

Communication Theory

COMM 4301 & COMM 5304

Instructor: Dr. Esther Rumsey

Office: FAB 203A

Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 1:30 – 3:30 pm

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Text (Required: Available in the University Bookstore)

Littlejohn, S.W., & Foss, K.A. (2011). *Theories of Human Communication*. Waveland Press, Inc. ISBN: 978-1-57766-706-3

Course Overview:

This course is designed to help students learn to use theories to examine actual communication events. This course provides information about theories and emphasizes the ways in which those theories can be used to analyze real events. The goals are as follows: 1) To develop student competencies in using theories to analyze actual events; and, 2) To help students become more perceptive observers of communication.

The course presents a variety of communication contexts and perspectives in order to provide students with the opportunity to learn about theories and how they can be applied to analyze and understand various communication situations.

Course Structure: Each week I will post a folder in the course documents section of blackboard. The folder will contain the materials and assignments for the week. Course materials will include such things as power point lectures, video links, supplementary readings, discussion board questions, chapter quizzes and class exercises. The exact mix of these materials will vary from week to week depending on the topics covered for the week. The student is expected to log onto Black Board two or three times a week to post on the discussion board and to review course materials for the week. Failure to log onto Blackboard for two consecutive weeks will result in you being dropped from the class for nonattendance.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Identify and explain a variety of communication theories
- Demonstrate the role of research in theory building
- Apply communication theories to communication situations
- Critically respond to published communication research.

Program Learning Outcomes:

This course is one of the required courses for a major in communication with a concentration in Human Communication, as such it is designed to meet one or more of the program learning outcomes for the major. These learning outcomes include:

The graduating student will demonstrate:

1. competency for appropriate oral communication in public presentations.
2. competency for appropriate use of presentation software – specifically power point.
3. the ability to analyze arguments including identification of the major elements of the argument such as claims, warrants, data and backing
4. competency in appropriate discipline specific written communication.
5. the ability to apply communication theory to the analysis of communication situations.
6. competency in the use of media technology including video, audio and web technologies.
7. general knowledge of communication concepts and terminology

ADA Needs:

It is Sul Ross University policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. If you would like to request such accommodations because of a physical, mental, or learning disability, please contact the ADA coordinator for Program Accessibility in the Counseling Office.

Grading:

Grades will be based on:

Discussion Questions	50%
Chapter Quizzes	20%
Midterm & Final Exam	20%
Journal Article Assignments	10%

Discussion Questions: You will have one discussion question a week to answer. As the name indicates, the question and your answers should generate a discussion among the class members. For this to work it is critical that everyone post their answers in a timely manner. The discussion question will have two deadline, one for your initial response to the question and one for your response to your classmates' answers. In calculating your grade for the discussion question I will be considering: timeliness of posting (both the initial response and follow-up posts); how well your posts reflect your understanding of the assigned readings for the week (while discussion questions do ask for some personal opinion, that opinion should be grounded in the readings and your answer should clearly demonstrate that you have read and understand the assignments); and, the clarity of your answer (is it well written, does it use appropriate language and correct grammar, are quotes and references to the reading clearly identified and credit attributed to the source, and does it clearly answer the question posed in the assignment.)

Chapter Quizzes: The chapter quizzes will consist of multiple choice and true and false questions based on the textbook chapters. You will be expected to read the entire chapter even when the class discussion focuses on only one portion of the chapter. The quiz will

provide you an opportunity to demonstrate your comprehension of the concepts presented in the chapter.

Midterm and Final Exams: Both the midterm and final will consist of short answer questions that provide you the opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of and ability to apply the theories examined in the class. You will have a week to complete both exams.

Journal Articles Assignments: Periodically in the semester I will ask that you locate and review research journal articles related to the assigned readings. Specific grading criteria will be explained with each assignment, but like the discussion questions timeliness of submission will impact the grade.