

**COMM 3309.001 – Family Communication**  
**Spring 2024**  
**Course Syllabus**

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Professor:                     | <b>Joseph Velasco, Ph.D.</b>   |
| Office Hours:                  | MW, 2-4pm & Tuesdays 12:30-1:30pm, or by appointment.  |
| Office Location:               | LH 307   |
| Telephone:                     | 432-837-8370   |
| Email Address:                 | jvelasco@sulross.edu   |
| Class Schedule:                | MW, 12:30-1:45pm   |
| Classroom Location:            | Blackboard-hosted Online Instruction   |
| Required Text:                 | Galvin, K. M., Braithwaite, D. O., Schrodt, P., & Bylund, C. L. (2019). Family communication: Cohesion and change (10 <sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Routledge. |
| Required Equipment & Software: | Internet connection; computer with webcam & microphone; Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint (available free to SRSU students via <b>Office 365</b> )              |

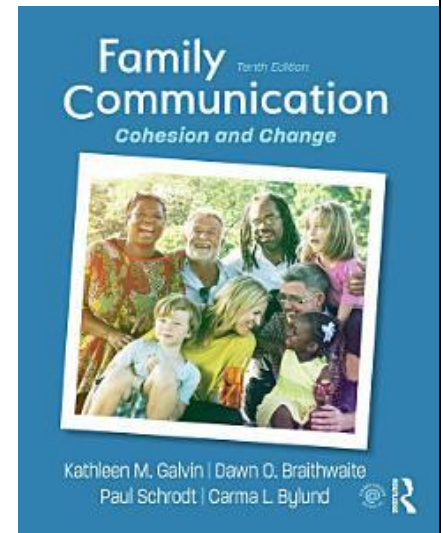
| RESOURCES                               |
|---|
| <a href="#">Bookstore</a>               |
| <a href="#">Graduate Student Center</a> |
| <a href="#">Human Resources</a>         |
| <a href="#">Library</a>                 |
| <a href="#">Lobo lookout</a>            |
| <a href="#">Lobo Pass</a>               |
| <a href="#">Office 365</a>              |



*“We are born into a family, we are socialized and acculturated within a family, we mature from a family using information and behaviors learned from a family, and, when we die, we diminish a family. Families surround us, shape us, and contribute to our destiny.”* (Judy Goldberg, family therapist)

My name is Dr. Joseph Velasco (most students call me Dr. V), and I am happy to be on this academic journey with you.

Communication is learned and much of what we learn is learned within family contexts. We communicate to meet and interact with other people and to improve all types of relationships. Across the varying dynamics of family, friends, romances, lifestyles, cultures, and interpersonal relationships, communication defines and shapes the interaction as we seek to strengthen bonds. This course is grounded in communication research centered on family interaction and multiple communicative/relational issues implicating family as the core communicative context.



This course is designed as an introduction to communication phenomena in the setting of the family. The overall goal is to help you understand how we develop, maintain, enhance, or disturb family relationships through communication. You will learn verbal and nonverbal skills which can help promote healthy family communication.

Finally, this course also provides an option for service-learning, which is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

## Section I. Course Objectives

The general objectives for this course are to *further enhance your competence and knowledge of human communication within family contexts*. As a student, your learning objectives are to:

1. Describe family communication according to Whitchurch & Dickson (1999).
2. Explain various theories in family communication.
3. Write a literature review.
4. Identify peer-reviewed research in the discipline of Communication Studies.
5. Demonstrate proficiency with synthesizing concepts from multiple readings in conversation with other students.
6. Write academic journal article summaries.
7. Contribute to a shared collection of academic journal article summaries, thereby constructing a community of scholars amongst your course colleagues.

## Section II. 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 III. 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

## Section IV. Course Requirements, Assignments, and Grading

| <u>Assignment</u>          | <u>Points Possible</u> |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Attendance & Participation | 200                    |
| Article Summaries (4)      | 400                    |
| Literature Review Draft    | 100                    |
| Final - Literature Review  | 300                    |
| Total                      | 1000                   |

### Grade Description (Points)

A = 900-1000  
B = 800-899  
C = 700-799  
D = 600-699  
F = < 600

**Attendance & Participation.** Each day I will take attendance and record the quality of your attendance as a function of your participation in our discussions, as well as your demonstration of your reading the relevant course materials for that day. Keep in mind that it is university policy that I may drop a student from a course after they have six unexcused absences. Attendance is important.

**Article Summaries.** Throughout the course, you are required to search the online database (provided by the library) and find *four scholarly journal articles* that both interest you AND relate to the field of family communication and **come from a peer-reviewed Communication journal**. For each journal article, you will write a one-page summary which adheres to a format which is posted on Blackboard. You will submit a Word document through our Bb Assignments link, and you will also post a copy in the designated discussion board so that your peers can view your work and respond to it. Basically, your summary will to teach the class about the content of the article, informing us of any key concepts, 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.

**Literature Review (and draft).** You will choose a topic that interests you and can be understood from a family communication perspective. You will then survey the relevant literature written about your topic (primarily in the academic discipline of Communication Studies and its journals) and then organize it thematically. As you review your literature and themes emerge, you should be thinking about what gaps exist and where you might go in your research. **On Monday, March 25<sup>th</sup>**, you will submit a draft on Blackboard (saved as a Word document) of your literature review so that I can give you feedback a month in advance of the due date. The draft is worth 100 points. **Your literature review is due on May 1st by 5pm.** **Additional guidelines will be provided in class.**

## Section V. Policies

**Basic Class Expectations:** It is expected that you spend at least a few hours each week to complete the course readings and assignments. If you are taking this class at a distance, 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.

**Online 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. I will be expecting all students to follow basic ground rules for online discussion. These are included at the end of the syllabus.

**Academic Integrity.** Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid the temptation to engage in behaviors that violate academic integrity, such as

turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden. Students should also avoid using open AI sources unless permission is expressly given for an assignment or course. Violations of academic integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

**Late Work:** All 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.

[Texas Senate Bill 17](#), the recent law that outlaws diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at public colleges and universities in Texas, does not in any way affect content, instruction or discussion in a course at public colleges and universities in Texas. Expectations and academic freedom for teaching and class discussion have not been altered post-SB 17, and students should not feel the need to censor their speech pertaining to topics including race and racism, structural inequality, LGBTQ+ issues, or diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## **Section VI. 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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:srsulibrary@sulross.edu)), or phone (432-837-8123).

Mike Fernandez, SRSU Librarian, is based in Eagle Pass (Building D-129) to offer specialized library services to students, faculty, and staff. Utilize free services such as InterLibrary Loan (ILL) and ScanIt to get materials delivered to you at home or via email.

**Counseling.** Sul Ross has partnered with TimelyCare where all SR students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/365 support by visiting [Timelycare/SRSU](https://www.timelycare.com/srsu). The SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office will continue to offer in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall room 112 (Alpine campus), and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students and RGC students.

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 [shileman@sulross.edu](mailto:shileman@sulross.edu) or calling 432-837-8015.

## Calendar

(This calendar is subject to change)

| Week                | Date             | Topic  | Reading                | Due or To Do:              |
|---------------------|------------------|--|------------------------|----------------------------|
| One                 | Jan 17           | Course Introduction  |                        | Introductions              |
| Two                 | Jan 22<br>Jan 24 | What is a Family?<br>What is Family Communication?                       | Chapter 1<br>Chapter 2 | *                          |
| Three               | Jan 29<br>Jan 31 | Family Communication Theories<br>Family Communication Theories           | Chapter 3<br>Chapter 3 | *                          |
| Four                | Feb 5<br>Feb 7   | FCPs and Family Identity<br>Rel. Maintenance in Families                 | Chapter 4<br>Chapter 5 | *                          |
| Five                | Feb 12<br>Feb 14 | Article Summary 1<br>Article Summary 1                                   |                        | <b>Article Summary 1</b>   |
| Six                 | Feb 19<br>Feb 21 | Intimacy within partnerships<br>Family Roles & Family Types              | Chapter 6<br>Chapter 7 | *<br>*                     |
| Seven               | Feb 26<br>Feb 28 | Article Summary 2<br>Article Summary 2                                   |                        | <b>Article Summary 2</b>   |
| Eight               | Mar 4<br>Mar 6   | Power, Influence, & Decision-making<br>Communication and Family Conflict | Chapter 8<br>Chapter 9 |                            |
| <i>Spring Break</i> | Mar 11<br>Mar 13 | <i>Spring Break – No Class</i><br><i>Spring Break – No Class</i>         |                        |                            |
| Nine                | Mar 18<br>Mar 20 | Article Summary 3<br>Article Summary 3                                   |                        | <b>Article Summary 3</b>   |
| Ten                 | Mar 25<br>Mar 27 | Communication & Family<br>Developmental Stress                           | Chapter 10             | Draft of Lit. Review       |
| Eleven              | Apr 1<br>Apr 3   | Unpredictable Stress<br>Unpredictable Stress                             | Chapter 11             |                            |
| Twelve              | Apr 8<br>Apr 10  | Family Communication & Well-being<br>Family Communication & Well-being   | Chapter 12             |                            |
| Thirteen            | Apr 15<br>Apr 17 | Article Summary 4<br>Article Summary 4                                   |                        | <b>Article Summary 4</b>   |
| Fourteen            | Apr 22<br>Apr 24 | <i>Family Crisis Symposium</i><br><i>Family Crisis Symposium</i>         |                        |                            |
| Fifteen             | Apr 29<br>May 1  | Course Wrap-up & Lit. Review<br>Showcase                                 |                        | Final Draft of Lit. Review |
| Sixteen             | TBA              | <b>Final Exam - TBA</b>  |                        | <b>Final Exam</b>          |

\* Additional readings for graduate students

See Blackboard for the reading list. I'll provide a link to a pdf copy for each reading.