
COMM 200
Communication and Social Science
Spring 2013

Instructor:	Jillian Pierson, Ph.D.	jilliank@usc.edu
Office:	ASC 333	
Office Hours:	Tues/Thurs 8:45 am – 9:30 am & 12:20 pm - 1 pm	If my office hours are not convenient for you, we can try to set a meeting for a different time or we can meet by phone.
Office Phone:	(213)821-1542 [Tues/Thurs only] no voice mail on this number	Please use my home phone for messages. I cannot retrieve messages on the office line.
Home Phone:	(323)xxx-xxxx [9am-9pm]	I want you to feel free to call me at home. Since my availability on campus is limited, I truly do welcome your calls at home.

Course Description

This class will introduce the nature of social scientific scholarship; major social scientific perspectives on the communication process; the role of theory in research; beginning research methods; and major intrapersonal, interpersonal, persuasion, organizational, group and mediated communication theories.

Course Goals

I'd like you to complete this course with an understanding of:

- The key methodological issues in the social scientific study of communication
- The major perspectives, issues and theories of communication
- Applications of theories of communication to real world communication behavior

Required Course Materials

Dainton, M. & Zelle, E. D. (2011). *Applying communication theory for professional life* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Additional readings may be required, mostly available on our Blackboard site.

Course Policies

Attendance: I expect you to be in class, on time, and distraction free. While I won't take attendance, this class is small enough that I will know if you are generally present or if you tend to miss a lot of class. Your attendance only becomes a concern to me if your absences begin adding up. *Any student who misses more than four classes is in danger of failing the course.* Please see me immediately if you have missed that number of class meetings.

When you do happen to miss a regular class meeting (with no exam or assignment due), I do not need to hear from you about why you were absent. You should consult with other students to find out what you missed; please do not ask *me*. Once you've spoken with your peers, you're welcome to come to me with questions.

Classroom environment: Please turn your cell phones off when you enter our classroom. I completely understand the temptation to multi-task but I ask that you forgo texting, instant messaging, internet surfing, gaming and other distractions during our time together. If you have a laptop with you, it should be used only for note-taking.

Late Papers/Assignments: Please do not ask me for an extension. If your assignment is late, it will be marked down by one third of a letter grade for every day it is late, regardless of the reason. Also, please be aware that if you end up handing a paper in late (thus accepting the automatic deduction), it falls to the bottom of my stack of things to do and will most likely not be returned to you in a very timely manner.

Missed exams: You better have a serious medical emergency with a verifiable written excuse (such as a bill from the paramedics) if you miss an exam. Contact me immediately if such an emergency arises (i.e., have a friend call me while they're wheeling you away on the stretcher).

Participation: Our class sessions combine lecture, discussion and activities. Participation (including attendance, promptness, courtesy, attentiveness, involvement in classroom activities, and discussion that clearly demonstrates you have kept up with the course material) may affect your grade by up to one third of a grade.

Grading: To achieve a "C" or better on written assignments, you must write at a level appropriate for a university student, i.e., with correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Midterm 1	25%
Midterm 2	25%
Final Exam (not cumulative)	25%
Written Assignments	25%

You also must complete all assignments to pass the course.

I believe a "B" represents really good work. An "A" represents excellent work. If you are disappointed by a grade, I would be happy to discuss your work with you and help you improve for the next assignment. A "C" grade should satisfactorily meet all the requirements of an assignment.

School of Communication Academic Integrity Policy

The School of Communication is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical support. It endorses and acts on the SCampus policies and procedures detailed in the section titled: "University Student Conduct Code." See

especially Appendix A: "Academic Dishonesty Sanction Guidelines." The policies, procedures, and guidelines will be assiduously upheld. They protect your rights, as well as those of the faculty.

It is particularly important that you are aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, fabricating data for a project, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone but yourself. If you have doubts about any of these practices, confer with a faculty member or the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

ADA Compliance Statement

Any student requesting academic accommodation based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

Tentative Course Schedule, *Subject to Change*:

Assignments and readings are due on the days they are listed.

	Date	Topic	Assignment Due/Exams	Readings
1	Jan 15 Jan 17	Course Orientation Introduction to Social Science		
2	Jan 22 Jan 24	Introduction to Theory		Ch 1
3	Jan 29 Jan 31	Theory Development	Assignment 1	Ch 2
4	Feb 5 Feb 7	Cognition and Intrapersonal Communication		Ch3
5	Feb 12 Feb 14	Midterm 1	Exam	
6	Feb 19 Feb 21	Interpersonal Communication		Ch 4
7	Feb 26 Feb 28		Assignment 2	
8	Mar 5 Mar 7	Persuasion		Ch 7
9	Mar 12 Mar 14	Group Communication	Assignment 3	Ch 5
Enjoy Spring Break (no class Mar 19 and 21)				
10	Mar 26 Mar 28			
11	Apr 2	Midterm 2	Exam	

	Apr 4	Organizational Communication	Ch 6
12	Apr 9 Apr 11		
13	Apr 16 Apr 18	Mediated Communication	Ch 9
14	Apr 23 Apr 25	Intercultural Communication	Assignment 4 Ch 10
15	Apr 30 May 2	Course Conclusion	
	May 14	Final Exam 8 am – 10 am	Exam

Assignments

You will do a series of short writing assignments to enhance your understanding and application of the concepts presented in class and in the readings. More information will follow; these are just examples to give you an idea about what the assignments will be like:

Social Science in the News

Find a popular reporting in the news of a relatively recent social science finding. Read the original academic publication and evaluate how complete and correct the popular account was.

Comm Theory in Pop Culture

Describe a scene from a specific film, television show or novel and explain how it illustrates a specific theory from the text.

Interview

Choose a theory from the text and then interview a subject about their experiences. Demonstrate how the person's experience can be used as data to support the theory, or to critique the theory.

Your Own Idea

Have a great idea for a written exercise that will demonstrate understanding and application of course concepts? Come to me for approval and I'll let you know if you can run with it—I might even add your idea as an assignment for all students.

Exams

The three exams in this class will cover the text and the lectures, even when the two do not overlap. Prepare for a challenging series of multiple choice questions as well as a short answer section on each test.

Looking Ahead

Studying communication is an ongoing experience of discovery. I look forward to learning more with all of you this semester.