

COMM 175-203: Introduction to Communication
Spring 2020

T/Th, 2:30-3:45 p.m., SOC 014

Instructor: Chad Van De Wiele
Office Hours: TBD / By Appointment

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Course Description:

This course provides a broad historical and theoretical introduction to communication studies, which begins by asking the question: *what is communication?* In our contemporary digital era, such questions are often taken for granted, but the history and practices of human communication have evolved from oral and written traditions over the course of thousands of years. By looking at human communication through variety of lenses – historical, critical, cultural, political, etc. – students will acquire an intellectual framework for continued study and practice within the discipline of communication, including both applied and academic.

Course Objectives:

The primary objectives for this course are to familiarize you with how communication practices emerge and change over time (e.g., through the introduction of new technologies), to convey various frameworks for investigating these practices, and to familiarize you with key terms and concepts within the communication discipline.

By the end of this course, successful students should:

- Understand and effectively articulate what communication is and why it is an important area of academic inquiry.
- Recognize how different social and cultural contexts impact communicative practices, including how messages are produced, exchanged, and interpreted.
- Distinguish and evaluate how ideology is produced and changed over time through communication practices.
- Demonstrate the appropriate application of key terms and concepts from the communication discipline.

Required Texts:

Introduction to Human Communication, 2nd Edition

Authors: Susan R. Beauchamp and Stanley J. Baran

Publisher: Oxford University Press

ISBN: 9780190918767

Students are also encouraged to purchase used versions, e-books, or rentals of this textbook, if possible. Please note that because this **second edition** was published in January 2019, used copies may be limited. Other readings and materials will be provided electronically.

Assignment & Grade Breakdown:

| | |
|--|------------|
| Attendance & Participation | 100 points |
| Theory Application Memos (<i>x 4 @ 50 points each</i>) | 200 points |
| Midterm Exam | 300 points |
| Final Exam | 300 points |
| Final Paper | 100 points |

Total Possible: *1000 points*

Final Grade Scale:

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 940+: A | 880-890: B+ | 780-799: C+ | 680-699: D+ |
| 900-939: A- | 830-879: B | 730-779: C | 640-679: D |
| | 800-829: B- | 700-729: C- | 600-639: D- |
| | | | < 600: F |

Theory Application Memos:

Over the course of the semester, you will write four, 2-3-page memos that engage with a communication theory covered in class. You are free to choose when you complete these throughout the semester, but you are ultimately responsible for keeping track of your progress – *I will not remind students how many they have left to complete*. Effective memos will do the following: (1) briefly summarize the main components of the theory being covered, including key figures, context of development, past applications and operationalization, etc.; (2) explain the significance of this theory to the field of communication and how it remains applicable today; and (3) provide a personal anecdote or story that demonstrates this theory at play.

You will submit these memos via Sakai by *Friday at midnight the week in which that theory is covered*. Of course, the expectation is that you have started reading and/or writing *before* our in-class discussion of that theory, so plan ahead and be thoughtful with your responses – these are meant to be fun and help you engage with theory!

Exams:

There will be two exams, a mid-semester and a final (non-cumulative). Each exam will cover material from class lectures, discussions, and readings. They will be objective (multiple-choice, true/false) and short response. Each exam represents 30% of your grade. There are no make-up exams unless permission is acquired in advance of test day.

Final Paper:

For your final paper, you will apply any of the communication theories covered in class to a contemporary social or political issue of your choosing. For example, you could explore an online counterculture using the lens of social identity theory or apply media literacy to investigate the rise of fake news. Regardless of the topic you select, final papers should achieve

the following: (1) provide ample background of the contemporary issue you have selected (e.g., terms, context, etc.), including *why it matters* and *how it pertains to communication*; (2) introduce and effectively summarize your chosen theory or framework, and clearly articulate how it applies to your chosen topic; and (3) without overstating any conclusions or generalizations, utilize that theory or framework to provide some plausible conclusions and/or recommendations for addressing the contemporary issue you selected.

Final papers should be 4-6 pages in length, double-spaced, 12 pt. font (Times New Roman or the like), 1-inch margins, etc. *You will submit your final paper online via Sakai during the two-hour window of our final exam period (see below).*

Course Policies:

Devices: Laptops and iPads are allowed in class *only* for the purpose of taking notes, referencing your e-book, or pulling up relevant cases for class discussion. Please refrain from using cell phones during class, as this is both distracting for, and disrespectful to, your instructor and fellow classmates.

Email Policy: Please give me 24 hours to respond to your emails; I will respond as quickly as I can within this window. During particularly busy times of the semester, however, my response may take up to 48 hours.

Office Hours & Appointments: As we move rather quickly through a range of concepts, I am available to help you with the class materials. Please do not hesitate to speak with me after class or set up an appointment. I am happy to discuss with you any thoughts or questions you may have about course content, the class schedule and expectations, or even college in general.

Attendance & Participation: This is a communication course, which means *student involvement is essential*. Students may miss **two class sessions** without documentation or penalty – use them wisely. Repeated unexcused absences will greatly affect your final grade. Assignments, exams, or other activities missed due to absences may NOT be made up unless you have clear, dated, and specific documentation (e.g., doctor's note).

If you have a chronic medical condition that you think may interfere with your performance in class, please visit the Student Accessibility Center early in the semester or with the first onset of symptoms. If you are experiencing a personal dilemma, such as a family crisis or emergency, speak with me as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity: Students who commit an act of plagiarism or academic dishonesty, whether deliberately or accidentally, will still be held responsible. Ignorance of academic rules, or failure to fact check work, sources and citations, is not an acceptable defense against the charge of plagiarism. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources.

For more information on standards for academic integrity at Loyola, visit:
https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml

Student Accommodations: Any student that require special accommodations or accessibility during exams or class periods should provide documentation from the Student Accessibility Center confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

Managing Life Crises: If you are experiencing a crisis pertaining to your personal or mental well-being, you have access to the Loyola University Wellness Center, which includes emergency and crisis care for mental health, group counseling, and self-assessment tools. For more information, visit: <https://www.luc.edu/wellness/mentalhealth/emergencycrisiscare/> or call 773-508-8883. Similarly, I encourage you to contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE referral (LUC.edu/csaa) for yourself or a peer in need of support.

If you are experiencing mental or emotional distress beyond your ability to manage safely right now: The Wellness Center has a service for students who are in crisis and need immediate assistance to speak to counselors and to receive crisis consultation, information on emergency resources, or even be directed to the Emergency Department, if appropriate. This service is available by calling **773-508-2530, Option 3** after hours, which includes weekends and holidays.

Diversity Statement:

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

Important note: *It is imperative that there be an atmosphere of trust and safety in the classroom.* I will attempt to foster an environment in which each class member is able to hear and respect each other. It is critical that each class member show respect for all worldviews expressed in class. It is expected that some of the material in this course may evoke strong emotions, please be respectful of others' emotions and be mindful of your own. Please let me know if something said or done in the classroom, by either myself or other students, is particularly troubling or causes discomfort or offense. While our intention is not to cause discomfort or offense, the impact of what happens throughout the course is not to be ignored and is something that I consider to be very important and deserving of attention. If and when this occurs, there are several ways to alleviate some of the discomfort or hurt you may experience:

1. Discuss the situation privately with me. I am always open to listening to students' experiences and want to work with students to find acceptable ways to process and address the issue.

2. Discuss the situation with the class. Chances are there is at least one other student in the class who had a similar response to the material. Discussion enhances the ability for all class participants to have a fuller understanding of context and impact of course material and class discussions.
3. Notify me of the issue through another source such as your academic advisor, a trusted faculty member, or a peer. If for any reason you do not feel comfortable discussing the issue directly with me, I encourage you to seek out another, more comfortable avenue to address the issue.

Land Acknowledgements:

I acknowledge that we are on the traditional homelands of the Očeti Šakówin (Sioux), Miami, Bodéwadmikiwen (Potawatomi), and Peoria peoples.

A land acknowledgment is a "formal statement that recognizes the unique and enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories" (<http://www.lspirg.org/knowtheland/>). As such, it is the first step to a reflection process that will help you be more intentional as you move through spaces. You are encouraged to continue to learn about and build relationships with the communities and the land you are occupying in an effort to continually support and work with those communities.

Course Schedule:

Note: This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Changes to the course schedule will be communicated to you in advance.

Week 1: Course Introduction

January 14 – *Syllabus, introductions, and course overview*

January 16 – *What is communication and why study it? (selected readings online)*

Week 2: The Communication Process: Perception, Meaning, and Identity (Ch. 1)

January 21 – *The process of creating meaning, communication models, and culture*

January 23 – *Perception, signs, and symbols*

Week 3: Communication Research and Inquiry (Ch. 2)

January 28 – *Theory, scientific inquiry, and traditions of communication research*

January 30 – *Research methods for communication*

Week 4: Verbal & Nonverbal Communication (Ch. 3 & 4)

February 04 – *The structure and function of language*

February 06 – *Theory and types of nonverbal coding*

Week 5: Listening (Ch. 5)

February 11 – *Basics and types of, and barriers to, effective listening*

February 13 – *Practices, politics, and ethics of listening (selected readings online)*

Week 6: Relational and Conflict Communication (Ch. 6)

February 18 – *Relationships and theories of interpersonal communication*

February 20 – *Interpersonal conflict: types, stages, and how to overcome conflict*

Week 7: Communicating in Small Groups (Ch. 7)

February 25 – *Types, dynamics, and theories of group communication*

February 27 – **EXAM 1 (Chapters 1-5)**

Week 8: Spring Break

March 03 – *NO CLASS*

March 05 – *NO CLASS*

Week 9: Organizational Communication (Ch. 8)

March 10 – *Defining organizational communication, messages, and traits*

March 12 – *Systems, networks, and the evolution of organizational communication*

Week 10: Intercultural Communication (Ch. 9)

March 17 – *Defining intercultural communication; theories of culture and identity*

March 19 – *Diversity, cultural values, tolerance, and ideology*

Week 11: Mass Communication & Media Literacy (Ch. 10 & 11)

March 24 – *Defining / theories of mass communication*

March 26 – *Media literacy and meaning-making*

Week 12: Social Media and Communication Technologies (Ch. 12)

March 31 – *Computer-mediated communication, identity, and relationships (guest lecture)*

April 02 – *The promise and peril of new communication technologies*

Week 13: Persuasion and Social Influence (Ch. 13)

April 07 – *What is persuasion? Values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors*

April 09 – *The Elaboration Likelihood Model & attitude change*

Week 14: Health Communication (Ch. 14)

April 14 – *Foundations and contexts of health communication*

April 16 – *Health communication and the internet*

Week 15: Public Speaking & Conclusion (Ch. 15)

April 21 – *The role, importance, and relevance of public speaking*

April 23 – **EXAM 2 (Chapters 6-14)**

Final Exam Period:

Saturday, May 2 – 4:15-6:15 p.m.

The window to submit final papers via Sakai will be open during this time