Stephen F. Austin State University
Department of Languages, Cultures and Communication
Communication Studies Program
Introduction to Communication Theory
COM 305.501, Fall 2019
Online Course

Instructor: Dr. Sudeshna Roy, Professor
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Office hrs: T/Th - 12.30-1.30, W - 11.30-12.30
Virtual hrs: T/Th - 1.45-2.45
And by appointments

Course Description:
Communication Theory is an introductory course designed to develop a basic understanding of foundational constructs in the field of communication.

“Introduction to Communication Theory” (3 credits) meets twice each week (Tuesday/Thursday) in 75-minute segments for 15 weeks, and also meets for a 2-hour final examination. Online delivery contains extensive written content as well as audio-visual presentations and exercises that includes the same information students in a face-to-face lecture course receive, requiring students to engage with the online modules for at least three hours per week. Students have weekly exercises, readings, and discussions, are expected to take regular quizzes and participate in exercises in class, and are required to submit two papers. These activities average at a minimum 6 hours each week to prepare outside of classroom hours.

Course Objectives:
This course allows the student to obtain a general knowledge of the basic theories of human communication, their origin, and their most well-known proponents. It also helps students develop an understanding of how these theories are situated in the objective/subjective or scientific/descriptive paradigm continuum.

Required readings:

How the course is conducted:
This course is modular and conducted completely online. There are no face-to-face meetings for this course. The course timeline describes the time frame and activities required for course completion. Activities for each module are due by the ending date of that module.

Program Learning Outcomes:
This course meets several objectives for Communication Studies majors. Specifically, students majoring in Communication Studies…
• Should display comprehension of major communication theories.
• Will apply the major theories in the field to communicate effectively in a variety of settings.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
Throughout the semester, we’ll explore a variety of theories, frameworks, and perspectives that apply to human communication and interaction. This course is designed to encourage students to increase their understanding of theory before applying theories to real-world experiences. By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Identify the functions and purposes of theory.
- Identify and describe the central premise, scope conditions, and tenets of various intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, group, media, and cultural communication theories.
- Apply theoretical constructs to situations that fit the scope conditions of such theories.
- Evaluate communication theories using established criteria.

**Academic Integrity (A-9.1):**
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54):**
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.
Students with Disabilities:
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/. Once this has been completed, please schedule an appointment with me so we can work out specifics about the accommodations needed.

Student Support:
Should you have technical questions regarding part of the course requirements, please visit the Online Orientation at http://www.sfaonline.info/supportandtutorials-. If you still need help, please contact SFA Online at 936.468.1919.

Course Policies

Participation:
Course participation is important for the success of the class. Sharing your experience and perspective with the rest of the class improves the quality of class discussion and makes the class more meaningful and enjoyable for everyone. You are expected to complete all class activities and assigned reading.

Late Assignments:
Assignments are due by the designated day/time on the Course Timeline. All assignments must be submitted via D2L. No late work is accepted. Any exceptions will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will require extremely compelling, well-documented reasons. You must provide documentation for dire circumstances (e.g., accident, hospitalization, family death etc.) to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (Rusk Bldg. #315; 936-468-2703). You are expected to leave yourself enough time to complete your assignments to account for technical difficulties.

Grading Policy:
I cannot explicitly measure effort. The final product is all that can be evaluated. Although effort is typically associated with improved results, you should not confuse the two. If you are dissatisfied with a grade on an assignment, you must wait at least 24 hours and no more than 7 days before discussing the issue with me. At that time, you should be focused on what can be done to improve your performance on the next assignment, rather than disputing the grade itself. I spend a great deal of time ensuring that I grade assignments in a fair and consistent manner and any error that does occur will be in your favor. Please feel free to contact me at any time about ways to improve your performance in the course. I strongly suggest however that this is done early in the semester rather than waiting until the end of the semester.

Discussion about Grades:
I understand that success in this class is important to many of you, and I will do the best that I can to help you. **Begging for a grade is unethical.** To deter such unethical practices, **you will lose 5 points per request.** Here are some general tips to help you earn your grade in this class.

1. Log in to D2L every day.
2. Check your SFASU email every day.
3. Read the textbook AND the online modules.
4. Take reading notes and notes during video lectures just like you would in a classroom.
5. Proceed through the modules in the order they’re presented to make sure you don’t miss important information.
6. Ask questions if you have them during virtual office hours, either via chat or email.
7. Follow the policies and procedures in this syllabus. Clear up any questions that you have early on.
8. Complete and submit your work on time or early.
9. Utilize on-campus resources that are available to you, including the AARC, CTL and the library.
10. Proofread your work before submission. If I am unable to understand your writing, you will lose points.
11. Closely follow assignment directions and read grading rubrics carefully.

**Technology:**

It is important that you be familiar with D2L. All correspondence will occur via D2L and your SFASU email account. You can anticipate that any unexpected changes or prompt announcements will be distributed via D2L. Moreover, all of your assignments will be distributed and submitted via D2L and grades will be posted in D2L. You are encouraged to check D2L and your SFASU email account on a daily basis for updates and other information. **If you do not check D2L and email regularly, you will still be held accountable for missed information regarding the course.**

I understand that technology can be quirky and problematic at times. However, it is your responsibility to ensure that assignments are delivered in some manner to me by the due date and time. If you’re having problems with D2L and can’t get your paper to submit, then you should email me the paper directly via my SFASU account (roys@sfasu.edu) with the intent of resubmitting the paper to D2L once technology issues have been resolved. However, I will **not** grade a paper submitted via email. It **must** be submitted to the designated D2L Dropbox. **Any** assignment submitted in any form after the due date stated on the Course Timeline will not be graded (see “Late Assignments” section).

**Classroom Civility:**

Civility in our virtual classroom is not only expected, but also required. We may discuss some sensitive issues in this class. **Please be mindful that although you have not experienced certain things first hand, it is very possible and highly likely that some of your classmates have.** A vast array of opinions, points of view, and experiences will be expressed, and we will work together to create an environment
where everyone feels welcome to express their ideas with the intention of learning from each other. While different opinions, experiences, and ideas will be welcomed, incivility and disrespect will not be tolerated. Although we are participating in an online course where we may feel more comfortable sharing information we wouldn’t normally share face-to-face, please also be mindful that sharing information that is too personal may make others feel uncomfortable.

Instructor Responsibility:
In this course, the instructor is responsible for:
• responding in a timely manner (within 24 – 48 hours) to student emails except weekends.
• responding in a timely manner (within a week) to quizzes and exams.
• responding in a timely manner (within a week) to essays and assignments or other written work submitted except holidays.
• responding in a timely manner (within a week) to discussion board posts.

How do you learn the material for the course?:
You’ll want to read each textbook chapter in addition to viewing/reading the materials provided under the content tab in D2L. These are called **modules** and they are the equivalent of an in-class lecture. Although there may be some similar material to the textbook, you may find testable information that is not covered in the textbook. So it is important that you go through each of the module’s content pages before completing your assignments. I will also guide you to which assignments are associated with the content. All due dates however can be found on the Course Timeline.

How will your knowledge be evaluated?
There is a total of 600 possible points in this class. The due dates of quizzes, discussion posts, and the paper are listed in the Course Timeline. Your final grade in this course is based on your cumulative point total (not percentage) and will be assessed as the following:

\[ A = 540-600, \quad B = 480-539, \quad C = 420-479, \quad D = 360-419, \quad F < 359 \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Assignments</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>Your Score</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Quizzes (4 @ 50pts ea.)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Posts (5 @ 20pts ea.)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities (10 @ 10pts ea.)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Submission #1</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Submission #2</td>
<td>125</td>
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Below is a chart that offers a general overview of how these assignments will be graded. Look for further explanation for each assignment as you proceed through the modules.

**When preparing for quizzes**, make sure to read both the textbook chapters and the modules as information can and will come from both of these sources. The **quizzes** themselves will include questions that are **definition and content** based, as well as more **situation/application-based questions**.

### General Assessment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Activities</th>
<th>Full Credit</th>
<th>Partial Credit</th>
<th>No Credit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes (4 total)</td>
<td>50 points. You correctly answer all questions.</td>
<td>1-49 points. Points are earned for each correct answer.</td>
<td>0 points. You do not complete the quiz on time and/or there is evidence of working with another student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board Posts (5 total)</td>
<td>20 points. You provide meaningful posts and there is evidence of participation. You clearly integrate course material/knowledge into the discussion. Your first post is at least a day ahead of the deadline and you respond to at least two other posts.</td>
<td>1-19 points. Points are lost if your participation or content is not adequate, and/or you do not follow instructions.</td>
<td>0 points. There is no evidence of your participation in the discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities (10 total)</td>
<td>10 points. You provide meaningful, completed assignments where you clearly demonstrate your knowledge of the course material.</td>
<td>1-9 points. If you do not submit the assignment on time or follow instructions.</td>
<td>0 points. If you do not submit your activity on time, you’ll receive zero points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Submission #1</td>
<td>75 points. Your grade will depend on the timeliness of your submission and your ability to follow directions.</td>
<td>1-74 points. If your paper is submitted after the deadline and diverges from the paper requirements, you’ll lose points.</td>
<td>0 points. If you do not submit your paper on time or your paper is plagiarized, you’ll receive zero points.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How will your knowledge be assessed?

Success in Assignments and Essays:

All papers must be double-spaced, 12 font, Times New Roman

As you go through the modules, the instructions for the assignments/reflectations will be embedded in those modules. For example, in module 4, the reflection assignment instruction will have its own page. Then there will be a link to the reflection assignment. For these assignments, you need to make sure that
- you read the instructions carefully,
- provide adequate definitions and explanations of the concepts you are writing about or identified, referencing the module lectures and your textbook, as well as outside research
- provide adequate examples of the concept and their relevance for the topic being discussed (remember that your examples must relate to communicative phenomenon), and,
- identify outside research about the topic. What are other scholars/experts talking about regarding this issue/concept?
- provide in-text citations and references in APA style format.

I also look for how your assignment compares to the standards set by your peers in the course. Make sure you type the assignment/reflectation in a .doc file and then upload that document to Dropbox. This practice protects you from losing your work in case of any technology failure. All references and formatting should follow APA 6th edition.

Papers and Final Paper Instructions can be found in D2L Modules.

Guide to writing discussion posts:

There are five things I look for in the discussions.

1. The discussion posts address the questions raised in that discussion adequately including relevant definitions and examples from the course perspective - Remember, whenever you are talking about an issue in the discussions, you are always doing so in the context of this course – intercultural communication.
2. Whether the student is responding to other students' posts in a meaningful manner - If the student simply agrees with another student, then that is not meaningful. The student needs to demonstrate understanding of the issue raised by fellow student
and has to make clear WHY he/she agrees or disagrees with the post of fellow student. **At least two responses** other than your own post is required.

3. **Whether the example given is creative, relevant and demonstrates outside research** to the issue or tangential - Sometimes, students would give examples that are far-fetched and don't really address the question or issue being discussed. You need to show that you are bringing in your own experiences and other researched material to the discussion.

4. **How does your post compare** with those of your group's posts - If you write a post that satisfies all the things I have mentioned in the first three points and yet falls far below the depth and quality of posts by members in your group, those members will earn higher grades than you would.

5. In order for your group members to respond to your posts, you need to post in a *timely manner* – **Your first post should be at least a day before the deadline.** If you post your first post on deadline day before noon, there will be a 20% deduction. If you post your first post on deadline day after noon, there will be a 40% deduction. If you respond to only one classmate, there will be a 20% deduction.

Also, make sure you type the post in a .doc file and then copy and paste it on the discussion board. This practice protects you from losing your work in case of any technology failure.

**Note:** If no one else posts, you'll be graded on the quality of your own post. Your grades will not suffer due to the non-participation of other group members. :)

**Discussion Board Rubric**

Below is a more specific explanation of what I'll be using to grade discussion board posts.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality and Timeliness</strong></td>
<td>5 points. Submits one initial response early in the session and two or more thoughtful peer responses early in the session, and more than two peer responses closer to the end of the session.</td>
<td>1.5-4.5 points. Submits at least one initial response early in the session, and at least one peer responses closer to the end of the session.</td>
<td>0-1 points. Does not submit at least one initial response at least one day before deadline and/or does not submit at least two peer responses closer to the end of the session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling and Mechanics</strong></td>
<td>5 points. Submits posts that contain grammatically correct sentences without any spelling errors.</td>
<td>3.5-4.5 points. Submits posts that have one or grammatically incorrect sentences and two spelling errors.</td>
<td>0-3 points. Does not submit posts that are in complete sentences or two or more of the complete sentences are grammatically incorrect and have greater than 2 spelling errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demonstrates Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>5 points. Posts and responses show</td>
<td>2.5-4.5 points. Posts and responses show</td>
<td>0-2 points. Post and responses show little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Understanding of Content and Applicability to Professional Practice</td>
<td>evidence of knowledge and understanding of course content and applicability to professional practice, and include other resources that extend the learning of the community.</td>
<td>responses show evidence of knowledge and understanding of course content and applicability to professional practice.</td>
<td>evidence of knowledge and understanding of course content and applicability of professional practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Generates Learning Within the Community</strong></td>
<td><strong>5 points.</strong> Posts elicit responses and reflections from other learners and responses build upon and integrate multiple views from other learners and take the discussion deeper.</td>
<td><strong>2.5-4.5 points.</strong> Posts attempt to elicit responses and reflections from other learners and responses build upon the ideas of other learners to take the discussion deeper.</td>
<td><strong>0-2 points.</strong> Posts do not attempt to elicit responses and reflections from other learners and/or responses do not build upon the ideas of other learners to take the discussion deeper.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>