COMM-134: INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION THEORY

Effective Term
Fall 2025

CC Approval
12/06/2024

AS Approval
02/13/2025

BOT Approval
02/20/2025

COCI Approval
04/30/2025

SECTION A - Course Data Elements

CB04 Credit Status
Credit - Degree Applicable

Discipline

Minimum Qualifications	And/Or
Communication Studies (Speech Communication) (Master's Degree)	

Subject Code
COMM - Communication Studies
Course Number
134

Department
Communication Studies (COMM)

Division
Language and Developmental Studies (LADS)

Full Course Title
Introduction to Communication Theory

Short Title
Intro to Communication Theory

CB03 TOP Code
1506.00 - Speech Communication

CB08 Basic Skills Status
NBS - Not Basic Skills

CB09 SAM Code
E - Non-Occupational

Rationale
Catalog course description updated to make it more student friendly and clarify content of the course.

SECTION B - Course Description

Catalog Course Description
An introduction to essential theories, perspectives, and approaches of human communication and how they work in various settings, including interpersonal, organizational, public, and mediated contexts.

SECTION C - Conditions on Enrollment

Open Entry/Open Exit
No

Repeatability
Not Repeatable

Grading Options
Letter Grade or Pass/No Pass

Allow Audit
Yes

Requisites

SECTION D - Course Standards

Is this course variable unit?
No

Units
3.00

Lecture Hours
54.00

Outside of Class Hours
108

Total Contact Hours
54

Total Student Hours
162

Distance Education Approval

Is this course offered through Distance Education?
Yes

Online Delivery Methods

DE Modalities	Permanent or Emergency Only?
Entirely Online	Permanent
Hybrid	Permanent

SECTION E - Course Content

Student Learning Outcomes

	Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:
1.	Demonstrate the ability to identify and accurately explain key concepts in human communication history, theory, and sub-disciplines.
2.	The ability to apply relevant communication theories, events, and artifacts to various contexts and real life situations.
3.	Articulate and compare the basic research methods for the evaluation of human communication phenomena.

Course Objectives

	Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:
1.	Explain and apply basic concepts of the field of communication.
2.	Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the specializations comprising the communication discipline.

3.	Critically discuss and write about human communication theories and events.
4.	Understand the major research traditions and varying approaches to studying human communication.
5.	Explain the contextual, cultural, and social foundations of human communication.
6.	Demonstrate an understanding of the role of ethics in communication.
7.	Be able to recall and connect major theorist to their corresponding theories and research traditions.
8.	Be able to accurately explain and evaluate theories and their major components using the appropriate terms and theoretical language.
9.	Summarize and explain an expanded world perspective that demonstrates an appreciation of the diverse range of viewpoints.

Course Content
1. Introduction and overview of the field of Communication Studies
   a. Communication models
   b. Basic principles and misconceptions
   c. Verbal and non verbal communication
   d. Language and symbols
2. Theoretical overview of the major traditions in the field of communication
   a. Socio-psychological tradition
   b. Semiotic tradition
   c. Socio-cultural tradition
   d. Critical tradition
   e. Phenomenological tradition
3. Basic communication theory
   a. Theory definition and purpose
   b. Criteria for evaluating theories
      i. Objective theory standards
      ii. Interpretive theory standards
4. Different research approaches to studying theory
   a. Objective vs interpretive approach to scholarship
5. Specializations and theories to be covered may include:
   a. Rhetoric and persuasion
      i. Rhetoric
      ii. Social Judgement Theory
      iii. Elaboration Likelihood Model
      iv. Cognitive Dissonance
   b. Mass communication and culture
      i. Agenda Setting Function Theory
      ii. Cultivation Theory
      iii. Semiotics
      iv. Cultural Studies
   c. Interpersonal communication
      i. Social Exchange Theory
      ii. Expectancy Violation Theory
      iii. Social Penetration Theory
      iv. Relational Dialectics
   d. Public and group communication
      i. Symbolic Convergence Theory
      ii. Functional Perspective to Decision Making
   e. Intercultural communication and diversity
      i. Communication Accomodation Theory
      ii. Face Negotiation Theory
   f. Gender communication
      i. Genderlect
   g. Organizational communication
      i. Cultural Approach to Organization
   h. Computer mediated communication/technology

   i. Social Information Processing Theory
  i. Emerging Specializations

Methods of Instruction

Methods of Instruction

Types	Examples of learning activities
Activity	In-class or online games used to illustrate purpose of theories.
Discussion	Weekly reflections: recorded as a written journal, electronic blog, or discussion.
Lecture	Use of multimedia and handouts to supplement lecture, discussion, and reading.

Instructor-Initiated Online Contact Types

Announcements/Bulletin Boards
Chat Rooms
Discussion Boards
E-mail Communication
Telephone Conversations
Video or Teleconferencing

Student-Initiated Online Contact Types

Chat Rooms
Discussions
Group Work

Course design is accessible

Yes

Methods of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation

Types	Examples of classroom assessments
Exams/Tests	Tests will reflect the unit readings and lectures.
Quizzes	Weekly reading quizzes.
Essays/Papers	Complete a total of six, two-page journal response papers applying the theories to your own life experiences.
Oral Presentations	Identify a song that reflects elements of one or more of the theories covered and give a 3-5 minute in class presentation on it.
Projects	Research journal article that uses a theory covered in class and present the research in a 20 minute, interactive lesson.
Class Participation	Socratic seminar to promote deep thinking, critical questions, academic vocabulary usage, and build a sense of community.
Homework	After reading about Aristotle's rhetorical proofs, find commercial examples that reflect how ethos, pathos, and logos are being used in modern advertisements.

Assignments

Reading Assignments

Example 1: Read the weekly chapter assignment. Example 2: Read Chapter 1 and be prepared to discuss the prompt on page 28.

Writing Assignments

Example 1: Write a 1-2 page response paper articulating how you see the theories demonstrated in your own life experiences. Example 2: Create a 1 page outline for each theoretical lens with the goal of applying two different theories to a pop culture artifact of your choosing (book, movie, television show). In doing so, 1) provide a working definition of the lens, 2) identify examples of two different theories in your artifact and 3) provide one outside reference to support your application of the theory.

Other Assignments

Group Work: Example: After playing Apples to Apples in groups, the class will be asked to articulate the connection between Coordinated Management of Meaning theory and the strategies they used in the game. Example: After watching a clip from The Hunger Games, get into groups and discuss where you saw examples of Social Exchange Theory in Katniss' different relationships.

SECTION F - Textbooks and Instructional Materials

Material Type
Textbook

Author
West, R and Turner, L

Title
Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application

Edition/Version
7th

Publisher
McGraw-Hill Higher Education

Year
2020

Material Type
Textbook

Author
Griffin, M., Ledbetter, A. & Sparks, G

Title
A First Look at Communication Theory

Edition/Version
11th

Publisher
McGraw-Hill Higher Education

Year
2023

Course Codes (Admin Only)

ASSIST Update
No

CB00 State ID
CCC000592706

CB10 Cooperative Work Experience Status
N - Is Not Part of a Cooperative Work Experience Education Program

CB11 Course Classification Status
Y - Credit Course

CB13 Special Class Status
N - The Course is Not an Approved Special Class

CB23 Funding Agency Category
Y - Not Applicable (Funding Not Used)

CB24 Program Course Status
Program Applicable

Allow Pass/No Pass
Yes

Only Pass/No Pass
No