

COMM 1335.001 – Introduction to Communication Studies
Fall 2026
Course Syllabus

Giving | MySRSU

My Account

Microsoft 365

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Teams

OneDrive

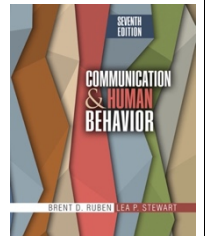
Word

Excel

Powerpoint

Professor:	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:	TTh 9:30-10:45am
Classroom Location:	LH 303
Required Text:	Ruben, B. D., & Stewart, L. P. (2020). <i>Communication and human behavior</i> (7 th ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt.
Required Equipment & Software	Internet connection; computer with webcam & microphone; Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint (available free to SRSU students via Office 365)

My name is Dr. Joseph Velasco (most students call me Dr. V), and I am happy to be on this academic journey with you. This course is designed to survey the academic 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. Together, we will examine [disciplinary fields](#) spanning digital media, mass communication & media literacy, public communication, cultural/intercultural communication, gender communication, interpersonal communication, and more.



Section I. 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 II. 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 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 and Grading

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Points Possible</i>	<i>Grading Scale</i>
<i>Mini exams (5 @ 10 pts)</i>	50	A = 450-500
<i>Final Exam</i>	100	B = 400-449
<i>Article Summary 1</i>	100	C = 350-399
<i>Article Summary 1 presentation</i>	25	D = 300-349
<i>Article Summary 2</i>	100	F = < 300
<i>Article Summary 2 presentation</i>	25	
<i>“Interview a Communication Scholar” Essay</i>	100	
Total Possible Points	500	

Section V. Course Assignments

Mini Exams. To inspire you to read and retain the material we cover in this class, I will examine your retention and comprehension through mini exams which will take about five minutes at the beginning of select classes indicated on our calendar. I don’t expect pure regurgitation of the readings. I expect original thought coupled with a demonstration of understanding concepts, theories, and/or histories of the discipline of Communication Studies.

Article Summaries. You are required to search the *Communication & Mass Media Complete* 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. They must be full studies that present original findings. 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 **or** upload a digital copy in the appropriate discussion board.

Article Summary Presentations. You will give an informal presentation of your journal article summary to the class. You will take us through your summary, attempt to answer any questions we may have relevant to the study, and stimulate conversation through your two discussion questions (see the Article Summary Format).

“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.

Final Exam. The final exam is comprehensive.

Section VI. 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.

(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 expressions of varying perspectives will help us all learn. This can be accomplished if ideas, beliefs, and opinions are presented in a respectful way. Effective listening is also necessary. I expect all students to follow basic ground rules for online discussion.

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 VII. Notes on University Programs and Policies

ADA. SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the 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 SRSU's Accessibility Services Director or Ronnie Harris, LPC, Counselor, at 432-837-8203 or email ronnie.harris@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, 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 Student Responsibilities Statement: All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the [Student Handbook](#) and the [Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog](#) and for abiding by the [University rules and regulations](#). Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize themselves with the requirements of such laws.

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 Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend in Alpine offer 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 logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or by phone (432-837-8123). No matter where you are based, public libraries and many academic and special libraries welcome the general public into their spaces for study. SRSU TexShare Cardholders can access additional services and resources at various libraries across Texas. Learn more about the TexShare program by visiting library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/ or ask a librarian by emailing srsulibrary@sulross.edu. 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), ScanIt, and Direct Mail 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.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 Lobo Den Tutoring Center offers FREE tutoring support to help you excel in your courses. Whether you need assistance in Writing, Math, Science, or other subjects, we're here to help!

Important Information:

- **Drop-in and Scheduled Appointments:** Flexible options to fit your needs.
- **Hours of Operation:** Monday–Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM.
- **Workshops:** Attend our regularly hosted academic workshops on STEM topics and professional development, often in collaboration with specialized faculty.
- **Location:** BWML (aka the library) Room 128.
- **Contact Us:** For more information or to book an appointment, email tutoring@sulross.edu or call (432) 837-8726.

Looking for additional support?

- Tutor.com offers FREE 24/7 online tutoring in over 200 subjects, including specialized support for ESL and ELL learners with native Spanish-speaking tutors.
- Access Tutor.com via Blackboard: Log in to your Blackboard account to get started anytime, anywhere.

Take advantage of these valuable resources to boost your confidence and performance in your classes. They look forward to helping you succeed!

Course Calendar
(This Calendar is subject to Change)

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Due or To Do:
One	Aug 25 Aug 27	Course Introduction Definitions and Theories	<i>Preface</i> Chapter 1	
Two	Sept 1 Sept 3	History of the Discipline Evolution of Communication Theory	Chapter 2	Mini Exam 1
Three	Sept 8 Sept 10	The Process Fundamentals & Writing Article Summaries	Chapter 3	Mini Exam 2
Four	Sept 15 Sept 17	Research Primer & McNair Scholars Program <i>Video: Library Research</i>	N/A N/A	
Five	Sept 22 Sept 24	Info Processing and Perception <i>Work on Article Summaries – No Class</i>	Chapter 6	Mini Exam 3
Six	Sept 29 Oct 1	Nonverbal Messages Verbal Messages	Chapter 4 Chapter 5	
Seven	Oct 6 Oct 8	Article Summary 1 Presentations Mediated Communication: Public & Mass	Chapter 7	Article Summary 1
Eight	Oct 13 Oct 15	The Individual: Identity & Self Self-Expression Preparing for Interviewing a Scholar	Chapter 8	Mini Exam 4
Nine	Oct 20 Oct 22	Interpersonal Comm & Relationships <i>Independent work on Interview Assignment - No class</i>	Chapter 9	
Ten	Oct 27 Oct 29	Guest Speaker: upper-level Comm student <i>Special Topic: Undergraduate Research</i>		
Eleven	Nov 3 Nov 5	Group Communication Organizational Communication	Chapter 10 Chapter 11	Mini Exam 5
Twelve	Nov 10 Nov 12	Article Summary 2 Presentations <i>Special Topic: Gender Communication</i>		Article Summary 2
Thirteen	Nov 17 Nov 19	Cultural Communication <i>NCA New Orleans – No Class</i>	Chapter 12	
Fourteen	Nov 24 Nov 26	<i>Independent Work on Interviews – No Class</i> <i>Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class</i>		
Fifteen	Dec 1 Dec 3	<i>Discuss Interviews</i> DEAD DAY – <i>No Class</i>		Interview Essay
Sixteen		Final Exam – TBA		Final Exam