COMM 4195 Independent Study in Communication
“Leadership and Crisis Communication
Spring 2024
Dept. Media and Communication

Instructor: Elizabeth Spradley, Ph.D.
Email: espradley@sfasu.edu
Phone: 936.468.7095
Office: Boyton 208E
Office Hours: virtual, by appointment
Class Meetings: This is an independent study. There are no scheduled class meetings for this class.

Course Description: Independent investigation of a special topic or project by the student with advice, approval and supervision by an instructor.

Course Contact Hours and Study Hours
COMM 4195 “Special Problems in Communication” (variable-credit) is an independent study course developed in cooperation with a faculty supervisor and student. Typically, independent study courses are 3-hour credits, in which students work with limited contact hours with the supervising faculty to independently complete readings, research, and a final written, research paper. For a 3-credit hour course, the student will complete on average a minimum of 8 hours of independent work per week of a 15-week semester. However, students receive more or less credit hours based on workload. For example, a student may take a 1-hour credit COM 4195 and average a minimum of 3 hours of independent work per week of a 15-week semester. Students taking a 1-credit hour course may be given work such as an annotated bibliography, a series of researched essays, an applied communication project, or data collection/coding.

Course Materials/Requirements:
• Readings on D2L

Student Learning Outcomes
1. Work independently to create a research project.
2. Conduct a survey of relevant literature in the field including journal articles and/or scholarly books that have researched the topic.
3. Cite and use a minimum of 10 scholarly sources.
4. Conduct/create a research project that analyzes data.
5. Collect data.
6. Write research using APA style in 20-25 page paper excluding references and appendices in the format of social science and rhetorical research.
7. Determine a conference to submit it to and a journal to also submit it for publication.

Communication Studies Program Learning Outcomes:
1. Applied Theory in Communication: Students majoring in Communication Studies will apply the major theories in the field to demonstrate their comprehension.
2. **Research Methods in Communication**: Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to use and demonstrate understanding of appropriate methodology in critical, humanistic, or social scientific paradigms in examining research questions in communication.

3. **Diversity and Freedom of Expression**: Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to recognize the central role of diversity and freedom of expression in a global community.

4. **Constitutive Nature of Communication**: Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the constitutive nature of communication, which includes forces that enable and constrain communication such as technology, ethics, and organizational life.

5. **Higher Order Thinking**: Students majoring in Communication Studies will be able to demonstrate oral and written competence in logical and critical thinking.

6. **Presentational Skills**: Students majoring in Communication Studies will demonstrate the ability to present various topics in a professional manner that includes researching, planning, organizing, and presenting with visual aids and/or multi-media technology.

**Course Calendar**

This is a course with independent work completed by due dates. The student is expected to email and meet with the instructor to keep the instructor appraised of progress. The keystone assignments are bolded.

**Week 1**
Meet with instructor to discuss project. Discuss what needs to be completed and a plan for completing it. Write the introduction to the paper with a rationale and clear research purpose.

**Week 2**
Use databases and library to research literature on the research topic. Focus on scholarly sources including journal articles and books. Create a reference list in APA style.

Work on the written version of the literature review and methods section.

Discuss data collection methods and data analysis methods.

**Week 3**
Collect and analyze data. Continue to work on the written version of the literature review and methods section.

**Week 4**
Complete data analysis. Write the findings, discussion, and conclusion sections of the paper. Meet with your instructor as needed.

**Week 5**
Finish writing and editing, and submit to instructor via email.

Meet to discuss conference and journal submission.

**Grading**

This course is worth 100 points. The student will complete five assignments for a possible 100 points in the course. The following earned point values correspond with letter grades.

A: 90-100 points

B: 80-89 points
C: 70-79 points
D: 60-69 points
F: 59 points or below

The completed paper will be in APA style, 20-25 pages of content, a minimum of 10 scholarly sources, and sections including: introduction with rational and purpose, literature review, methods, findings, discussion, and conclusion. The paper will be graded based on: 20% writing quality and style, 20% APA and scholarly sources, 20% use of literature, 20% methods, and 20% findings, discussion, and conclusion.

**Grade Appeal Process (HOP 04-109)**

A student may appeal a final course grade if it can be demonstrated that the instructor did not adhere to stated procedures or grading standards, or if other compelling reasons exist to change the grade. A student may not appeal due to general dissatisfaction with a grade or disagreement with the instructor's professional judgment regarding the quality of the student’s work.

**Procedures:**

These steps are followed when making an appeal. The burden of proof rests with the student throughout the process.

A. Students must first appeal in writing to the faculty member with whom they have a final grade dispute. Students must appeal to the instructor within thirty (30) calendar days after the first-class day of the next semester, fall or spring. Given extenuating circumstances, exceptions to this deadline may be granted by the academic unit head. If the dispute is not resolved, the student may appeal to the academic unit head. The academic unit head then requests a written statement from the faculty member and the student involved in the dispute. The academic unit head provides both parties a written recommendation.

B. If the dispute remains unresolved after a recommendation by the academic unit head, the student may appeal in writing to the academic dean. The dean notifies both parties of the continuation of the appeal. The faculty member may submit an additional response. The academic unit head will forward all documentation involved in the dispute to the dean. Prior to making a recommendation, the dean may refer the appeal to the relevant college council. If the college council has no student members, the dean asks the president of the Student Government Association to recommend no more than two students from that college to be appointed as voting members. If consulted, the college council reviews all documentation and submits its recommendation to the dean. The dean provides both parties a written recommendation.

C. If the dispute remains unresolved after a recommendation by the dean, the student may appeal in writing to the provost and vice president for academic affairs. The provost and vice president for academic affairs notifies both parties of the continuation of the appeal. The faculty member may submit an additional response. The dean will forward all documentation involved in the dispute to the provost and vice president for academic affairs. The college council may serve as an advisory body to the provost and vice president for academic affairs. The provost and vice president for academic affairs informs the student and all persons involved in the appeal process of the recommendation.
An appeal must be made within ten (10) business days from the conclusion of each step. Recommendations at each level are generally made within four (4) weeks of receiving the appeal.

Under extraordinary circumstances (e.g., the instructor is deceased, is no longer at the institution or is in violation of a university policy), a grade may be changed by the provost and vice president for academic affairs after consultation with the dean and unit head. The provost and vice president for academic affairs informs the student and all persons involved in the appeal process of the final decision.

The full process is outlined at: https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/hops/04-109.pdf

Attendance Policy
This is an independent study course. There are no class meetings, but there are due dates for three keystone assignments indicated on the course calendar. Assignments may only be made up with an excused absence for a health event, emergency, court, or institutional absence.

Institution Absences (HOP 04-110)

An Institutional Absence may be granted to a student who participates as a representative of the University in academic (including research), extra- or cocurricular, or athletic activities. Students will be excused for institutional purposes from otherwise required academic activity only when a valid Institutional Absence is approved by the appropriate administrative unit or official and the documentation of approval is provided to the faculty member at least five (5) days in advance.

Institutional absences will not be approved for keystone events, defined as: a special or unique assignment, test, project, experience, or other academic exercise identified by the Faculty member as critical for successful completion of standards of the class and unable to be missed. These events must be identified on the syllabus at the beginning of the semester and communicated to the students. Events added to the syllabus at a later date will not qualify for Keystone Event status. Keystone Events where the date/time is changed will no longer be considered a Keystone Event. Students should make themselves aware of any Keystone Events identified in the syllabus to ensure there are no conflicts.

For keystone events where the assignment dates vary, it is incumbent upon the students to work with their faculty member to not select a conflicting date.

More information on Institutional Absences, including how to apply, can be found at https://www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents/student-resources/institutional-absences.

Academic Integrity (4.1)

The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1)
Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (5.5)**

*Please copy and paste the following information regarding Withheld Grades into your syllabus. Add additional information as needed to meet your departmental or course needs.*

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 coursework 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 to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to [https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf](https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf).

**Students with Disabilities**

*Please copy and paste the following statement and place it in your course syllabus.*

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 promptly may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/)
Student Wellness and Well-Being
SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

On-campus Resources:
The Dean of Students Office (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)
www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents
936.468.7249
dos@sfasu.edu

SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic Human Services, Room 202
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
936.468.1041

The Health and Wellness Hub “The Hub”
Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.

To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:
• Health Services
• Counseling Services
• Student Outreach and Support
• Food Pantry
• Wellness Coaching
• Alcohol and Other Drug Education
www.sfasu.edu/thehub
936.468.4008
thehub@sfasu.edu

Crisis Resources:
• Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
• National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
• Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
• johCrisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741