“Nothing is as practical as a good theory.” This is a course introducing you to the vast field of communication. This class is designed to give you an overview of communication theory and research that is part of a 2500 year old discipline. Your work in this course prepares you for future study in more specific disciplines of communication. By the end of this class you should have a basic understanding of:

- the role and function of theory in communication
- the basic traditions of communication theory
- rhetorical history and theory
- interpersonal communication theories
- intercultural communication theories
- organizational communication theories
- mediated communication theory
- gender and communication
- new media technologies and communication

Ultimately, this course is designed to help you see the influence of communication theory in the world around you and to synthesize and apply concepts of communication theory to your life and experience.


**A SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING CLASS EXPECTATIONS:** I have high expectations of any College of Charleston student, but I have particularly high expectations of the students in this class. This is mainly because I would assume that if you are in this class, you have a) decided to be a communication major or b) you have at least some interest in the field of communication. I expect that your work will be of high quality and that you will engage the material. I also expect that you take responsibility for your actions (or your failure to act). I expect you to be proactive about your grade and your work in this class. If you are concerned about your grade, you should contact me and make efforts early in the semester to address the situation. At the end of the
semester it will be too late for me to offer you any constructive options. I will not make exceptions or allowances for individual problems (unless it is an extreme and DOCUMENTED issue). I cannot, in good conscience offer one student an opportunity that I would be unwilling to offer to the entire class.

Attendance: Your regular attendance and participation are expected and encouraged in this class. Please keep in mind that for me, participation is more than being a body in a desk. You are expected to ACTIVELY participate in class discussion and activities. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class period, either by roll or by sign in sheet. If you miss this it is YOUR responsibility to make sure you have signed the roll. I DO NOT distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. You have THREE free absences to use throughout the semester for any reason (illness, sleeping in late, not feeling like coming to campus, etc.). After those 3 are used, 5 points will be deducted from your overall participation grade.

Cell phones (and other things that beep, whistle, vibrate, hum, or otherwise make noise in class). Technology is a wonderful thing. We are going to spend a good deal of time in this class talking about how it has changed our lives. However, the classroom is not a place to take calls. Please turn off all cell phones and beepers and NEVER (if you happen to forget) answer your cell phone in class.

Exams must be taken on the day scheduled. You will notice that the exam dates are listed in the syllabus. There are 3 exams and an optional make up exam. If you miss an exam FOR ANY REASON throughout the semester, you will need to take the make up exam. All students can take all four exams and will have the opportunity to drop the lowest. A missed exam obviously would count as your lowest. If you are more than 10 minutes late for an exam you will be unable to take it and will receive a grade of F = 0. All cell phones must be turned off and stowed during exams.

Late work is NOT ACCEPTED in this course. If your work is not turned in by the due date, the assignment will be returned and you will receive a grade of ZERO.

Quizzes and in-class exercises: Quizzes will be of the “pop” variety. You will have several quizzes that cover assigned readings and lecture throughout the semester. Quizzes cannot be made up (except in the case of a valid and documented excuse). Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class. If you miss it due to lateness you will not be able to take the quiz. Throughout the semester, there will also be occasional homework or writing assignments. Assignments are due in class. Late work will not be accepted.

Academic Honesty: In addition to the high quality I expect of your work, I fully expect that your work be your own. I, and the Department of Communication take issues of academic honesty very seriously. Plagiarism, cheating, copying, or in any way submitting work that is not solely your own will result in a grade of F and will be referred to the College Honors Board. If you are in any way unclear about definitions of
plagiarism, academic honesty, etc., refer to the College policy stated in your student handbook or ask me directly.

**Disability Accommodations:** Accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. Such accommodations should be arranged for at the beginning of the semester and should be accompanied by official documentation provided by the SNAP office. It is the student’s responsibility to provide this documentation. No accommodations will be made without documentation. Also, some students are permitted to take exams in the SNAP office. If this is the case, it is the student’s responsibility to provide the paperwork and make arrangements with the SNAP office AT LEAST one week prior to the exam. Late requests will not be accommodated.

**Meetings:** My office hours and contact information are listed on the first page of this syllabus. I strongly encourage you to meet with me at my office if you have questions, comments, and/or concerns about the class or your performance in it. Email is always a good way to reach me as well. It is checked regularly, almost every day. I check my voicemail with less frequency on weekends and days when I am not in the office.

**Assignments**

**Quizzes/Attendance:** (5%) Participation is made up of your in-class performance, as well as occasional take-home and in-class assignments. There will also be occasional pop quizzes over the course of the semester. Attendance will also be counted toward this grade. Please see the attendance policy listed above.

**Exams:** (20% each) As this class is transitioning to a large lecture format, exams will be the primary basis of evaluation. You will see on the schedule that 4 in class exams are listed (the last of which is labeled “make-up”), **YOUR LOWEST GRADE OF THE FOUR TESTS WILL BE DROPPED.** If you are happy with your first three grades, you may choose not to take Test #4. If you miss an exam for any reason you will need to take the fourth make up exam. Exams are some combination of multiple choice, true/false (justify), fill-in the blanks, short answer, and/or essay. See above for exam day policies.

**Application Project** (10%): Over the course of the semester you will complete one small project designed to test your ability to apply the information from this class. You have a choice as to which of the projects you want to do. The projects increase in difficulty as the semester progresses. For that reason, I highly recommend that you think about which project you would like to complete sooner rather than later. The possible assignments are as follows:

**Option 1: Finding personal experiences in theory.** For this assignment, you will write a 2-3 page explanation of how you see a particular theory or theoretical concept in your life or relationships. Your paper should include a thesis statement and a coherent preview of your ideas. Your statements should be well supported with evidence both from the text/theories as well as your experience. Your paper should be well written, proofread, and should adhere to basic principles of formatting (typed, double-spaced, 1” margins, **no**
Option 2: Finding examples of theory in film and television. For this assignment you will describe how you see a theory expressed in a scene from a film or television show. You will need to describe the scene (or the phenomenon, if you choose to discuss something like the genre of reality television) and fully analyze how you see the theory or concept you have chosen operating. Your paper should include a thesis statement and a coherent preview of your ideas. Your statements should be well supported with evidence both from the text/theories as well as your media text. Your paper should be 2-3 pages in length. Your paper should be well written, proofread, and should adhere to basic principles of formatting (typed, double-spaced, 1” margins, no spaces between paragraphs). All information should be properly cited using the American Psychological Association Style Manual (5th Edition).

Option 3: Find a scholarly, peer reviewed research article that utilizes one of the theories we have discussed in class. For this paper, you will find a scholarly, peer-reviewed research article that utilizes or extend one of the theories we have discussed. The article must have been PUBLISHED in an actual scholarly journal. You MUST include a full copy of the article. Your paper will basically synthesize what you have read. What is the purpose of the article? How is the theory used? What did the scholar(s) find? What are the implications of the research? Your paper should be 2-3 pages in length. Your paper should be well written, proofread, and should adhere to basic principles of formatting (typed, double-spaced, 1” margins, no spaces between paragraphs). All information should be properly cited using the American Psychological Association Style Manual (5th Edition).

Option 4: Finding a communication theory outside of the scope of this class. This paper will ask that you find and research a communication theory not covered in this course or in the class text. You may use other communication texts to locate and define this theory, but then must include at least one scholarly, academic, peer reviewed source to discuss the use of this theory in a research context. Overall your paper will describe the theory, its potential uses, as well as its limitations. Your paper should be 3-4 pages in length. Your paper should be well written, proofread, and should adhere to basic principles of formatting (typed, double-spaced, 1” margins, no spaces between paragraphs). All information should be properly cited using the American Psychological Association Style Manual (5th Edition).

Cumulative Final Exam: (25%) Same format as above.
Criteria for evaluation.

A = 92-100
A- = 90-91.99
B+ = 88-89.99
B = 82-87.99
B- = 80-81.99
C+ = 78-79.99
C = 72-77.99
C- = 70-71.99
D+ = 68-69.99
D = 62-67.99
F = <62

Tentative (and very changeable schedule)

Week 1
R 1/10 Introduction to the class

Week 2
T 1/15 What is a theory? Chs. 1 & 3
R 1/17 What is a theory? (cont.)

Week 3
T 1/22 Mapping the territory Ch. 2
R 1/24 Mapping the territory (cont.)

Week 4
T 1/29 Symbolic Interactionism Ch. 4
R 1/31 Expectancy Violation Theory Ch. 6
Option #1 due

Week 5
T 2/5 Interpersonal Deception Theory Ch. 7
R 2/7 Exam #1

Week 6
T 2/12 Social Penetration Theory Ch. 8
R 2/14 Uncertainty Reduction Ch. 9

Week 7
T 2/19 Relational Dialectics Ch. 11
Option #2 due
R 2/21 Interactional View Ch. 12
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<th>Week 8</th>
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<th>2/26</th>
<th>Information Systems</th>
<th>Ch. 19</th>
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<td>R</td>
<td>2/28</td>
<td>The Rhetoric of Aristotle</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
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<td><strong>Happy Spring Break</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Exam #2</strong></td>
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<td>Cultural Studies</td>
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<td>Media Effects (TD, ME)</td>
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<td>R</td>
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<td>Cultivation Theory/Agenda Setting</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
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<td><strong>Exam 3</strong></td>
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<td>R</td>
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<td>Face Negotiation/AUM</td>
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<td>Gender Communication</td>
<td>Ch. 33 &amp; 34</td>
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<td>Gender (cont.)/ Review</td>
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<td><strong>Option #4 due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Make-up Exam #4</strong></td>
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Final Exam Date/Time Thursday May 1st  8 a.m.-noon.