

COMM 4302.001 – Communication Theory & Research
Spring 2020
Course Syllabus



Instructor:	Joseph Velasco, Ph.D.
Office Hours:	Monday through Thursday, 2-2:50pm, or <i>by appointment</i>
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Email Address:	jvelasco@sulross.edu
Class Schedule:	12:30-1:45 p.m. MW
Classroom Location:	MAB 301
Required Texts:	<p>Davis, C. S., & Lachlan, K. A. (2017). <i>Straight talk about communication research methods</i> (3rd ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.</p> <p>West, R. W., & Turner, L. H. (2010). <i>Introducing communication theory: Analysis and application</i> (4th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.</p>

Section I. Introduction

This advanced course focuses on developing and fine-tuning your knowledge of theory and research. There are many communication theories relevant to your areas of interest within the discipline of Communication Studies. In this class, we focus on those frequently used to generate research in recent years. As advanced students in Communication, you will have some freedom to explore your interests as you learn about theory and various traditions, paradigms, and methods of doing research.

It is likely you enrolled in this course simply because you are *required* to take it as a Communication major, so we will not pretend that you are enamored with communication theory. But at the same time, consider the possibility that engaging and developing deeper understandings of theory and research may teach you new ways to think about, understand, and explain the social world altogether.



Section II. Course Design: Communication Infused

To be successful in college and beyond, many sources (e.g., Morreale & Pearson, 2008) indicate that communication competencies are essential. Sul Ross recognizes that the current generation of undergraduate university students should receive training to navigate a global world as competent communicators in various contexts and channels of communication.

Through our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) called *Compass*, Sul Ross aims to equip you to navigate excellence in the 21st century by developing your communication skills across multiple courses. This [insert program/discipline/course name] course is designed to enhance your communication skills. Therefore, this course has the following QEP Student Learning Outcome:



Section III. QEP Student Learning Outcome

QEP SLO: The student will create works that exhibit skill in prepared and purposeful communication (written, oral or visual).

Section IV. Course Objectives

After completing this course successfully, you will be able to:

1. Identify and explain a variety of theories used by the academic discipline of Communication Studies.
2. Understand the role of research in building theory
3. Apply communication theories to a variety of situations, settings, and contexts
4. Read and summarize quantitative and qualitative research reports, as well as share those findings with others through presentations
5. Analyze quantitative data using SPSS.
6. Understand the process of IRB approval.

Section V. Student Learning Outcomes




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

SLO 1: Students will be able to analyze communication content for argument, including identification of major elements, such as claim, warrants, and data.

SLO 2: Students will be able to effectively construct messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context; including electronic media technologies.

SLO 3: Students will be able to apply Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts to the analysis of communication situations.

Section VI. Course Requirements and Grading

Assignment	Points Possible	Grading Scale
Attendance & Preparation	200	Entire Course A = 895-1000 B = 795-894 C = 695-794 D = 595-694 F = < 595
SPSS Analysis 1	100	
SPSS Analysis 2	100	
Ethics & IRB Quiz	100	
<i>Quantitative</i> Article Summary 	100	
<i>Qualitative</i> Article Summary 	100	
My Favorite Theory PowerPoint 	200	
Final Exam	100	
Possible Points	1000	

Section VII. Course Assignments

Attendance & Preparation. Thirty percent of your grade is dependent upon you attending class and being prepared. I will keep attendance records and note trends of your preparation for class as evidenced through participation and by being equipped with course materials.

SPSS Analysis 1&2. These assignments will be handed out in class. You will submit them through Blackboard. Basically, you will be asked to use the SPSS software to perform basic quantitative data analysis.

Ethics & IRB Quiz. This quiz will largely cover chapters 1, & 3 in the Davis & Lachlan text. Some material will come from lectures.

Article Summaries. You are required to search the online database (provided by the library) and find *two scholarly, peer-reviewed, academic journal articles* that both interest you AND relate to the academic discipline of communication studies. The first study must be quantitative and the other qualitative in design. Theory must be present in both. You will then write a one-page summary of each article and **submit one on the designated days in your course calendar**. Please bring a one-page copy of your summary for each of your class colleagues.

Article Summary Presentations. You will present your article summary to the class. Basically, you will have to teach the class about the content of the article, informing us of any key concepts, theories, the methods employed, the findings, and discuss the implications of the study. In addition, you will need to prepare two discussion questions to pose to the class concerning your topic. All of this should be included in your handout.

My Favorite Theory PowerPoint. This is not another speech assignment. You are asked to prepare a visual presentation of a communication theory of your choice. Political Science students may choose a Political Science theory approved by Professor Jessica Velasco, ABD. Your PowerPoint must be at least 10 slides in length. Additional guidelines will be provided in class. You will submit this through Blackboard as an assignment, and you will also submit it to your classmates through a Blackboard discussion board.

Final Exam. The Final Exam will be comprehensive, composed of multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions.

Section VIII. 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. As stated above, your attendance will directly impact your grade.

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 **not** disrupt class. Please turn off your cell phone during class.

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).

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 IX. Notes on University Programs and Policies

ADA. It is Sul Ross State 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 challenge, please contact the ADA Coordinator in the Counseling office in Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is PO Box C-122, Alpine, TX 79832. E-mail: mschwartz@sulross.edu

Section X. Marketable Skills

This course offers you the opportunity to develop the following skills:

- Informative and Persuasive Speaking
- Audience-centered Writing
- Critical Analysis
- Research
- Effective Message Construction Using Technology

COURSE CALENDAR

(This calendar is subject to change)

Week	Date	Topic	Chapters	Assignment/Activity
One	Jan 13	Intro. To Course		Introductions
	Jan 15	Thinking about Communication	West & Turner, Chapter 1	
		Looking for Reality	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 1	
Two	Jan 20	<i>MLK Day – No Class!</i>		
	Jan 22	Social Science & Humanistic Inquiry	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 1	
		Intro to Hypotheses	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 1	
Three	Jan 27	Paradigms	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 2	
	Jan 29	Library Research	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 3	
		Research Questions & Hypotheses	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 5	
Four	Feb 3	Research Ethics	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 6	
	Feb 5	Variables	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 7	
		Qualitative Research	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 14	Ethics & IRB Quiz
Five	Feb 10	Qualitative Research	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 15	Instruction: Writing an Article Summary
	Feb 12	Qualitative Research	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 16	Instruction: Presenting an Article Summary
		Qualitative Research	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 17	
Six	Feb 17	Quantitative Data Analysis – Survey Research	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 10	
	Feb 19	SPSS & Descriptive Statistics – Experiments	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 12	
		SPSS & Inferential Statistics	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 13	
Seven	Feb 24	SPSS & t-tests & Chi-square	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 13	SPSS Analysis 1
	Feb 26	Discuss SPSS Analysis Assignment 1		
		SPSS – ANOVA & MANOVA	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 13	
Eight	Mar 2	SPSS – Correlations and Regressions		SPSS Analysis 2
	Mar 4	Qualitative Article Summary Presentations		Qualitative Article Summary Presentations (1 st assessment of QEP SLOs 1&2)
		Theory & Research Coming Together	West & Turner, Chapter 3	Qualitative Article Summary Presentations



	Mar 9	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS!		
	Mar 11	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS!		
Nine	Mar 16	The Research Process	West & Turner, Chapter 3	
	Mar 18	Reviewing & Covering our Bases	West & Turner, Chapter 4	Instruction: Effectively Using PowerPoint
		Standpoint Theory	West & Turner, Chapter 29	
Ten	Mar 23	Symbolic Interaction Theory	West & Turner, Chapter 5	
	Mar 25	Expectancy Violations Theory	West & Turner, Chapter 8	
		Social Penetration Theory	West & Turner, Chapter 10	
Eleven	Mar 30	Optional PowerPoint Presentations		My Favorite Theory PowerPoint (1 st assessment of QEP SLO 3)
	Apr 1	Social Exchange Theory	West & Turner, Chapter 11	
		Relational Dialectics Theory	West & Turner, Chapter 12	
Twelve	Apr 6	Organizational Culture Theory	West & Turner, Chapter 16	ETS Testing in Library Classroom
	Apr 8	Organizational Information Theory	West & Turner, Chapter 17	
		Cultivation Analysis	West & Turner, Chapter 22	
Thirteen	Apr 13	Spiral of Silence Theory	West & Turner, Chapter 24	
	Apr 15	Students' Choice	Students' Choice	
Fourteen	Apr 20	Attend Research Symposium as a class		
	Apr 22	<i>New Directions</i>	West & Turner, Chapter 30	Course Evaluation ☺
		Article Summary Presentations		Quantitative Article Summary (2 nd assessment of QEP SLOs 1&2)
Sixteen	Apr 27	Article Summary Presentations		Quantitative Article Summary
	Apr 29	Last Class Day - TBA		Revised Submission: My Favorite Theory PowerPoint (2 nd assessment of QEP SLO3)

The Final Exam is scheduled for Tuesday, May 5th at 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

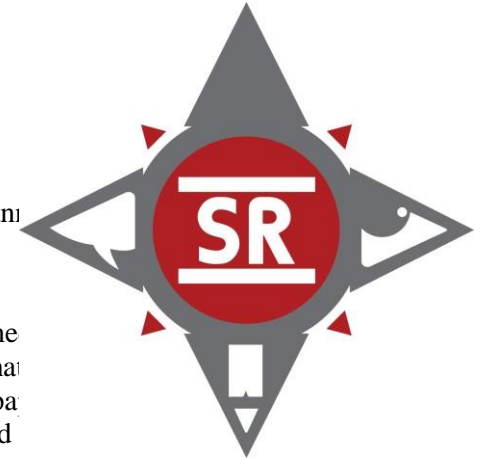
QEP MAPPED CLASS CARDINAL RUBRIC

Definition

The process of sending, receiving and interpreting messages through written, oral, or nonverbal communication channels, and/or by which two or more people reach understanding.

Framing Language

Communication is transmitted through a variety of modes (oral, written, or visual). This rubric is specifically designed in an academic environment to determine that the central message is conveyed, reinforced by multiple supporting materials organized. Communication in an academic environment may include: a variety of written works such as academic papers, webpages, personal essays; oral presentations of sufficient length such that a central message is conveyed, supported by visual media, including but not limited to posters, PowerPoints, videos, graphic art, and infographics.



Glossary

The definitions below serve to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- **Organization:** The grouping and sequencing of ideas and supporting material. Organizational patterns supporting effectiveness typically include an introduction, one or more identifiable sections in the body and a conclusion. An organizational pattern should be purposeful and make the content easy to follow. Potential patterns might include a chronological pattern, a problem-solution pattern, or an analysis-of-parts pattern.
- **Content Development:** The ways in which a topic is explored and represented in relation to its audience and purpose.
- **Purpose:** The main point/thesis/"bottom line"/"take-away" of a message. A clear purpose is easy to identify. For example, is the message meant to persuade or to inform, to report or to summarize, or to amuse?
- **Academic Language:** Language supporting the effectiveness of a central message is appropriate to the topic, genre/discipline, audience, is grammatically correct, and clear. Language enhancing the effectiveness may also be vivid, imaginative, and expressive.
- **Supporting Material:** In communication, students draw upon sources to extend, develop, define, or shape their ideas. Digital citizenship, the careful consideration of copyright and fair use of images is important. The student considers reliability of communication to include an understanding of accuracy, applicability, currency, liability, and completeness.
- **Technique:** Execution or performance of communication skills given the mode of communication. For example, in writing, technique may include mechanics and use of style; in oral communication, it may include nonverbal cues and use of voice; in visual works, it may include the use of the medium.

Cardinal Rubric was adapted from the Association of American Colleges and Universities oral communication VALUE rubric, the National Communication Association's Speaking and Listening Competencies for College Students, Texas A&M University's Visual Communication rubric, Otis College of Arts and Design's Fine Arts rubric, Lane Community College Communicating Effectively Rubric, and Stephen F. Austin State University's assessment rubric for Oral and Visual Communication.

QEP MAPPED CLASS CARDINAL RUBRIC

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet formative (cell one) level performance.

	4 = Exemplary	3 = Satisfactory	2 = Developing	1 = Formative
Organization	Organizational pattern is clearly and consistently observable, skillful, and makes the content of the message cohesive.	Organizational pattern is clearly and consistently observable; contains elements of logical development; contains clear transitions; has a	Organizational pattern is intermittently observable; lacks organization; it is sometimes disjointed and/or awkward.	Organizational pattern is not observable; has no discernible organizational structure; contains random unconnected elements.
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the topic, conveying understanding or a useful perspective.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context. It is clear, accurate and appropriate.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas but may have inaccuracies or may be unclear at times. Provides limited insight or information.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work. May contain misinformation, or may be confusing or misleading.
Purpose	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work. The purpose of the message is clearly conveyed.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context). The purpose of the message can be discerned with some effort.	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions). The purpose of the message is vague or unclear.	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience). The purpose of the message is not at all apparent or is missing.
Academic Language	Communication is grammatically correct. Language choices are imaginative, memorable, compelling, and demonstrate constructive knowledge, connects with audience and flows well. Error free.	Communication is grammatically correct. Language choices are thoughtful and generally effective, demonstrate constructive knowledge, connects with audience and flows well. Limited errors.	Grammar occasionally interferes with communication. Language choices are mundane, commonplace, and partially effective. Language is moderately appropriate to audience. Includes some errors.	Errors in grammar and format. Language choices are questionable and minimally effective. Language is not appropriate to audience. Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning.
Supporting Material	Demonstrates skillful use of a variety of supporting material that are high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the intended message or discipline.	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the intended message or discipline. Though limited, it refers to supporting information or analysis, or establishes credibility of authority on the topic. Generally attributes sources as appropriate.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the intended message or discipline. Makes reference to weak/partial supporting information or analysis. Sources are inconsistently attributed.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas but it insufficiently makes reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the intended message or topic. Fails to attribute sources as appropriate.
Technique	Demonstrates exemplary appropriateness and quality of technique for the chosen mode. For example, skillful execution of genre and disciplinary conventions on written works; skillful oral delivery; exemplary craftsmanship	Demonstrates appropriateness and quality of technique for the chosen mode. For example, appropriate execution of genre and disciplinary conventions on written works; or, effective oral delivery; or, notable craftsmanship of visual works.	Attempts to demonstrate appropriateness and quality of technique for the chosen mode. For example, follows expectations of execution of genre and disciplinary conventions on written works; satisfactory oral delivery; satisfactory	Marginal demonstration of appropriateness and quality of technique for the chosen mode. For example, attempts to execute basic genre and disciplinary conventions on written works; poor oral delivery; poor