methods, Results, and Discussion sections

Research Reflection #4: Reference List of at least 15 sources and chosen theory for Lit Review due at 11:59 p.m.

**Week 6:** This week: Individual Meetings with Dr. Smith to discuss Lit Review Outline and Progress toward Final Project

Discussion: Elevator Pitch & Research Synopsis Drafts

Overview of Lit Review Presentations

Research Reflection #5: Post typed Elevator Pitch and Research Synopsis by 11:59 p.m.

**Week 7:** COMM Senior Seminar Garden Party – Be prepared to network with prepared (and rehearsed!) Elevator Pitch and Research Synopsis

Literature Review Outlines Due by 11:59 p.m.
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<th>Week 8: Lit Review Presentations</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Poster Drafts Due on Blackboard 11:59 p.m.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 9: Lit Review Presentations</strong></td>
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</table>
| **Week 10: Lit Review Presentations**  
**Receive Feedback on Poster Drafts** |
| **FINAL LITERATURE REVIEW DUE 11:59 p.m.** |
| **Week 11: Poster Rehearsal – CCH 118** |
| **Week 12: Poster Presentation – See online instructions** |
| **Department Reflections Due 11:59 p.m.** |
Campus Safety Measures

To promote public safety and protect students, faculty, and staff during the coronavirus pandemic, Texas A&M University has adopted policies and practices for the Fall 2020 academic term to limit virus transmission. Students must observe the following practices while participating in face-to-face courses and course-related activities (office hours, help sessions, transitioning to and between classes, study spaces, academic services, etc.):

- Self-monitoring—Students should follow CDC recommendations for self-monitoring. **Students who have a fever or exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should participate in class remotely and should not participate in face-to-face instruction.**
- Face Coverings—Face coverings (cloth face covering, surgical mask, etc.) must be properly worn in all non-private spaces including classrooms, teaching laboratories, common spaces such as lobbies and hallways, public study spaces, libraries, academic resource and support offices, and outdoor spaces where 6 feet of physical distancing is difficult to reliably maintain. Description of face coverings and additional guidance are provided in the Face Covering policy and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) available on the Provost website.
- Physical Distancing—Physical distancing must be maintained between students, instructors, and others in course and course-related activities.
- Classroom Ingress/Egress—Students must follow marked pathways for entering and exiting classrooms and other teaching spaces. Leave classrooms promptly after course activities have concluded. Do not congregate in hallways and maintain 6-foot physical distancing when waiting to enter classrooms and other instructional spaces.
- To attend a face-to-face class, students must wear a face covering (or a face shield if they have an exemption letter). If a student refuses to wear a face covering, the instructor should ask the student to leave and join the class remotely. If the student does not leave the class, the faculty member should report that student to the Student Conduct office for sanctions. Additionally, the faculty member may choose to teach that day’s class remotely for all students.

**TAMU-CC Face Coverings**
TAMUCC Face Coverings Policy and FAQs:
https://www.tamucc.edu/fall-2020/face-coverings-faq/

Rule and Procedure:
https://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/34.99.99.c0.02_use_of_face_coverings.pdf