INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION THEORY  
COMM 210  
Spring 2011

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Office Hours:  W 2-4, Th 3-4:30  
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Course Objectives:

Not surprisingly, the aim of this course is to provide you with an introduction to the key theories in the study of human communication. We will read and discuss the critical concepts and research findings in the discipline, with an eye to gaining insight into the development of communication as an area of academic study. By the end of this course, you should:

- Be familiar with the basic theories in the various areas of study within the communication discipline (rhetoric, interpersonal, organizational, mediated, gender, and intercultural communication).
- Understand the linkages between the various areas noted above.
- Recognize how communication theories apply outside of the classroom (in your personal and professional life).
- Be prepared for further study in the discipline.

Textbook and Materials:


iClicker – required for the course and must be brought to class each day.

OAKS is the learning management system for the class and is available through MyCharleston.

Study aides are available at [www.afirstlook.com](http://www.afirstlook.com). Chapter overviews, outlines and other helpful information about each theory are easy to access through the textbook website. Some chapters we will read are only available through this website (see course schedule).

Course Policies:

1. **Electronic Devices in Class**
   
   Please turn off all mobile and personal electronic devices before entering class. If your cell phone rings during class or you are texting, the following penalties will be imposed:
   - First offense: I will speak to you (during or after class) or email you a warning.
   - Second offense: 5 points deducted from your final grade.
   - Third and further offenses: 50 points deducted from your final grade.

2. **Attendance**
   
   Attendance will be taken every day using iClicker. You must bring your iClicker to class in order to be counted as having attended. If you forget your clicker, you can see me at the end of class and I will mark your attendance, but these devices will also be used for the quizzes (see below) and you can not make up quizzes if you do not have your clicker on the days that we have quizzes, so it is in your best interest to always bring your I-Clicker to class. 😊

   **You are allowed 3 unexcused absences.** Beginning with the fourth absence, you will lose 20 points from your final point total for each additional unexcused absence. I must be notified of excused absences through the College’s absence notification system (corner of George & Glebe Streets). **Students with eight or more absences (excused or unexcused) will receive an “F” for the course.**
I also have a late arrival and early departure policy. Do not arrive late or leave early. Not only is this behavior rude and disruptive to the class, it is also in violation of the College’s Classroom Code of Conduct (see http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/classroom-disruption.php). Late arrival and early departure will count as a half absence.

If you are absent from class, know that I hold you responsible for what has taken place in class. In addition, I do not repeat course lectures and you are responsible for announcements or schedule changes made.

3. Professor’s Availability Outside of Class
I hold regular office hours at the times noted above and am typically in my office Mondays-Fridays for some portion of the day (when not in class or meetings). You can also contact me by email or phone and I generally will respond within 24 hours on weekdays, though this semester I have back-to-back classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays, so contact made on these days may not receive responses until the next day. I typically do not respond to email on the weekends. When contacting me, please use your EDISTO email (which is required by the College) – see the policy on student email, which can be found at: http://www.cofc.edu/~register/STUDENTEMAILPOLICY.pdf

4. Make-Up Work/Exams
No make-up exams or presentations will be allowed. No late work will be accepted without arrangements made in advance. Work that is turned after the class period it is due will be penalized 1 letter grade each day it is late thereafter.

5. Final Exams
The College has a policy on the rescheduling of final exams which suggests that final exam times are not to be changed except in rare and extreme circumstances, and final exam times typically cannot be rescheduled by the professor for individual students (see the Undergraduate Catalog). Our last exam is scheduled on Tuesday, May 3rd, the final exam day designated by the Registrar’s Office and students are expected to take the exam then.

6. Honor Violations
The College of Charleston has an Honor Code and a Student Code of Conduct. Please refer to the Student Handbook at the link below for a discussion of the penalties for cheating, deception, plagiarism, and other forms of academic and personal misconduct. Forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (such as a PDA, smart phone, texting, etc.), copying from another’s exam, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance. I take these issues seriously, so know that no breaches of the Code will be tolerated. Link to the Student Handbook: http://www.cofc.edu/pv_obj_cache/pv_obj_id_22FEBBFF97C39CAB542D2A20BC9885C0AAE00D00/filene me/handbook.pdf

7. Written Work
All written work submitted must be typed, double-spaced, and proofread. I do correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

8. Assigned Readings
You are responsible for assigned readings in the text, even if we do not cover those readings in class lectures. This material may appear on exams. You will also be responsible for reading any additional material that I provide to class over the term, and this material may appear on exams.

9. Accommodations
Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements to meet course requirements, should contact the professor as soon as possible, but no later than January 27, 2011.
Assignments:

Group Presentation -  
(1 presentation @ 40 points and  
1 individual paper @ 10 points)  
50

Quizzes  
(10 quizzes @ 5 points each)  
50

Four Exams  
(4 @ 100 points each)  
400

Total Possible Points  
500

Final Grade Points:  
465 – 500 points = A  
450 – 464 points = A-  
435 – 449 points = B+  
415 – 434 points = B  
400 – 414 points = B-  
385 – 399 points = C+  
365 – 384 points = C  
350 – 364 points = C-  
335 – 349 points = D+  
315 – 334 points = D  
300 – 314 points = D-  
299 points & below (or 7+ absences) = F

Assignment Descriptions:

Quizzes
There will be 10 electronic pop quizzes in class over the course of the semester using the iClicker. Paper version of the quizzes will not be available, nor can you makeup a quiz if you are absent or do not have your iClicker with you that day. The quizzes will generally have 5 multiple choice or true/false questions based on the reading from the textbook that was assigned for that class period. Remember that on some days, two chapters are assigned, and the quiz may be on either chapter.

Exams
There are four exams over the course of the semester (see schedule below). These exams will always have a multiple choice (Scantron) section, and may have matching, true/false, short answer, and/or essays sections.

Group Project Assignment Guidelines
You and your group will select one particular theory (from those we are covering as listed on the course schedule) to study and demonstrate. Each group (all members) is required to meet with me at least one week before you present. This meeting will take place at my office and typically lasts 30 minutes.

Some important hints:

- Presentations should be creative applications of components and concepts of a particular theory and should involve the class in some active way (and yes, I mean the whole class!). Use this time to show how your group’s chosen theory applies in everyday life, and make it fun!
- You should not present a lecture on the theory – I generally teach the theory before groups present.
Your group’s task is to help the class understand the theory better by having them apply it in some way. This can be accomplished through media/new technology examples, related new research studies, role-playing exercises or activities for class members, skits, debates, simulations, game shows, and/or team competitions etc. Your group should ensure that your presentation does not exclude or offend any class members.

Your group’s presentation should last 12-15 minutes.

As a group, you will be graded on the following criteria---two written components, and three performance components as noted below. Finally, each group member hands in an individually written post-presentation assessment of your group’s performance.

Written:

List of Objectives: You will hand in one copy of the List of Objectives for the whole group which articulates clearly both what you intend to accomplish through your presentation and how you intend to go about doing it. In other words, what are your goals for what the class will get out of your presentation and how will you achieve them? Be very specific. This document should be free of errors, include all group members’ names, and be handed in on the day of the presentation. I recommend that you produce this document as a group.

Student Handouts: You will provide a chapter outline as a handout for the class that will help them study for the exam. This should be creatively designed and tied to the theme or example used in your presentation. This document should be free from errors and have all group members’ names, and have been planned and produced by the group. I have many good examples in my office which you can look at when your group meets with me. Please send this document to me as an email attachment or upload it into the Oaks’ “Dropbox”.

Performance:

Creativity: Design your presentation to be interesting, creative, and most of all, interactive! Do something more than a typical presentation -- I prefer that you do something more creative with your time…so you can do the whole presentation as a news broadcast, or as a debate, or as a talk show, or as an ethnography or you can design an activity, game, role-play, etc. — whatever seems to best fit your theory. What you must do, though, no matter what format you choose, is involve the class, and I mean everyone…At least some portion of your presentation must be interactive and discussion-based.

Presentation/Speaking Skills: I will write individual commentary to each of you on the basic public speaking delivery issues—volume, rate, fluency, eye contact, audience focus, preparedness, etc. As a group, you should balance the speaking time and responsibilities evenly among you. One of my top pet peeves is seeing the workings of the presentation during the presentation (when it is clear that members of the group are unsure what is happening and have to check with one another) and when it is clear that members of the group have prepared individual “sections” and just pieced them together. Group members should dress appropriately…smart casual or professional. Begin your presentation with an attention-getter and appropriate introduction and be sure to end with a developed conclusion.

Thought-Provoking Content: Your group must present the material in a thought-provoking way, helping the class to see how the theory applies to “real life.” Remember that the class will have had to have read the chapter, and thus should be prepared to participate in discussion. Seeking out additional sources (see suggested readings at the ends of the chapters) helps.

INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT: Due no later than 2 class periods after your group presents.

Each member of the group will write an assessment of their own and the group’s performance:

1. Address the process the group engaged in to prepare for the presentation as well as the successes and failures in the group presentation itself.
2. You should also address your own strengths and weaknesses as a group member and as a public speaker.
3. What will you do differently in future group work and in-class presentations?
Planned Course Schedule***
Spring 2011

T – 1/11 Course Introduction

R – 1/13 What is theory? What is Communication?
*Have read for today:*
  Ch. 1 --- Launching your study of communication theory

T – 1/18 Approaches to the Study of Communication
Choose Groups
*Have read for today:*
  Ch. 2 --- Talk about theory

R – 1/20 Approaches to the Study of Communication (continued)
Activity

T – 1/25 Seven Traditions in Communication
*Have read for today:*
  Ch. 4 --- Mapping the territory

*Interpersonal Communication Theories*
R – 1/27 *Have read for today:*
  “Interpersonal Messages”
  Ch. 5 --- Symbolic Interactionism

T – 2/1 *Have read for today:*
  Ch. 7 --- Expectancy Violation Theory
  www.afirstlook.com --- Interpersonal Deception Theory (online chapter)

R – 2/3 Interpersonal Deception Theory (cont.)
*Have read for today:*
  “Relationship Development”
  Ch. 9 --- Social Penetration Theory

T – 2/8 *Have read for today:*
  Ch. 10 --- Uncertainty Reduction Theory

R – 2/10 *Have read for today:*
  “Relationship Maintenance”
  Ch. 12 --- Relational Dialectics

T – 2/15 *Have read for today:*
  Ch. 13 --- Interactional View

R – 2/17 Exam # 1

*Rhetorical Theories*
T – 2/22 *Have read for today:*
  “Public Rhetoric”
  Ch. 21 --- The Rhetoric of Aristotle
R – 2/24 Have read for today:  
Ch. 23 --- Narrative Paradigm

**Group and Organizational Communication Theories**

T – 3/1 Have read for today:  
Ch. 17 --- Functional Perspective on Group Decision Making  
Ch. 19 --- Cultural Approach to Organizations

R – 3/3 Have read for today:  
Ch. 19 --- Cultural Approach (cont.)  
Ch. 20 --- Critical Theory of Communication in Organizations

Spring Break!

T – 3/15 Exam # 2

**Media Theories**

R – 3/17 Field trips! (2 groups)  
Have read for today:  
“Media and Culture”  
Ch. 24 --- Media Ecology

T – 3/22 Video  
Have read for today:  
Ch. 25 --- Semiotics

R – 3/24 Video  
Have read for today:  
Ch. 26 --- Cultural Studies

T – 3/29 Have read for today:  
“Media Effects”  
Ch. 27 --- Cultivation Theory

R – 3/31 Have read for today:  
Ch. 28 --- Agenda-Setting Theory

T – 4/5 Exam # 3

**Intercultural Communication Theories**

R – 4/7 Have read for today:  
www.afirstlook.com --- Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (online)  
Ch. 31 --- Face Negotiation Theory

T – 4/12 Face Negotiation Theory (cont.)  
Have read for today:  
Ch. 32 --- Speech Codes Theory

**Gender and Communication Theories**

R – 4/14 Have read for today:  
Ch. 33 --- Genderlects & Ch. 34 --- Standpoint Theory
T – 4/19  Have read for today:
      Ch. 34 --- Standpoint Theory (cont.)

R – 4/21  Have read for today:
      Ch. 35 --- Muted Group Theory

T – 5/3  Exam #4  12:00 pm
      There is no “cumulative final exam” in this course.