

COMM 5304.001 – Communication Theory & Research
Spring 2022
Course Syllabus



Instructor:	Joseph Velasco, Ph.D.
Office Hours:	MW: 10-11am, 2-3pm; TTh: 2-3pm; & Fri (web) 8am-noon
Office Location:	FAB 206B
Telephone:	432-837-8370
Email Address:	jvelasco@sulross.edu
Class Schedule:	12:30-1:45 p.m. TTh
Classroom Location:	MAB 301
Required Texts:	Davis, C. S., & Lachlan, K. A. (2017). <i>Straight talk about communication research methods</i> (3 rd ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt. Littlejohn, S. W., Foss, K. A., & Oetzel, J. G. (2021). <i>Theories of human communication theory</i> (12 th ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

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

Basic Class Expectations: It is expected that you spend at least a few hours each week to complete the course readings and assignments. Since this is an online course, it is also expected that you have reliable internet service and that you check your university email at least once a day. It is also recommended that you set up course notifications in Blackboard to receive a text alert when I post announcements, grades, or other course-related items. See instructions in Blackboard.

Classroom Demeanor: Communication issues tend to be emotionally charged. It is highly unlikely in a class this size that everyone will share your personal values, beliefs, and opinions. Believe it or not, this is a good thing! The presentation of varying perspectives will help all of us to learn. This can be accomplished if ideas, beliefs, and opinions are presented in a respectful way.

Late Work: All of the assignments for the entire course will be posted and available as soon as the course is open. It is expected that all assignments are completed by the stated deadlines. Please plan your time carefully. If something does come up, prompt and clear communication will facilitate an accommodating response.

Academic Integrity. Intellectual development requires hard work. Academic dishonesty severely interferes with this development and reduces the value of college degrees. Presenting the ideas or work of others as your own, submitting the same paper for multiple classes, doing someone else's work, and/or failing to cite your sources when you utilize the ideas of others, are all examples of dishonest academic conduct. As an SRSU student, it is your responsibility to read and understand the university's expectations about academic integrity. All violations will be taken seriously and handled through the appropriate university process. The policy can be found at: <https://www.sulross.edu/about/administration/university-policies/>

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Section IX. Notes on University Programs and Policies

ADA. SRSU Disability Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mary Schwartz Grisham, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203 ("please leave a message and we'll get back to you as soon as we can during working hours"). The office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall (Suite 112), and their mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832. **Please note that instructors are not permitted to provide classroom accommodations to a student until the appropriate verification has been received.**

SRSU Distance Education Statement: Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. **Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.** Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

Technical Support. SRSU 24/7 Blackboard Technical Support: Toll Free: 888.837.6055.
Email: blackboardsupport@sulross.edu

SRSU Library Services. The Sul Ross Library offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires your LoboID and password. Check out materials using your photo ID. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123).

The **Graduate Student Center**, located in BAB 104, provides resources and services for all SRSU graduate students. There is a computer lab with desktop computers and a networked printer/copier/scanner; laptop computers which can be checked out; a projector and screen for rehearsing student presentations; and a conference room for group study. Both Alpine and distance education students can receive writing and thesis assistance by contacting gradcenter@sulross.edu or calling 432-837-8524.

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 11	Intro. To Course		Introductions
	Jan 13	Thinking about Communication	West & Turner, Chapter 1	
		Looking for Reality	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 1	
Two	Jan 18	<i>MLK Day – No Class!</i>		
	Jan 20	Social Science & Humanistic Inquiry	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 1	
		Intro to Hypotheses	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 1	
Three	Jan 25	Paradigms	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 2	
	Jan 27	Library Research	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 3	
		Research Questions & Hypotheses	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 5	
Four	Feb 1	Research Ethics	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 6	
	Feb 3	Variables	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 7	
		Qualitative Research	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 14	Ethics & IRB Quiz
Five	Feb 8	Qualitative Research	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 15	Instruction: Writing an Article Summary
	Feb 10	Qualitative Research	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 16	Instruction: Presenting an Article Summary
		Qualitative Research	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 17	
Six	Feb 15	Quantitative Data Analysis – Survey Research	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 10	
	Feb 17	SPSS & Descriptive Statistics – Experiments	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 12	
		SPSS & Inferential Statistics	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 13	
Seven	Feb 22	SPSS & t-tests & Chi-square	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 13	SPSS Analysis 1
	Feb 24	Discuss SPSS Analysis Assignment 1		
		SPSS – ANOVA & MANOVA	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 13	
Eight	Mar 1	SPSS – Correlations and Regressions		SPSS Analysis 2
	Mar 3	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 8	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS!		
	Mar 10	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS!		
Nine	Mar 15	Foundations of Communication Theory	L, F, & O, Chapters 1&2	
	Mar 17	Message Production Theories	L, F, & O, Chapter 4	Instruction: Effectively Using PowerPoint
		Message Management Theories	L, F, & O, Chapter 4	
Ten	Mar 22	The Medium – production, effects, & consumption	L, F, & O, Chapter 5	
	Mar 24	Cultivation Theory & more	L, F, & O, Chapter 5	
		Spiral of Silence Theory & more	L, F, & O, Chapter 5	
Eleven	Mar 29	Optional PowerPoint Presentations		My Favorite Theory PowerPoint (1 st assessment of QEP SLO 3)
	Mar 31	Affection Exchange, CPM, & Fam Comm Patterns	L, F, & O, Chapter 7	
		Relational Maintenance & Equity Theory	L, F, & O, Chapter 7	
Twelve	Apr 5	Organizational Culture Theory	L, F, & O, Chapter 9	ETS Testing in Library Classroom
	Apr 7	Situational Crisis Communication	L, F, & O, Chapter 9	
		Organizational Control/Identification	L, F, & O, Chapter 9	
Thirteen	Apr 12	Health Contexts	L, F, & O, Chapter 10	
	Apr 14	Culture	L, F, & O, Chapter 11	
Fourteen	Apr 19	Family Crisis Symposium		
	Apr 21	Society & Political Communication	L, F, & O, Chapter 12	Course Evaluation 😊
		Article Summary Presentations		Quantitative Article Summary (2 nd assessment of QEP SLOs 1&2)
Sixteen	Apr 26	Article Summary Presentations		Quantitative Article Summary
	Apr 28	Dead Day – No Class		Revised Submission: My Favorite Theory PowerPoint (2 nd assessment of QEP SLO3)

The Final Exam is scheduled for Tuesday, May 3rd at 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

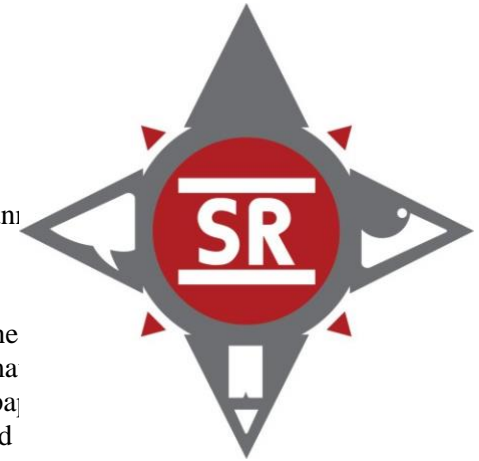
QEP MAPPED CLASS CARDINAL RUBRIC

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.

	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Developing	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 or authority on the topic. Generally attributes sources as	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