

# Communication Theory Syllabus

## Fall 2017

COMS 4381.01 3 Credit Hours

Professor: Dr. Brandau

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Office: Dan Rather Bldg. 322A

### Required Course Texts

West, R. & Turner, L. H. (2010). *Introducing communication theory: Analysis and application*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: McGraw Hill.

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

### Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to communication theories and to explore their application to our everyday interactions. Turner & West provide a comprehensive background and explanation of important communication theories. After class lecture and activities you should have a better understanding of how these theories operate and their importance. Additionally, this course will introduce you to how social science research is conducted. You will learn how to select and refine a topic, find relevant research, write and abstract and literature review.

### Course Policies

1. **Attendance.** Instruction in this course is lecture and participation based, therefore regular attendance is required. All students start with an attendance grade of 100 points. You are allowed to miss **3 class hours** (e.g. MWF 3 absences; TTH 2 absences) without penalty and all absences after that will result in a ten point deduction from the attendance grade. Students missing **six or more class hours** will receive an 'F' in the course. Students will not be dropped from the course due to absences, therefore you are responsible for attending or dropping. **I do not accept excuses!** You are allowed to miss 3 class hours without penalty, use them wisely. (Meaning, on your fourth class hour absence points will be deducted because you have already used your 3 "free" class hour absences.) If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what work you missed (either from another student or myself) and complete all assignments by the due date. You are responsible for signing the class attendance sheet for each class session. Your signature becomes official documentation that you were in class; if you do not sign-in you will be considered absent! You will be considered absent if you do not attend the entire class period. That is, staying for only half of the class, or coming in 15 minutes before the end of class, or consistently coming 5-10 minutes late does not mean that you attended class. Two tardy days will count as one absence. (This pattern continues in increments of two.) Those students sleeping during class will be considered absent.

**Note:** An undetermined number of unannounced quizzes may be used to encourage attendance. These quizzes will be given at the beginning of the class period and there will be no make-up quizzes for late students.

2. **Late Examinations.** If you miss an examination and have a **legitimate** reason for doing so, you must make it up within a reasonable time (normally 1 week or less). All arrangements for missing an examination must be made **prior** to the time the examination is scheduled. If such arrangements are not made, then no make-up examination will be given and you will receive a zero for that examination. All make-up exams will be strictly essay.

Note: You must be on time for all exams.

Students more than 15 minutes late will not be allowed to take the exam.

**3. NO late assignments will be accepted. No late speeches will be allowed. However, if you are incapacitated (aka in the hospital) and provide an excuse you will be allowed to make up the speech with a 25 point penalty.**

You are responsible for turning in assignments on time. Keep up with the course activities and due dates to ensure you do not miss a deadline.

ALL assignments must be typed. Failure to type assignments will result in a significant point deduction.

**4. Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is defined as “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work” (Dictionary.com). All work must be the original composition of each student. Although you must use outside sources, you must cite them appropriately. Plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment. Assignments will be checked for plagiarism by ***any and all means available***, including electronic checking services (i.e. Turnitin.com). 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.

**5. Americans with Disabilities Act.** If you are a qualified student with a disability seeking accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to self-identify with the Committee for Continuing Assistance for Disabled Students at 294-1720.

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.

**6. 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.

**7. Classroom Visitors.** 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. It is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

**8. IDEA System.** Students are asked to complete an IDEA evaluation of the course and the instructor at the end of the semester. Participation is voluntary.

9. **Classroom conduct.** Free discussion, inquiry, and expression is encouraged in this class. Classroom behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of students to benefit from the instruction is not acceptable. Examples may include routinely entering class late or departing early, cell phones, or other electronic devices; texting via computer or phone; repeatedly talking in class without being recognized; talking while others are speaking or arguing in a way that is perceived as 'crossing the civility line'. In the event of a situation where a student legitimately needs to carry a beeper/phone to class, prior approval of the instructor is required. SHSU recognizes the right to carry a concealed handgun, however you **MUST** comply with all federal, state, local laws and the SHSU policy. If you have any questions regarding this policy please review it. <http://www.shsu.edu/katsafe/campus-carry/>

Students are expected to read and abide by all rules and policies in the SHSU Student Handbook. The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/documents/2016-2018%20Student%20Guidelines.pdf>

#### Assignments and Requirements

The scale for determining grades is: A = 90-100% B = 80-89% C = 70-79%  
D = 60 -69% F = 59% and below

Exam I	17.5%	Paper	20%
Exam II	17.5%	Research Presentation	5%
Exam III	17.5%	Participation/Attendance	5%
Exam IV	17.5%		

Specific instructions for assignments will be distributed in class at the appropriate time during the semester.

#### Instructor's Notes

My office is in the Communication building room 322A. If there is something you do not understand or need help with please come see me. I encourage you to make an appointment even if it is during office hours because I may step out of my office for a few minutes.

My office hours are tentatively scheduled as:

**W** 10:00- 11:30                      In class **TTH** 11:00-12:30

**TTH** 1:30 – 3:00

I am in my office much more than the posted office hours if you need to see me at another time please make an appointment.

**Continuation of enrollment in this course indicates acceptance of the terms and requirements of this syllabus.** Changes may be made to this syllabus as circumstances necessitate.

[www.shsu.edu/syllabus/](http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/)