

Communication 337: Communication Theory, Fall 2013

Contact Information

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COM337 Fall 2013 Semester Schedule

	<u>Class Time</u>	<u>Contact Hours</u>
Session A: Wed/Fri:	3:30-5:00pm	5:00-6:30pm
Classroom:	Consult electronic signboard <i>regularly</i>	

Introduction

Welcome to COM337! Communication Theory is a required course for the communication major and teaches students about fundamentals of communication theory development/testing. It introduces you to the seminal theories of human communication across several contexts, including interpersonal, organizational and cultural. Communication Theory is a lecture course but asks you to personalize the knowledge by considering applications of these theories to your own lives. It encourages you to think critically about communication as a dynamic process.

Course Objectives and Structure

This course has the following goals:

- 1) To familiarize you with major communication theories
- 2) To provide an appreciation for how these theories depict and account for human communication behaviors
- 3) To offer the vocabulary and instruments to evaluate and apply theories to solve practical problems

This class will be conducted primarily in a lecture format. However, we will also break from a typical lecture format a number of times during the semester to explore communication using other methods of learning such as class discussions, in-class activities and application assignments. A tool I frequently employ for in-class assignments and class examples are clips from television shows and movies. Your mastery of the material from lecture, class discussions and course readings will be evaluated by objective quizzes and a number of relatively short written assignments.

Your grades will be regularly posted on the course website. It is your responsibility to monitor your progress on the course website, as well as to check your school email regularly for updates.

Required Textbook

Griffin, E. (2009). A first look at communication theory (8th edition). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Please buy the EIGHTH EDITION of this book. It is the one that the lectures, activities and quizzes will be based upon.

Assessment and Grading

There will be quizzes, individual application assignments and in-class group assignments in this class. Your grade will be figured by dividing the number of points you have earned by the total number of possible points for this class (400) and then applying the appropriate letter grade to the percentage. Extra credit will not be available in this class.

Once you have calculated your percentage, you can determine the letter grade you will earn in the class.

This is of critical importance: Your grade will be calculated by what is posted in the UBLearn's gradebook. Due to glitches within all computerized systems and the possibility of human error, it happens, on occasion, that a grade is not accurately recorded or reflected. While I try to monitor for such mistakes, **it is your responsibility to check your gradebook regularly and report any errors you find to me.** Once reported to me, I will fix it immediately. However, if it is not caught and your final grade is calculated with this error, I cannot go back to fix the final grade once it has been submitted to the university at the end of the semester.

Just like it is your responsibility to check your bank account after depositing money to make sure that the deposit goes through, you must also check your grade book.

Please note that I use a typical grading scheme found at SUNY at Buffalo. Here is a list of assignments and points possible:

Item	Points	Total
10 Quizzes	(@10 points)	100
5 In-Class Activities	(@20 points)	100
5 Individual Application Assignments	(@30 points)	150
1 Individual Poster	(@50 points)	50
GRAND TOTAL		400

A	100 – 95	B+	89 – 87	C+	79 – 77	D+	69 – 67
A-	94 – 90	B	86 – 83	C	76 – 73	D	66 – 60
		B-	82 – 80	C-	72 – 70	F	59 or less

Quizzes

The quizzes take place each day at the start of class. The quizzes will be handed out at the very beginning of class, and you'll have 10 minutes to answer the 5 multiple choice or T/F questions. The quizzes are worth 10 points each and serve as a substitution for a final end-of-semester test. They're designed to ensure punctuality and test retaining of content from previous classes as well as, occasionally, mastery of the chapter(s) that are to be covered that day.

Assignments

A description of all five Individual Application Assignments can be found on UBLearns and are structured to provide you with a way to apply theories learned in class to your own lives in a meaningful, analytical way.

The In-Class Group Assignments are designed to be started and completed in class as a group of 5-6 students, with the exception of taking them home and typing them. They will be described in class on the day they are to occur. One assignment should be turned in for your group. Be sure that you divide the work fairly amongst yourselves. If your name is not on a group assignment, you will not get a grade for that assignment. As all group members will receive the same grade for the assignment, **it is vital that you list all group members' names on the paper you turn in as a group!** Please include person numbers and underline each group members' surname, as indicated by UBLearns. **This enables me to grade papers far quicker AND ensure that everyone gets a grade.**

Working together as a group is a skill essential to your future careers. Excuses or complaints regarding your involvement or group members' involvement in a particular assignment will not be tolerated.

Poster

Each of you will work individually to create a poster that provides a meaningful overview of a theory covered in the text (i.e. even if it is a theory not covered in class, it is fair game!). The idea for this evaluation is that you spend time reading up on the theory and explain it in a way that is clear, organized and meaningful. You should be able to illustrate out what the theory predicts and explains, give examples of how it has been studied, relate it to real life, etc. On Poster Day (see schedule) everyone will have a chance to walk around and see each other's posters and tell a bit about them.

Assignment policies and procedures

Each assignment takes about a week to evaluate and grade. Late work will take longer. Typed in-class assignments are to be turned in the class day following the one in which you did the assignment.

In-class assignments are to be turned in as a hard-copy. All assignments **must** be typed and formatted in 12-point **Times New Roman** and **double spaced**. Assignments not presented in this format will have 10% taken off the top of the grade. There are two reasons for this policy:

1. Requesting one standard format ensures that everyone is completing a similar amount of work for assignments on which page limits are employed.
2. Protocol and adherence to rules will be required of you everywhere you go. It is an important life skill to learn how to follow directions and still maintain your own identity through various other modes of expression.

Application assignments are to meet the word-limit indicated on UBLearn and are to be submitted electronically. Please submit them on UBLearn using the Applications tool. A step-by-step guide for this process can be found on UBLearn. **Please submit an assignment ONCE! Do not re-submit an assignment, as this often causes glitches with the gradebook that are not in your favor!**

You are expected to complete assignments by the due date indicated on the course schedule. Late assignments will receive an automatic 30% grade reduction and will only be accepted up to one week after the due date. Therefore, it is recommended that if you anticipate missing a class in which work is due, come to see me during my contact hours prior to your absence and turn your work in early. This is especially advisable for in-class assignments. Since all group members receive the same grade for the in-class assignments, a late penalty of 30% is shared by everyone! This late work policy is necessary so that I can return graded assignments in a reasonable amount of time.

Course Policies

Attendance: You are expected to not only be in class on time, but to also make appropriate contributions to class discussion. ***If you miss an in-class assignment, you will not be allowed to make it up.*** This policy is meant to ensure fairness to all students. If you are absent on a day on which a test takes place, you cannot make it up (however, your lowest test score is dropped).

It is your responsibility to follow through to get assignments and materials missed due to excused absences.

Punctuality: Please be on time. While “life happens” and accidental lateness happens to everyone on occasion (myself included), chronic lateness is disruptive and disrespectful and will not be tolerated. You are expected to be in the classroom and seated prior to the start time of class.

Etiquette: *Please silence your cell phones before coming to class.* While laptops/tablets are welcomed in the classroom as note-taking devices, using them to watch videos, instant message or read email is **not** welcomed.

Also along these lines, sleeping, carrying on private conversations, reading outside materials etc., is noticed by me and by your classmates. This behavior is disrespectful, disruptive, reflects poorly on you and will definitely affect your grade. Likewise, enthusiastic, well-intentioned and relevant participation keeps the class interesting and moving!

Classroom condition: Please practice carry-in/carry-out when you are in the classroom – it is my request that we leave the room in the condition in which we found it or better, if possible.

Respect: **Although you can expect some lively discussion in this class, students are expected to respect gender, sexual identity, race, religion, and other similarities and differences.**

General UB Program Policies

“Attendance and active participation is expected by all students in every class. Students are expected to be present for the entire duration of each class. Tardiness to or absenting oneself during class will result in a deduction from the attendance and participation portion of the final grade.

“Late assignments, if accepted, will be penalized.

“Students who are absent from a midterm exam must request a make-up exam from the course instructor; a make-up will be given only if there is an appropriate, documented reason for absence from the exam (such as an MC); any disputes regarding the validity of the reason or the documentation may be referred to the student advisor.

“Students who are absent from a final exam must formally request a make-up exam in writing to the student help desk within 24 hours of the original exam. Supporting documents must be provided. Make up final exams will not be granted automatically but will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account all the relevant circumstances. Disputes may be referred to the resident director.

“There will be no make ups for other course assessments, and students who are absent from such assessments will receive a zero.”

UB Statement of Principle on Academic Integrity

“The University at Buffalo has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for appropriate citation of sources, and for respect for others’ academic endeavors. By placing their name on academic work, students certify the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements.

“Additionally, students are expected to understand and abide completely by the following guidelines for academic integrity in all UB courses:

“Plagiarism, cheating, and other incidents of academic dishonesty will result in an automatic failing grade for the course. Depending on the severity of the violation, your case may also be reported to UB for further investigation and may result in expulsion from the university.

“Plagiarism consists of copying work from another source without giving proper citations. You must not copy information from printed materials, internet sources, or from the work of other students. If you are uncertain about how to submit your work correctly, consult the instructor immediately.

“Any claim of ignorance of the rules of academic integrity by any student is unacceptable.”

A Final Note:

This syllabus should be viewed as a contract. In reading this syllabus and maintaining your registration in this course, you are indicating that you accept its terms and conditions.

Course schedule (Subject to change upon instructors' discretion and/or needs of students)

WEEK	Date	CHAPTERS	DUE DATES
1	28-Aug	Defining and testing theory	
	30-Aug	Defining and testing theory	
2	4-Sep	Symbolic interactionism	
	6-Sep	Coordinated management of meaning	Application #1
3	11-Sep	Expectancy violations theory	
	13-Sep	Social penetration theory	
4	18-Sep	Uncertainty reduction theory	
	20-Sep	Social information processing theory	
5	25-Sep	Relational dialectics	Application #2
	NO CLASS		
6	2-Oct	Social judgment theory	
	4-Oct	Elaboration likelihood model	
7	9-Oct	Cognitive dissonance	Application #3
	11-Oct	Functional perspective on group decision making	
8	16-Oct	Symbolic convergence theory	
	18-Oct	Cultural approach to organizations	
9	23-Oct	Semiotics	Application #4
	25-Oct	Uses and gratification theory	
10	30-Oct	Cultivation theory	
	1-Nov	Agenda-setting theory	
11	5-Nov	Communication accommodation theory	
	8-Nov	Face-negotiation theory	Application #5
12	13-Nov	Speech codes theory	
	15-Nov	Genderlect styles	
13	20-Nov	Common Threads in COM Theories	
	22-Nov	Poster Day	POSTER DAY
14	25-Nov	CONSULTATION HOURS: 1:00-5:00pm	
	26-Nov	CONSULTATION HOURS: 12:00-4:00pm	
	27-Nov	CONSULTATION HOURS: 12:00-4:00pm <i>Deadline to raise questions regarding final grade is 27/11 at 4:00pm; queries must be made in person at consultation hours at office in Ngee Ann, Block 82, floor 7.</i>	

SYLLABUS AGREEMENT FORM

After reading this syllabus, please print, sign and return this form to me. I will keep it in my records. No grades will be posted for you until I receive this form with your signature. Thank you!

I _____, have read the entire content of this syllabus. By maintaining my registration in this class, I accept the terms and conditions outlined in this syllabus.

(print name)

(sign name)

(UB person number)

(date)