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THEORY AND PRACTICE OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION
COM 5103.001 (25588) – Spring 2007
Tuesday 5:30-8:15, MB 0.326
University of Texas at San Antonio

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Office hours:
Tuesdays / Thursdays 3:30-5:00
or by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW
This course facilitates understanding of the major theories and empirical research in interpersonal communication. In this graduate-level seminar, emphasis will be placed on critical analysis of current scholarship. Responsibility for comprehension and description of scholarship will be shared among the instructor and students. Assignments will include critical reviews and presentation of empirical research, individualized annotation of research and observation and description of interpersonal interactions within a theoretical framework. A final comprehensive essay exam will be utilized to assess mastery of material.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Successful students, by the end of the semester, should:

• Understand current theories which frame the study of interpersonal communication
• Identify, describe and critically analyze current research supporting the field of interpersonal communication
• Lead class discussion on a topic of relevance to the field

Class time will be organized around reviewing and discussing current scholarly articles which build or test interpersonal communication theory. The course will utilize WebCT to foster discussion, administer assignments and distribute course reading materials. A selection of articles will be placed on WebCT for course use as well as references for students to locate for course purposes.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS
Several graded assignments and an exam will be utilized to assess student learning, including:

• Article reviews (10% each)
  Students will be assigned three short written essays which critically analyze research articles investigating some aspect of interpersonal communication. Each review will describe the relevance of the article to the domain of communication, examine the comprehensiveness of the literature review, determine the appropriateness of the methods utilized, and analyze the justification of claims.

• Annotated bibliography (20%)
  Students will be assigned an annotated bibliography of thirty (30) current empirical articles on a topic of his or her choice within the domain of interpersonal communication. Each annotated bibliography should include an introduction which describes the topic and general research purpose, complete references with abstracts written by the student, and ancillary materials such as the articles in electronic form.
• **Observational report (15%)**
  Students will choose a naturalistic interpersonal interaction to observe and describe in essay form. The assignment will require a description of the context for the observation, and the application and comparison of two interpersonal communication theories to the observed interaction.

• **Article presentation (15%)**
  Students will be assigned a date for leading a class discussion on an article from a predetermined list. Each presentation will involve a critique of the article in the form of the article reviews described above. Each student will be assessed on the thoroughness and preparedness of the presentation, the demonstrated relevance of the article to the course, and the student’s ability to elicit thoughtful questions about the article.

• **Final exam (20%)**
  During the final exam period, students will be evaluated on knowledge of course material through examination. It will cover the conceptual foundations of interpersonal communication theory as covered in class and assigned readings. The final exam will be essay in nature.

All written assignments must conform to the requirements of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.)*. Assignments will be assessed based on compliance with these requirements as well as ability to follow instructions as specified in class and through WebCT.

**Policies**

**Cheating, plagiarism and collusion will not be tolerated.** All work submitted must be the original work of the student. The penalty for plagiarism, cheating or collusion may include failing the assignment, failing the course, or expulsion from the University depending on the severity of the infraction.

**Students are expected to attend class.** Students who may miss an examination or assignment deadline due to an authorized University activity should make arrangements to complete the assignment in advance, which includes approval from the student's Dean.

**Late assignments or examinations will not be accepted.** Students are expected to take examinations and turn in assignments at the scheduled time.

**Course requirements must be fulfilled in order to successfully pass the course.** Incompletes will be given only in very limited cases and only when they meet the Policy for Incompletes on file in the Department of Communication office, as well as the University requirements for Incompletes.

**The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:** If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require special accommodations, please see a coordinator at Disability Services (MS 2.03.18) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations as soon as possible.

Please see the University's Student Code of Conduct, the Information Guide, or the Handbook of Operating Procedures for information regarding these policies.
Grading Policies

- Article reviews (100 pts. each) 900 - 1000: A
- Annotated bibliography (200 pts.) 800 - 899: B
- Observation report (150 pts.) 700 - 799: C
- Article presentation (150 pts.) 600 - 699: D
- Final exam (200 pts.) BELOW 600: F

Grades are earned and will be calculated on a cumulative scale. Grades can be calculated by dividing the raw score of the assignment by the total points possible for the assignment. Grades are calculated using a 1000 point scale. For example, if the total number of points that can be achieved on the first article review is 100, then that assignment is worth 10% of the final grade. The final exam is worth 200 points. Therefore, a raw score of 168 on the final exam is 16.8% of the final grade. Extra credit will not be assigned for any student due to poor performance or missed assignment. Grades are not rounded. You may obtain your current grade for assignments in WebCT for this course.

Grading Rationale

A Exceptionally well-prepared completion of assignment indicating effort, individualized style, and impact expected of effective communication.

B Unusually well-prepared completion of assignment indicating original application of course materials and individual imagination distinctly superior to average effort.

C Satisfactory completion of assignment indicating effort normally expected of the majority of students (basic preparation, correct procedure, and disciplined technique.)

D Unsatisfactory completion of assignment indicating technical irregularity, misperceived objectives or methods, unorganized effort, or failure to follow directions.

F Failure to complete assignments during the scheduled time through lack of evident effort.

All students will be expected to follow the instructions as they are presented, meet the grading criteria, and turn in each assignment by the due date in order to earn a "B."
LIST OF IMPORTANT DATES

January 16: Classes begin.

January 22: Final date for adding the course.

January 31: Final date for dropping the course without receiving a grade of “W”.

February 16: Article Review #1 due by 5:00pm.

March 2: Article Review #2 due by 5:00pm.

March 12-16: Spring Break.

March 23: Annotated Bibliography due by 5:00pm.

March 26: Final date for dropping course.

March 29-April 1: IABD Conference in Orlando, Florida.

April 13: Article Review #3 due by 5:00pm.

April 27: Observation Report due by 5:00pm.

May 1: Last Day of Class.

May 8: Final Exam 2:00pm - 4:45.

May 15: Final grades due.

Dates for class assignments and exams will not be altered. We will meet during the Final Examination period. Unless otherwise indicated, assignments are due as assigned.
SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Week One: Overview: Graduate Seminar in Interpersonal Communication Theory.
   • Consider and choose topic of research interest in Interpersonal Communication.

Week Two: History and Development of Interpersonal Theory.
   • Read Knapp, Miller and Fudge; Ruesch and Bateson.

Week Three: Systems Theory.
   • Read Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson; Monge; LeBlanc.

Week Four: Rules Theory.
   • Read Shimanoff; Cushman; Shimanoff.

Week Five: Action Assembly Theory.
   • Read Greene; Beatty and Behnke.

Week Six: Uncertainty Reduction Theory.
   • Read Berger; Gudykunst; Kramer.

Week Seven: Application of Uncertainty Reduction Theory.
   • Article Presentations #1 - See WebCT for Reading.

Week Eight: Interpersonal Deception Theory.
   • Read Buller and Burgoon; Carlson, George, Burgoon, Atkins and White.

Week Nine: Application of Interpersonal Deception Theory.
   • Article Presentation #2 - See WebCT for Reading.

Week Ten: Nonverbal Expectancy Violation Theory.
   • Read Burgoon and Hale; Myers and Ferry.

Week Eleven: Application of Nonverbal Expectancy Violation Theory.
   • Article Presentation #1 - See WebCT for Reading.

Week Twelve: Relational Dialectics.
   • Read Baxter; Braithwaite and Baxter.

Week Thirteen: Application of Relational Dialectics Theory.
   • Article Presentations #4 - See WebCT for Reading.

Week Fourteen: Coordinated Management of Meaning.
   • Read Cronen, Chen, & Pearce; Pearce & Pearce.

Week Fifteen: Application of Coordinated Management of Meaning.
   • Article Presentation #5 - See WebCT for Reading.

Final Exam Week:
   • Final Exams. (See List of Important Dates for information regarding your exam).
GRADE MONITORING FORM

Name: ________________________________   Banner ID: __________________

GRADING SCALE:

- 90.0 - 100:    A
- 80.0 - 89.9:    B
- 70.0 - 79.9:    C
- 60.0 - 69.9:    D
- BELOW 60:    F

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Article Review 1: Total: ___   Possible: 100
- Article Review 2: Total: ___   Possible: 100
- Article Review 3: Total: ___   Possible: 100
- Annotated Bibliography: Total: ___   Possible: 50
- Observation Report: Total: ___   Possible: 50
- Article Presentation: Total: ___   Possible: 100

EXAMINATIONS:

- Final: Total: ___   Possible: 200

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FINAL GRADE: Total: ___   Possible: 1000   Percent: ___   Grade: _____
ARTICLE REVIEWS

Objective: To demonstrate the ability to critically analyze the major elements of a research article in light of theories previously discussed in class.

Directions: This formal essay assignment requires analysis of current research utilizing a communication theory covered in class. The study should examine how well the article utilizes a theoretical framework to describe an interpersonal communication phenomenon. The type of phenomenon of interest for analysis is not important provided it is significant and related to the specific domain of the communication theory under investigation.

The article for selection is up to your discretion, however it should utilize an empirical method to describe or explain interpersonal phenomena. Use fairly recent scientific journal articles published within the past eight years. Focus on each of the major elements of the article: a) introduction, b) literature review, c) methods, d) results/analysis, and e) discussion/conclusion. Ask critical questions about each of these sections.

This paper should be written in formal essay style according to the American Psychological Association (APA) style manual (5th ed.). The essay should be typed and not to exceed two single-spaced pages. Include on the first page the full reference information for the article in proper format. Submit the assignment via WebCT Assignments Link in this format (LastnameF1.doc). Please use Microsoft Word, Corel Wordperfect, or Lotus Wordpro. (100 points each)

Evaluation of the Article Review assignment will be based on the following criteria:

I. Relevance of topic (20 pts).
II. Comprehensiveness of literature review (20 pts).
III. Appropriateness of methods (20 pts)
IV. Justification of claims (20 pts)
V. Mechanics? (10 pts)
VI. Instructions followed? (10 pts)

Throughout the semester you are responsible for three article reviews. Evaluation criteria for the second and third reviews will be the same as above. When submitting the second and third reviews via the WebCT assignments link, use the appropriate file naming protocol as in LastnameF2.doc or LastnameF3.doc. Additionally, you will be required to lead a class discussion on an application of a covered theory. You should organize the discussion around an article review as above. For specific instructions, please see the handout: ARTICLE PRESENTATION.
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Objective: To demonstrate the ability to find and abstract the important elements of research articles within a narrow domain of interest.

Directions: Choose a topic within the domain of interpersonal communication which may match future thesis, project, or major paper research interests. Find and read 30 articles from peer-reviewed scholarly journals that are no more than ten years old and relevant to the chosen topic. The articles should include empirical studies, theoretical proposals, and meta-analyses. Create an annotated bibliography covering the articles by writing an abstract for each article in your own words.

Report: Submit for credit a document which specifies a domain of study in a title and introductory paragraph, list each article read in proper APA 5th ed. reference form, followed by an abstract of at least 75 words in length for each article found. Submit the annotated bibliography via WebCT Assignments Link in this format (LastnameF4.doc). Please use Microsoft Word, Corel Wordperfect, or Lotus Wordpro. In addition, create an electronic folder containing the page images (Adobe Acrobat *.pdf) format of all articles abstracted. You may submit the electronic folder as a CD-ROM. (200 points).

Evaluation of the Annotated Bibliography assignment will be based on the following criteria:

I. Introduction (20 pts).
II. Number of sources with abstracts (60 pts).
III. Number of ancillary materials (60 pts).
IV. Quality of self-written abstracts (20 pts).
V. Mechanics? (20 pts)
VI. Instructions followed? (20 pts)

Note: You may use any of the articles selected for this assignment to review for the Article Reviews and Article Presentation Assignments. Additionally, you may use articles from this assignment for the Observation Report assignment. See the description for those assignment for more information.
OBSERVATION REPORT

General Instructions: Students will choose a naturalistic interpersonal interaction to observe and describe in essay form. The assignment will require a description of the context for the observation, and the application and comparison of two interpersonal communication theories to the observed interaction.

General Guidelines: The interaction to be observed should be interpersonal in nature. This includes face-to-face interaction between at least two but not more than six simultaneous interactants. The context may include more than six potential interactants, but your focus should be on one-to-one interactions within that larger context. Additionally, interpersonal interactions can be mediated through means other than face-to-face, but should still be interpersonal in nature entailing symbolic exchange of information between individuals. For purposes of this assignments, students are allowed to use observational notes for observations done as part of an assignment for other classes, as long as the observation meets the above criteria and accomplishes the tasks specified below.

Specific Instructions: Prepare an essay of approximately 2000 words which describes an observation and compares/contrasts two theories covered in class to the interaction observed. The essay should be divided into five sections: a) introduction, b) description of the observation and context to be analyzed, c) application of theories to the observed interaction, d) comparison of the two theories as explanations for the interaction, and e) conclusion. In general, the introduction and conclusion sections should be relatively short: one to two paragraphs each. The introduction should briefly specify the nature of the interaction being observed and list the theories to be applied in the analysis. The conclusion should state the general effectiveness of the chosen theories to explain the interaction observed.

Excepting the introduction and conclusion, each of the other three sections should approximate one-third of the essay. You may use articles selected for your annotated bibliography assignment to assist in crafting your argument regarding the applicability of each theory to the interaction observed. Additionally, you may use articles utilized in class for discussion of interpersonal theories by the instructor or other students in the class, as well as articles listed in other students annotated bibliography assignments. You may use theoretical as well as empirical articles which utilize a theoretical framework as a basis for your claims.

When your essay is completed, please submit electronically through WebCT by the deadline.

Evaluation of the Observation Report assignment will be based on the following criteria:

I. Description of observational context (30 pts)
II. Application of theory I (30 pts)
III. Application of theory II (30 pts)
IV. Comparison of theories (30 pts)
V. Mechanics? (15 pts)
VI. Instructions followed? (15 pts)
Criteria I through IV should be evident from the instructions above. Criteria V entails grammar, spelling, organization and proper use of APA 5th edition rules to citations and references. Criteria VI applies to how well you followed any of the instructions given above.

**Note:** A general purpose of this assignment is to assist you in focusing your attention on a problem of particular scholarly interest to you. It is my hope that the observation of choice can apply to a direction of study for future endeavors in other course work, independent research, theses, or continued graduate education. It is intended to provide an opportunity to integrate "interpersonal" thinking into other communication context, as well as provide a venue for appropriate scholarly collaboration. If you have questions or concerns about the project, please address them to me at your earliest convenience.
ARTICLE PRESENTATION

Objective: To demonstrate the ability to lead a class discussion about the application of a theoretical framework to an interpersonal phenomenon through a critical analysis of a research article.

Directions: This presentation assignment requires analysis of current research utilizing a communication theory covered in class. Upon selection of a topic for more thorough investigation through the Annotated Bibliography Assignment, students will be assigned a date for leading a class discussion on an article from a predetermined list. Each presentation will involve a critique of the article in the form of the article reviews described in the handout: ARTICLE REVIEWS. Each student will be assessed on the thoroughness and preparedness of the presentation, the demonstrated relevance of the article to the course, and the student’s ability to elicit thoughtful questions about the article. (150 points).

Evaluation of the Article Presentation assignment will be based on the following criteria:

I. Preparedness and thoroughness of presentation (35 pts)
II. Critique of article (35 pts)
III. Demonstrated relevance to course (35 pts)
IV. Heuristics (30 pts)
V. Instructions followed? (15 pts)

Note: The date for individual presentation will be determined by relevance to course content following the Schedule of Assignments and Activities.
# LIST OF COMMUNICATION RESEARCH JOURNALS

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<tr>
<th>Journals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Education</td>
<td>PN 4071 S74</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Monographs</td>
<td>PN 4077 S6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Quarterly</td>
<td>PN 4071 T6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Reports</td>
<td>P87.C58 (Trinity University)</td>
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<td>Communication Research</td>
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<td>Communication Research Reports</td>
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<td>Communication Studies (formerly Central States Speech Journal)</td>
<td>PN 4001 C45</td>
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<td>Communication Theory</td>
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<td>Discourse Processes</td>
<td>P 302 D55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Communication Research</td>
<td>P 91.3 H85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal of Applied Communication Research</td>
<td>HM 258 J67</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal of Communication</td>
<td>P 87.J6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal of Nonverbal Behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quarterly Journal of Speech</td>
<td>PN 4071 Q3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research on Language and Social Interaction</td>
<td>P 1.P36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern (Speech) Communication Journal</td>
<td>PN 4071.S65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Journal of (Speech) Communication</td>
<td>PN 4071.W45</td>
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## Related Journals

- American Sociological Review
- Child Development
- Developmental Psychology
- Family Relations
- Family Process
- Journal of Adolescence
- Journal of Applied Social Psychology
- Journal of Early Adolescence
- Journal of Family Issues
- Journal of Marriage and the Family
- Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
- Journal of Social Issues
- Journal of Social and Personal Relationships
- Journal of Youth and Adolescence
- Research in Sociology of Education and Socialization
- Small Group Research
- Social Psychology Quarterly

## Abstracts (Reference)

- Communication Abstracts                                               | P 87.C59733              |
- Psychological Abstracts                                                | BF 1.P65                 |
- Sociological Abstracts                                                 | HM 1.S67                 |
REFERENCES


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Shimanoff, S. B. (1980). Communication theory from a rules perspective (Chapter 6). In

