

**SCOM 503: Foundations of Communication  
Syllabus  
Spring 2007**

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**Student Disability Services:**

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in DUC A-200 of the Student Success Center in Downing University Center.

Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

**Required Readings:**

Griffin, E. (2006). *A first look at communication theory* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Additional readings as assigned below.

**Course Goals:** This course has been developed as a survey of foundational communication theories. This course is constructed to meet the following goals:

- To aide students in understanding the dominant paradigms that exist in the field.
- To assist students in understanding and using the terminology of communication theory and research
- To help students explore an array of communication theories that have been developed and tested throughout the existence of the communication discipline
- To teach students how to apply communication theory to their individual, organizational, and mediated experiences

The assignments in this class are designed to achieve these goals. Assigned readings, class lectures, in-class activities, projects, and presentations will not only provide you with information about major concepts, but will also allow you the opportunity to experience the concepts.

## Course Requirements and Policies

### **Attendance: Department of Communication, MA in Communication, Attendance Policy (Effective Summer, 2006)**

The Department of Communication Graduate Program develops student knowledge and skills through a varied curriculum in applied organizational communication. Our courses are special learning communities in which professors and students join together to study course-specific literature from the Communication discipline. Students process and evaluate scholarly work through written and oral presentation of information and ideas.

Therefore, attendance and active participation are essential for all students' success.

Punctual attendance at each class is an obligation of the student. By registering for this course, you are indicating that you will be able to attend classes on time and without early departure on the dates published. A student missing a weekend class meeting or more than one meeting of a semester-long class should NOT expect to pass the course. Students should have their personal or professional schedules well in mind when they choose courses for the semester. Therefore, do not register for a course if you know you will not be able to attend class on all the published dates. Graduate faculty may supplement this departmental attendance policy through specific announcements in each course syllabus.

### **Assignment Due Dates:**

All assignments must be completed by the class period in which they are due for full credit (unless the absence meets the excuse policy above). ***If a student turns in a paper more than 15 minutes after the class period begins, it is considered late.*** Late papers will be accepted, but will be subject to a penalty of a one letter grade deduction per day the assignment is late. If a student accrues an unexcused absence for the class period in which the paper is due, the paper will not be accepted!

Presentations may not be made up!!!!

It is not OK to miss class and e-mail me an assignment. I must receive all assignments hard copy.

### **Written Work:**

***All written work, unless otherwise specified in the assignment, must be typed in Arial 11 point font with 1" margins on all sides. All source citation must follow the APA Publication Manual (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a poor grade.***

### **Grading Criteria:**

Grading criteria for each assignment will be explained throughout the semester.

### **Cheating and Plagiarism:**

Cheating/Plagiarism will not be tolerated. If a student is caught cheating or plagiarizing, the student may be assigned an F in the course, and his/her name may be turned over "to the Office of the Dean of Student Life for disciplinary sanctions" (Hilltopics, 1994).

**Note: The taking of an exam from the classroom will also be considered cheating; all exams remain the property of the professor.**

**Course Assignments:**

Reading/Reflection Questions:

Week #2: 75 points

Week #3: 75 points

Week #4: 25 points

Communication Journal Article Analyses (3 @ 25 points each)=75 points

Discussion and Participation=100 points

Final Presentation=50 points

Final Exam =150 points

Final Paper=300 points

**Final Grade Scale:**

90-100%=A

80-90%=B

70-80%=C

60-70%=D

Anything below 60%=F

**Assignment Descriptions**

**Reading/Reflection Questions:** To encourage and facilitate discussion, I will assign questions for each week's readings (available via the course blackboard site). These questions will guide you in uncovering the main points of each article/chapter and assist you in comparing, contrasting, and integrating the concepts/theories discussed from week to week. The questions will also ensure that you understand the critical terminology necessary to be a successful communication scholar; terminology you will encounter no matter which area of communication becomes your passion. You can satisfactorily complete these assignments by providing SHORT answers to each question (about a paragraph or two). Please re-type all questions and provide the answer below the corresponding question. Single space answers; double-space in between questions. On blackboard, I have separated the questions into two sections per week, those that are due on Friday and those that are due on Saturday. Each day you will turn in the questions for that day (to ensure that the essays were read and the questions answered prior to class); however, the questions for each week will be graded as a single unit. Each week's questions should be no more than six pages in length.

**Communication Journal Article Analysis:** On the first night of class, you will be assigned 2 theories (one that will be covered in Week #2 and Week #3 of the course). For the theories you are assigned, you are to find a recent (less than five years old) ACADEMIC, PEER-REVIEWED journal article that uses that theory and write a 2 page synopsis of the article. Your synopsis is to be posted on blackboard to be shared with your classmates by the date the theory is to be covered in class. On the day the theory is covered in class, you are also to provide your instructor with a hardcopy of your synopsis for grading purposes. NOTE: In some cases, relevant articles may be more than 5 years old. If you find that to be the case with your assigned theory, please let me know in advance to avoid a penalty. For Week #4, each student will choose one theory, not already assigned to him/her, to complete the third journal article analysis assignment.

**Discussion and Participation:** Each student is expected to come to class each day and provide valuable input.

**Final Paper:** For this assignment, you have two options:

**Option #1:** Using an organization of your choice (e.g., one in which you work, have worked, or frequently volunteer), you are to demonstrate your knowledge of four of the theories/typologies we covered during the semester. You will do this by writing a 12-15 page paper explaining how the theories/typologies you chose illuminate or and/or can be applied to your experience and/or organizational texts. **Further, theories from at least two different epistemological/ontological perspectives should be represented in your work** (e.g., your paper should not use four theories that were all developed from a functionalist perspective/quantitative methodology).

After your analysis is done, you should provide a discussion of how the four theories you chose helped you see your organization/its texts/ your experiences differently (e.g., what did you learn by applying cognitive dissonance theory to your experience, that you would not have seen had you only used dramatism). This last section should be no more than 2-3 pages of the entire paper.

**You are also required to cite two journal articles per theory other than those used in the class reading packet provided by the instructor to support your analysis.**

For this paper, please remember to follow the font and style guidelines given on the syllabus. Also, instead of putting your name on the first page of text, provide a cover page with your name on it and do not put your name on the first page of text to take up space. **YOU MUST CITE ANY AND ALL SOURCES USED FOR THIS PAPER IN APA FORMAT BOTH IN TEXT AND ON A SEPARATE REFERENCE PAGE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**Option #2:** Using a movie/television series approved by your instructor, you are to demonstrate your knowledge of four of the theories/typologies we covered during the semester. You will do this by writing a 12-15 page paper explaining how the theories/typologies you chose illuminate the interaction/happenings in the movie. **Further, theories from at least two different epistemological/ontological perspectives should be represented in your work** (e.g., your paper should not use four theories that were all developed from a functionalist perspective/quantitative methodology).

After your analysis is done, you should provide a discussion of how the four theories you chose helped you to analyze the interactions/happenings in the movie differently (e.g., what did you learn by applying cognitive dissonance theory to your experience, that you would not have seen had you only used dramatism). This last section should be no more than 2-3 pages of the entire paper.

**You are also required to cite two journal articles per theory other than those used in the class reading packet to support your analysis.**

For this paper, please remember to follow the font and style guidelines given on the syllabus. Also, instead of putting your name on the first page of text, provide a cover page with your name on it and do not put your name on the first page of text to take up space. **YOU MUST CITE ANY AND ALL SOURCES USED FOR THIS PAPER IN APA FORMAT BOTH IN TEXT AND ON A SEPARATE REFERENCE PAGE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**Final Presentation: To meet the requirements of this assignment, you will be asked to give a 5-6 minute presentation related to your final paper. In 5-6 minutes, you WILL NOT be able to explain how all four theories used in your final paper applied to the topic. Chose ONE or TWO.**

**Exams:** One, comprehensive essay exam will be given during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of class on Saturday March 3, 2007. Details for the exam's make-up will be given in class.

## Tentative Daily Schedule

### WEEK #1

**Friday, January 26:** Course Overview/Introductions/Defining Communication/Defining Theory/Paradigms of Communication

Readings:

Text Chapters 1 & 3

Watzlawick, P., Beavin, J. H., & Jackson, D. (1967). *Pragmatics of human communication*. W. W. Norton & Company: New York.

Motley, M. T. (1990). On whether one can(not) not communicate: An extension via traditional communication postulates. *Western Journal of Communication, 54*, 1-20.

Andersen, P. A. (1991). When one cannot communicate: A challenge to Motley's traditional communication postulates. *Communication Studies, 42*, 309-325.

Motley, M. T. (1991). How one may not communicate: A reply to Andersen. *Communication Studies, 42*, 326-339.

## **WEEK #2**

### **Friday, February 2:** Contemporary Research Issues/The Rhetoric/Dramatism/Apologia

#### Readings:

Text Chapters 22 & 23

Carlson, A. C. (1994). How one uses evidence determines its value. *Western Journal of Communication*, 58, 20-24.

Fitch, K. L. (1994). Criteria for evaluating qualitative research. *Western Journal of Communication*, 58, 32-38.

Wilson, B. J. (1994). A challenge to communication empiricists: Let's be more forthcoming about what we do. *Western Journal of Communication*, 58, 25-31.

Campbell, K. K. The ontological foundations of rhetorical theory.

Ling, D. (1970). A pentadic analysis of Senator Edward Kennedy's address to the people of Massachusetts, July 25, 1969. *In Readings in Rhetorical Criticism, 2nd Edition*, pp. 223-229, Carl R. Burghardt (Ed.). Strata Publishing, Inc.: State College, Pennsylvania. **(Article is on reserve at the Cravens Library Circulation Desk)**

Ware, B.L & Linkugel, W. A. (1973). They spoke in defense of themselves: On the generic criticism of apologia. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 59, 273.

Rowland, R. C & Jerome, A. M, (2004) On organizational apologia: A reconceptualization. *Communication Theory*, 14, 191-211.

### **Saturday, February 3:** Social Judgment Theory/Elaboration Likelihood Model/Cognitive Dissonance/Symbolic Interactionism/Constructivism

#### Readings:

Text Chapters 4, 13, 14, 15, 16

Sypher, B. D. & Zorn, T. E. (1986). Communication-related abilities and upward mobility: A longitudinal investigation. *Human Communication Research*, 12, 420-431.

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**WEEK #3**

**Friday, February 16:** Anxiety Uncertainty Management (Developed from Uncertainty Reduction Theory)/Relational Dialectics/Communication Privacy Management/Face Negotiation

Readings:

Text Chapters 8, 9, 30, 11, 31

Cools, C. A. (2006). Relational Communication in intercultural couples. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 6, 262-274.

Petronio, S. (2006). Impact of Medical Mistakes: Navigating Work–Family Boundaries for Physicians and Their Families. *Communication Monographs*, 73, 462-467.

**Saturday, February 17:** Functional Perspective on Group Decision Making/Cultural Approach/Diffusion/Information Systems/ Critical Theory of Organizations

Readings:

Text Chapters 17, 19, 20, 21

Pacanowsky, M. E. & O'Donnell-Trujillo, N. (1982). Communication and Organizational Cultures. *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, 46, 115-130.

Trujillo, N. (1992). Interpreting (the work and talk of) baseball: Perspectives on ball park culture. *Western Journal of Communication*, 56, 350-371.

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**WEEK #4**

**Friday, March 2:** Agenda Setting Theory, Standpoint Theory, Muted Group Theory

Readings:

Text Chapters 28, 34, 35

Wood, J. Feminist Standpoint Theory and Muted Group Theory: Commonalities and divergences. *Women and Language*, 28, 61.

**Saturday, March 3: Presentations/Final Exam**

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