

**COMS 2331 Introduction to Communication Theory and Research
(3 Credit Hours)
Fall 2017**

Location of Class Meeting: CB312

Class Meeting Time: 9:30 to 10:50am

Instructor: Dr. Shuangyue (Shaun) Zhang

Teaching Assistant: Matthew Wald

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Phone: (936) 294-1835

Office Hours: TUTH 11:00am-12:00pm or by appointment

Required Text:

Griffin, E., Ledbetter, A., & Sparks, G. (2015). *A first look at communication theory* (9th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Rubin, R. B., Rubin, A. M., & Piele, L. J. (2010). *Communication research: Strategies and sources* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Class Objectives and Policies

Objectives:

- To provide students with an introductory understanding of several key communication theories.
- To prepare students to evaluate communication theories effectively.
- To enable students to apply communication theories to their own lives within a number of varying contexts, especially interpersonal and family situations.
- To introduce students to the systematic study and research of communication.
- To improve students' abilities to analyze and synthesize communication research articles.

Participation/Attendance:

For every class you miss beyond three, your grade will be dropped by 2% of the total. University approved absences (e.g., forensics, athletics) are not included in this. In addition, your absence will be excusable if you provide evidence of reason such as serious illness, family death, and natural disaster. **Students who miss four or more weeks of classes will automatically fail, regardless of their performance in exams and other class assignments.** It is really important that class begins on time every day to guarantee that all of the scheduled information and activities are completed. **For every two times you are late, it counts as one absence.** It is your responsibility to make sure I know you were late and not absent.

Cell Phones:

Please, please, please make sure you turn the ringers off on your cell phones prior to the start of class. It is best to shut them off completely. In recent years, particularly on speech days, ringing cell phones have become a problem. This can't be tolerated.

Academic Dishonesty:

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. **Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action.** The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

Americans with Disability Act:

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

Religious Holidays

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

Visitors in the Classroom

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the

class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

This policy is not intended to discourage the occasional visiting of classes by responsible persons. Obviously, however, the visiting of a particular class should be occasional and not regular, and it should in no way constitute interference with registered members of the class or the educational process.

www.shsu.edu/syllabus

Instructor Evaluation

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

ASSIGNMENTS/EVALUATIONS

Exams (45%)

There will be two exams, a midterm (25%) and a final (20%), with the possibility of a few announced quizzes. There will be review sessions for both exams.

Literature Review (5% topic, 5% reference list, 15% summary, 25% final paper)

The aim of this paper is to review literature on a course relevant concept. The focus of the paper should center on some communication issue that is well narrowed. Papers should be typed in 12 point Times New Roman or Garamond font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins, proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Papers should be 5 to 7 full pages of text. *Please see attached instructions of the paper.* In order for you to succeed, there are four steps of this project with four different due dates.

Attendance/Participation (5%)

Class participation and attendance will count for 5% of your final grade.

WEEKLT SCHEDULES

Week	Topics	Readings	Assignment
Aug 23-25	Introduction	CT Chapter 1 CR Chapter 1	
Aug 28-Sept 1	Overview of the Theories Literature Search	CT Chapters 2-4 CR Chapter 2	
Sept 4-8	Symbolic Interactionism Search Strategies	CT Chapter 5 CR Chapter 3	
Sept 11-15	CMM Using the Internet	CT Chapter 6 CR Chapter 4	Topic due for final paper

Sept 18-22	EVT General Sources/Tools	CT Chapter 7 CR Chapters 5-6	
Sept 25-29	Social Penetration Comm Periodicals	CT Chapter 8 CR Chapter 7	Reference list due
Oct 2-6	URT Information Compilations Process of Comm Research	CT Chapter 9 CR Chapters 8-9	
Oct 9-13	SIPT Project Designing	CT Chapter 10 CR Chapter 10	Midterm
Oct 16-20	Relational Dialectics Preparing Writing	CT Chapter 11 CR Chapter 11	Summaries due
Oct 23-27	Privacy Management Writing Papers	CT Chapter 12 CR Chapter 12	
Oct 30-Nov 3	Social Judgment	CT Chapter 14	
Nov 6-10	ELM	CT Chapter 15	
Nov 13-17	Cognitive Dissonance	CT Chapter 16	
Nov 20-24	CAT	CT Chapter 31	
Nov 27--Dec 1	CAT Face-Negotiation	CT Chapters 31-32	Final Paper
Dec 4-7	Finals Week		Final Exam

Instructions of Literature Review for COMS 2331

General Instructions: The aim of this assignment is to review literature on a course relevant concept. The focus of the paper should focus on some communication issue that is well narrowed. You will need to locate, read, and synthesize **5 to 7** journal articles on a specific topic of your interest. Your goal is to look for connections and/or contradictions in the literature and explain the “big picture” to the reader. In order for you to succeed in completing the project, we break it down to *four* steps with different due dates. In total, this project accounts for **50%** of your course grade.

Step One: Finding a Topic (3%, Due by Week 4)

Instructions: You will find a topic that is related to interpersonal communication behaviors. By week four, you need to submit a paragraph explaining what your topic is and why you are interested in the topic. You are encouraged to choose one topic from the list below. If you decide to pick a topic that is not on the list, please get approval from me before you proceed any further. We will have a session on topic selection during class.

1. Relational maintenance (among friends, romantic couples, parent-child)
2. Jealousy communication
3. Communication between long-distance couples
4. Social media use and interpersonal communication (maintenance, etc.)
5. Conflict resolution
6. The role of attachment in relationships
7. Social support
8. Network influence (from family and friends) on relationships
9. Online dating
10. Hurtful feelings, messages
11. Topic avoidance among friends, dating partners
12. Communication in step families
13. Sexual communication between dating/marriage partners
14. Forgiveness communication
15. Self-disclosure
16. Intergenerational communication
17. Relationship breakups
18. Relational commitment
19. Interracial dating/marriages
20. Violence/abuse in relationships
21. Mate selection
22. Communication in LGBT couples
23. Relational uncertainty
24. Parent-child communication
25. Communication privacy management

Step Two: Reference List (7%, Due by Week 6)

Instructions: Once you decide your topic for the project, you need to do some library research to locate all the articles you need for your literature paper. I expect that you locate 7 to 10 journal articles on your topic and save all the PDF files of those articles. Submit a reference list of your articles in APA format by Week 6. You will be graded based on the following rubric.

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
All sources properly cited in the reference list. Fewer than 2 errors. All references are relevant.	All sources properly cited in the list. Fewer than 4 errors. All references are relevant.	Not all sources properly cited in reference list. Fewer than 6 errors. Most of the references are relevant.	Sources not properly cited in the list. More than 6 errors. More than 2 references do not seem to be relevant.

Step 3: Summaries of Journal Articles (15%, Due by Week 9)

Instructions: Pick **2** of articles from your reference list and write summaries for each of these **2** articles. Your summaries should include the following items: 1) What were the purposes/aims of the article? 2) What were the research questions or hypotheses? 3) What methods were used, survey, experiment, content analysis, or interviews? 4) What were the major findings? 5) What were the limitations of the studies? A summary should be directed toward imagined readers who have not read the article being summarized. The purpose of the summary is to give these persons a clear overview of the article's main points. The criteria for a summary are 1) accuracy of content, 2) comprehensiveness and balance, and 3) clarity, readability, and grammatical correctness. You will be graded using the following rubric.

- 6** A 6 summary meets all the criteria. The writer understands the article thoroughly. The main points in the article appear in the summary with all main points proportionately developed (that is, the writer does not spend excessive time on one main point while neglecting other main points). The summary should be as comprehensive as possible and should read smoothly, with appropriate transitions between ideas. Sentences should be clear, without vagueness or ambiguity and without grammatical or mechanical errors.
- 5** A 5 summary should still be very good, but it can be weaker than a 6 summary in one area. It may have excellent accuracy and balance but show occasional problems in sentence structure or correctness. Or it may be clearly written but be somewhat unbalanced or less comprehensive than a 6 summary or show a minor misunderstanding of the article.
- 4** A score of 4 means good but not excellent. Typically, a 4 summary will reveal a generally accurate reading of the article, but it will be noticeably weaker in the quality of writing. Or it may be well written but cover only part of the essay.
- 3** A 3 summary must have strength in at least one area of competence, and it should still be good enough to convince the grader that the writer has understood the article fairly well. However, a 3 summary typically is not written well enough to convey an understanding of the article to someone who has not already read it. Typically, the sentence structure of a 3 summary is not sophisticated enough to convey the sense of hierarchy and subordination found in the essay.
- 2** A 2 summary is weak in all areas of competence, either because it is so poorly written that the reader cannot understand the content or because the content is inaccurate or seriously disorganized. However, a 2 essay convinces the grader that the writer has read the essay and is struggling to understand it.
- 1** A 1 summary fails to meet any of the areas of competence.

Step 4: Final Paper (25%, due by Week 15)

Instructions: Papers should be typed in 12 point Times New Roman or Garamond font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins, proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Papers should be **5 to 7** full pages of text. You should have at least **5** scholarly references listed at the end and they must be cited according to APA standards. You may use the course textbooks, but they will not count as part of the required references. All works cited in the text of the paper must be in the reference list. Also, all works in the reference list must be cited in the text of the paper.

A title page should include the paper's title, your name, course, instructor's name, and date, centered on the page. Number the pages in the upper right corner, starting with the title page as page one. Staple your paper in the upper left corner. Either attach copies of the articles reviewed or have them available should I request them. There is no need for special folders, fancy paper, or colored print.

During week 12, submit a final draft to *Turnitin* on Blackboard. Your paper will be graded using the same rubric as used in peer reviews.

Introduction:		10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Clear overview of paper, demonstrates importance of topic		
Body	Balanced viewpoint:	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
	Objective, balanced view from various perspectives	
	Coherent theme:	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
	Each cited study related to the topic and to other studies	
	Depth and breadth of research:	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
	Variety of studies and attention to detail about the topic	
	Analysis:	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
	Collection of studies analyzed for differences and commonalities about the topic	
Conclusion and Synthesis:		10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Information synthesized and brought to a logical conclusion		
Organization and Alignment:		10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Information logically organized with good flow. Issues threaded throughout paper.		
Mechanics:		10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Correct spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, word usage	
APA:	
Correct use of APA in body of paper	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
References:	
References correctly typed, appropriate number and quality	10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Total	