



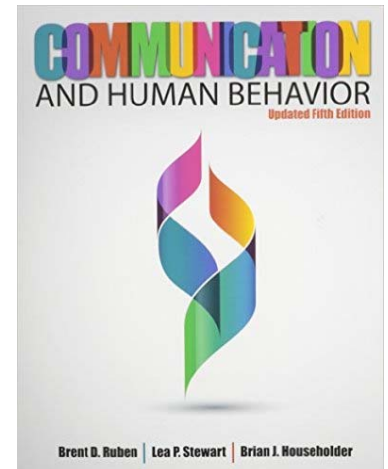
COMM 1335.001 – Introduction to Communication Studies
FALL 2015
Course Syllabus

Professor: Joseph Velasco, Ph.D.
Office Hours: *Wednesday: 9am-11am; 2pm-5pm, or by appointment*
Office Location: FAB 206B
Telephone: 837-8370
Email Address: jvelasco@sulross.edu
Class Schedule: 9:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday
Classroom Location: MAB 302
Required Text: Ruben, B. D., Stewart, L. P., & Householder, B. J. (2014). *Communication and human behavior* (Updated 5th ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt.

Always bring applicable reading material to class with you.

Introduction

Communication lies at the heart of being human. Even before attending a day of school, you sought to learn its arts, observe its affects, and even analyze its principles. This may sound overstated, but remember: From the first day you interacted intentionally, you began a lifelong investigation of communication. How would you craft your messages? What would be the most effective words? How might you replicate your success or learn from failure? As a pattern-seeker trying to unravel the structures of the human condition--seeking to anticipate, predict, interpret and influence the choices of others--you have a lifetime's experience as a communication theorist and practitioner.



But do you need a major, a department, or a textbook for something so common to the human experience? One may offer the facile response that "simply because one communicates does not assure that one communicates well." From this standpoint, we could propose that the study of communication offers us the skills, tools, and practices of an expert. Certainly, we all can improve our communication abilities. However, we will not limit our study of communication to simply doing communication better. Otherwise, we could take a few advanced public speaking courses and focus our energies on pursuits best explored by our friends in economics, political science, and philosophy. No, the discipline of communication studies offers us more than mere tricks and tips. It offers us a lens for understanding and even changing our social world(s).

This course is designed to survey the discipline of Communication Studies, giving attention to tracing its historical lineage and development. This course is designed specifically for Communication Majors to serve as a foundation for further learning and specialization within the discipline.

Section I. Course Learning Objectives

After completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of the major theories that have shaped the field of communication, and their relevance to your life and your scholarship.
2. Demonstrate understanding of the major paradigms at work in the communication field, and how those paradigms shape theoretical perspectives and research methods.
3. Describe how particular communication theories and methods can be used to address communication problems in social and cultural contexts.
4. Demonstrate ability to write and cite research sources in a manner consistent with communications scholarship.
5. Develop a portfolio of your work in this course documenting your personal, professional, and scholarly interests.

Section II. Program Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to meet one or more of the program learning outcomes applied to all Communication majors:

The graduating student will demonstrate the ability to:

1. Competently deliver public presentations, including the use of presentation technology such as presentation software, video, and audio.
2. Analyze communication content for argument, including identification of major elements, such as claims, warrants, data, etc.
3. Complete appropriate discipline specific writing assignments.
4. Apply communication theory to the analysis of communication situations appropriate to each degree specialization.
5. Demonstrate competent use of media technology including video, audio, and internet-based technology.

Section III. Course Requirements and Grading

Assignment	Points Possible	Grading Scale
Quiz One	25	Grade Description (Points) A = 450-500 B = 400-449 C = 350-399 D = 300-349 F = < 300
Quiz Two	25	
Final Exam	100	
Writing Workshop/Peer Review	50	
Initial Reflection Essay	100	
“Interview a Communication Scholar” Essay	100	
Portfolio	100	
Possible Points	500	

Section IV. Course Assignments

Unannounced Quizzes. To inspire you to read and retain the material we cover in this class, I will conduct two multiple-choice quizzes. Each quiz will be designed to test only that you’ve read and considered the reading for that day. Quizzes may not be made up.

Writing Workshop/Peer Review. The writing process should always include revision. For this assignment, bring a full-draft of your *Initial Reflection Essay*. You will be in groups of two or three. A peer-review form will be used to help guide and record your interaction.

Initial Reflection Essay. In three to five pages, develop an essay that accomplishes the following goals: (1) Describe the field of communication studies: its primary areas of interest and professional opportunities; (2) Indicate what concentration of communication scholarship interests you the most; (3) Summarize two examples of recent communication scholarship (with APA in-text citation) that relates to your area of interest; and (4) Share how completion of this degree relates to your personal goals. Instructions:

- Ensure that each section is balanced in length and development.
- Keep an electronic copy for your portfolio.

“Interview a Communication Scholar” Essay. The discipline of Communication Studies is made up of real people doing real scholarly work. To help humanize your understanding of our discipline, you have the opportunity to talk to a scholar and write a reflection essay on the experience. You will have the responsibility of contacting a Communication scholar of your choice. You may interview this person by phone, email, or through other channels (even face-to-face). Your essay should be 3-5 pages in length. Adhere to APA-style throughout.

Portfolio. For this assignment, you will collect all of your essays, graded quizzes, and any other work done related to this course. All work that has been previously submitted and graded should be accompanied by a revised version. Revision is the most important part of this assignment. It is also important that your revised work be kept by you. I promise you, you will want to have this on your shelf 20 years from now.

Final Exam. The final exam is comprehensive.

Section V. Policies

Attendance. I expect you to be in class. You are responsible for everything that goes on, including announcements, lecture material, assignments and modifications to the course schedule – *this includes required reading in subsequent class meetings*. Arrange with someone in the class wherein you will notify each other of relevant items in the event that one of you must be absent.

Attendance is essential to your success in this class; therefore, excessive absences will be reflected in your grade. All students are expected to attend all classes. Absences will reduce your score since you will be actively participating in activities (e.g. giving presentations, being an audience member, etc.) during every class session. Attendance will be recorded at **the beginning** of every class session. Fifty points will be taken away from your final grade for every **unexcused** absence after two unexcused absences have been recorded. Therefore, I am giving you two unexcused absences before you begin losing points. For example, if you record five unexcused absences, your grade will be reduced by 150 points (essentially a letter grade). “Excused absences” are those that have approved documentation (e.g. certified doctor’s excuses that specifically cite the class date, time, and reason for the missed day). With that said, **DO NOT SCHEDULE DOCTOR’S, DENTISTS, CHIROPRACTORS, MECHANICS, FAMILY REUNIONS, OR ANY OTHER TYPE OF APPOINTMENTS DURING THIS CLASS**. Thank you.

Classroom Demeanor. I expect the environment during class meetings to be conducive to learning. I have little tolerance for students talking among themselves when they should be listening to someone else speak. It is particularly disturbing when students talk among themselves when one of their classmates is presenting a speech, giving a report, making a comment, or observing or asking a question. I understand that some comments pertain to class material; I encourage you to share these comments with the class as a whole. Also, I would rather that cell phones, pagers, etc. **not** disrupt class – make sure your communications technology is **shut down** when class begins. If you do have a communication device that rings, beeps, vibrates, or in any other way disturbs the class, you may be asked to leave. If you choose to send text-messages during class, you may be asked to leave. If these types of disturbances become in any way chronic, routine, or repetitive, you may be dropped from the course entirely. If you feel that you need special consideration due to extenuating circumstances (e.g. your wife may go into labor soon, you anticipate a family emergency, you are acting as a ‘phone-a-friend lifeline’ on *Millionaire*, etc.), see me beforehand.

Academic Integrity. I expect and assume that as students you conduct yourselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Sul Ross State University reserves the right, through due process, to place on probation, suspend or expel any student who violates academic integrity and regulations by *plagiarism, classroom misdemeanor, or academic dishonesty*. Plagiarism includes doing and/or taking credit for someone else’s work, presenting the ideas and work of others as your own, and not citing your sources if you utilize the ideas of others. Classroom misdemeanor includes cheating, allowing others to cheat, and interfering with others’ ability to succeed in the course. Academic dishonesty includes procuring examination materials illegally, doing unauthorized group work, and handing in your own work for which you have

already received academic credit (see Student Handbook, p. 39-40). I consider all forms of academic misconduct to be insulting, unacceptable, and inexcusable. These things simply do not belong on a campus of higher learning. If I find any of this, I will exercise my right to do what I can to see that the maximum penalties are levied against you. That said, I am not looking to bust you; I just want you to have a positive, honest experience. So if you are in a gray area on one of these points, see me.

Grading. Different assignments require different grading procedures. Exams and quizzes are not curved.

Missed Exams. In my experience exams are *always* given on the date that it says on the schedule (unless we negotiate a schedule change as a class). Accordingly, the rule on missing an exam is, simply: If you miss an exam, then you get a zero. If you produce documentation, through the Vice President of Academic Affairs, that missing the exam could reasonably be excused, then you will be able to make up the exam (possibly by taking an incomplete for the course and taking a makeup exam sometime after the semester). If you are to miss an exam because you are representing the University in some official capacity, then you are allowed to make it up – but this likely means that you will take the exam *early*, not late. See me well in advance of any exam you will have to miss, and I will try to work it out with you.

Late Work. *You are responsible for handing in assignments when they are due.* While I am willing to “hear you out” when unforeseen and/or difficult circumstances impede with your course work, I do not generally accept late work, *and especially* if you have not notified me that you’re having problems before the due date arrives. If you miss a due date, you will be given full credit *only* if the assignment was missed because of a University-excused absence – which includes hospitalization or a *serious* medical condition, a family or personal *emergency*, or a University-sponsored activity. In order to be able to make up the assignment, you must notify me beforehand *and* have supporting documentation from a relevant authority that the situation or event occurred. *NOTE: There is nothing in this syllabus that requires me to accept late work; if you submit work late, then receiving credit depends on my allowing you to turn it in. If I do accept late work, it will likely be at half-credit.*

Section VI. Notes on University Programs and Policies

ADA. 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 located in FH 112 or call 837-8691.

Calendar
(This calendar is subject to change)

Week	Date	Topic	Chapter	Assignment/Activity
One	Aug 25 Aug 27	Intro. To Course Definitions & Theories	<i>Preface</i> 1	Introductions
Two	Sep 1 Sep 3	History of the discipline (Continued)	2 2	
Three	Sep 8 Sep 10	Evolution of Comm Theory (Continued)	3 3	
Four	Sep 15 Sep 17	The Process Fundamentals	4 5	
Five	Sep 22 Sep 24	<i>Library Workshop –Arrive Early</i> Reception & Perception	6	
Six	Sep 29 Oct 1	Verbal Messages Nonverbal Message	7 8	
Seven	Oct 6 Oct 8	<i>Writing Workshop</i> Media	9	Draft of I.R. Essay
Eight	Oct 13 Oct 15	The Individual Work on I.R. Essays	10	
Nine	Oct 20 Oct 22	Relationships Work on Interviews	11	Initial Reflection Essay
Ten	Oct 27 Oct 29	Relationships (Cont'd) <i>Guest Speaker: Jan Rueb</i>	11	
Eleven	Nov 3 Nov 5	Groups Organizations	12 13	
Twelve	Nov 10 Nov 12	Culture <i>Special Topic: Gender</i>	14 TBA	
Thirteen	Nov 17 Nov 19	Public & Mass Comm <i>Special Topic: Health Comm</i>	15 TBA	
Fourteen	Nov 23 Nov 26	Discuss Interviews Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class		Interview Essay
Fifteen	Dec 1 Dec 3	LAST CLASS – Closing discussion DEAD DAY – No Class		Portfolio

The Final Exam is scheduled for Dec 8th at 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.