

HUMAN COMMUNICATION THEORY

Classroom: Zoom / UC 235

Day & Time: M 5:30-8 p.m.

A detailed exploration of established theoretical traditions in the study of human communication: rhetorical studies, semiotics, systems theory, as well as socio-cultural, socio-psychological, phenomenological, and critical approaches.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Instructor: Kevin Ells

E-mail: kells@tamut.edu

Student Hours: MW 1:30-2:30, TR 9:30-10:30

Office: UC #321K (inside 321S)

Phone: (903) 223-3040

Zoom: <https://tamut.zoom.us/j/3852029337>

REQUIRED TEXT

Littlejohn, S.J., Foss, K.A. and Oetzel, J. G. (2021). *Theories of Human Communication* (12th ed.). Waveland Press. ISBN: 978-1-4786-4667-9. (Our bookstore might have used copies, and you might find less expensive copies online. I chose this book because it is the least expensive of its kind, and one of the best in the field.) **ALL other course materials available online in Canvas.**

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

1. Evaluate theories of communication in various established research traditions
2. Analyze theories of communication relevant to challenges or conflicts in interpersonal, group, organizational, and mediated contexts
3. Research and write a theoretical essay, or conduct and write a research report on a pilot study to test a communication theory

Most class meetings will consist of a short lecture followed by extensive discussion about the utility, scope, relevance, and logic of specific theories of human communication, primarily in face-to-face but also in mediated contexts. Please come to each class having read any assigned readings and textbook chapters. *It is not necessary to understand everything you read before a class meeting, let alone to agree with it.* Class meetings will be our time to answer questions or clear up any confusion about concepts and applications together. Grad school is a reading-intensive, classroom-flipped interactive experience. If you have a chaotic or disorganized week and haven't read everything (or anything), please let us know early on, and keep up with our conversation as well as you can. Please do all you can not to fall behind, or you will not get the full return on your investment in the course.

COURSE PROCEDURES

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Plagiarism means passing off in writing OR IN PUBLIC SPEECH the work, ideas, or language of others as your own, without giving due credit. The penalty for plagiarism is ZERO (not F). **A student who plagiarizes his or her term paper in whole or in part will automatically receive a grade of F for the entire course, and is excused from the final exam.**

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Please turn off all phones and electronics during class. **Set phones or pagers active for family or medical reasons to silent or vibrate.** In an emergency, leave class to attend to an urgent call, and catch up with the instructor later.

GRADING SCHEME

Item	Points
Short theory responses and presentations (3-4)	225
TERM PAPER PROPOSAL AND INTERIM REPORT (50+25)	75
MIDTERM EXAM	200
TERM PAPER (due Monday, May 8 th , 2023)	300
FINAL EXAM (written or oral)	200
Total	1000

A=900-1000; B=800-899; C=700-799; D=600-699; F=0-599

MACHINE-ASSISTED WRITING

Nearly every time we write today, we do so with the aid of machines. Whether we engage support from autocorrect, predictive text, spell check, or even more advanced platforms like Grammarly or Google Translate, digital computing technologies allow us to compose quickly and, in many cases, more accurately than if we were left on our own. I strongly caution you against using recent advances in artificial intelligence to cut corners in your academic writing assignments. Whatever your media career plans, strong written communication skills still rank at the top of nearly every employer skills survey out there. This course is a safe place to try new things, to learn from each other, and to gain confidence as a writer. Do *your* work here, and you'll be better for it later.

OUTSIDE CLASS

If you don't understand the requirements of an assignment, or just want to communicate about communication, please send me an email (I check email regularly, though rarely after 9 p.m., and almost never Friday night or Sundays), or log off last with me after class. I want to guide you to success in the course, but I can't help you if you don't reach out.

UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students who need assistance with disability accommodations to maintain equitable access to courses, programs, and activities must link to [Disability Services](#) or call (903) 223-3062 or visit the Office of Student Life in UC 420. Once registration is complete, inform your instructor in advance about any accommodations you need.

DROP POLICY

The course drop/university withdraw request is now online and can be submitted electronically by students. Instructors and relevant departments will be notified via email when a student has submitted a drop or withdraw request, and instructions will be included within the email as to how to respond. The link to the form can be found on the [Registrar website](#). Please contact registrar@tamut.edu if you have any questions.

Drop/Withdraw deadlines for the Fall 2024 semester		
Session	Drop class without a grade (<i>grade will not appear on transcript</i>)	Last day to withdraw without F (<i>"W" on transcript; no refund</i>)
16 week (Aug 26-Dec 5)	Wednesday, September 11	Friday, November 25

EAGLE LEARNING CENTER

The Eagle Learning Center at A&M-*Texarkana* offers a variety of academic support services for all students, free of charge. Services include group study sessions, individual tutoring across a variety of subjects (including some online), supplemental instruction, computers, and workshops. The Eagle Learning Center is located in UC 330. [Visit the Eagle Learning Center homepage](#) to learn more.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

For questions on *all web-enhanced and online courses*, please refer to [Technology Innovation and Digital Education \(TIDE\)](#).

These are the *minimum* computer requirements for online learning:

- A computer that can stream video (a mid-range multi-core CPU should be adequate)
- A sound card for audio
- A high-speed internet connection (preferably connected via a hard-wired Ethernet cable)
- Virus and adware protection software; Microsoft Word, minimum version 2016 or above

WHEN WE ZOOM

- Upload a photo or decent selfie of yourself to your Zoom profile (**REQUIRED**)
- Zoom in a few minutes early so we can start on time
- Keep your Chat window open and visible to use in case of audio issues
- Use the Reactions emojis to indicate your attitude to something said
- Open your Participants window and click Raise Hand if you want to speak up
- Feel free to Chat to me privately if you don't want Everyone to see your question

Day	Date		Deadlines
1	Aug 27	UNIT 1: Messengers & messages (Chs. 1-5 + supplemental readings) Communication history and scholarship Classifying and assessing theories Intellectual traditions in Communication Theories about the individual <i>communicator</i> Theoretical approaches to <i>messages</i> and <i>media</i>	
2	Sep 3		
3	Sep 10		
4	Sep 17		Theory Talk #1
5	Sep 24		
6	Oct 1	UNIT 2: Communication contexts (Chs. 7-9 + supplemental readings) From conversations to <i>relationships</i> Introduction to <i>group</i> communication Communication in <i>organizations</i>	
7	Oct 8		Paper Proposal
8	Oct 15		
9	Oct 22		Mid-term
10	Oct 29		Theory Talk #2
11	Election	UNIT 3: Nature, Culture, & Society (Chs. 6, 11, 12 + supplemental readings) <i>Mediated</i> communication Communication and <i>culture</i> <i>Critical</i> and <i>sociological</i> perspectives	“Dolphin Pond”
12	Nov 12		
13	Nov 19		Theory Talk #3
14	Nov 26		
15	Dec 3	Conclusions and Paper Presentations	
16	Dec 10	Final Exam	TERM PAPER

Assignments and schedule may be modified at the discretion of the professor or according to student needs, and surely will be in this course, but all material listed will be covered.