

COMM 4302.001 – Communication Theory & Research
Fall 2024
Course Syllabus



Instructor:	Joseph Velasco, Ph.D.
Office Hours:	MW, 9:50-10:50am & TTh 2-3pm, or by appointment.
Office Location:	LH 307
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. Marketable Skills

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.

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 III. 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 IV. 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 V. Course Requirements and Grading

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

Section VI. 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 VII. 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.

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. There is no guarantee that I will accept late work. I may accept late work for a reduced grade.

Section VIII. 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).

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 24/7/356 support by visiting Timelycare/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.

Graduate Student Support Services, located in BAB 300, 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.

COURSE CALENDAR
(This calendar is subject to change)

Week	Date	Topic	Chapters	Assignment/Activity
One	Aug 27	Intro. To Course		Introductions
	Aug 29	Thinking about Communication	West & Turner, Chapter 1	
		Looking for Reality	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 1	
Two	Sept 3	Social Science & Humanistic Inquiry	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 1	
	Sept 5	Intro to Hypotheses	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 1	
Three	Sept 10	Paradigms	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 2	
	Sept 12	Library Research	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 3	
		Research Questions & Hypotheses	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 5	
Four	Sept 17	Research Ethics	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 6	
	Sept 19	Variables	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 7	
		Qualitative Research	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 14	Ethics & IRB Quiz
Five	Sept 24	Qualitative Research	Davis & Lachlan, Chapters 15-17	Instruction: Writing an Article Summary
	Sept 26	<i>Work on Article Summary – No Class</i>		
Six	Oct 1	Quantitative Data Analysis – Survey Research	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 10	
	Oct 3	SPSS & Descriptive Statistics – Experiments	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 12	
		SPSS & Inferential Statistics	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 13	
Seven	Oct 8	SPSS & t-tests & Chi-square	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 13	SPSS Analysis 1
	Oct 10	Discuss SPSS Analysis Assignment 1		
		SPSS – ANOVA & MANOVA	Davis & Lachlan, Chapter 13	
Eight	Oct 15	SPSS – Correlations and Regressions		SPSS Analysis 2
	Oct 17	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

Nine	Oct 22	Foundations of Communication Theory	L, F, & O, Chapters 1&2	
	Oct 24	Message Production Theories	L, F, & O, Chapter 4	Instruction: Effectively Using PowerPoint
		Message Management Theories	L, F, & O, Chapter 4	
Ten	Oct 29	The Medium – production, effects, & consumption	L, F, & O, Chapter 5	
	Oct 31	Cultivation Theory & more	L, F, & O, Chapter 5	
		Spiral of Silence Theory & more	L, F, & O, Chapter 5	
Eleven	Nov 5	Optional PowerPoint Presentations		My Favorite Theory PowerPoint
	Nov 7	Affection Exchange, CPM, & Fam Comm Patterns	L, F, & O, Chapter 7	
		Relational Maintenance & Equity Theory	L, F, & O, Chapter 7	
Twelve	Nov 12	Organizational Culture Theory	L, F, & O, Chapter 9	
	Nov 14	Society & Political Communication	L, F, & O, Chapter 12	
Thirteen	Nov 19	Health Contexts	L, F, & O, Chapter 10	
	Nov 21	NCA New Orleans – No Class		
Fourteen	Nov 26	Family Crisis Symposium		
	Nov 28	Thanksgiving - No Class		
Sixteen	Dec 3	Article Summary Presentations		Quantitative Article Summary
	Dec 5	Dead Day – No Class		Revised Submission: My Favorite Theory PowerPoint

The Final Exam is scheduled for ???? at ??:30 p.m. – ??:30 p.m.